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INTRODUCTION

Nearly a century ago, Rudolf Bultmann described two basic problems that beset the study of the Fourth Gospel: (1) the place of the Gospel in the development of early Christianity and (2) its central idea.¹ Simply put, from what conceptual, social, and historical situation does the Gospel of John emerge? And how can we characterize the central theological claim of the Gospel? Whether stated or not, these two questions – the historical and the theological – and their corresponding answers are bound up with all exegesis of John.² The present study will propose an approach to the Fourth Gospel that sheds light on both problems: The Gospel of John ought to be read as a narrative argument about how Israel might embrace its future. The Gospel consistently demonstrates how Israel’s worship of God and obedience to God find their fulfillment through Jesus Christ. John’s concern for the future of Israel means that it is incorrect to view John as interested in *replacing* or *superseding* Judaism. It is incorrect to read John as a document that looks back on a decisive break with Judaism. Rather, John seeks to demonstrate the fundamental continuity that runs toward Jesus through the Scripture and history of Israel, and through the practices and convictions of first-century Judaism. John claims that this Scripture and history, those practices and convictions, find their home in Jesus and the people who believe in him. Nearly half a century ago, Nils Dahl called this a “peculiar” continuity.³ He was surely right, about both

¹ Rudolf Bultmann, “Die Bedeutung der neuerschlossenen mandäischen und manichäischen Quellen für das Verständnis des Johannesevangeliums,” *ZNW* 24 (1925): 100–146 (see esp. 100–102).

² See John Ashton, *The Interpretation of John*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 7–25. My categorization of Bultmann’s two questions as “historical” and “theological” is indebted to Ashton.

³ Nils Dahl, “The Johannine Church and History,” in *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church*, ed. Nils Dahl (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), 119.

the continuity and its peculiarity. Be that as it may, the Gospel of John presents its reader with a theological vision for the way in which Israel might move into its future in continuity with its past. Reading the Gospel from this perspective sheds light on the historical context of the Gospel and its theological center.⁴

The burden of this entire study is to make this case. But before presenting this reading, a few clarifications are in order: First, while John is obviously a narrative, the statement that John is a *narrative argument* is not as clear. The claim of this study is that the theological vision of the Gospel of John derives from and speaks into a set of historical and theological concerns that were present within Second Temple Judaism. To read John historically is to read it within a particular “context of expectation,” one that is alert to the question of how the Jewish tradition can live in fidelity to its past and anticipation of its future. In formal terms, the Gospel is a narrative that works within the generic conventions of its day, but it is implicitly an argument for a particular (and in its context, an alternative) understanding of Jesus’ significance vis-à-vis the Jewish tradition.⁵ We will consider this in much more detail in the pages that follow. A second clarification to make is that to state that John’s narrative is also an argument does not mean to deny that John is also (and primarily) a gospel – good news. It is to claim, however, that a

⁴ The methodological implications of the text’s theological coherence and historical context, as well as the complex theological and historical developments that preceded the final form, are considered in M. C. de Boer, “Historical Criticism, Narrative Criticism, and the Gospel of John,” *JSNT* 47 (1992): 35–48. My aim to read John as a *historically situated argument* attempts to build on de Boer’s criticisms and proposals without accepting that a full reconstruction of the redaction history of the Gospel is a prerequisite to an account of its coherence. Similarly, see Jörn-Michael Schröder, *Das eschatologische Israel im Johannesevangelium: Eine Untersuchung der johanneischen Israel-Konzeption in Joh 2–4 und Joh 6* (NET 3; Tübingen/Basel: A. Franke Verlag, 2003), 26–28.

⁵ Frank Kermode (*The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979], 162–163) describes genre as “a context of expectation . . . a set of fore-understandings exterior to a text which enable us to follow that text.” This study proposes that the context/fore-understanding necessary to read John well is not only generic (John as a *bios*, novel, etc.) but also the urgent historical and theological questions facing John’s Jewish tradition. As an “argument,” I mean that the narrative of John is, as a whole, a kind of *reason* or *proof* that supports a particular proposition. (On this, see *OED*, *ad loc.*) The description of John as a narrative argument can be coordinated with many other approaches to the genre of the Fourth Gospel; see, e.g., the essays in Kasper Bro Larsen, ed., *The Gospel of John as Genre Mosaic*, SANt 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

theological vision for the future of Israel is basic to the good news of John. To miss John's vision for Israel is to miss something significant about the Gospel. Third, the meaning of the terms "*Ioudaioi*," "Jewish," and "Israel" requires clarification.⁶ I will show in this study how a theological frame of reference for these terms must be added to their oft-noted sociological frames of reference. For now, it will suffice to note that in this study *Ioudaioi*, "Israel," and "Judaism" are not used allegorically.⁷ Fourth, John's vision for the future of Israel correlates with the Gospel's critical stance toward the *Ioudaioi*. John is arguing not only *for* a particular vision of the future of Israel but also *against* a competing vision for the future of Israel. The positive argument and the negative argument belong together. Many studies falter when they reduce or underplay one side of the argument – as if John is primarily positive and only minimally critical, or vice versa.

My aim is to demonstrate John's commitment to the future of Israel as a theme that runs through the entire Gospel. This thesis draws on several streams of scholarship, and it has been anticipated by a number of studies of John. The streams that contribute to this reading include those that shed light on what C. K. Barrett aptly named "Johannine Judaism."⁸ These include the significant studies of Wayne Meeks,⁹ J. Louis Martyn,¹⁰ Raymond Brown,¹¹ Klaus

⁶ In this study, the transliterated "*Ioudaioi*" will refer to the group that is commonly referred to as "the Jews" (oftentimes including quotation marks) in other studies of the Fourth Gospel. It is my hope that the transliteration preserves some of the historical distance that is vital to reading John as a historically situated narrative argument.

⁷ They are not allegorical in the way that is often attributed to Bultmann, where "*Jews/Ioudaioi*" = the unbelieving world. (Bultmann is more nuanced than this common summary of his position. See Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* [trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971], 86–87, esp. 87n2).

⁸ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism*, 1st American ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 19.

⁹ Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, NovTSup 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1967); "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91.1 (1972): 44–72; "Am I a Jew? – Johannine Christianity and Judaism," in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Morton Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

¹⁰ J. L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003).

¹¹ Raymond Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

Wengst,¹² and John Ashton.¹³ Focused studies on the Gospel of John that have attempted to sustain similar ideas in their exegesis include the works of Stephen Motyer,¹⁴ Andreas Köstenberger,¹⁵ and John Dennis.¹⁶ Daniel Boyarin's important contributions to New Testament studies in general and Johannine scholarship in particular open up space for the thesis I will pursue.¹⁷

In order to set up a reading of the Fourth Gospel that can appreciate its vision for the future of Israel, this introduction proceeds in four steps: (1) a brief sketch of recent scholarship on this topic and a clarification of my approach in light of prior studies; (2) a review of the diversity of Second Temple Judaism, with particular attention to the theologically significant ways that Jewish groups could narrate their identity vis-à-vis "Israel"; (3) a conceptual account of this diversity – here we will turn from a historical mode to a philosophical mode in order to gain perspective about how Jewish writers, including the Fourth Evangelist, could understand the distance between their present way of life and their future as the restored and re-gathered people of God; and (4) a review of the *Ioudaioi* in the Gospel and how John's characterization of them informs the Gospel's vision for the future of Israel.

¹² Klaus Wengst, *Bedrängte Gemeinde und verherrlichter Christus: der historische Ort des Johannesevangeliums als Schlüssel zu seiner Interpretation* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981).

¹³ John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁴ Stephen Motyer, *Your Father the Devil? A New Approach to John and the Jews* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997); "The Fourth Gospel and the Salvation of Israel: An Appeal for a New Start," in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, ed. R. Bieringer et al. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 83–100.

¹⁵ Andreas Köstenberger, "The Destruction of the Second Temple and the Composition of the Fourth Gospel," in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, WUNT 2/219, ed. John Lierman (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 69–108.

¹⁶ John A. Dennis, *Jesus' Death and the Gathering of True Israel: The Johannine Appropriation of Restoration Theology in the Light of John 11.47-52*, WUNT 2/217 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

¹⁷ Daniel Boyarin, "The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John," *HTR* 94.3 (2001): 243–284; "The IOUDAIOI in John and the Prehistory of 'Judaism,'" in *Pauline Conversations in Context: Essays in Honor of Calvin J. Roetzel*, JSNTSup, ed. Janice Capel Anderson, Philip Sellew, and Claudia Setzer (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 216–239; "What Kind of Jew Is the Evangelist?" in *Those Outside: Noncanonical Readings of the Canonical Gospels*, ed. George Aichele and Richard Walsh (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 109–153.

Locating This Study on the Map of Johannine Scholarship

The question of the relationship between John and Judaism has dominated much of twentieth- and early twenty-first-century scholarship on the Gospel, but there are only a few studies of John's vision for the future of Israel. Three recent, sustained arguments for such a reading can be found in the works of Stephen Motyer, John Dennis, and Jörn-Michael Schröder. Motyer argues for a reading of John that rejects the specific historical background that many scholars have assumed in order to make sense of John (i.e., the alienation of the Johannine community following expulsion from the synagogue/Jewish life by the Jamnian authorities). Instead of finding meaning in a murky history, Motyer attends to the "points of sensitivity" that any reader can find in the text of John.¹⁸ For Motyer, these include the temple, the festivals, and the interpretation of Torah. The evangelist engages these central symbols of Jewish identity as a means of engaging his readers. When John is read with these points of sensitivity in mind, and within the tumultuous world of Judaism just after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, interpreters are equipped to understand John as an appeal for fellow Jews to recognize how the symbols of Jewish life that were threatened by the crisis of the temple's destruction might be maintained in Jesus.¹⁹

There is much to affirm in Motyer's reading, particularly his interest in understanding the whole narrative of John and its particular emphases within the historical context of post-70 Judaism – a context about which nearly all ancient and modern interpreters of the Fourth Gospel agree. But at a number of points Motyer's interpretation requires critique as well as further application. First, Motyer's reading of the Gospel essentially ends at John 8:59 due to his focus on understanding the polemic of John 8 (esp. v. 44, "... your father the devil") within the framework of his wider thesis. (For Motyer, John 8 is part of a prophetic critique of John's coreligionists.)²⁰ Readers can infer how the whole Gospel might come under Motyer's thesis, but this is left largely undone.

¹⁸ Motyer's language about "points of sensitivity" is from James D. G. Dunn, "Let John Be John," in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien: Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982*, WUNT 1/28, ed. Peter Stuhlmacher (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 309–339.

¹⁹ See Motyer, *Your Father the Devil?*, 214.

²⁰ See Motyer, *Your Father the Devil?*, 141–159. Motyer's proposal that John's polemic is best understood as "prophetic" and *therefore* has a missionary purpose is strained. On the role of prophetic critique to circumscribe a community, see Marianne

Second, Motyer argues that the purpose of John is to serve as a missionary document for Jews.²¹ Klaus Wengst, among others, has rightly shown that this is unlikely: the Gospel presupposes a knowledge of the basic Christian narrative (e.g., the evangelist takes for granted knowledge of the Twelve in 6:67, and Mary as the one who had anointed Jesus in 11:2); it assumes fundamental theological ideas (e.g., what it means to “abide” in Jesus, 6:56 et passim); and it tells the story of Jesus with devices of misunderstanding and irony that suggest an audience already converted to faith in Jesus.²² Limited though it is, the glimpse of the Johannine community that we encounter in the epistles of 1, 2, and 3 John offers one important set of witnesses for the reception and use of the Fourth Gospel within a community that engages the core ideas of the Gospel *not* primarily in their outreach to unbelievers but in the task of understanding the significance of Jesus for the common life they share.²³ The evangelist would likely rejoice if nonbelievers came to faith through his gospel, but we have no reason to think of John as a kind of late first-century missionary tract.²⁴

Third, it will be helpful to note a conceptual problem in Motyer’s argument: in pursuing a reading that recognizes John’s particular emphases, Motyer argues against J. Louis Martyn’s proposal that a conflict with nascent rabbinic Judaism is also important for understanding the Fourth Gospel. Thus, he asks interpreters to accept a

Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015), 194; Andrew Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), 179–180.

²¹ See esp. Motyer, 211–220. Here Motyer follows Karl Bornhäuser, *Das Johannevangelium: Eine Missionsschrift für Israel* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1928).

²² On this point, see Klaus Wengst, *Bedrängte Gemeinde und verherrlichter Christus: Der historische Ort des Johannevangeliums als Schlüssel zu Seiner Interpretation* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 34–36; Meeks, “Man from Heaven,” 70. Francis Moloney, “Who Is ‘the Reader’ in/of the Fourth Gospel,” *ABR* 40 (1992): 20–33; Richard Bauckham, “John for Readers of Mark,” in *The Gospel for All Christians*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 147–171.

²³ On the relationship of the Gospel to the Epistles, I agree with Raymond Brown that the Epistles correct possible misreadings of the Gospel. On these points, see Brown, *Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 93–144 (esp. 93–109); *An Introduction to the New Testament*, ABRL (Doubleday: New York, 1997), 383–405.

²⁴ I read John 20:31 as an expression of the Evangelist’s goal to build up the faith of his readers regarding how Jesus is, in fact, the Messiah, the Son of God. The difficult critical decisions about this text are best deferred to arguments about the nature of the whole Gospel – what kind of narrative is it? – and thus there is an important way that this entire study is an argument for how to understand this particular verse. On this question, see Maloney, “The Gospel of John and Evangelization,” in Francis J. Maloney, *The Gospel of John: Text and Context*, BIS 72 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 3–19.

false dichotomy: either a relationship of conflict between John and the Jews (Martyn et al.) or John's constructive vision for Jewish worship finding its fulfillment in Jesus (Motyer). Motyer's thesis and historical reconstruction cannot balance John's particular emphases on temple, worship, and Scripture with the sustained criticism of the *Ioudaioi* in the Fourth Gospel and the possible historical scenario that would make sense of it. Thus, he asks his readers to follow him in denying the conflict with Judaism that Martyn described. While there are reasons to be cautious in adopting and deploying Martyn's thesis, readers should not need to make a decision between John's "points of sensitivity" on the one hand and the specific historical conflicts that would fit in post-70 Judaism on the other.

John Dennis's study of restoration theology in the Fourth Gospel interprets John 11:47–52 within the broad context of first-century Jewish restoration theology. Dennis argues that the ingathering of the scattered children of God spoken of in 11:52 denotes the scattered people of Israel.²⁵ Thus, the Gospel of John presents Jesus' death as fulfilling Israel's expectation for the people to be gathered by God in the last days. The plight of Israel is brought to an end by Jesus' death for (ὑπέρ) the nation.²⁶ After showing how the specific concerns of a restored nation and place of worship fit within Second Temple and post-70 Judaism,²⁷ Dennis surveys the Fourth Gospel's presentation of Jesus as, among others, the new temple (1:14; 2:13–22), the one who gathers the scattered people lest they perish (6:11–14), the shepherd of Israel prophesied in Ezek 34–37 (John 10:1–18), and the one who defeats the devil, the cosmic foe who leads astray the people of Israel (12:31; cf. 8:44).²⁸ John 11:47–52 is the crystallization of John's understanding of Jesus' death: he dies on behalf of the nation in order to bring about Israel's eschatological restoration.

There are several ways in which my focus on *the future of Israel* differs from Dennis's argument about Jesus' *gathering the true Israel*. First, although the implications of his findings move in many directions, Dennis's major contribution is to clarify how Jesus'

²⁵ In John 11:52, Jesus death is ἵνα καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ διεσκορπισμένα συναγάγῃ εἰς ἕν. On the relevant Scriptural context for such "scattering," see Deut 30:1–5; Neh 1:8; Ps 106:26–27; Jer 9:16; 10:21; 23:1–4; Ezek 5:10; 11:16; 12:15; 20:23; 20:24; 28:25; 29:13; Dan 9:7; Zech 1:21; Sir 48:15, and esp. Isa 56:8.

²⁶ Dennis, *Jesus' Death and the Gathering of True Israel*, cf. esp. 46.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 80–116.

²⁸ *Ibid.* See, respectively, *ibid.*, 136–177, 188–200, 200–201, 205–209.

death functions in John from within a Jewish frame of reference, specifically how Jesus' death brings about the long-anticipated restoration of the people of God.²⁹ Dennis's study demonstrates the significance of Jesus' death by examining various motifs and images in the Gospel and in contemporary literature and then locating those motifs within the broader framework of Jewish restoration theology. The present study aims to show how a particular interest in eschatological fulfillment runs through nearly every pericope in the Gospel. To put the differences most sharply, where Dennis's driving interest is restoration theology, mine is Christology, focusing on John's portrayal of Jesus as the one who fulfills the hopes of Israel. To be sure, some aspects of John's depiction of Jesus derive from restoration theology, but not all. Moreover, this study will attend in a more sustained way than Dennis's to the presence of polemic in John's Gospel – how the Gospel both casts a vision for Israel's future in Jesus and rejects alternative proposals. Thus, I hope to demonstrate how several pressing questions lie behind the Gospel's presentation of Jesus: How can Israel faithfully live into its future? Around what (or whom) should it organize its life? I propose that John is an argument for a particular answer to these questions. The difference, then, is that I am trying to locate the whole narrative of John within a broad hermeneutical context. The question is not: *What do we understand when we understand Jesus's death as "for the nation" (11:52)?* – although the answer is critical, and the motifs, images, and expectations of contemporary Jewish literature are indispensable. The question for this study aims at the broader narrative: *What do we understand when we understand the Gospel according to John?*³⁰

Jörn-Michael Schröder's *Das eschatologische Israel im Johannesevangelium* argues that in the Gospel of John Jesus establishes the eschatological people of God in continuity and discontinuity with the Jewish and Old Testament tradition.³¹ In John, the vision for this newly established eschatological Israel informs both the salvation-historical message of the Gospel and illuminates the contextual

²⁹ Against Bultmann et al., see Dennis, 13–14, 351–353.

³⁰ There may of course be multiple ways of answering this question. My contention is that a historically and theologically rooted reading of John will lead to the conclusion that the future of Israel is one such thing that readers are meant to understand.

³¹ Jörn-Michael Schröder, *Das eschatologische Israel im Johannesevangelium: Eine Untersuchung der johanneischen Israel-Konzeption in Joh 2–4 and Joh 6*, NET 3 (Tübingen/Basel: A. Franke Verlag, 2003).

strategy of the Gospel as it serves a community in conflict with its local religious community. Schröder demonstrates his thesis by studying every pericope in John 2–4 and 6, and then reading the imagery of these pericopae against the eschatological expectations of the Old Testament and, especially, within the Fourth Gospel's own eschatologically loaded terminology. The aim of the project is striking similar to my own: to demonstrate that John's eschatological vision stands in strong continuity with the traditions of Scripture and expectation that were long nurtured within Judaism, and that John also breaks with those traditions in order to characterize Jesus as the one who fulfills the hopes of Israel.³²

The major differences between Schröder's work and my own are hermeneutical. First, as will become clear below, I approach the continuity/discontinuity between John and the Jewish tradition as one that is grounded in a more robust account of Judaism as a tradition that, in its various expressions, is sensitive to the question of how its current form (Hasmonean Judaism, Pharisaic Judaism, "common" Judaism, etc.) approximates its ultimate form (the restored Israel). This framing provides a broader historical context for understanding the Gospel of John, one that removes the necessity of reading the Gospel as a text that is generated primarily as a reaction to the exclusion of Johannine Christians from their parent religious group.³³

Second, Schröder sees John's commitment to eschatological Israel as so thoroughgoing that it becomes the allegorical key to understanding the narrative. So, in John 2, the mother of Jesus should be understood an ideal "Jew" – one who does not understand Jesus but commits to trusting him.³⁴ Nicodemus should be seen not as the text presents him – a ruler of the *Ioudaioi*, a Pharisee – but rather as a representative of a late first-century synagogue adherent convinced of Jesus' signs but unwilling to fully entrust himself to Jesus.³⁵ Jesus' walking on the sea in John 6 should be seen as transparent to God's presence and preservation of his beleaguered eschatological people (following, it seems, Bornkamm's reading of Matthew

³² Cf. Schröder, 351–354.

³³ *Ibid.*, 12–17; cf. 316–317.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 42–43 and *passim*.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 83–88. Note that the representative function of Nicodemus is not a problem (he speaks in the first person plural), only the strained profile that Schröder creates.

14:22–33).³⁶ When John writes “it was dark” (6:17), we should read, “there was demonic opposition to the post-Easter church,” because in John 8, 12, and in the letter of 1 John, σκοτία implies an era in or realm of history in which Jesus is not present in the world.³⁷ Taken individually, each of these proposals is interesting and possible, but taken together they reflect Schröder’s broader hermeneutical approach, which views the eschatological fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel as so thoroughly enclosed within the argument of John that individual terms are often shoehorned to fit his readings.³⁸ I am interested in pursuing the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel in the Gospel of John, but I see John making this argument by means of a much deeper engagement with specific traditions and expectations of Scripture and Second Temple Judaism. In other words, while Schröder’s approach is heavily *intratextual* (within John) but requires the re-signification of common terms and a level of reading-in that strikes me as problematic, my approach is weighted toward *intertextuality* – reading John as an engagement with a historically situated set of texts and the arguments that they served.

Finally, Schröder consistently presents John’s vision of the eschatological Israel as one that “transcends” the earthly level for the heavenly. For instance, the *Ioudaioi* and the crowds are left behind as Jesus offers an interpretation of the manna miracle that transcends its original, earthly frame of reference. In their earthly way of thinking, the *Ioudaioi* signify the problem of any religious practice without transcendent reference.³⁹ The problem here is the idea that in John the eschatology of Jesus is out of reach to the *Ioudaioi* because it transcends what they could think or imagine. This is off point: the gap between Jesus and the *Ioudaioi* is not the ability to think metaphorically or to imagine a transcendent reality (for instance, that God’s word could sustain a person like bread – Deut 8). Rather, the gap between Jesus and the *Ioudaioi* in John is the unwillingness of the *Ioudaioi* to recognize *Jesus* as the one who mediates the transcendent reality that they both affirm. The gap of understanding is specifically Christological. The point of difference is not the ability to think eschatologically. It is the ability/willingness to

³⁶ Cf. 222. Cf. Bornkamm’s “The Stilling of the Storm in Matthew,” in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, ed. G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, and H. J. Held (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 52–57.

³⁷ Schröder, 221–224; cf. 263.

³⁸ Schröder has a brief discussion of key terms on pp. 321–324.

³⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 306–307.

think of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and therefore to think eschatologically about *him*.

Students of John will know of several article-length studies suggesting theses like mine.⁴⁰ Two things distinguish my work from these. First, a brief study cannot make this argument in a convincing way. Too many texts need to be considered and too many exegetical decisions need to line up for an article to prove the point. Second, John's vision for the future of Israel needs to be coordinated with its polemic toward the *Ioudaioi*. This is critical. In order to understand the Fourth Gospel's vision for Israel, readers need to make sense of both John's constructive engagement with Israel's traditions and its polemic toward the *Ioudaioi*, and readers need to make sense of these two lines of the Johannine narrative as they play out across the whole Gospel.⁴¹

If Motyer, Dennis, and Schröder are readers of John who offer interpretations similar to mine, then from which interpretations of John does this study differ significantly? A list of scholars and explanation of all the differences would endlessly delay the task of actually reading John. Nevertheless, my understanding of the social, historical, and theological context of the Fourth Gospel differs from prior explorations of these topics, and so a basic sketch of the Jewish context in which John appeared will help situate this study within the broader scholarly discussion of the Gospel and its relationship to Judaism.

The Diversity of Second Temple Judaism, and Identification with "Israel" as a Theological Claim

First-century Judaism was diverse, but not endlessly so.⁴² Within and alongside of a large center ("common Judaism") existed various

⁴⁰ See esp. Motyer, "The Fourth Gospel and the Salvation of Israel"; Andreas Köstenberger, "The Destruction of the Second Temple and the Composition of the Fourth Gospel," in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*. Several specialized studies point in this direction without opening up their arguments to the Gospel as a whole, e.g., Hans Förster, Dorit Felsch, and Gerry Wheaton.

⁴¹ Rightly noted by Schröder, *Das eschatologische Israel*, 31.

⁴² The paragraphs that follow build on Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the Early Second Temple Period," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, ed. Patrick D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, and S. Dean McBride (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 587–616. See also Boyarin, "What Kind of Jew Is the Evangelist?" (cited in n. 17); Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Development of Jewish Sectarianism," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century*

parties, sects, and schismatic groups. The roots of this diversity stretch back to the destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Up until that time, the land of Israel, the Jerusalem temple, the religious and cultic leadership of prophets and priests, and the political leadership of the king worked to center the identity of Israel and to ground the people in their shared history and ethnic identity. There were, of course, religious, political, and economic disagreements. Some of these disagreements ran very deep, for instance, to charges of syncretism, idolatry, and illegitimate claims to authority or social status. Nevertheless, a basically cohesive understanding of “Israel” existed: Ephraim and Judah, the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, shared a sense of peoplehood and commitment to the same basic social structures. The twelve tribes of Israel were distinct from all the other nations. Their differences never overcame the agreements that provided them with a common identity.⁴³

The loss of the temple, the cult, the role of the priests, the leadership of the royal family, and the deportation of the upper strata of Judean society changed all of this. In the Babylonian conquest, beginning with the deportation of 597 BC and then after the destruction of the temple in 586, Judeans were settled in compact communities in Babylon (Ezek 1:1–3; 3:15; Ezra 8:15–20; Neh 1:1). In these exilic communities, Judeans worked to preserve their distinct identities, and they looked to the future for the restoration of the nation of Israel. The Judean vision for restoration and their particular understanding of religious identity, both of which were cultivated in exile, spurred an important shift in Israelite history.

Israelites who remained in the land, whether Judea or Samaria, did not develop the same understandings of their identities as the Judeans in Babylon. Some remained after the conquest and kept up their identities as Israelites but now under the religious, social,

B.C.E., ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 385–404. My argument builds toward an image of Second Temple Judaism that balances the contributions of Gabriele Boccaccini on the one hand and E. P. Sanders on the other (see Gabriele Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought 300 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991]; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice & Belief 36 BCE–66 CE* [Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992]. Cf. Richard Bauckham, “The Parting of the Ways: What Happened and Why,” in *The Jewish World in and around the New Testament* [WUNT 2/233; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck], 175–192).

⁴³ Talmon, “The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the Early Second Temple Period,” 591–593.

political, and economic pressures imposed on them by their conquerors (see, e.g., 2 Kings 17; Ezra 4:1–4; 2 Chron 30:10–12). Others moved to Egypt: some settled in Upper Egypt, where they maintained their religious identity at the Jewish garrison in Elephantine;⁴⁴ others settled in Lower Egypt, where, according to Jeremiah, they abandoned the Lord to worship the Queen of Heaven (Jer 41–44). The critical observation about this moment in Israel’s history is the emergence of a variety of “centers” for Israelite identity – some in Babylon, others in Palestine, perhaps others in Egypt. This “multicentricity” among Israelites was unprecedented.⁴⁵ Not all of these centers were of equal importance, and we need not envision them all in competing relationships.⁴⁶ Still, their development is what proves decisive. The Babylonian conquest robbed all of the people of Israel (both those in the South and those that remained in the North) of the land, temple, and cultic and political sovereignty that once circumscribed their shared, if also contested, identity. The conquest fragmented Israel by creating social, historical, and conceptual conditions in which communities of Israelites would cultivate independent understandings of their identity and the norms by which to maintain that identity. This fragmentation also catalyzed groups to fill the voids within Israelite identity and the corresponding structures of leadership for Israel. It is in this context, with the establishment of exilic communities and the return of some exiles to Palestine following Cyrus’s decree in 538 BC, that readers of the Bible first encounter the terms *Ioudaios/Ioudaioi* as terms referring to a group marked by both a regional and a confessional identity.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ On the Jewish community at Elephantine, see Abraham Schalit and Lidia Matassa, “Elephantine,” *Encyclopedia Judaica* 6:311–314. Cf. also Talmon, “The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the Early Second Temple Period,” 596.

⁴⁵ The term is from Talmon, “The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the Early Second Temple Period,” 594 et passim.

⁴⁶ See, e.g., A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923). See esp. papyrus nos. 30–32.

⁴⁷ E.g., Ez 4–6; Neh 1, 4, 6; Esth 2. The terms יהודי יוֹדֵי־יְהוּדָה occur in other biblical contexts as well (e.g., Jer 32:12; 38:19; 40:11); the point that I will demonstrate here is that post-exilic literature uses the terms with a particular range of meaning. Importantly, “Jews/Judeans” could refer to communities of Judeans resettled in places other than Babylon, e.g., the community at Elephantine referred to themselves as *Yahudiya* (יהודייה); Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.*, 112–119.

I am aware of the debates about when it becomes appropriate to translate “Jew” rather than “Judean.” My preference for *Ioudaioi* reflects my sustained engagement

In Ezra, the term *Ioudaioi* refers clearly to the community whose identity was forged in the Babylonian exile.⁴⁸ In Ezra 4, “the adversaries of Judah” (4:1), who are synonymously referred to as “the people of the land” (4:4), approach the “returned exiles” and offer to help in the rebuilding of the temple.⁴⁹ The people of the land claim to have been worshipping God since the days of Esar-Haddon (i.e., the immediate successor to Sennacherib, the Assyrian conqueror of the Northern Kingdom). Zerubbabel and “the heads of the families of Israel” rebuff their offer for help. The logic of their rejection follows 2 Kings 17: the people of the land know only an illegitimate form of worship to Israel’s God. But the people of the land do not take this rejection well. They write to the king and denounce the returned exiles: “The *Ioudaioi* who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and

with Boyarin, particularly his attention to the way in which the *Ioudaioi* are not inherently co-extensive with Israel (see his essay, “What Kind of Jew Is the Evangelist?”; cf. also Blenkinsopp, n. 54 in this chapter); Steve Mason, “Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,” *JSJ* 38 (2007): 457–512. (This article is discussed in more detail below.) My use of “*Ioudaios*” in the period under discussion here is meant to draw out how the particular vision of the Babylonian exiles represents one understanding among others about the qualities that define Israelite peoplehood. Cf. also Seth Schwartz, “How Many Judaisms Were There? A Critique of Neusner and Smith on Definition and Mason and Boyarin on Categorization,” *JAJ* 2 (2011): 208–238; for a helpful account of ethnicity in the first century, see Philip Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul’s Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 62–74. (Again, my concern that “*Ioudaios*” might reflect a particular way of being “Judean” prevents me from reaching Esler’s conclusion of translating Ἰουδαῖος as “Judean,” despite his concern that the translation “Jew” is “morally questionable” [p. 68]. One wonders: Would *Ioudaios* be similarly morally questionable, or is it redeemed by its strangeness?) On recent trends in the translation of these terms, see Adele Reinhartz, “The Vanishing Jews of Late Antiquity,” *Marginalia*, June 24, 2014. Online: <http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/vanishing-jews-antiquity-adele-reinhartz/>; for John in particular, see the recent important work of Ruth Sheridan, “Issues in the Translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 132.3 (2013): 671–695.

⁴⁸ I am aware that Ezra and Nehemiah represent reality in a way that stands at some distance from what a critical history offers. The reconstruction offered here proceeds on the assumption that for *John* (and many other writers up through the first century of our era) these writings were received as accurate representations of the past. For modern works that clarify the gap between history and the representation of reality in this literature, see Morton Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1987); Peter R. Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah* (JSJSup 65; Leiden: Brill, 2001) (and see: Victor Hurowitz, “Restoring the Temple – Why and When? Review of Peter Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah*,” *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 93.3–4 [2003]: 581–591); Sara Japhet, “The Temple in the Restoration Period: Reality and Ideology,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 44: 3–4 (1991): 195–251.

⁴⁹ Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 11.84–115, where the adversaries are named the Samaritans.

wicked city. . .” (4:12). The people of the land lose their case and, in the end, the *Ioudaioi* are vindicated and their leadership receives the support of Darius (5:5; 6:6–12, 14). The remnant community then reestablishes worship and specifically undertakes sacrifice for the sins of the entire nation, offering “twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel” (6:16). Passover follows six weeks later, observed by “the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by all who had joined them and separated themselves from the pollutions of the nations of the land to worship the Lord, the God of Israel” (6:21).

How should we understand these dynamics after the fragmentation of the Babylonian conquest and the prophetic vision for the reunification of Israel that was proclaimed in Babylon? The text suggests this: The book of Ezra narrates a particular segment of Israel, that is, the *Ioudaioi*, returning from exile and establishing worship on behalf of the larger nation of Israel. “The *Ioudaioi*” and “Israel” are not exactly co-extensive. Rather, the *Ioudaioi* are the mechanism by which Israel’s national life is authentically reestablished.⁵⁰ If they will give up their idolatrous or syncretistic ways and identify with the *Ioudaioi*, then all the scattered people of Ephraim and Judah will again participate in Israel.

Before continuing, it is important to note that the transliterated term “*Ioudaios*” is preferable in these contexts to the terms “Jew” or “Judean.” The strangeness of the transliterated term reminds modern readers that to be a *Ioudaios* in the ancient world meant to identify oneself with a particular stream within the broader Jewish tradition. While many today would consider the “people of the land,” the Qumran community, and the Pharisees in John as groups

⁵⁰ This seems to be the reason for the use of *twelve* sacrifices (Ezra 6:17) and *twelve* priests (8:24). N.B. The “Ezra narrative” of Ez 7–10 prefers “Israel” to “*Ioudaios*” (e.g., 7:7, 11, 28; 9:1). A similar preference for “Israel” appears in 2:1, 3:1, and 4:3. This makes sense because, unsurprisingly, the book of Ezra is convinced of its own message, viz., that Israel will now be grounded in the faithful life of the returned exiles. In other words, in Ezra, the use of the term “Israel” presupposes *at least* religious alignment and *at times* historical identification with the Judean exiles who returned from Babylon at Cyrus’s decree (1:5). Commentaries on Ezra do not contradict the approach I am outlining; the approach offered here also works when one considers the complicated history of redaction in Ezra. See further H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, WBC 16 (Waco: Word Books, 1985), 1–lii; Jacob M. Myers, *Ezra, Nehemiah: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 14 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964); Juhu Pakkala, “The Exile and the Exiles in the Ezra Tradition,” in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts*, ed. Christoph Levin and Ehud Ben Zvi, BZAW 404 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 91–101.

populated by “Jews,” it is, as we will see, not the case that in their own historical contexts the members of these various groups would have all identified themselves with the term *Ioudaioi*. It is, however, also true that they each recognized themselves as sharing something in common. Thus, this study opts for the transliterated term *Ioudaioi* as a way of retaining some of the specificity of the ancient term (though, as we will see, there were also internal differences among those who designated themselves *Ioudaioi*); this study retains the adjective “Jewish” as a way of referring to the broader tradition that looks back to Israel, which a variety of groups (Qumran, people of the land, Pharisees, etc.) held in common.

An alternative to the choice made above would be to follow the reasoning of Steven Mason, who has argued at length for the central importance of *place* in designating an *ethnos* in the ancient world. This leads into a preference for translating Ἰουδαῖος as “Judean” by Mason and many other scholars when translating this terminology, especially in literature from this early period. But insofar as each group of “*Ioudaioi*” in the exilic period represents a particular option for how to live out “Judean” identity, it is helpful to retain the terms “*Ioudaios*”/“*Ioudaioi*” because the latter terms capture the way in which each group of Judean exiles represents a unique understanding of the qualities that define Israelite peoplehood. In the Gospel of John, as in this earlier literature, the *Ioudaioi* embody a particular way of life that is an argument for how to live faithfully as God’s people. The term *Ioudaios* is not reducible to the constellation of beliefs and practices that define the “Judean” *ethnos* because, in addition to designating a historic connection to a place (a position that I have no quarrel with), the term also possesses the particularity of a specific vision for Israel.⁵¹ Thus, the preference in this study for the term *Ioudaios/Ioudaioi* in the period under discussion is meant to draw out how the particular vision of the Babylonian exiles represents one understanding among others about the qualities that define Israelite peoplehood.

Coming back to portrayals of the *Ioudaioi* in the Scriptures of this early period, the usage of the book Ezra holds for the other texts that are expressly concerned with the return of the Judean exiles and the rebuilding of the temple (i.e., Nehemiah, Zechariah, and

⁵¹ One way to say this by employing Mason’s terminology would be to say that for John, the “*Ioudaioi*” represent a particular option about how to be “Judean.” For more on this point, see n. 47.

Haggai).⁵² In Nehemiah, the *Ioudaioi* are “those who escaped the captivity” (1:2)⁵³ and are actively engaged in resettling Jerusalem and repopulating the land (2:16; 4:1–2, 10–12; 5:1, 17; 6:6; 13:23). Like Ezra, Nehemiah uses “Israel” with reference to the returned exiles. This is because the *Ioudaioi* are the vanguard of the restored people of Israel. In the worship and resettlement of the land by the *Ioudaioi*, Israel is reconstituted (7:73; 8:17; 9:1; 10:33, 39; 11:3, 12:47; 13:1–3). But again the two terms are not identical. Nehemiah uses “*Ioudaioi*” to refer to the particular historical community that is engaged in the task of reestablishing the broader historical and theological reality of “Israel.” Nehemiah can slip from one term to the other – to oppose the *Ioudaioi* is to oppose what is good for Israel (2:10) – but this slippage is *exactly* the point of how Nehemiah uses the language (Ezra too). The *Ioudaioi* are at the center of the reestablishment of Israel and its worship. The interchangeable use of *Ioudaioi* and “Israel” is not based on a simple historical identification, but rather on the theological aims of the story. Insofar as the identification “*Ioudaioi* = Israel” becomes historical, it demonstrates the acceptance of this theological claim.⁵⁴

Haggai is simpler because it does not employ the terms “*Ioudaios*,” “*Ioudaioi*,” or “Israel.” Yet it does add one noteworthy element to our picture of the resettlement. In Ezra and Nehemiah, the “people of the land” are aligned against the rebuilding of Jerusalem (cf. Ezra 4:4; 9:1–2; et passim; Neh 10:28–31). In Haggai, the people of the land are exhorted to join with Zerubbabel and Joshua in the work of

⁵² For overviews of the historical, social, and theological contexts of these works, see Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Haggai-Zechariah 1–8*, AB25B (Garden City: Doubleday, 1987), xxix–xliv; Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14*, AB25C (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 15–29.

⁵³ This verse could refer to two groups, but the syntax of v. 2 suggests they stand in apposition, and the answer Nehemiah receives in v. 3 suggests this too: “I asked them about the *Yahudim* that survived, those who had escaped the captivity, and Jerusalem.”

ואשאלם עליהיהודים הפליטה אשר נשאר מן יהשבי ועלירושלם
 αὶ ἠρώτησα αὐτοὺς περὶ τῶν σωθέντων, οἱ κατελείφθησαν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας καὶ
 περὶ ἱερουσαλήμ (Note that the LXX lacks the word “*Ioudaioi*.” The αὐτοὺς in the LXX refers back to Nehemiah’s brother and certain men of Judah [ἄνδρες Ἰουδα/יהודים מיהודה].)

⁵⁴ For nuanced treatments of these themes, cf. Gary N. Knoppers, “Nehemiah and Sanballat: “The Enemy without or within?” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.*, ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 305–331 (esp. 320). See also Joseph Blenkinsopp, “Judeans, Jews, Children of Abraham,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*, ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 461–482.

building the temple (2:4; cf. 1:12; 2:2). This may suggest a perspective in which Israelites who remained in the land (but who were still, technically, non-*Ioudaioi* /non-Judeans) have a role in reconstituting Israel. Or “people of the land” may simply refer to resettled Judeans (cf. Neh 11:3, 20). Either way, Haggai supports the basic perspective of Nehemiah and Ezra: The Lord himself orders and blesses the work of the returned exiles under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua.

Zechariah’s prophecies align with those of his contemporary, Haggai. The Lord calls his people to return to the land: “I have returned to Jerusalem with compassion . . . my cities shall again overflow with prosperity; the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem” (Zech 1:16–17). The first eight chapters of Zechariah focus on Jerusalem and Judah (e.g., 1:14, 16, 17, 21; 8:1–8, 15). They address the community under Zerubbabel’s leadership (4:6–10), and they call the exiles in Babylon to leave their captivity and take part in God’s reestablishment of Zion (2:6–13). With Zechariah’s focus on the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple, and its message to the Jerusalem community and to the Judean exiles in Babylon, it is entirely fitting that the book’s eight visions conclude with this promise: “In those days ten men from nations of every language shall take hold of a *Ioudaios*, grasping his garment and saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you’” (8:23).⁵⁵ Here, as in Ezra and Nehemiah, the *Ioudaioi* (i.e., the Judeans who have been exiled in Babylon) are in the privileged position of participating in the restoration of the people and the blessings of the nations that will again come from Israel (8:13).

A shift occurs in Zechariah 9–14.⁵⁶ Jerusalem and Zion remain in focus, but Zechariah now introduces a wider frame of reference for “Israel.” In a departure from Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and even Zechariah 1–8, the pronouncements of Zechariah 9–14 introduce a concern for gathering all the tribes of Israel (9:1), for God’s recompense on the oppressors of both the Northern Kingdom and the Southern (9:10, 13). God turns against the leaders of his people

⁵⁵ In Zech 8:23, *Ioudaios* is in the genitive sg. (ἰουδαίου). I have altered the text in keeping with my consistent practice of using *Ioudaios/Ioudaioi* without inflection when they are transliterated.

⁵⁶ Critical scholarship recognizes here the beginning of “Second Zechariah.” See Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14*, 15–50.

(10:3) and promises to care personally for all of his people, both Ephraim/Joseph and Judah (10:6–10). The pronouncements of chapters 11–14 describe God’s strong commitment to Judah, Jerusalem, and Israel, but they shift away from the emphasis on Zerubbabel, Joshua, or the *Ioudaioi*/Judeans and into a different emphasis on the initiative that God, rather than specific human actors, will take to establish Jerusalem as the place from which God reigns over the earth (14:9). This shift that occurs in Zechariah is a shift between two ways of thinking about Israel: The first, Zechariah 1–8, lines up with Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai in envisioning the *Ioudaioi* as the center of Israel; the second way of thinking about Israel in Zechariah 9–14 has in mind the same goal (Israel, and its center in Jerusalem and Judah) but approaches this goal with no commitment to the particular historical actors of the *Ioudaioi* (e.g., Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, Joshua).⁵⁷

This overview sheds light on an important development in the conceptual world of ancient Judaism: the way in which the distinction between the term “*Ioudaios/Ioudaioi*” and Israel arose and also the way in which that distinction contained within it the possibility for ongoing debates about how particular historical communities might relate to the biblical vision of “Israel.” Observing these social realities and the impact of the returned Judean exiles on the larger makeup of the people, Shemaryahu Talmon writes:

[O]nce this new form of communal life [i.e., communities constituted by their particular confession] had come into existence, it would not be discarded even when the conditions that brought it about were seemingly reversed or attenuated by the return to the land, which did not, however, put an end to the existence of an exilic community . . . When the returning exiles reconstituted the political framework of Judah in the early Persian period, there evolved a symbiosis of creedal community with nation. After that time, Jewish peoplehood would embrace communities that accentuate their national-religious heritage differently.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ See here Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14*, 29. See also Gary N. Knoppers, “Did Jacob Become Judah? The Configuration of Israel’s Restoration in Deutero-Isaiah,” in *Samaria, Samaritans, Samaritans: Studies on Bible, History and Linguistics*, ed. József Zsengellér, SJ 66 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 39–67.

⁵⁸ Talmon, “The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the Early Second Temple Period,” 598.

The main lines that we have been observing offer this picture: In Babylon, the *Ioudaioi* developed a strong communal identity that was reinforced by particular norms and by prophetic teachings and pronouncements about the exile and the coming restoration.⁵⁹ The strong sense of identity, vocation, and emphasis on normative ways of being *Ioudaioi* (=Judeans) that were developed in exile persisted even when the exiles returned to their homeland. Once back in Palestine, however, the norms began to have an effect *within* the broader community: they began to separate not only the *Ioudaioi* from the Babylonians and other Gentiles, they also began to demarcate *Ioudaioi* from other Israelites (even “*Ioudaioi*” from other groups with a historical connection to Judea – for instance, the “people of the land”). Talmon pictures the varying ways of relating to the nation thus:

creedal-national	inner-group	[= <i>Ioudaioi</i>]
national	in-group	[=Israelite people broadly understood]
creedal-ethnic-foreign	out-group	[=Gentiles] ⁶⁰

This model is helpful for understanding the distrust in Ezra and Nehemiah for “the people of the land” and concern for separation from people of mixed or foreign descent (Ezra 10; Neh 13:1–3). The separation enforces a distinction within the people of God, one in which the normative ways of living associated with the *Ioudaioi* from Babylon are necessary in order to claim participation in the theological reality of “Israel.” This model also accounts for the conceptual shift between Zechariah 1–8 and Zechariah 9–14. In the former, the inner-group (i.e., the *Ioudaioi*) is the means of salvation; in the latter, the in-group (Israel broadly understood) is in view. This model accounts for the distinction between two groups of Israelites as, alternatively, “the wicked” and “those who fear the Lord” in Mal 3:13–18.⁶¹ In a different way, it accounts for the rift between Samaritans and *Ioudaioi*: both groups claim a heritage going back to a pre-exilic people (the Northern and Southern tribes, respectively), and both groups put the Torah at the center of their communal life,

⁵⁹ On this paragraph, cf. also *ibid.*, 599–604.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 599. The bracketed additions are mine.

⁶¹ N.B. The identification of the groups mentioned in this passage is important for scholars who undertake historical reconstructions of Jewish life during this period. For in-depth discussion, see Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi*, AB25D (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 51–84, 357–363; Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, WBC 32 (Waco: Word Books, 1984), 298–299.

yet their particular visions of “Israel” preclude their unity. Although a decisive break between *Ioudaioi* and Samaritans may not have occurred until the Hasmonaean period (second century BC), the fundamental disagreement between the groups emerged out of these conditions in the Persian and Hellenistic periods of the fifth and fourth centuries BC.⁶²

When these observations are taken together, the question that rises to the surface from this period in Israel’s life is not only *Who’s in and who’s out?* (That question is important but can be too sharply focused on in-group/out-group relationships.) In the triad of possible relationships described earlier, the question that must now also be asked is this: *Who has a rightful claim to “the center” of Israel – and to the name “Israel” itself?* That is, *Who determines the inner-group and those who might participate in it?*

“*Ioudaioi*” and “Israelites” in the Later Second Temple Period

Within intertestamental literature, “*Ioudaioi*” and “Israelites” continue as distinct but overlapping entities. It is not the case, as a previous generation of scholarship argued (whose voice can still be heard today), that in Jewish literature outside of Scripture “Israel” is a term employed by insiders and “*Ioudaios*” a term used by outsiders.⁶³ Such a view cannot adequately account for the use of Ἰουδαῖος in literature written by and for *Ioudaioi* (e.g., 2 Macc 1:1–9).

⁶² On the dynamics of this “schism” and its development, see Gary N. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of Their Early Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); see also James D. Purvis, *The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Origin of the Samaritan Sect*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 1–15, 88–118; Robert T. Anderson and Terry Giles, *The Samaritan Pentateuch: An Introduction to Its Origin, History, and Significance for Biblical Studies*, SBLRBS 72 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2012), 7–23, 105–136; Gary N. Knoppers, “Samaritan Conceptions of Jewish Origins and Jewish Conceptions of Samaritan Origins: Any Common Ground?” in *Die Samaritaner und die Bibel: Historische und literarische Wechselwirkungen zwischen biblischen und samaritanischen Traditionen*, ed. Jörg Frey, Ursula Schattner-Rieser, and Konrad Schmid, *Studia Samaritana* 7 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012) 81–118. See also the discussion of John 4 in Chapter 2.

⁶³ Most importantly here, cf. K. G. Kuhn’s statement in the *TDNT*: “יִשְׂרָאֵל is the name which the people uses for itself, whereas Ἰουδαῖος is the non-Jewish name for it [i.e., the people].” Idem, “Ἰσραήλ, Ἰουδαῖος, Ἑβραῖος in Jewish Literature after the O T,” *TDNT* 3.359–369. For a contemporary presentation of a similar view, see Peter J. Tomson, “‘Jews’ in the Gospel of John as Compared with the Palestinian Talmud, the Synoptics, and Some New Testament Apocrypha,” in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth*

As in the Persian period, so also in the following centuries, the distinction between the terms is better explained theologically. In the intertestamental period, “*Ioudaioi*” continues to refer to a particular segment of the broader people of Israel. Often the term refers specifically to a segment that stands in historical continuity with the people who left Judea during the time of the Babylonian conquest. Thus, as in Ezra and Nehemiah, so also in this literature, *Ioudaioi* can view themselves as the theological and sociological center of Israel. But by making such a claim they do not necessarily limit to themselves the meaning of “Israel.” Nor does usage of the term “*Ioudaios*” designate a static understanding of how to organize religious and social life vis-à-vis Israel. The precise meaning of “*Ioudaios*” would certainly shift between Egypt, Palestine, and Babylon. The *Ioudaioi* at Elephantine certainly did not construe the implications of Judean identity in exactly the same way as their kin who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon. Yet the terms “*Ioudaios*”/“*Ioudaioi*” could nevertheless identify groups that lived differently yet still oriented themselves toward the same basic place and beliefs.⁶⁴ The term “Israel,” however, is not used with such variety. “Israel/Israelites” continues to refer to the Northern Kingdom in the biblical past as well as to the unified people of God in the biblical past or in the prophesied future.⁶⁵ Numerous studies support the conclusion that in this period “Israel” refers to a biblical and theological entity that

Gospel, ed. R. Bieringer et al. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 176–212; Peter J. Tomson, “The Names ‘Israel’ and ‘Jew’ in Ancient Judaism and the New Testament,” *Bjdr* 4 7.2–3 (1986): 120–140, 266–289. Cp. Maurice Casey, “Some Anti-Semitic Assumptions in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*,” *NovT* 40.3 (1999): 280–291 (esp. 280–286).

⁶⁴ Thus, not all “*Ioudaioi*” in this literature have the same relationship to Judea or the same understanding of “Judaism” (a term that appears for the first time only in 2 Macc). Consider, for instance, how the Egyptian *Ioudaioi* addressed in 2 Maccabees conceive of their Judaism differently from the Palestinian *Ioudaioi* from which the work arises. Cf. Jonathan A. Goldstein, “Biblical Promises and 1 and 2 Maccabees,” in *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, ed. Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, and Ernest S. Frerichs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 70; for an account of such disagreements that considers the broader period, see Timothy Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity*, WUNT 2/291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

⁶⁵ Second Temple writers envisioned Israel in a striking variety of ways. The variety is important, but the consistent place “Israel” holds as the entity of the biblical past that provides the substance for the eschatological vision is what is central to my argument. See Michael E. Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel: Israel’s Re-gathering and the Fate of the Nations in Early Jewish Literature and Luke-Acts* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 13–101.

existed in the past and will exist again when God acts to restore the fortunes of the twelve tribes of Israel.⁶⁶ Space does not permit an exhaustive survey of the evidence, but it will be helpful to observe the linguistic differences that mark the usages of “*Ioudaios*” and “Israel” in some of the literature of the Second Temple period and thus to appreciate the kind of gap that existed between the terms. We will do this by considering briefly the distinctions between “*Ioudaios*” and “Israel” in three bodies of literature: 1 and 2 Maccabees, the Qumran scrolls, and Josephus’s *Antiquities*.⁶⁷

1 Maccabees demonstrates the success of the argument first made by Ezra and Nehemiah.⁶⁸ The history records a grave threat to the identity of Israel. Renegades from Israel make a covenant with the Gentiles, set up a citadel in Jerusalem, and Israelites are subjected to violent persecution (1 Macc 1:11, 34–36, 58). The nadir of this situation occurs when a *Ioudaios* from Modein steps forward to apostatize (2:23). In this situation, Mattathias and his sons become leaders in the leaderless Israel. The subsequent battles under Judas, Simon, and Jonathan are all narrated in terms of their significance for “Israel” (e.g., 3:2, 8, 10, 43 et passim). Close attention to the use of the terms “*Ioudaios*” and “Israel” in 1 Maccabees demonstrates that beginning in 4:1, and thereafter (e.g., 10:23, 25–45; 11:30–37, 45–51; 13:41–42; 14:47, etc.) the narrative of 1 Maccabees presents the community of warriors fighting on behalf of the whole people

⁶⁶ The significance of “Israel” as an eschatological entity is treated by Brant Pitre in *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile: Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement*, WUNT 2/204 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 31–40. See also Jason Staples, “Reconstructing Israel: Restoration Eschatology in Early Judaism and Paul’s Gentile Mission,” PhD Diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016, 64–461; Joel Marcus, “‘Twelve Tribes in the Diaspora’ (James 1.1),” *NTS* 60 (2014): 433–447.

⁶⁷ A stream of NT scholarship would emphasize the strained *social* relations between Judea and the *Ioudaioi* on the one hand and Galilee and Samaria on the other. For these writers, the regions were divided by economic, cultural, and religious distinctions that by the first century hardened into a situation in which Jews/*Ioudaioi*/Judeans were the bourgeoisie whose culture ran up hard against that of the Galilean/Samaritan proletariat. The regional differences between these groups are important, but I would argue for the need to find a way to view theological and social differences together, rather than attempting to explain one by the other. For a study of John that errs too much to one side, see Tom Thatcher and Richard Horsley, *John, Jesus & the Renewal of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).

⁶⁸ For introductory and critical issues relating to 1 and 2 Maccabees, see Jonathan A. Goldstein, *1 Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 41 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974), 3–36, 62–89.

of Israel as the *Ioudaioi*.⁶⁹ The text thus makes an important connection between Israel as a theological entity and the *Ioudaioi*, under Hasmonaean leadership, as the historical (and of course also theological) entity that protects and establishes Israel against threats inside and out. The two terms are not simply identical, but all the *Ioudaioi* in the narrative are vigorously engaged in the task of restoring the integrity of Israel's life among the nations.

In 1 Maccabees, readers encounter a text that identifies its actors with the historic and future people of "Israel." In stark contrast to 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees narrates the events of Judas Maccabeus and his campaigns with an overwhelming preference for describing the people as "*Ioudaioi*" and the way of life they are fighting for as "Jewish" (Ἰουδαϊσμός, 2 Macc 2:21; 8:1).⁷⁰ In 1 Maccabees, "Israel" and its cognates occur sixty-three times; in 2 Maccabees the term occurs six times, and each of these six occurrences come in instances of prayer or recollection of God's commitment to Israel in the past.⁷¹ By contrast, the term "*Ioudaios*" (Ἰουδαῖος) and cognates appear fifty-nine times in 2 Maccabees – nearly twice the rate "*Ioudaios*" is used in 1 Maccabees.⁷²

Why does the writer of 2 Maccabees not narrate the campaigns of Judas in terms of their significance for Israel as the author of 1 Maccabees does? An answer lies at hand if we follow Jonathan Goldstein's argument about the writer's theological assessment of his historical situation: The author of 1 Maccabees believed that the worst part of the "Age of Wrath" was past, and that "God had chosen the Hasmonaean dynasty to bring permanent victory to Israel."⁷³ But the writer of 2 Maccabees was ambivalent about the achievements of the Hasmonaeans in terms of ushering in a new age. Thus, even as he celebrates Judas, the narrator "discredits all other

⁶⁹ In strictly narrative terms, it is possible to consider that the low point of *Jewish* apostasy in 2:23 (i.e., apostasy in the "inner group") catalyzed the zeal of Mattathias.

⁷⁰ N.B. An ancient reader would not turn the page on 1 Maccabees and immediately begin 2 Maccabees. The books were composed with differing commitments and aims. See the work of Goldstein (n. 68) for further discussion. The significance of this point is that the differences we observe in this discussion likely reflect broader commitments.

⁷¹ See 2 Macc 1:25, 26; 9:5; 10:38; 11:6; 15:14.

⁷² On these statistics, and for an argument similar to this one, see Staples, 229–236.

⁷³ See Goldstein, "Biblical Promises," 81. Cf. also Staples, 219–236. See further Jonathan A. Goldstein, *2 Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 41A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 3–27.

Hasmonaeans.”⁷⁴ Instead of following 1 Maccabees and presenting Mattathias and his sons as the actors through whom God began the restoration of Israel, the writer of 2 Maccabees prefaces his work with an appeal for the Egyptian *Ioudaioi* to join him in a prayer that acknowledges Israel’s restoration as unfulfilled and awaiting God’s action (2 Macc 1:24–29). The lack of “Israel” terminology in 2 Maccabees thus corresponds to the book’s overarching theological *Tendenz*, which resists attributing eschatological significance to the Hasmonaeen dynasty and looks to divine intervention for the future reconstitution of Israel.⁷⁵ 2 Maccabees refers to “Israel” when it describes the Lord’s commitment to his people and how that commitment in the present stands in continuity with his commitment in the past, but the book does not characterize the success of Judas and the *Ioudaioi* who fight with him as the restoration of Israel through these particular *Ioudaioi*. In this way, the persistent use of the term “*Ioudaios*” reinforces the modest position of the book’s eschatology vis-à-vis other possible presentations of the history: in 2 Maccabees, God actively preserves the *Ioudaioi* through Judas and the Jewish way of life for which he fought, but the restoration of Israel has not yet begun. This reading makes sense of the call for the reader of 2 Maccabees to join with other *Ioudaioi* in continuing to pray for the restoration of Israel (1:24–29).⁷⁶ For our purposes, the critical point is the distinction between “Israel” and “*Ioudaios*.” The terms are loaded with historical and theological significance. They are not inherently coextensive, but the extent to which they overlap (or do not) corresponds to a broader assessment of the relationship between a particular historical and theological community and an idealized theological and historical people, Israel.

Josephus’s *Antiquities* offers another body of literature in which to recognize the distinction between the terms “*Ioudaios*” and “Israel.” In a way similar to the use of these terms in 2 Maccabees, Josephus shows an awareness of the gap between the people of the present moment and the biblical ideal of Israel that encompasses them. In a survey of Josephus’s use of these terms, Jason Staples notes that Josephus shifts from using “Israel/Israelites” in the first 11 books of

⁷⁴ Goldstein, “Biblical Promises,” 87; Goldstein, *2 Maccabees*, 17–19.

⁷⁵ See Goldstein, “Biblical Promises,” 87, 96nn89–90.

⁷⁶ Robert Doran in *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*, Hermenia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 13–14 lists “fidelity to ancestral laws” (e.g., 2 Macc 6:1, 6) as an aim of the narrative. This comports with the broader sketch offered here.

his *Antiquities* to a preference for the term Ἰουδαῖος at precisely the point in the narrative that he begins to speak of the return of the Babylonian exiles. According to Staples, there are 188 uses of “Israel” and cognates before *Antiquities* book 11, and none after it. Of just over 1,200 uses of Ἰουδαῖος and cognates in *Antiquities*, 1,190 occur *after* book 10.⁷⁷ Importantly, Josephus is self-aware in how he employs these terms, as he explains:

This name [i.e., Ἰουδαῖοι] by which they have been called from the time when they went up from Babylon, is derived from the tribe of Judah; as this tribe was the first to come to those parts, both the people themselves and the country have take their name from it. (*Ant.* 11.173, LCL trans. Marcus)

Then he [Ezra], read the letter in Babylon to the Jews [τοῖς... Ἰουδαίοις] who were there ... But all the Israelite people remained in the country. In this way it has come about that there are two tribes in Asia ... while until now there have been ten tribes beyond the Euphrates – countless myriads whose number cannot be ascertained. (*Ant.* 11:132–133)

Josephus’s use of terminology stems from his understanding that Israel encompasses the biblical past and the future expectation of the people of God.⁷⁸ In his time, however, he uses the term *Ioudaios* to designate an ethnic and religious group whose history is bound up with the exiled-and-returned people of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and he notes how the “Israelite people” are not identical with the returnees.⁷⁹ Josephus is aware of the distinction that first arose in Ezra and Nehemiah, and he preserves it.

When we turn to the Qumran Community, we find a group that refers to itself with the term “Israel” as well as designations such as “the community,” “the remnant” (often with “of your people” or “of

⁷⁷ See Staples, “Reconstructing Israel,” 82–84.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 300–303 (= “Israel’s Restoration in Josephus”), and note Staples’s comment on early post-exilic literature: “[A]t the root of exilic and postexilic Judaism we find not a *redefinition of Israel limited to Jews/Judahites* but *restoration eschatology* – a theology looking backwards to biblical Israel and forward to a divinely orchestrated future restoration of Israel far exceeding the small return of Ἰουδαῖοι/יהודים in the Persian period” (p. 127).

⁷⁹ Staples, “Reconstructing Israel,” 84–85.

your inheritance”), and “sons of light” (or “truth”).⁸⁰ But even as the Qumran community uses these terms, it also retains an understanding of “Israel” that is bigger than the community itself. The Community Rule presents the group as the harbinger of the fully restored people of Israel. The community lays “a foundation of truth for Israel” and acts on behalf of “the house of truth in Israel” (1QS 5.5–6). In its faithfulness to the covenant, the community “is the tested rampart, the precious cornerstone that does not shake . . . it will be a house of perfection in Israel” (1QS 8.7–9), the place in the desert to which God’s people may go to prepare the way of Lord (8.12–14; cf. 4Q398 Frag 14–21.7). To this new cornerstone of Israel the community calls out those people of the House of Judah who resist the illegitimate leadership of Judah’s “Wicked Priest” (1QpHab 8.1–3; 11.10–12.10). The striking reticence to use terms like “*Ioudaios*” as well as the scrolls’ ambivalence toward “the house of Judah” reflect the history of the group, which (likely) retreated into exile (perhaps to join in symbolic exile with the other tribes) after losing influence in Jerusalem.⁸¹ Perhaps no other body of literature reveals in such a sustained way how the alignment of the terms “*Ioudaios*” and “Israel” (or the refusal to do so) constitutes a theological and historical claim about the authentic makeup of the people of God. The Qumran community struggled against (what it understood to be) a “Judean” inner-group and attempted to place itself as the inner-group of the people of Israel. Talmon’s model of the inner-group, in-group, and outer-group can help us recognize how each of these texts considers “Israel” as the entity that did, and some day will again, comprehend all the people of God. Until that day, however, various groups posture to become the “inner-group” that might help the nation draw close to its true identity.

The conclusion of this survey can now be drawn: The terms “*Ioudaios*” and “Israel” were not inherently coextensive in the Second Temple period. Rather, the relationship between these terms hinges on theological convictions about the relationship of a particular historical and theological entity (a Judaism) to a broader, idealized historical and theological entity (Israel). The identification of

⁸⁰ These terms are ubiquitous across Qumran literature. On “the community” and “Israel,” see, e.g., 1QS et passim; on “the remnant,” see e.g., 1QM 14.8–9 et passim; on “sons of . . .,” see 1QS 3.13–25, 1QH^a 3.11.

⁸¹ See 1QpHab 7–13, and the well-documented discussion in Staples, “Reconstructing Israel,” 403–410.

these terms as coextensive begins in the Bible itself (Ezra, Nehemiah), and in the Second Temple period that identification was at turns reasserted (1 Maccabees), challenged (Qumran), or modestly put to one side in anticipation of God's action to vindicate and restore his people through whatever means he would choose (Josephus, 2 Maccabees; cf. Zech 9–14). Admittedly, many who belonged to the “common Judaism” of these periods likely took for granted the continuity between their way of life and the “Israel” from which and toward which it grew. At no point in any of this literature, however, does opposition to or ambivalence about a particular form of Judaism necessarily signify a broader rejection of the people of Israel as a historical and theological entity. In fact, the opposite is the case: a commitment to Israel can motivate resistance by a Jewish group to an alternative, competing, and still Jewish vision of Israel.⁸²

Judaism as a Tradition in Transformation and Crisis

Before we move to the Gospel of John, it will be helpful to offer a conceptual clarification of the dynamics observed above. How do we understand the relationships of various Jewish groups? How might a reader account for the variety of ways in which Jewish groups presented the continuity between particular historical communities and the people of the biblical past and prophesied future to which they laid claim? The returnees from Babylon, the Samaritans, the “people of the land” in Ezra, the Hasmonaeen dynasty, the *Ioudaioi* who worshipped at Leontopolis, the Teacher of Righteousness – how do we conceptualize their agreements and disagreements?

Following Alasdair MacIntyre, we should see them as related to one another within a broader tradition, a narratively dependent way

⁸² Helpfully, cf. Jacob Neusner: “A Judaism is a religious system comprising a theory of the social entity, the ‘Israel,’ constituted by the group of Jews who sustain that Judaism; a way of life characteristic of, perhaps distinctive of, that group of Jews; and a world-view that accounts for the group’s forming a distinctive social entity and explains those indicative traits that define the entity.” Neusner, “What Is ‘a Judaism?’” in *Judaism in Late Antiquity: Part 5: The Judaism of Qumran: A Systematic Reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Volume 1: *Theory of Israel*, ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck, Jacob Neusner, and Bruce D. Chilton (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 3–21 (here 9–10, my emphasis). My only criticism of this definition as a description of ancient Judaism would be that it is drained of the eschatology that animates the meaning of “Israel” in literature from the period.

of thinking and living that extends through time.⁸³ Traditions possess their own rationalities, their own internal logic, their own standards of excellence. Participants in traditions are tutored in how to think and live in ways appropriate to their tradition. All traditions transform over time as participants live out the logic of the story they find themselves in. Traditions undergo changes when a conflict or argument creates a rupture in the conceptual world of the tradition and thereby uncovers various inadequacies. As they transform, and propose and work out new solutions, traditions “embody continuities of conflict.”⁸⁴

According to MacIntyre, we can recognize three stages within the enquiry of a tradition: the first stage is marked by a moment in which beliefs, texts, and authorities are recognized but not yet questioned; the second stage reveals inadequacies in the tradition that have not yet been resolved; and the third stage records the response to those inadequacies by means of reformulating, reevaluating, or reinterpreting the relationship of the tradition to its basic commitments.⁸⁵ If anyone can look back at her tradition and contrast her “new beliefs” with her “old beliefs,” then she is able to recognize an inadequacy in her tradition and an attempt to resolve it.⁸⁶ To occupy a position whereby a new belief is (purportedly) true in contrast to an old belief is to take up and embody an argument: I claim that my new way of understanding our tradition and living it out overcomes the challenges of the past in a way that maintains continuity with our basic convictions.⁸⁷ Recognizing these inadequacies and the arguments they extend from, and then proposing resolutions to these inadequacies, results in a process that MacIntyre calls “transformation.”⁸⁸

⁸³ “A living tradition then is an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition. With a tradition the pursuit of good extends through generations, sometimes through many generations.” Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 2007), 222.

⁸⁴ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 222.

⁸⁵ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 1989), 355.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 356.

⁸⁷ Cf. MacIntyre: “The test for truth in the present, therefore, is always to summon up as many questions and as many objections of the greatest strength possible; what can be justifiably claimed as true is what has sufficiently withstood such dialectical questioning and framing of objections” (*ibid.*, 358).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 355–356.

But there is another phenomenon, which MacIntyre names an “epistemological crisis.” An epistemological crisis occurs when a tradition stalls in terms of its ability to resolve the problems and issues that it faces. The resources of transformation are inadequate to the new challenge. “Its [i.e., the tradition’s] trusted methods of inquiry have become sterile. Conflicts over rival answers to key questions can no longer be settled rationally.”⁸⁹ In such crises, the presenting issue may uncover a range of problems in the modes of reasoning that led to that point. Thus, the “dissolution of historically-founded certitudes is the mark of an epistemological crisis.”⁹⁰

The path through such a crisis is the path of conceptual innovation. This innovation must have a particular character. First, an innovation must “furnish a solution to the problems which had previously proved intractable in a systematic and coherent way.”⁹¹ Second, the conceptual innovation must explain “just what it was which rendered the tradition . . . sterile or incoherent or both.”⁹² Third, the innovation must be able to exhibit fundamental conceptual and theoretical continuity with the beliefs that had defined the tradition before the crisis.⁹³ A solution need not emerge linearly. In fact, a crisis and its resolution might be grasped only in retrospect.⁹⁴ But looking back the tradition will be able “to rewrite its history in a more insightful way” – a way that traces previously unrecognized threads through the long fabric of its story.⁹⁵

What if a tradition lacks the resources within itself to innovate? What if its way of reasoning is exposed as so deeply flawed that it cannot adapt? In such a state of epistemological crisis, adherents face two options. First they can live in the crisis and wait for a solution to emerge. The risk here is atrophy. Second, a tradition that cannot innovate may continue by recognizing the cogency of an alternative tradition. This new tradition would be cogent insofar as it could offer an account of the failure of the first tradition and a demonstration of how it, the new tradition, was capable of overcoming the conceptual challenges that overcame the first tradition. But embracing a new

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 361–362.

⁹⁰ MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?* 362.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 362.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 362–363. The new conceptual structure will often have required “imaginative innovation” and will be “in no way derivable from those earlier positions [i.e., the theses that were central to the tradition before the crisis].” *Ibid.*, 362. Continuous – yes. Derivable – no.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 363.

tradition would require something like conversion, the dramatic reorganization of a person's whole life around a new conceptual world, the language of that world, its beliefs and authority structures, and the practical ways of life that correspond to the new tradition. A new tradition would place a person in a new existential location.⁹⁶ The difference between a tradition overcoming a crisis by innovation and by conversion to a new tradition is this: conversion to a new tradition admits the failure of the old tradition; innovation within a tradition admits deeply rooted problems but overcomes them while maintaining basic continuity.

We have stepped off the path of Second Temple Judaism, but we have done so only to frame the issues considered above. Second Temple Judaism is our modern term for the tradition as a whole during one long historical period. It is the tradition that exists in historical continuity with the patriarchs of Israel, the monarchies of David, Solomon, the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, the cultic leadership of priests, and the heritage of Torah, prophets, and writings that underwrite all of this. Its various streams of sects, schools, schisms, and its large center in a "common Judaism" embody various efforts to live out the logic of the tradition, and each of these efforts offers its own account of the adequacy of the tradition and the various problems that await resolution. As we have seen, one important way of relating the present life of the tradition to its past and its future – that is, one way of assessing the presence and urgency of inadequacies – was by the coordination of one's present group in the tradition with the idealized entity that names the overall tradition's origin and goal – that is, Israel. Does the Hasmonaean dynasty close the gap between the *Ioudaioi* and Israel, or does the gap remain? Does the current organization of national leadership – especially temple leadership, priesthood, and calendar – lead the people into a way of life that is congruent with its storied past and promised future? In short, where do we stand in relation to Israel?

John's vision for the future of Israel stands within this tradition. The Gospel is at pains to demonstrate continuity between Jesus and

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 364–367. See also C. Kavin Rowe, *One True Life: The Argument of Rival Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016): "Short of conversion, we are literally shut out of one [tradition] by the life we live in another" (p. 204); "Each tradition argues both that the truth of all things is that which it teaches and that one has to live the tradition to know this truth. They are existentially exclusive claims of the same, universalizing sort" (p. 235).

the traditions of Scripture and Second Temple Judaism. But its continuity is, as Dahl observed, “peculiar.” How then do we account for John’s distance from Judaism – the fact that “the Fourth Gospel is most anti-Jewish just at the points it is most Jewish”?⁹⁷

Many studies of John answer this question by way of history and sociology, citing the traumatic expulsion of the Johannine community from the synagogue and the resulting development of a sectarian consciousness within the community.⁹⁸ Without negating these approaches, I would like to frame John’s relationship to Judaism in a way that will draw out the logic that is at work in the Gospel’s approach to Israel and “the *Ioudaioi*”: From the perspective of the Gospel of John, Judaism is in an epistemological crisis. For John, the true sign of crisis is Christological – the failure of the *Ioudaioi* to recognize their messiah.⁹⁹ The logic of the tradition as it stands holds no promise for the future. The tradition must innovate or face failure. John’s solution – its “innovation” – is Christological. As we will see, this is why John takes up Torah, Wisdom, Moses, temple, Passover, Booths, and Hanukkah, and uses the terms “Israel” and “the *Ioudaioi*” as it does. In taking up these basic ways of configuring Jewish life and identity, John presents Jesus as the fulfillment of (and at times, the alternative to competing ways of configuring) Jewish life. In each of these moves John is casting a vision for the future of Israel, a way of closing the gap between the people’s present life and the eschatological identity of God’s people. John is arguing that the gap between Judaism and Israel is bridged Christologically.

⁹⁷ Meeks, “Am I a Jew? – Johannine Christianity and Judaism,” 172.

⁹⁸ This is an important aspect of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the works of, among others, Martyn (*History and Theology*) and Meeks (“The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism”). For more in this vein, see Kåre Sigvald Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism in Perspective: A Sociological, Historical, and Comparative Analysis of Temple and Social Relationships in the Gospel of John, Philo and Qumran*, NovTSup 119 (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Raimo Hakola, *Identity Matters: John, the Jews and Jewishness*, NovTSup 118 (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Jaime Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken: The Social Function of the Use of Scripture in the Fourth Gospel* (Boston: Brill, 2003).

⁹⁹ This is widely noted but helpfully summed up in Leander Keck’s “Jesus and Judaism in the New Testament,” in *Why Christ Matters: Towards a New Testament Christology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2015), 57–72: “So in John the issue between Jesus and Judaism is not the right way to obey Moses and achieve righteousness, as in Matthew. . . . The issue between them is Jesus himself” (p. 66). Of course, the ruins of the temple were likely an important – though in John suppressed – confirmation of this crisis.

But three qualifications are necessary. First, as an account of the crisis within Judaism and its solution in Jesus, the Gospel of John is a historically situated argument. Presupposed by the argument is the perception that there is a crisis at all – that the structures of contemporary Jewish life are fundamentally inadequate to the task of faithfully embodying a witness to the God of Israel. John recognizes that these inadequacies have not always been present. Salvation is “from the *Ioudaioi*” (John 4:22). But it resides there no longer.¹⁰⁰ The Gospel of John is a *late first-century argument* about how Israel might embrace its future.

Second, what John presents as fulfillment will look like supersessionism, displacement, and/or apostasy to those members of the tradition who do not accept the Gospel’s account of the crisis and its innovative solution. John tells us as much (see 7:20; 8:48; 9:22; 12:42; 16:2; 19:21). Related here is the historical observation that John’s account of contemporary Judaism, its problems and solutions, occurred alongside of the early development of rabbinic Judaism, which did not frame the problems facing Judaism or their solutions in terms as innovative as John.¹⁰¹ It does not seem to be the case that the rabbis saw the epistemological crisis that John did.¹⁰² Where

¹⁰⁰ See John 8:24. Consider also the words of C. K. Barrett: “The eschatological fulfillment of the biblical tradition is now at hand (ἐρχεται ὥρα, verse 21), and the disputes and privileges of Judaism are alike left behind in realization. The privileges had been real . . . We worship what we know . . . Hence it is salvation that proceeds from the Jews to the world at large.” Barrett, “Christocentric or Theocentric? Observations on the Theological Method of the Fourth Gospel” in C. K. Barrett, *Essays on John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 14–15.

¹⁰¹ The many studies that trace continuity, even if it is a complex continuity, from the Pharisees to the rabbis are evidence of this. See here Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006); Shaye J. D. Cohen, “The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis, and the End of Jewish Sectarianism,” *HUCA* 55 (1984): 27–53. See also Philip S. Alexander, “What Happened to the Priesthood after 70,” in *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honor of Seán Freyne*, ed. Zuleika Rodgers et al., *JSJSup* 132 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 5–33; and Philip S. Alexander, “‘The Parting of the Ways’ from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism,” in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 1–26.

¹⁰² It would be interesting, but it would not change this argument, if nascent rabbinic Judaism did conceive of such an epistemological crisis (even as early as John did) and propose its own innovation. For arguments that this could be inferred from, see Jacob Neusner, “Emergent Rabbinic Judaism in a Time of Crisis: Four Responses to the Destruction of the Second Temple” (in Jacob Neusner, *Early Rabbinic Judaism: Historical Studies in Religion, Literature, and Art* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 34–49; Jacob Neusner, *First Century Judaism in Crisis* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 48–53, 160–175; Daniel Boyarin, “Masada or Yavneh? Gender and the Arts of Jewish Resistance,” in *Jews and Other Differences*, ed. Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin

John saw the fundamental incoherence of Judaism outside of its Christological reorientation, the rabbis saw a rupture, an inadequacy, and the need to transform Jewish life based on the resources that were available to them from within their tradition.¹⁰³ The judgment of apostasy or fidelity is a theological judgment that requires an assessment of the crisis facing Judaism.

Third, we should allow this model to render the complex relationship between John and the *Ioudaioi* in the text of the Gospel. We have already observed that the terms “*Ioudaioi*” and “Israel” are not coextensive. And we have seen how one Jewish community could distance itself from another, as for example the Qumran Community embraced its identity as the center of Israel while marking itself off from the House of Judah, or in the way that the *Ioudaioi* of Jerusalem argued for the legitimacy of their temple to the *Ioudaioi* of Egypt (2 Macc). The Gospel of John belongs in this milieu. It is a Jewish text – a document that simultaneously presupposes and attempts to resolve a fundamental problem in its tradition. When Raimo Hakola argues that the Gospel of John emerges from a *Sitz im Leben* that has “passed over the boundary between being Jewish and Christian” because of the Gospel’s ambivalence to various institutions of Jewish life, he has rightly noted John’s ambivalence toward a particular way of organizing Jewish life, but he has missed the conceptual, theological, and sociological situation by a wide margin.¹⁰⁴ In its specific references to “Israel” and in its many engagements with the writings and traditions of Judaism, the Gospel of John exploits the gaps between the *Ioudaioi* and Israel because it (1) belongs to the broad

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 306–329; Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

¹⁰³ Members of the Jewish tradition (including “the *Ioudaioi*”) had precedent for this: the Babylonian exile had given them a clear paradigm for navigating a crisis like the destruction of the temple in 70.

At this point, we are facing the difference between referring to John’s community as a “sect” (a group that is essentially an introversionist recovery movement) and a “cult” (a group that is innovating in the direction of becoming a new religion). I find these categories imprecise for studying the text of John. Insofar as John makes an argument, it makes efforts at both recovery *and* innovation, but the nature of its innovations (e.g., its re-understanding of important symbols) must be understood in the context of its placement within the broader tradition of Judaism. For nuanced reflections on these terms in Johannine scholarship, see Fuglseth, *Johannine Sectarianism in Perspective*, 45–65, and esp. 353–374.

¹⁰⁴ Hakola, *Identity Matters*, 228 (here quoting Alan Segal, *The Other Judaisms of Late Antiquity* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987], 31).

tradition of Judaism and its vision for Israel and (2) it is seeking an innovative solution to a perceived crisis. John reads like a text that is “beyond the boundaries of Judaism” because it is innovating, but it is doing so within the tradition of Judaism. The Fourth Gospel thus vigorously opposes the *Ioudaioi* and their particular vision for the future of Israel while simultaneously casting its own vision from within the broader tradition.¹⁰⁵ This is the way in which, as Daniel Boyarin has written, the Gospel of John is “a non-canonical Jewish text.”¹⁰⁶ To place John “beyond” Judaism would represent a failure to read the text historically – that is, to place John “beyond” Judaism would be to fail to read it as an argument that is set within the particular historical, social, and epistemological conditions of late first-century Judaism.

Several conclusions follow after recognizing John’s relationship to Judaism as one of engagement on the basis of an epistemological crisis. Importantly, the “trauma” of an expulsion from the synagogue, whether real or merely perceived/feared, is a necessary but not sufficient explanation for why John engages the *Ioudaioi* as it does.¹⁰⁷ The trauma explanation can be sketched as follows: The Johannine community felt alienated because they had been rejected by their parent-community. Therefore, the Fourth Gospel narrates the story of Jesus in order to reclaim key aspects of Jewish identity for the socially-beleaguered and psychologically-wounded community. In this vein, and in an uncharacteristic moment of

¹⁰⁵ Although originally developed to characterize Justin Martyr’s relationship with Trypho, Kevin Rowe’s term “dis-agreement” agreement captures well John’s relationship to the *Ioudaioi*. The orthographic awkwardness reinforces the simultaneity of both agreement (same God and Scripture) and disagreement (Jesus Christ offering an ἐξήγησις of God, 1:18; Jesus as the one to whom the γράφη bear witness, 5:39). See Rowe, *One True Life*, 166–170.

¹⁰⁶ Boyarin, “What Kind of Jew Is an Evangelist?” 131.

¹⁰⁷ The main proponent of the expulsion as real is, of course, Martyn (*History and Theology*). An effort to relegate that expulsion to the symbolic world of the Johannine community is in Hakola, *Identity Matters*, 41–86. The argument of Hakola (and to an extent Reinhartz) that the Gospel manufactures fear of persecution seems strained to me. On the historical situation, see Joel Marcus, “*Birkat Ha-Minim* Revisited” *NTS* 55 (2009): 523–551.

It must also be noted that the expression “the synagogue” can be very misleading: it can mean a local place of assembly, or it can mean an emerging institution. The present study tends to avoid this term in order to prevent the inference that John means anything more than the locally organized religious community known to its readers. “The synagogue” is not shorthand for Judaism as an organized religious institution.

psychologization, Margeret Daly-Denton suggests that the Christological fulfillment of the Psalms works to “console” the Johannine community.¹⁰⁸ Mary Coloe leads off her study of the temple theme in John suggesting that the presence of temple imagery would “soothe” the painful break between the Johannine community and the *Ioudaioi*.¹⁰⁹ Gale Yee’s classic study *Jewish Feasts and the Gospel of John* argues that John’s nullification and replacement of Jewish liturgical practice extends from “much hurt and bitterness” over the loss of those institutions “in its divorce from the synagogue.”¹¹⁰

The imagery of “trauma” and even “divorce” can helpfully characterize an intense historical moment; however, such language cannot sufficiently account for Johannine theology or even the deployment of all of the images or themes taken up in the narrative.¹¹¹ The Gospel of John presents belief in Jesus as the innovation that will save Judaism from its current situation of blindness (9:39–41; 12:40), deafness (12:28–30), and being scattered among the nations (11:52–53). Jesus is the one who can rightly orient God’s people around their Scripture (5:39–47) and give them life (20:31; 3:16–17). The Psalms, temple, and festivals all point to Jesus not simply because of the wounds of the community but because according to John, Jesus literarily embodies the deepest logic of these aspects of Israel’s life. We will see this in much detail in the chapters that follow. For the moment it is enough to recognize that reading

¹⁰⁸ Margaret Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel: The Johannine Reception of the Psalms*, AGJU 47 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 120.

¹⁰⁹ Mary Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 7.

¹¹⁰ Gale Yee, *Jewish Feasts and the Gospel of John* (Wilmington: M. Glazier, 1989), 25–26.

¹¹¹ Note, for instance, that nearly all of these works follow the historical reconstruction of Raymond Brown (*The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, 36–47), who located key Christological developments *before* expulsion from the synagogue (and thus theological developments precede psychological developments as explanations of social and historical conditions). For an example of the alternative from which I dissent, see Robert Kysar, “Anti-Semitism and the Gospel of John,” in Robert Kysar, *Voyages with John: Charting the Fourth Gospel* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005), 147–159. “[T]he posture of the church was that of defensiveness amid the self-doubt of uncertain identity . . . The vitriolic attack on Judaism is nothing more or less than the desperate attempt of the Johannine Christians to find a rationale for their existence in isolation from Judaism” (154–155).

For recent bibliography and helpful reappraisal of this approach (one that views the trauma *not* as expulsion but as incarnation), see Adele Reinhartz, “Incarnation and Covenant: The Fourth Gospel through the Lens of Trauma Theory,” *Int* 69.1 (2015): 35–48.

John as a “non-canonical Jewish text,” and one that seeks to overcome an epistemological crisis, will lead us to prioritize the Christological claims of the Gospel as the basis for the Gospel’s stance toward the *Ioudaioi*. The Gospel of John does not make strong claims against the *Ioudaioi* due primarily to a sense of alienation. It does so because a theological commitment to the future of Israel underlines what is at stake.¹¹²

Additionally, John’s engagement with the *Ioudaioi* on the basis of an epistemological crisis renders the question of John’s anti-Judaism more complex, as we have seen, and also more serious. More complex because it occurs within the banks of the tradition. More serious because it cannot be accounted for without recognizing that John’s vision for the future of Israel presents Jesus as the way in which to bring the people of God into their identity as Israel while simultaneously presenting Jesus in a way that will counter an alternative vision for the future of Israel – the vision of formative Judaism. John’s argument that Jesus brings near the future of Israel puts a question mark (if not an *X*) over rival visions for the future of Israel, and particularly the one represented by the *Ioudaioi*.¹¹³ The Fourth Gospel narrates this basic theological difference between (what we call) emergent Christianity and the forms of late first-century Judaism that were coalescing into the rabbinic movement – that is, between those who seek the future of Israel in Jesus and those who seek it in a different construct.¹¹⁴ The final section of this

¹¹² I hasten to add that the programmatic comments of this paragraph are intentionally framed in terms of the Gospel in its final form. I have no intention to sweep aside the insights of form- or redaction-criticism related to the Johannine community and the way in which particular aspects of the Gospel reflect back particular experiences. I do believe, however, that identifying formative contexts for individual parts is not the same thing as accounting for the narrative whole.

¹¹³ Though writing about a different text (Galatians), Joel Kaminsky rightly notes that the establishment of an intra-Jewish context for NT polemic does not remove the challenges of these claims: “Once one recognizes that Galatians contains part of Paul’s critique of Judaism, it becomes quite clear why later Christian writers felt compelled to expel the Jews. It seems that christological exclusivism creates only enough dialogue space to accommodate those Jews who abandon their religion.” (Citation from Joel S. Kaminsky, review of Jeffrey S. Siker, *Disinheriting The Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy*, CH 63 [1994]: 82–83.)

¹¹⁴ I see this late first-century context as one marked by competing authorities. This context is also one in which the nascent rabbinic movement was probably the best-organized alternative for the challenges facing the Jewish community in Palestine. This claim draws together the works of several historians and theorists of this historical moment: Philip Alexander, “What Happened to the Priesthood after 70”; idem, “‘The Parting of the Ways’ from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism”; Daniel Boyarin,

introduction will demonstrate how John narrates this basic theological difference. We will consider John's characterization of the *Ioudaioi* in order to bring into focus how the Gospel casts a vision for the future of Israel while also implying that believers in Jesus must resign alternative visions for Israel, specifically the vision of the *Ioudaioi*.

John, the *Ioudaioi*, and the Narration of an Epistemological Crisis

The opening scenes of the Fourth Gospel (1:19–4:54) present readers with *Ioudaioi* who are inquisitive, perplexed, and at times uncomprehending about Jesus. At first, the *Ioudaioi* send priests and Levites to John the Baptist to inquire about his identity. “Who are you?” they ask (1:19). The Baptist's witness to Jesus is unrestrained, but the initial curiosity and lack of understanding among the *Ioudaioi* persists – “Who are you?” “Why, then, are you baptizing?” (1:19, 25). When Jesus begins to interact with the *Ioudaioi* directly in the temple court, they do not dispute his actions, but they question his legitimacy (“What sign will you give us?” 2:18). Jesus' death and resurrection are supplied as the sign (2:19), and the *Ioudaioi* are again placed in a position of incomprehension (2:21–22). This continues with Nicodemus. This “ruler of the *Ioudaioi*” addresses Jesus as his first disciples did – “rabbi” (2:2; cf. 1:38) – but Jesus' teaching about how one might see the Kingdom of God outpaces Nicodemus' best attempts at understanding. “How can these things be?” he asks (3:10). For Jesus, the question represents the profound inadequacy of Nicodemus to his role: “You are a teacher of Israel and you do not know these things!?”

Questions continue to mark the interactions as Jesus moves on. “A *Ioudaios*” (sg.) inquires about the growing popularity of Jesus' baptisms instead of John the Baptist's (3:25–26). The Samaritan woman tries to relate Jesus' actions to his Jewishness, but Jesus does not fit her image of a *Ioudaios* (4:9; cf. 4:22). Galilee is then marked out as a place in which Jesus is received (4:44–45, 54), almost to

Border Lines; idem, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*; Jacob Neusner, *First Century Judaism in Crisis: Yohanan ben Zakkai and the Renaissance of Torah* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975); E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*; and Klaus Wengst, *Bedrängte Gemeinde*.

suggest (it will become more explicit later) that a person cannot simultaneously center her worship around Jerusalem and follow Jesus.¹¹⁵ Together, these opening scenes characterize the relationship of Jesus to the *Ioudaioi* with a strong sense of curiosity and perplexity about Jesus, and intimations of the incompatibility of following Jesus and belonging to the *Ioudaioi*. In what follows (John 5:1–10:41), curiosity is replaced by hostility, and intimations of incompatibility become open disagreements.

A Sabbath-day healing catalyzes the antagonistic relationship between Jesus and the *Ioudaioi*, but the disagreement quickly settles on the claims of Jesus' relationship to his Father (5:16–18), the honor due Jesus (5:43–44), and the legitimacy of his work as “the one sent by God” (5:30).¹¹⁶ The failure to recognize Jesus signifies that the *Ioudaioi* have never heard the voice or seen the form of God (5:38), that they do not have the love of God (5:42), that the Scriptures are opaque to them (5:39, 46–47), and that Moses is against them too (5:45). These charges challenge the coherence of the worldview of the *Ioudaioi*. This challenge continues in John 6, where the *Ioudaioi* take offense at Jesus' claim to be “the bread that came down from heaven” (6:41). Jesus quotes Isaiah – “They will all be taught by God” (Isa 54:13; John 6:45) – in order to bind up together belief in Jesus with the will of God to draw people into the truth. The rich imagery of this chapter will come under discussion later in the book, but for understanding John's position vis-à-vis the *Ioudaioi* it is enough to note here that John raises the question, “Who is ‘taught by God’?” John traces the thread that runs from Moses (6:14) to Passover (6:4) to the wilderness generation (6:31) to the eschatological day of divine teaching (6:45; Isa 54:13) and the nourishment that God gives (Isa 55:1–3) – and the thread leads to Jesus. Hearing these claims is difficult (σκληρός ἐστιν ὁ λόγος οὗτος; 6:51). But the stakes at least are clear: Continuity with the Israel of the biblical past and the prophesied future can only be found by belief in Jesus. This view is crystalized in the closing words of John 5: “If you believed in Moses, you would also believe in me – for he wrote about me. But

¹¹⁵ See W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 288–335.

¹¹⁶ The strong overtones to Moses are relevant in Jesus' repeated references to the “Father who sent me” (John 5:23–24, 30 et passim; cf. Ex 3:13–15; 7:16; Num 16:28–29). See also Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 301–303.

if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (vv. 46–47).

John sustains these questions and the conviction that in his own person Jesus provides continuity between the biblical past and the prophesied future of Israel for the Jewish tradition. The *Ioudaioi* seek Jesus at the Festival of Booths (7:11), and they question the source of his learning (7:15). Jesus argues for his own legitimacy even as he lodges a criticism against his opponents: "The one who speaks from himself seeks his own glory, but the one who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is true and there is no unrighteousness in him" (7:18). Having framed his conflict with the *Ioudaioi* on the basis of legitimate motives and authority, Jesus defends his action to heal on the Sabbath (7:19–24). A key turn of events happens next: many people believe in Jesus (7:31; cp. 2:23). Divisions open between the Pharisees and chief priests in leadership (7:32 = "the *Ioudaioi*," 7:35) on the one hand and the crowds and Jerusalemites who are drawn to Jesus on the other. Jesus' appropriation of the imagery of living water deepens the division between those who recognize Jesus as prophet or messiah and those who see him as misleading the people (7:40–49). Here we can see the struggle developing between Jesus and the *Ioudaioi*: Jesus' teaching comes from God; the teaching of the *Ioudaioi* comes from themselves. Jesus is the anticipated prophet and messiah; the *Ioudaioi* see him as misleading the people (7:12; cf. 7:47). Jesus claims that Scripture bears witness to him; "look and see," say the Pharisees, that Scripture marks this out as impossible (7:52).

Chapter 8 develops this further. Jesus again appropriates the imagery of the festival to himself ("I am the light of the world," 8:12). The Pharisees criticize the insufficiency of his testimony, but the exchange that ensues reveals what John understands to be the profound inadequacy of the criticism: The Torah's requirement for two witnesses is fulfilled by the Father and Jesus (8:13, 17–18). What other witnesses could one ask for? As irrational as Jesus' answer might sound, it is in fact the rejection of Jesus and the Father by the *Ioudaioi* that is, in John's view, truly absurd: Jesus' opponents are looking at God's enfleshed word and asking for a human witness. Their inability to be taught by God renders them completely inadequate to their role as leaders of the people or interpreters even of the imagery of the festival they celebrate. Next, for the second time at the festival, many believe in Jesus (8:30). But Jesus does not accept the belief unchecked. He addresses "the *Ioudaioi* who believed in

him” and claims himself as the locus of true freedom. This is too much for them, and the ensuing conversation about paternity (Abraham, God, the devil; 8:33, 41, 44) moves “the *Ioudaioi* who believed in him” back into a state of disbelief.¹¹⁷ The priority of Jesus over Abraham is nonnegotiable (8:56–59). For John, those who would believe in Jesus must do so entirely on his terms.

Jesus’ healing of the man born blind depicts the growing rupture between Jesus and the Pharisees (9:13, 15, 40 = “the *Ioudaioi*,” 9:18, 22). As in the previous scene, a division occurs within the ranks of the *Ioudaioi* (9:16). For the *Ioudaioi*, uncertainty about Jesus’ origins nullifies any claim to legitimacy: “*You* are a disciple of that one, but *we* are disciples of Moses. *We* know that God spoke to Moses, but *this one*, we do not know where he is from” (9:29–30). For John, to pit Moses against Jesus is to create a false alternative. Moses precedes and bears witness to Jesus (cf. 1:17; 5:45–47). But the Pharisees/the *Ioudaioi* cling to this distinction.¹¹⁸ The continuity between Jesus and the heritage of Israel becomes the sticking point. To see it, or not, is a matter of vision or blindness (9:39–40).

The healing of the blind man spills over into chapter 10. Jesus describes his own identity as “the good shepherd” in a way that draws on the rich Scriptural images of God shepherding, or providing a shepherd for, his people, and at the same time he also criticizes those who illegitimately occupy the position of leading God’s people.¹¹⁹ Jesus’ characterization of himself as the shepherd again causes a division among the *Ioudaioi* (10:19–21). As John has shown before, however, Jesus responds to the division among the *Ioudaioi* concerning his identity not by simply embracing those who are open to him but by challenging them further. In 10:22–39, Jesus insists on the connection between his messiahship and sonship (10:25–30). If those who once received the word of God were called gods, is it

¹¹⁷ It is hard to understand John 8 with “the *Ioudaioi* who believed in him” (τοὺς πεπιστευκότας αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίους) being understood in a pluperfect sense (i.e., the *Ioudaioi* who *had* believed but had since fallen away). John 7–10 describes various groups believing and doubting Jesus’ identity, and also being divided over it, and thus it seems most likely that the characters referred to in 8:31 refer to a group of *Ioudaioi* who had begun to believe in Jesus but had done so without adequately orienting their worldview around him. For further discussion, see Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), 338–340; cf. Thompson, *John*, 189–194, esp. 189n178. For a reading similar to my own, see Lincoln, *Truth on Trial*, 82–83.

¹¹⁸ Relatedly, the synagogue becomes the social space that signifies this distinction (9:22; cf. 6:59–60).

¹¹⁹ Cf. esp. Ps 80:1–2; 2 Sam 5:2; Mic 7:14; Jer 3:15; 23:1–8; Ezek 34:1–34.

blasphemy for the one sanctified and sent into the world by God to also claim that status (10:34–36).¹²⁰ As at Booths, so at Hanukkah, Jesus responds to the growing interest of the *Ioudaioi* by pushing their beliefs to the breaking point. In the process, they turn against him (10:39). Jesus' speech in John 10 moves from a proclamation of the inability of the *Ioudaioi* to believe ("You do not believe because you are not of my sheep," 10:26) to an appeal for them to believe ("If I am doing [the works of my Father], then even if you do not believe me, believe in the works, in order that you might know and recognize that the Father is in me and I in him," 10:38). The logic of this movement is the conviction that the only way to recognize Jesus, to come under the good shepherd, is by believing in him on his terms. Specifically, this means believing in Jesus and his relationship to the Father. The *Ioudaioi* cannot reason their way into this. One enters this hermeneutical circle by belief in the words of Jesus. In MacIntyre's terms, we can see here that only if the *Ioudaioi* are willing to accept the innovation of Jesus as the one sent by God – that is, even God's son – will they be able to grasp the coherence of Jesus as the one who will truly shepherd Israel.

The striking development in John 11–12 in terms of the relationship between Jesus and the *Ioudaioi* is that "many of the *Ioudaioi* who had accompanied Mary saw the things he did and believed in him" (11:45). In raising Lazarus, Jesus had, of course, exercised the power over life and death that the Father had given him (5:24–29, 11:21–27). What interpreters often overlook, however, is that the *Ioudaioi* who believed are those who embraced Jesus' appeal of 10:38: they saw the works and believed in Jesus and his relationship to the Father. (See esp. 11:42–43, where Jesus performs the raising of Lazarus *in the context of a prayer to his Father*.) Jesus does not rebuff these new believers. They have come to him on his terms and recognized him correctly as the son of the Father. But the threat that Jesus represents to the Pharisees is clear: If many believe in Jesus, then the Romans will "take away from us, the place [i.e., temple], and the people" (11:48). John thus offers a passing glimpse of *Ioudaioi* coming to belief in Jesus, but as soon as the Gospel presents the possibility, it also shows the Pharisees recognizing the threat that Jesus poses to life as they know it. Chapter 12 carries the narrative forward while also repeating the new elements in

¹²⁰ My reading here follows that of Jerome H. Neyrey, "I Said: 'You Are Gods': Psalm 82:6 and John 10," *JBL* 108 (1989) 647–663.

Jesus's relationship to the *Ioudaioi*. As they witness Jesus and Lazarus together, many are again "leaving the *Ioudaioi* and believing in Jesus" (12:11). The Pharisees look at Jesus, however, and see a man whose popularity has become a risk (12:19; cf. 11:48). As the chapter goes on, John records the inquiries of the crowd, the belief of many "rulers" and also the nature of the Pharisees' coercive power (12:42). Isaiah foresaw it all – both the particular glory of Jesus and obstinacy of the people to whom he came. But John 12 does not end on a note of the permanent rejection of Jesus by his people. Jesus cries out again, appealing for those who have seen and heard him to recognize that they have, in truth, seen and heard the Father (12:44–50).

In John 13–17, the *Ioudaioi* appear in backward glances (13:33) and in predictions that the hostilities of the present will continue in the future (15:18–16:4). They appear indirectly as Jesus' references to "the world" allude to prior interactions with the *Ioudaioi* (14:17; cf. 5:37). Once John's Passion Narrative begins, the characterization of the *Ioudaioi* continues as a major element in the narrative. Officers sent from the chief priests and Pharisees (18:3 = the *Ioudaioi*; cf. 18:12) arrest Jesus and lead him to Pilate. While the chief priests and their officials are at times specified as the actors, John slips easily into describing Jesus' antagonists as the *Ioudaioi*.¹²¹ Yet, even as John's Passion Narrative refers to Jesus' opponents as the *Ioudaioi*, it also raises the question of the distance between Jesus and the *Ioudaioi*. "Are you the King of the *Ioudaioi*?" says Pilate to his prisoner (18:33); "Your nation and chief priests handed you over to me" (10:35); "Hail! King of the *Ioudaioi*!" cry the soldiers (19:3); "Behold, your King!" says Pilate to the *Ioudaioi* (19:14); "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the *Ioudaioi*," writes Pilate (19:19); "Do not write, 'The King of the *Ioudaioi*,' but that *he claimed*, 'I am King of the *Ioudaioi*'" say "the chief priests of the *Ioudaioi*" (19:21). Even as John describes the *Ioudaioi* pledging allegiance to another – "Our only king is Caesar" (19:15) – he also tells the story of the crucifixion in

¹²¹ N.B. John's passion narrative slips from specific descriptions of Jesus' opponents (officers of the chief priests) into labeling them "the *Ioudaioi*." (e.g., 18:35, 36). This happens also in John 9 and 11. The Jewish leaders are the only opponents who could be meant by the term "the *Ioudaioi*" in John's passion narrative. But limiting "the *Ioudaioi*" to "the leaders," while fitting the narrative, reduces the range that is implied in 18:20 ("I always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the *Ioudaioi* gather.") The *Ioudaioi* thus seem to include not just specific leaders but the movement they constitute and, therefore, the adherents to that movement.

such a way that the *Ioudaioi* cannot escape the possibility – or the irony – that Jesus is their would-be king.

Why does John develop the story in this way? Is Jesus “the King of the *Ioudaioi*” or not? And how does the appellation “King of the *Ioudaioi*” square with Jesus’ view of kingship (18:36–37; 6:15)? In a narrative so rife with misunderstanding, it would be a mistake to accept the words of Pilate or the *Ioudaioi* at face value. The narrative of the Gospel consistently measures Jesus’ kingship in terms of Israel (1:49; 12:13) and the way in which Jesus, in his own person, embodies the deep logic and significance of the tradition’s Scripture, belief, expectation, and practice. The *Ioudaioi* deny this, recognizing a different logic and significance in the same tradition’s core commitments. When the *Ioudaioi* witness the crowd’s acclamation that Jesus is “King of Israel” (12:13), they perhaps hear a claim that Jesus is “King of the *Ioudaioi*” *simpliciter* (12:19; 19:21). But in John’s view they would be wrong to do so. Jesus’ kingship can be rightly recognized only by belief in Jesus and his relationship to the Father. In John, the worldview of the *Ioudaioi* precludes this. Thus, insofar as Jesus lays claim as shepherd and teacher to the heritage of Israel and offers in himself the fulfillment of its promises and vision for the future life of God with his people, he is the king over all of those who find themselves in the same tradition and claiming the same heritage. But he is also *not* the King of the *Ioudaioi*. He is incapable of being absorbed into the preexisting worldview of the *Ioudaioi*, incapable of sharing primacy of place with Abraham or Moses. This is why, for John, belief in Jesus coincides with “departing” from the *Ioudaioi* (πολλοὶ δι’ αὐτὸν ὑπέηγον τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ ἐπίστευον εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν; 12:11).

This summary shows that the characterization of the *Ioudaioi* shifts throughout the narrative of John. The *Ioudaioi* begin as inquisitive, transition to hostile, and then the hostility of some is overcome by faith. This is short-lived, however. The Pharisees and chief priests, who speak as leaders of the *Ioudaioi*, perceive in Jesus a threat to the integrity of the tradition and the very concrete forms that it takes – the people, the place, their own leadership (11:48).¹²²

¹²² Although his work has largely been dismissed because of its untenable thesis that John is a “Missionschrift für Israel,” Bornhäuser’s discussion of the identity of the *Ioudaioi* in John and the way that an understanding of that identity situates the conflict of the Gospel is valuable. Admittedly, Bornhäuser’s treatment is at times uncomfortably polemical against those whom he reconstructs as “Thorafanatiker” (Bornhäuser, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 19–23; 139–152).

Taken together, in the account of Jesus' relationship to the *Ioudaioi*, John has narrated the alternatives that compete for the claim of representing the future of Israel. How can the people of God live in accord with Scripture? How can they experience God's presence (an especially poignant question after AD 70)? How can they weigh the insights of those who have purportedly "seen God"? How might God's people experience the realization of all that the festivals signify? What will it look like when the words of the prophets and psalmist are fulfilled? What will it look like when "they will all be taught by God"? John's presentation of Jesus presupposes these questions and places him as their answer. The *Ioudaioi* disagree about the answer, but not the questions.

In all of this, the alternatives that readers of the Fourth Gospel encounter are those that stand within the same tradition of thinking and living – they both stand within the tradition of Second Temple and late first-century Judaism. For both alternatives, the logic of the world and its basic structures are, in this broad sense, Jewish. Though they both belong to the same Jewish tradition, however, the ways in which Jesus and his followers structure their thinking and living stands at a distance from how the *Ioudaioi* and their followers would structure theirs. Thus, for John, a new linguistic and conceptual problem faces the Jewish people after Jesus. John has taken the conceptual gap that could exist between the *Ioudaioi* and "Israel," that is, between a particular historical community within this tradition and the idealized theological and historical people to whom they belong – and John has stretched the gap into a chasm. In philosophical terms, John has taken a distinction and "perfected it" – carried it through to its conceptual limit.¹²³ A possible incongruity (to be a *Ioudaios* need not entail a privileged position vis-à-vis "Israel") has become in John a necessary incongruity (*Ioudaios* does not correspond to "Israel"). John does not resolve the linguistic problem that this creates; nor does the Gospel take up the word

¹²³ The philosophical "perfection" of a concept has nothing to do with the morality of that perfection but rather with the way in which a person develops out a concept (or here, a distinction) to its teleological limit. For a helpful application to New Testament studies, cf. John M. G. Barclay's comments:

"Perfecting a theological motif may constitute an implicit or explicit claim to theological correctness, discrediting those who understand (and even perfect) the concept in a different way. Where such conceptual perfection is matched by social practice, it becomes the ideology of a distinctive pattern of life, and can prove enormously powerful in legitimating a religious tradition." John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gif* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 69.

“Christians” as an alternative to “*Ioudaioi*.”¹²⁴ Nevertheless, the Gospel creates the problem because the continuity that joins the living tradition of first-century Judaism to its foundation is at stake.

This survey of the characterization of the *Ioudaioi* in the Fourth Gospel illustrates the three implications of reading John’s vision for Israel sketched in the previous section. The argument above was that John’s Christology is an innovation that intends to argue for a way in which the tradition of Judaism might enter its future in continuity with its basic beliefs, traditions, and practices. Returning to those implications in light of this overview, we can see, first, that John’s argument for the future of Israel is *historically situated*. It presents a vision for the future that touches down within the particular debates and points of sensitivity that belonged to late first-century Judaism. Second, John’s argument for the future of Israel *looks like supersessionism, displacement, and/or apostasy to those who do not accept it*. This does not mean that John’s claims vis-à-vis Judaism are inherently illegitimate. It means, rather, that the only way to state a position on John’s supersessionism, displacement, and/or loyalty to the traditions of Israel is to do so by taking a theological position. Is Jesus the one sent by God or not? The one who brings Israel into its future or not? Finally, John’s argument for the future of Israel *renders the relationship between believers in Jesus and the Ioudaioi more complex and serious*. Nearly everyone in the Gospel is Jewish, in the sense that they belong to the broad tradition of Second Temple Judaism. But John pushes the distinction between Jesus and the *Ioudaioi* to the point that belief in Jesus implies the reorganization of one’s conceptual and linguistic (and by implication social) world away from the particular construal of the *Ioudaioi* that John knew.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Cf. Boyarin, *Dying for God* (esp. 6–19, 92, 123–124) and his correct rejection of an early “reified Judaism” (or “reified Christianity”). This perspective sheds important light on the Fourth Gospel, but also note that habits of speech guided by the Gospel of John would move in the direction of a new linguistic innovation and reification of “*Ioudaioi*” and, eventually, “Jews”) as one thing and believers in Jesus as another. Jacob Neusner notes the broad linguistic challenges that this situation creates for those who inquire into this field (Jacob Neusner, “Review of *Dying for God*,” *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 6.2–3 [2003]: 379–380).

¹²⁵ Of course, what John meant for a particular, historically situated group of *Ioudaioi* has been transposed onto innumerable other Jews by Christians through the reception history of the Fourth Gospel. Insofar as a form of Christianity (or Judaism) stands in historical and conceptual continuity with this founding form of Christianity (or formative Judaism), the problem of John’s characterization of the *Ioudaioi* possesses contemporary relevance. It cannot be reduced to a historical or rhetorical moment; it cannot be passed over as a “moment” of intolerance. The argument in

Conclusion

As this study now turns toward the text of the Gospel of John, it will be helpful to review the four major claims of this introduction:

1. Participation in the Jewish tradition includes debating and proposing understandings of continuity between the people of the present and their storied past and prophesied future.
2. The terms “*Ioudaioi*” and “Israel” are not inherently coextensive. Their connection is the result of a theological argument – one that was widely accepted but also contestable.
3. The Gospel of John takes up major aspects of the Jewish tradition in order to demonstrate how continuity with the past and future of Israel is achieved in Jesus. This task extends from a perceived “epistemological crisis.”
4. The Gospel’s specific polemics against the *Ioudaioi* represent, in John’s logic, not a break with the tradition itself but with an alternative, historically embodied argument by the *Ioudaioi* about how to connect the contemporary members of the Jewish tradition to their historic and eschatological identity.

The following chapters trace the constructive claims that the Fourth Gospel makes about how Jesus opens up a future for Israel in himself. Where possible, this study will sketch how others in the Jewish tradition drew on similar texts and traditions to present their own visions for how to live in continuity with the central themes and commitments of the tradition. But a clear mirror image about what the *Ioudaioi* believed is not available for every claim John makes, so the attention in what follows will be on the Gospel of John as an argument for the future of Israel, and specifically an argument that offers an innovative solution to a tradition that is perceived to be in crisis. In all of this, it is my hope that attention to John’s vision for Israel will add a layer of complexity and clarification to treatments of the Gospel of John that attempt to understand how its forceful argument worked in the past and still works today.

the Fourth Gospel between Jesus and the *Ioudaioi* is *still an argument* insofar as there is continuity between the originating and the contemporary participants in this debate. Of course, the continuity bears the complexity of 2,000 years of historical development. One hopes that the intervening centuries have taught Christians in particular to approach this argument in a way that is consonant with the fundamental claims of the larger tradition, namely nonviolently.