

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

RETELLING SCRIPTURE:  
THE RHETORICAL FUNCTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CITATIONS VIS-À-VIS  
THE JEWS IN JOHN 1:19-12:15

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B.A, B.Th (Hons)

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY  
IN TOTAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MT ST MARY CAMPUS, STRATHFIELD, NSW

25 NOVEMBER 2010



This thesis is based upon original work by the author and a study of the relevant published works as indicated and acknowledged in the text.

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

*Signed:* .....

*Date:* .....

*(Author's signature)*

To my husband, Jonathan, and to my son, James:

ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει

I COR 13:8

Mehr als ich ahndete schön, das Glück, es ist mir geworden

GOETHE, *Römische Elegien* III:1 (1795)

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank the Lord for enabling me to study God's Word, and for inspiring me to pursue this challenging topic.

To my supervisor, Associate Professor Mary Coloe – you have simply been amazing, coming on board and helping me so willingly, having such faith in me and being so prompt and thorough in your response to my work. To my associate supervisor, Dr. Laurie Woods: your support in the early days was invaluable!

To my parents, John and Cathy Sheridan: thank you for your support from afar (and those times you were near!). Thank you for your constant love for me. Thank you for teaching me to think critically and instilling in me a desire for learning from my earliest days.

This thesis simply could not have been written without the help of my parents-in-law, Maureen and Rex Fernandes: without your practical support in the home, and your help with child minding, I would not have advanced as quickly as I did.

To Dr Michele Connolly: this journey began with our classes at the Catholic Institute of Sydney where you inspired me to take up further study in the New Testament. I won't forget all the dinners and coffees that followed, and I hope there will be many more to come! To Dr Gerard Moore and Professor Neil Ormerod: thank you for your mentoring and guidance. To my colleagues at the Broken Bay Institute: thank you for your support, your friendship and your patience as I finished up the thesis. To my friend Lucienne Paul: thank you so much for our 'study' days – they really were what I looked forward to the most! To the staff at Veech library: thank you for your practical help with photocopying as I researched with my little son tagging along.

And, to save the best for last, to my husband, Jonathan: thank you for you. Your love is what motivates me in everything I do. Your support during this difficult journey has been incredible. To my son James: some people doubted that I could do this thesis with a newborn, but the truth is that I could not have done it *without* you. You enabled me to think and write in ways I never thought I could. You are the most wonderful blessing in my life. This achievement is as much yours as it is mine, and I dedicate it all to you.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANE	Ancient Near East
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATJ	<i>Ausburg Theological Journal</i>
BAGD	Bauer, W., W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. Chicago, 1979.
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
BGBE	Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese
BHS	<i>Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983.
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BTZ	<i>Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>

CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CI</i>	<i>Critical Inquiry</i>
<i>Di</i>	<i>Dialog</i>
<i>Dikaionia</i>	<i>Dikaionia</i>
<i>DR</i>	<i>Downside Review</i>
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by H. Balz. G. Schneider. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990-1993.
<i>ELH</i>	<i>English Literary History</i>
<i>EstBib</i>	<i>Estudios Bíblicos</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
<i>Exp</i>	<i>The Expositor</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
GCT	Gender, Culture, Theory Series
HBS	Herders Biblische Studien
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>ITQ</i>	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JES</i>	<i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JLS</i>	<i>Journal of Literary Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament – Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament – Supplement Series
JSS Sup	Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement Series

<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>JTSA</i>	<i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i>
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NA <sup>27</sup>	Nestle-Aland, <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , 27 <sup>th</sup> edition (4 <sup>th</sup> rev. ed)
NCB	New Century Bible
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
<i>NLH</i>	<i>New Literary History</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum, Supplements
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OT	Old Testament
ÖTKNT	Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar (Neue Testament)
<i>Pacifica</i>	<i>Pacifica</i>
<i>Poetique</i>	<i>Poetique</i>
<i>PT</i>	<i>Poetics Today</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>Semeia</i>	<i>Semeia</i>
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SP	Sacra Pagina
Str-B	Strack, H. L., and P. Billerbeck, <i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash</i> . 6 vols. Munich, 1922-1961.
<i>Style</i>	<i>Style</i>

<i>TD</i>	<i>Theology Digest</i>
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by Gerhard Kittel; translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. 9 <sup>th</sup> edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TrinJ</i>	Trinity Journal
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum
TVZ	Theologischer Verlag Zürich
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZWT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie</i>

#### Writings from the Dead Sea Documents

CD	The Damascus Document
1QS	The Community Rule

#### Writings from the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

<i>2 Bar.</i>	<i>2 Baruch (Syriac Apocalypse)</i>
<i>1 En.</i>	<i>1 Enoch (Ethiopic Apocalypse)</i>
<i>4 Ezra</i>	<i>4 Ezra</i>
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>

## The Writings of Philo

<i>Congr.</i>	<i>De congress eruditionis gratia</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De fuga et invention</i>
<i>Her.</i>	<i>Quis rerum diviniarum heres sit</i>
<i>Leg. 3</i>	<i>Legum allegoriae III</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	<i>De mutatione nominum</i>

## The Writings of Josephus

<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>J.W.</i>	<i>Jewish War</i>

## The Targumic Texts

<i>Tg. Ps.-Jon. Gen.</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis</i>
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## The Mishnah, Talmud and Related Literature

<i>'Abod. Zar.</i>	<i>'Avodah Zarah</i>
<i>t. Sukk.</i>	<i>Tosefta Sukkah</i>
<i>m. Mid.</i>	<i>Middot</i>
<i>m. Sanh.</i>	<i>Sanhedrin</i>
<i>m. Yad.</i>	<i>Yadayim</i>
<i>y. Ta'an.</i>	<i>Yerushalmi Ta'anit</i>

## Other Rabbinic Writings

<i>Mek. Exod</i>	<i>Mekilta Exodus</i>
<i>Gen. Rab.</i>	<i>Midrash Genesis Rabbah</i>
<i>Exod. Rab.</i>	<i>Midrash Exodus Rabbah</i>
<i>Lev. Rab.</i>	<i>Midrash Leviticus Rabbah</i>
<i>Qoh. Rab.</i>	<i>Qoheleth Rabbah (Joel)</i>
<i>Sifre Deut.</i>	<i>Sifrei to the Book of Deuteronomy</i>
<i>Tanḥ.</i>	<i>Tanḥuma</i>

## Writings from the Apostolic Fathers

<i>Cat. Lect.</i>	<i>Catechetical Lectures</i> , by Cyril of Jerusalem
<i>Comm. Zach.</i>	<i>Commentary on Zechariah</i> , by Jerome
<i>Hom. Jo.</i>	<i>Homilies on the Gospel of John</i> , by John Chrysostom
<i>Dialogue</i>	<i>Dialogue with Trypho</i> , by Justin Martyr

## Writings from the New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

<i>Gos. Thom.</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis claims that the rhetorical design of John's Gospel encourages an 'ideal' reader to construct a particular characterisation of the Jews in light of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15. This claim builds upon the work of earlier scholars who noted that the OT citations in 1:19-12:15 were prefaced by a distinct 'formula' (e.g. ἔστιν γεγραμμένον) which indicated a correlative rhetorical function of those citations – namely, that the content of the citations *witnessed* to Jesus in his public ministry before the Jews. In most of the OT citations found in 1:19-12:15, the Jews constitute the direct narrative audience (1:23; 6:31, 45; 10:34), or they are otherwise present in the scene (e.g. 2:17; 7:37-39; 12:15). The OT citations in John 1:19-12:15 aim to bring the Jews to faith in Jesus, and also the ideal reader of the narrative. The contention of this thesis is that, ironically, the Jews do not come to faith through the citations, but rather, become increasingly obdurate towards Jesus. The ideal reader succeeds in coming to faith in Jesus through a process of 'othering' the Jews by constructing them as negative characters in the context of the OT citations. It is argued that in the task of character construction, the reader relies upon *direct* and *indirect* means of character definition, as articulated in the narratological theory of Ewen/Rimmon-Kenan. It is shown that while *direct* means of character definition are relatively sparse in the pericopae under analysis, there is much *indirect* character presentation for the reader to construct a portrait of the Jews. This includes the *response* of the Jews to the content of the OT citations, indicated by their speech and actions. However, the Jews are not only characterised by their response, but also by another aspect of what I have categorised as 'indirect presentation', namely, the ways in which the broader, allusive contexts of the OT citations function to characterise the Jews 'intertextually' particularly by signifying the OT 'glory' motif. This thesis therefore utilises aspects of intertextuality theory to argue that the reader interprets the Jews in view of the Gospel's 'retelling' of the biblical story. The function of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15 *and* the presentation of the Jews within this context are primarily rhetorical and ideological, rather than being motivated only by historical contingencies or by Christological reflection.





## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

It is often acknowledged that John's Gospel is a very 'Jewish' Gospel: perhaps more than the Synoptics, John's Gospel is steeped in Old Testament (hereafter, OT) symbolism and motifs.<sup>1</sup> The Gospel evinces characteristically Jewish "turns of phrase and ways of thought" (cf. 1:38; 2:6; 9:7; 19:17; 20:16).<sup>2</sup> It often alludes or refers to great OT figures such as Jacob (1:51; 4:5-6), Moses (1:17, 45; 3:14; 5:54; 6:32; 7:22, 23; 9:28-29), Abraham (8:33, 37, 39, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58), David (7:41-42) and Isaiah (1:23; 12:37, 39) and has extensive recourse to the OT Scriptures, either by way of citation or allusion (1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:24; 12:13-15, 37-39; 13:18b; 15:25; 19:24, 28, 36, 37). The Gospel of John also employs contemporaneous exegetical methods of Scriptural interpretation.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Jesus and most other characters in the Gospel are Jews (cf. 4:9), and they are presented as taking part in the Jewish festivals of first-century Palestine (2:13; 5:1; 7:10; 10:22-23; 12:1, 13). The Gospel's Christology is heavily cloaked in Jewish associations: Jesus' descent into the world as Word

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, C. K. Barrett, "The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," *JTS* 38 (1947): 155-169. The notion of John's Gospel as the 'most Jewish' has its origins in the debate about whether John's Gospel was the most 'Hellenistic' of the four gospels, and only later came to be dialectically posited with the 'anti-Jewish' elements of the text. Cf. Hudo Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel Interpreted in Its Relation to Contemporaneous Religious Currents in Palestine and the Hellenistic-Oriental World* (Uppsala: Almqvist, 1929), 5-6. In this study I use the term 'Old Testament' in place of the alternatives 'Hebrew Bible' or 'Jewish Scriptures' for the following reasons: (a) linguistically, 'Hebrew Bible' tends to denote the MT, thereby excluding the LXX from discussion; (b) the term 'Hebrew Bible' favours a specifically Protestant discourse, as the Deuterocanonical writings are part of the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Eastern Orthodox canons; (c) the term 'Jewish Scripture' is inaccurate because John's Gospel itself could have been considered 'Jewish Scripture' by the Johannine community (see section 1.3.1 for more detail). From the perspective of interfaith dialogue, 'Old Testament' need not connote something outdated or superseded, but something venerable.

<sup>2</sup> John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 131.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Peder Borgen, "Observations on the Midrashic Character of John 6," *ZNW* 54 (1963): 232-240.

is drawn from the Wisdom traditions of the Scriptures (1:1-18; cf. Prov. 8:22-31; Sir 24:1-22), and Jesus himself is presented as the subject of the Torah, about whom ‘Moses wrote’ (cf. 5:46).<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, much attention has recently been focused on what many scholars would consider to be a markedly anti-Jewish polemic in the Gospel of John.<sup>5</sup> Often when John refers to Moses (cf. 1:17-18; 6:32; 9:28-29), the Temple (2:14-22; 4:21-24; 10:23-40) or the Torah (1:17; 8:17; 10:34; 15:25), some scholars would claim he implicitly suggests that these have been superseded by God’s revelation in Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> According to Moloney, the central meaning of the Jewish feasts has been freshly and definitively appropriated by Jesus (cf. 6:31-58; 7:1-10:22).<sup>7</sup> What is more, John uses the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (‘the Jews’) in a pejorative and “undifferentiated” way throughout the Gospel to designate a body of characters who refuse to believe in Jesus and who seek his death (5:18; 7:1, 20; 8:37, 40; 11:53; 18:28-32; 19:7, 12).<sup>8</sup> A dichotomy is drawn between the Jews – who are said to have the ‘devil’ as their ‘father’ (8:44) – and Jesus, whose origins are in God (6:46; 7:29; 8:42) and

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Angus Paddison, “Christology and Jewish-Christian Understanding: Reading the Fourth Gospel as Scripture,” in *Christology and Scripture: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Andrew T. Lincoln and Angus Paddison (London: T & T Clark/Continuum, 2008), 46.

<sup>5</sup> See the extensive introduction by Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville, “Wrestling with Johannine Anti-Judaism: A Hermeneutical Framework for the Analysis of the Current Debate,” in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 3-40.

<sup>6</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, “Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel as a Theological Problem for Christian Interpreters,” in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 61-82.

<sup>7</sup> Francis J. Moloney, *Signs and Shadows: Reading John 1-4* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 207.

<sup>8</sup> For οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as an ‘undifferentiated’ term see Erich Grässer, “Die antijüdische Polemik im Johannesevangelium,” *NTS* 11 (1964-65): 74-90.

who is ‘one with God’ (10:34).<sup>9</sup> In this respect, the Gospel could indeed be termed ‘anti-Jewish’.<sup>10</sup> In fact John Ashton explicitly notes that the Gospel’s ‘anti-Jewishness’ “applies to a people or a nation.”<sup>11</sup>

The broader picture, however, is a paradoxical one. ‘Positive’ uses of the terms ‘Jew/the Jews’ occur in the Gospel (4:9, 22; cf. 1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 8:31; 9:2; 11:8; 12:11), as do

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<sup>9</sup> It is common in the secondary literature to place the vernacular translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in quotation marks (e.g. ‘the Jews’ or ‘die Juden’) when commenting upon the Gospel text. Sometimes this move is explained as a means of circumventing anti-Semitic interpretations of the text because it apparently serves to emphasise that the Jews of John’s Gospel are *not* coterminous with real Jews of Jesus’ day (nor of any epoch) but represent synagogue officials of the late 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE with whom Johannine Christians conflicted; see Francis J. Moloney, *John* (SP 4; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 9. However well-meaning the motivation for this trend, I find it inappropriate for two reasons: (1) it sidelines the rhetorical characterisation of the Jews in the Gospel and the real possibility that actual Jews *were* (and still may be) identified by readers/hearers with the Jews in John; and (2) it assumes the correctness of Martyn’s synagogue-expulsion theory. Both of these points are developed further in the thesis. See also, Adele Reinhartz, “‘Jews’ and Jews in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 213-227.

<sup>10</sup> The terminology is problematic, as will be further explained (see section IV). Those claiming that the Gospel is the most ‘anti-Jewish’ of the four include Samuel Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 119; Jürgen Becker, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (ÖTKNT 4/1-2; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1979-1981), 304-10; Michael Goulder, “Nicodemus,” *SJT* 44 (1991): 153-168, who argues that the Gospel demonstrates a “great hatred of the Jews” perceptible even to “simple readers” (page 168); Judith Hellig, “The Negative Image of the Jew and its New Testament Roots,” *JTSA* 64 (1998): 39-48, who claims that the Gospel reflects the apex of “philosophic anti-Jewish midrash” (page 44); Judith Lieu, “Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel: Explanation and Hermeneutics,” in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 101-120; Esther Straub, *Kritische Theologie ohne ein Wort vom Kreuz: Zum Verhältnis von Joh 1-12 und 13-20* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 57.

<sup>11</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 131. Adele Reinhartz contends that this is precisely how οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι would have been understood in the ancient Diaspora setting within which the Gospel circulated. See Reinhartz, “‘Jews’ and Jews,” 213-229. Francis J. Moloney, “‘The Jews’ in the Fourth Gospel: Another Perspective,” in *The Gospel of John: Text and Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 40, argues to the contrary: “the repeated use of the expression ‘the Jews’ in a negative sense has *nothing* to do with national, political, or religious affiliation. It has *everything* to do with the definite rejection of Jesus as the revelation of God” (Moloney’s emphasis). Moloney’s position will be engaged with in more depth further in this chapter (see pages 50-51).

so-called ‘neutral’ usages of the same terms, these latter referring mainly to Jewish customs and feasts (cf. 2:6, 13; 5:1; 6:4; 7:2; 11:55; 19:40, 42) and once denoting Judea as a geographic location (3:22, τὴν ῥουδαίαν). The ‘negative’ usages of the term still outweigh the ‘positive’, (cf. 1:19; 2:28, 20; 3:25; 5:10, 15, 16, 18; 6:41, 52; 7:1, 11, 13, 20; 8:31, 37, 40, 48, 52, 57; 9:18, 22; 10:24, 31, 33; 11:8, 53-54; 18:28, 31, 35, 36, 38; 19:7, 12, 14, 38; 20:19). In any case it is not a matter of statistical predominance but of the fact that for the most part, whenever ‘the Jews’ is used, the connotations are of rejection (6:52), hostility (5:42; 10:39) fear (7:13; 20:19) murmuring (6:41), murder (5:18; 7:1, 20; 8:37, 40; 11:53; 18:28-32; 19:7, 12) and death (8:24). Thus C. K. Barrett famously stated that John’s Gospel is at once “Jewish and anti-Jewish.”<sup>12</sup> Extrapolating on Barrett’s dictum, Wayne Meeks sharpened the distinction by arguing that “the Fourth Gospel is most anti-Jewish just at the points it is most Jewish.”<sup>13</sup> This characteristically ‘Jewish’ Gospel –whose protagonist is presented as unabashedly Jewish (cf. 4:9, 22b) – also displays an “anti-Jewish bias”<sup>14</sup> in its discourse and narrative. The implications of this paradoxical assertion are by no means unambiguous in the scholarship. The *non-sequitur* argumentation that John’s ‘Jewishness’ softens his anti-Jewishness has been advanced in several studies, but this thesis does not

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<sup>12</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1975), 71. Others noting this paradox have included Colin Hickling, “Attitudes to Judaism in the Fourth Gospel,” in *L’Évangile de Jean: Sources, Rédaction, Théologie*, ed. Marinus de Jonge, (BETL 44; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1977), 347-354; Sean Freyne, “Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self: Matthew’s and John’s Anti-Jewish Polemic in Focus,” in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us’: Christians, Jews, ‘Others’ in Late Antiquity*, ed. J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 117-144; Jean Zumstein, “Die Abschiedsreden (Johannes 13,31-16,33) und das Problem des Antijudaismus,” in *Kreative Erinnerung: Relecture und Auslegung im Johannesevangelium*, (ATANT 84; Zürich: TVZ, 2004), 189-207; Raimo Hakola, *Identity Matters: John, the Jews and Jewishness* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Wayne A. Meeks, “Am I a Jew?” - Johannine Christianity and Judaism,” in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, ed. J. Neusner (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 163.

<sup>14</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 132.

move in that direction.<sup>15</sup> The place that this study seeks to fill will become clear as this chapter progresses.

This chapter will begin by exploring the contours of the Gospel's Jewishness with specific reference to John's indebtedness to the OT Scriptures. In this context I will review and evaluate those studies that centre upon the relationship between John's Gospel and the OT, with specific attention to John's citation of the OT Scriptures. Studies on the relationship between the Gospel of John and the OT have been numerous and varied, tending to concentrate upon the many OT allusions found in John's Gospel, or to focus on the instances wherein the OT appears to be explicitly cited. Some studies are broad enough to include in their discussion analysis of both the OT allusions and the citations present in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>16</sup> Generally, those studies focusing strictly on John's allusive recourse to the OT Scriptures can be categorised according to whether they attend to: (a) OT themes, motifs or symbols; (b) the presence of OT figures in the Gospel, such as Moses, Abraham and Isaiah; or (c) the implicit ways in which the Gospel is indebted to the OT. On the other hand, studies dedicated to the OT citations in the Gospel have concentrated upon: (a) the method of interpretation which John employs when citing Scripture; (b) the question of John's sources; and (c) the significance of the 'formulae' which John<sup>17</sup> uses to introduce a citation. Finally,

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. R. Leistner, *Antijudaismus im Johannesevangelium? Darstellung des Problems in der neueren Auslegungsgeschichte und Untersuchung der Leidensgeschichte* (TW 3; Bern and Frankfurt, 1974); Brian D. Johnson, "Salvation is from the Jews: Judaism in the Gospel of John," in *New Currents Through John: A Global Perspective*, ed. F. Lozado and T. Thatcher (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 98.

<sup>16</sup> For example, Günter Reim, *Studien zum alttestamentlichen Hintergrund des Johannesevangeliums* (SNTSMS 22; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

<sup>17</sup> I use the name 'John' to refer to the Gospel of John *and* to the author(s) of the Gospel as a shorthand expression, without suggesting anything about the identity of the real author.



recent scholarship has enlarged the scope of the issue by considering the possible social function of the OT citations in the hypothetical Johannine ‘community’ of 1 CE.<sup>18</sup>

The literature review presented below will examine and evaluate the range of scholarly perspectives on each of these issues in turn. I will begin with a brief outline and analysis of studies treating the OT allusions in John’s Gospel, before attending in more detail to the literature on the OT citations in John. An excursus on the ‘anti-Jewish’ nature of the Gospel will then follow, as I address the correlative side of the Gospel’s paradox in more detail. Following this, I briefly state the contribution of the present study in relation to the literature reviewed. It will be clear that, while other studies analysed the OT citations in the Gospel in terms of their doctrinal or social function, the current study aims to analyse the *rhetorical* function of the OT citations, specifically with regard to the construction of the Jews as characters at the level of the Gospel narrative. The argument of this chapter can be schematised as follows:

## 1. Introduction and Literature Review

### I. Old Testament Allusions in the Gospel of John

- A. Old Testament Themes and Motifs
- B. Old Testament Figures in John’s Gospel
- C. Implicit Reference

### II. Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John

- A. Trajectory I: John’s Method of Scriptural Interpretation
- B. Trajectory II: John’s Sources for Scriptural Citation
- C. Evaluation of Previous Trajectories

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<sup>18</sup> Examples of such studies will be referred to and engaged with below. I define ‘citation’ and ‘allusion’ in more depth in Section I of Chapter 3.

### III. The Function of the Old Testament Citations in John's Gospel

- A. Andreas Obermann: The Theological-Rhetorical Function of Scripture
- B. Jaime Clarke-Soles: The Social Function of Scripture

### IV. Excursus: Anti-Judaism in the Gospel of John

### V. The Hypothesis of This Thesis

- A. Rationale and Scope of Study
- B. Thesis Statement
- C. Methodology
- D. Outline of Argument

### I. Old Testament Allusions in the Gospel of John

- A. Old Testament Themes and Motifs

The pervasiveness of OT symbolism in the Gospel of John has given rise to a variety of studies on the topic. The volume and variety of these works necessitates a cursory overview of the literature rather than a critical review, which will be reserved for those works relating directly to John's OT citations, and thus, to this immediate topic. Kirsten Nielson analysed the symbolism of the Vine in John 15 against the background of Isa 5:1-17 and the Song of the Vineyard in Isa 5:1-7.<sup>19</sup> The symbolism of the Temple in the Fourth Gospel has also been studied from different angles, receiving extensive treatment in the work of Mary Coloe, who

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<sup>19</sup> Kirsten Nielsen, "Old Testament Imagery in John," in *New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives. Essays from the Scandinavian Conference on the Fourth Gospel, Aarhus 1997*, ed. Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Petersen (London: T & T Clarke, 2004), 66-82.

argues for the presence of Temple symbolism across the Gospel as a whole.<sup>20</sup> The prophetic background to the symbolic figure of the “Good Shepherd” in John 10:1-18 has also been the subject of monographs and articles.<sup>21</sup> With regard to OT themes and motifs, the Gospel’s allusions to marriage have been studied in depth in relation to the notion of Jesus as “bridegroom Messiah.”<sup>22</sup> An earlier study by Günter Reim argued forcefully for an appreciation of the Johannine Jesus as the Messiah-King of Psalm 45 particularly as this pertains to the defence of Jesus’ kingship in his trial before Pilate.<sup>23</sup> Other OT themes studied in relation to John include: the theme of creation, particularly in light of the opening verses of the Johannine Prologue (John 1:1-18);<sup>24</sup> the motif of divine wisdom in relation to the Gospel’s Christology<sup>25</sup>; and finally, the presence of the OT covenant motif in John’s Gospel has been argued for by Rheka Chennattu, specifically as it informs the Johannine concept of discipleship.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Mary Coloe, *God Dwells With Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001). See also Alan R. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus’ Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John* (JSNTSup 220; Sheffield Academic Press, 2002). For a different methodology applied to the same evidence see Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfilment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> Johannes Beutler and Robert T. Fortna (eds.), *The Shepherd Discourse of John 10 and its Context*, (MSSNTS 67; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>22</sup> Jocelyn McWhirter, *The Bridegroom Messiah and the People of God: Marriage in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Günter Reim, “Jesus as God in the Fourth Gospel: The Old Testament Background,” *NTS* 30 (1984): 158-160.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Edward C. Hoskyns, “Genesis i-iii and St. John’s Gospel,” *JTS* 21 (1920): 210-218; Calum M. Carmichael, *The Story of Creation: Its Origin and Its Interpretation in Philo and the Fourth Gospel* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996); Jan A. du Rand, “The Creation Motif in the Fourth Gospel: Perspectives on Its Narratological Function within a Judaistic Background,” in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. G. Van Belle, J. G. Van Der Watt and P. Maritz, (BETL 184; Peeters/Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 21-46.

<sup>25</sup> Sharon Ringe, *Wisdom’s Friends: Community and Christology in the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1999). See also Ben Witherington III, *John’s Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1995).

<sup>26</sup> Rheka M. Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006).

## B. Old Testament Figures in John's Gospel

Apart from studies that focus upon the way the Fourth Gospel incorporates thematic or symbolic elements of the OT, a range of studies consider the place and function of certain OT figures in the Gospel, such as Moses, David, Abraham and Isaiah. While the figure of Moses receives most attention in the literature – and I will shortly return to this – the other major OT figures alluded to in the Gospel have also been the subject of close study. The Gospel's intermittent allusions to Jacob (1:51; 4:5-6), for example, have generated considerable research on the “Jacob traditions” that John likely received in the process of composing the Gospel.<sup>27</sup> Recently, Paul Miller speculated about the figures of Abraham (8:56), Moses (5:46) and Isaiah (12:41) in the Gospel, suggesting that they are presented as witnesses to Jesus not only in terms of prophetic testimony, but insofar as they are understood to have had a ‘vision’ of the pre-incarnate Logos which formed the basis of their testimony.<sup>28</sup> Miller concludes that John's unique scriptural hermeneutic is integrally tied to the “theological and epistemological category” of seeing/believing in John.<sup>29</sup> A famous OT figure often neglected for his potential typological associations in John's Gospel is King David. The recent work of Daly-Denton,

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<sup>27</sup> See Ellen B. Aitken, “At the Well of Living Water: Jacob Traditions in John 4,” in *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Craig A. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 342-352; Jerome H. Neyrey, “Jacob Traditions and the Interpretation of John 4:10-26,” *CBQ* 41 (1979): 419-437; Jerome H. Neyrey, “The Jacob Allusions in John 1:51,” *CBQ* (1982): 586-605; for the Joshua-Jesus parallels in the Gospel see Brian Byron, “Bethany Across the Jordan: Or Simply, Across the Jordan,” *ABR* 46 (1998): 42.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Miller, “They Saw His Glory and Spoke of Him’: The Gospel of John and the Old Testament,” in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament* ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 133-134.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Miller, “They Saw His Glory and Spoke of Him’,” 134-235.

who examined the use of the Psalms in the Gospel, has underscored the importance of the figure of David – as man of prayer, model Shepherd, and Temple builder.<sup>30</sup>

Arguably the most notable figure in the fourth Gospel is that of Moses. He is referred to consistently across the Gospel in a variety of contexts. The Gospel often refers to the biblical stories of Moses and the Exodus (cf. 3:14-16; 6:1-71; 7:37-39). Indeed some authors consider the Fourth Gospel to be a kind of re-telling of the Scriptural stories found in the Pentateuch, with Moses functioning typologically to prefigure Jesus. These authors also argue that the form of the Gospel, as well as its content, is patterned after certain of the OT books.<sup>31</sup> Jacob Enz exemplifies this approach, arguing for John's direct dependence upon the book of Exodus, stating that the Gospel was deliberately crafted by the evangelist as a parallel work to that book.<sup>32</sup> These studies all seek to argue that the Fourth Gospel transposes the story of Moses and the Exodus onto its own story of Jesus.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Margaret Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel: The Johannine Reception of the Psalms* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Aelred Lacomara, "Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourse (Jn 13:31-16:33)," *CBQ* 36 (1974): 65-84; cf. T. F. Glasson, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel* (London: SCM Press, 1963).

<sup>32</sup> Jacob J. Enz, "The Book of Exodus as a Literary Type for the Gospel of John," *JBL* 76 (1957): 208-215. Enz' arguments eventually become constrained and reductionistic. For example, Enz claims that the Good Shepherd imagery of John 10:1-18 evokes the role Moses plays as shepherd in Exod 3:1, when surely the Ezekiel parallels are clearer (page 213). In stating that John's story re-narrates the Exodus story I do not think one needs to argue also for a structural likeness between John's Gospel and Exodus, or for John's literary dependence on Exodus. For a different view in relation to Mark, see Larry Perkins, "Kingdom, Messianic Authority and the Re-Constituting of God's People – Tracing the Function of the Exodus Material in Mark's Narrative," in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels, Vol 1: The Gospel of Mark*, ed. Thomas R. Hatina, (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 100-115.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel* (JSNTSup 69; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 74.

More voluminous are those works that attend to the ways in which the figure of Moses has influenced the Johannine portrait of Jesus, and specifically, the Johannine Christology.<sup>34</sup> M.-E. Boismard has demonstrated how Jesus is presented in the Fourth Gospel as the ‘Prophet’ whom Moses spoke of in the ‘oracle’ of Deut 18:18-19.<sup>35</sup> Jesus, then, functions in the Gospel as the Prophet ‘like’ Moses and whose words call for acceptance on pain of divine judgement (cf. John 12:48-50).<sup>36</sup> Boismard also shows that Jesus is sometimes set in contradistinction to Moses (cf. 9:28-29) – in these instances characters in the story and readers of the text are invited to choose between allegiance to Jesus *or* Moses.<sup>37</sup> The Gospel sets forth yet another way of understanding Moses, this time as one who prefigures Jesus, as Jesus is presented as one who works ‘signs’ and wonders like Moses did in the sight of Pharaoh to show that God was with him (cf. 3:2; 9:31-33; cf. Exod 3:12).<sup>38</sup> Boismard therefore analyses John’s ‘ambivalent’ Moses-typology under the twin rubrics of: “Moses *or* Jesus (9:26 ff.)” and “Jesus and Moses.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (Leiden: Brill, 1967); Cf. Severino Pancaro, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity According to John* (Leiden: Brill, 1975). Cf. M.-E. Boismard, *Moses or Jesus: An Essay in Johannine Christology*, trans. B. T. Viviano (Peeters: Leuven University Press, 1993), 56-57; Thomas Cherian, *Jesus the New Moses: A Christological Understanding of the Fourth Gospel*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation (Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1987); Stan Harstine, *Moses as a Character in the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Ancient Reading Techniques* (JSNTSup 229; London/New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

<sup>35</sup> Boismard, *Moses or Jesus*, 10.

<sup>36</sup> Boismard, *Moses or Jesus*, 11-14.

<sup>37</sup> Boismard, *Moses or Jesus*, 22-23.

<sup>38</sup> Boismard, *Moses or Jesus*, 55-59.

<sup>39</sup> Boismard, *Moses or Jesus*, 22-23; 55-59.

A recent study by Wendy North has followed the lead of Boismard, perceptively analysing the Gospel's shifting portrayal of Moses in relation to the issue of the Jews in John.<sup>40</sup> North reflects upon the "Moses piety" commonly found amongst devout Jews at the time of the Fourth Gospel's composition, arguing that Moses was perceived as the 'Law-giver' of highest status; Moses was God's "Prophet" (cf. Deut 18:15-18).<sup>41</sup> This deuteronomical passage also predicts the rise of another "Prophet" – like Moses but greater than Moses – who will speak God's words (Deut 18:18). In the Fourth Gospel, Jesus himself is acknowledged as 'the prophet who is to come into the world' (6:14; 7:40; cf. Jesus as 'a prophet' in 4:19; 9:17). North rightly argues that the Jews in John's Gospel are not homogenously hostile towards Jesus: there is a degree of nuance to the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι which it is "important" to recognise.<sup>42</sup> While the majority of usages of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John have a decidedly hostile connotation, the term sometimes denotes those characters who are either wavering in their opinion about Jesus or who 'had believed in him' (8:31). North explains how these wavering 'Jews' saw Jesus to be the Prophet like Moses, but their faith was (inadequately) based on the 'signs' Jesus wrought (cf. 12:17-18). The 'Jews' who are presented as being hostile towards Jesus (5:18; 7:30; 8:40) identify themselves as "disciples of Moses" (i.e. *not* of Jesus, cf. 9:28), and perceive Jesus possibly to be the 'false prophet' of Deut 18:20, who deserves death. The Johannine community, on the other hand, shaped their Christology on the figure of Moses.<sup>43</sup> North's nuanced, audience-oriented criticism allows her to account for the diversity of ways in which Moses is portrayed in the Gospel, either as "faithful witness" to Jesus (1:45;

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<sup>40</sup> Wendy E. S. North, "Monotheism and the Gospel of John: Jesus, Moses and the Law," in *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E. S. North (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 155-166.

<sup>41</sup> North, "Monotheism and the Gospel of John," 161.

<sup>42</sup> North, "Monotheism and the Gospel of John," 158-159. Still, North concedes that "for the most part the Jews in John's Gospel are presented as a hostile and menacing force."

<sup>43</sup> North, "Monotheism and the Gospel of John," 161.

5:45-46), as “like” Jesus (cf. 3:14), or as antithetically contrasted with Jesus (cf. 1:17-18; 9:28).<sup>44</sup>

### C. Implicit Reference

One final aspect to consider under the category of John’s allusive recourse to the OT is the claim that John’s Gospel is thoroughly steeped in Scripture such that the *entirety* of the OT permeates the Gospel. John’s allusive use of the OT is not always thematised as in the case of figurative typology; John has absorbed the OT completely so that one may also find ‘implicit’ references even if ‘unintended’ by the author. The seminal work of C. K. Barrett on the topic of John’s use of the OT is relevant here. According to Barrett, John had a “comprehensive and understanding knowledge of the OT.”<sup>45</sup> This knowledge enabled John to make use of the OT in a “specific” way, which, in Barrett’s estimate, is more “sophisticated” than that of the other Gospels.<sup>46</sup> Barrett argues that whereas Matthew, for example, employs the more “primitive” proof-text method of referring to the OT, making use of the early Christian *testimonia*, John’s “characteristic” and “novel” manner of using the OT involved letting go of the explicit (Markan) *testimonia* while still collecting their overall sense and weaving this sense into the Gospel as a whole.<sup>47</sup>

Barrett’s chief example is the Markan use of the Isaian ‘testimonium,’ “their hearts are far from me,” a charge of hypocrisy levelled against those who outwardly honour God but inwardly lack spiritual depth (Mark 7:6-8, citing Isa 29:13). For Mark, Isaiah’s charge of hypocrisy is levelled against Pharisees who neglect God’s commandments for the sake of

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<sup>44</sup> North, “Monotheism and the Gospel of John,” 163.

<sup>45</sup> Barrett, “The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” 155.

<sup>46</sup> Barrett, “The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” 157, 156.

<sup>47</sup> Barrett, “The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” 156.



their own traditions; for John, what is neglected is a “proper response to Jesus.”<sup>48</sup> This Isaian theme of ‘hypocrisy’ runs throughout John 5-8, according to Barrett, but the guilty party has broadened from the ‘Pharisees’ to the Jews. Thus Barrett can argue that whilst John’s Gospel has comparatively fewer *explicit* instances of OT citation than the Synoptic Gospels (only twenty-seven to Matthew’s 124, Mark’s 70 and Luke’s 109), John’s knowledge of the OT is nonetheless more “comprehensive,” and his use of the *testimonium* theme pervades the Gospel.<sup>49</sup>

Barrett’s assumption that the Christian *testimonia* in its Markan form was known to John and deliberately reworked is not commonly accepted in the current scholarship. Nevertheless, Barrett’s work on John and the OT is important, but due to the scope of the current literature review cannot be analysed in more depth here. Still, Barrett’s work does raise intriguing points for further exploration, particularly with regard to the relationship between the Jews as characters in the text and the Gospel’s utilisation of the OT – a *lacuna* that this thesis aims to fill. Although this thesis deals with John’s *explicit citations* of the OT, Barrett’s principle that John has absorbed the wider ‘sense’ of the OT will still be relevant to this study.<sup>50</sup>

This brief overview of the literature on the OT allusions present in John’s Gospel evidences the vast and growing concern with OT themes, motifs and symbols in John. These studies shed light not only on the significance of the Johannine Christology but on wider questions such as the role of the Jews in John, a role that this thesis will examine through the use of the

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<sup>48</sup> Barrett, “The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” 159.

<sup>49</sup> Barrett, “The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” 155, 156.

<sup>50</sup> Barrett argues that all of the citations (whether in the Book of Signs or the Book of Glory) that have a “testimony manner” to their introductory formula or a “proof-text” method are not Johannine but are “primitive” and remain “an ineradicable part of the early Christian tradition” (see Barrett, “The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” 157, 168). Barrett does seem to sideline a consideration of citations in favour of a ‘sophisticated’ absorption of the OT in John. I have reason to question this assumption, and this thesis aims to show that the citations have significance in their own right.

explicit OT citations in the Gospel. Before examining this further, I review the literature on the explicit citations of the OT in the Gospel of John.

## II. Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John

A significant body of literature has focused upon John's explicit citation of the OT Scriptures (cf. 1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 7:39; 10:34; 12:14-15, 37-40; 13:19; 15:25; 19:24, 28, 36, 37). These studies usually fall into one of four categories: (a) John's *method* of citing Scripture; (b) the *sources* behind the explicit citations; (c) the distinctive 'formulae' John employs when introducing a citation; and (d) the function of the explicit citations, whether theological, rhetorical or social. The issues of John's exegetical method of Scriptural citation and the sources lying behind those citations have been two major trajectories in the research. Nevertheless, the first of these two points will be dealt with summarily, whereas the latter three will be covered in more depth.

### A. Trajectory I: John's Method of Scriptural Interpretation

The question of how to generically categorise John's method of Scriptural citation is an ongoing and unresolved debate. It is commonly noted that John's methodological approach can be likened to the ancient interpretive technique of *peshar* practiced at Qumran.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Cf. Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM Press, 1961), 265-72; Raymond E. Brown, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles," in *New Testament Essays* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965), 102-131; Richard

However, a recent article by Stephen Witmer has strongly challenged such assertions, arguing that they often are made “*en passant*” – in passing – and without any substantial evidence resulting from sustained analysis of the texts.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Witmer argues that very few scholars who claim that John utilises the *peshet* method do so after thorough consideration of the *peshet* genre itself.<sup>53</sup> It is the concern of Witmer’s article to analyse both the Qumran and Johannine texts *and* to define the *peshet* genre.<sup>54</sup> To be brief, Witmer defines the basic form of the Qumran *pesharim* on the grounds of its “lemmatic” structure.<sup>55</sup> In terms of its content, *peshet* exegesis thoroughly ‘contemporises’ the ancient Scriptures, reading in them references to certain figures or incidents in the Qumran community. Often there is an eschatological sense to the *pesharim*: the ‘true’ meaning of the Scriptures is realised in the latter day in which the community are living.<sup>56</sup>

Witmer argues that similarities between John’s Gospel and the Qumran *pesharim* indeed exist, and he demonstrates this largely through a close reading of the Bread of Life discourse (John 6:22-58) which he claims to be analogous to *peshet* exegesis.<sup>57</sup> Witmer contends that John’s Scriptural hermeneutic rested largely on an understanding of how “the full meaning of

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Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 152, 157; Ashton, *Understanding*, 416.

<sup>52</sup> Stephen Witmer, “Approaches to Scripture in the Fourth Gospel and the Qumran *Pesharim*,” *NovT* 48, no. 4 (2006): 314.

<sup>53</sup> Witmer, “Approaches to Scripture,” 313.

<sup>54</sup> Witmer, “Approaches to Scripture,” 313-314.

<sup>55</sup> Witmer, “Approaches to Scripture,” 316: that is the *lemma* (the text of Scripture) is quoted, followed by an introductory formula (“the *peshet* – interpretation – is”).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Witmer, “Approaches to Scripture,” 316-318. An example given by Witmer on this same page is 1QpHab 2:10-12, where the prophet Habakkuk is cited (Hab 1:6): ‘For see, I will mobilize the Chaldeans, a cruel [and deter]mined people’/Introductory formula: ‘Its interpretation [פִּשְׁרוֹ] concerns...’/Contemporary figure: ...’the Kittim, wh[o are] swift and powerful in battle...’

<sup>57</sup> Witmer, “Approaches to Scripture,” 322-326.

the Scripture is brought out when its reference to Jesus is uncovered.”<sup>58</sup> However, in the final analysis, for Witmer, the differences between the *pesharim* and John’s use of Scripture are too great to define John’s hermeneutic as *peshet*.<sup>59</sup> Ultimately it is the “Christocentric” hermeneutic that John employs that sets his Gospel apart from the *pesharim*: Jesus interprets Scripture and Scripture points to him, but [it] “points beyond the Scriptures to a new and fuller revelation of God in himself.”

While most scholars liken John’s method of citing Scripture to *peshet*, some argue that is more akin to techniques of rabbinic exegesis, namely, those employed in the *Midrashim*.<sup>60</sup> While *midrash* does not routinely contemporise the OT like *peshet*, some claim that it still bears points of resemblance to John’s method of using the OT.<sup>61</sup> But such claims have not gone uncontested.<sup>62</sup> Alternatively, and finally, the question of whether John’s method can be generically categorised as ‘typology’ has been weighed by A. T. Hanson, who concludes that John’s approach may be considered ‘typological’ in an adjectival sense, but it is not *generically* that of ‘typology.’<sup>63</sup> Typology in itself is not so much a method as a

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<sup>58</sup> Witmer, “Approaches to Scripture,” 320.

<sup>59</sup> Witmer, “Approaches to Scripture,” 313, 327-328.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Peder Borgen, *Bread From Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo* (NovTSup 10; Leiden: Brill, 1965); Cf. Miller, “They Saw His Glory and Spoke of Him,” 129; Bruce Metzger, “The Formulas Introducing Quotations in the NT and the Mishna,” *JBL* 70 (1951): 297-307; Metzger states that for John the main difference from the *midrashim* is the “fulfilment formula” that John uses (pages 306-307).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Frédéric Mann, *L’Evangile de Jean à la lumière du Judaïsme* (SBFA 33; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing, 1991), 311-312.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 10.

<sup>63</sup> Anthony T. Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel: A Study of John and the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 234-253.

“presupposition that the present has been foreshadowed by the past,” showing how “God works in patterns across history.”<sup>64</sup>

Discussion of the question of defining John’s interpretive method is performed both independently from and in conjunction with text-critical and source-critical questions. However, source-critical inquiries into John’s explicit citation of the OT have become a field of research in their own right. Under the broad and general term, ‘source-critical’ are found two types of approaches: firstly, those studies that posit that something specific about John’s explicit citations (such as the ‘formula’ prefacing them) points to the hidden presence of a pre-Gospel source; and secondly, and more commonly, those studies that analyse every explicit citation in the Gospel to determine the source upon which John relies (e.g., the LXX, the MT, the Targums). As the present study follows a similar methodological procedure insofar as it examines each explicit citation in John 1:19-12:15 – but asks a very different question of the text – these studies merit the most in-depth analysis in this literature review.

## B. Trajectory II: John’s Sources for Scriptural Citation

One of the earliest works to investigate the possible connection between John’s explicit OT citations and his sources was an article by A. Faure, published in 1922.<sup>65</sup> As the title of his work suggests, Faure’s hypothesis was that John’s Gospel can be divided into two parts, each part betraying different redactional activity and distinct pre-Gospel sources. The clue to this ‘source-division’ for Faure, lay in John’s differing use of the ‘formulae’ introducing his

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<sup>64</sup> Craig A. Evans, “Introduction,” in *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. Craig A. Evans, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 10.

<sup>65</sup> A. Faure, “Die alttestamentlichen Zitate im 4. Evangelium und die Quellenscheidungshypothese,” *ZNW* 21 (1922): 99-122.

explicit OT citations. Faure explains how in the first half of John's Gospel, the Scriptural citations are introduced with no special or consistent 'formula', but are called upon merely as "a collection of proof-texts."<sup>66</sup> The last example of this use of Scripture occurs in John 12:15. From John 12:38 onwards, however, there is a marked change in the way in which Scripture is cited; suddenly a distinct 'formula' is consistently employed as a preface to each OT citation – whenever Scripture is cited, it is spoken of as being fulfilled in the words, actions or events surrounding Jesus. According to Faure, this way of citing Scripture indicates a very different perception of the Scriptures. No longer a mere "collection of references," instead "Scripture is also a kind of Logos which embodies an idea that desires to, and must, gain form."<sup>67</sup> Faure situates latter perception of Scripture in the context of the prophetic Word of God which "went out and cannot return empty" (cf. Isa 55:10-11), and which as a "living, moving" Word, "becomes truth" and "must fulfil itself."<sup>68</sup> And so, the OT citations in the second part of John's Gospel are prefaced by a distinctive 'fulfillment' formula (ἵνα ... πληροθῇ). These two different uses and perceptions of Scripture in John indicate for Faure a break in composition somewhere between 12:15 and 12:38; Faure even speaks of the final form of the Gospel as pieced together by an editor and as such constitutes an "unfinished draft."<sup>69</sup>

Faure's notion that John's change in citation formula suffices to indicate the presence of two different pre-Gospel sources has not won much favour. Several years later F. Smend argued against Faure, stating that the citation formulae give no clues to the presence of sources in

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<sup>66</sup> Faure, "Die alttestamentlichen Zitate," 101: "eine Sammlung von Belegstellen."

<sup>67</sup> Faure, "Die alttestamentlichen Zitate," 101: "die Schrift auch eine Art Logos, der sich verkörpern, eine Idee, die Gestalt gewinnen will und muß."

<sup>68</sup> Faure, "Die alttestamentlichen Zitate," 101: "Das Wort, das – ausgegangen – nicht leer zurückkehren kann, das als lebendig treibende Kraft Leben, Wirklichkeit werden – eben sich erfüllen muß."

<sup>69</sup> Faure, "Die alttestamentlichen Zitate," 117: "eine unvollendeten Entwurf;" cf. page 120.

John.<sup>70</sup> However, the questions Faure asked of the text continued to be posed by later scholars from slightly different angles: Bultmann argued that all of John's explicit citations came from the hand of the evangelist, except for Isa 53:1 in John 12:38, which he argues came from a pre-Gospel source.<sup>71</sup> R. T. Fortna called this the *sēmeia* (σημεῖα) source, and suggested that traces of this source were to be found in John 12:27-38.<sup>72</sup> But the assumption of Faure and later scholars, that the citation formulae indicate anything about pre-Gospel sources is not the only contentious point to note. Faure's conclusion that the finished form of the Gospel is really an 'unfinished draft' is equally contentious, missing as it does the rhetorical significance of the textual function of the OT citations and their Johannine formulae. Few scholars today would concede that John 1:19-12:15 functions merely as a repository of proof-texts. It is much more common to find scholars claiming a positive, 'witnessing' function for Scripture in John 1:19-12:15.<sup>73</sup> Scripture is called upon for what it *reveals* about Jesus – not in the pejorative proof-text manner; for John this would be redundant as the words and works of Jesus reveal the divine – but insofar as Scripture *itself* is a 'sign' that points to Jesus.

Later works directly addressing the question of John's explicit OT citations no longer sought primarily to uncover hidden pre-Gospel sources. Instead, scholarship was set upon a new trajectory wherein the major concern was to pinpoint the source of each *individual* citation of

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<sup>70</sup> F. Smend, "Die Behandlung alttestamentlicher Zitate als Ausgangspunkt der Quellenscheidung im 4. Evangelium," ZNW 24 (1925), 147-150.

<sup>71</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray et al, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 452 n. 2; 674, n. 1.

<sup>72</sup> Robert T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel* (SNTSMS 11; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 242.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Andreas Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift im Johannesevangelium: Eine Untersuchung zur johanneischen Hermeneutik anhand der Schriftzitate* (WUNT 2/83; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996).

the OT in the Gospel. In other words, these latter studies began to ask, ‘upon which version of the Scriptures does John rely when he cites from them?’ The answer to this question depended partly upon which versions of the Scriptures scholars thought would have been available to John. The extant Masoretic Text (MT), the Septuagint (alternatively, the ‘Old Greek’, LXX/OG), the Aramaic Targums and even the Synoptic Gospels appeared in the scholarship as the main contenders for the title of ‘John’s source text’. In addition to seeking the source(s) of John’s explicit OT citations, this field of study also questioned *how* John utilised his sources, for example, whether he was quoting his source text reliably, and if not, what might have been his reasons for altering it. The issue of John’s redactional activity, therefore, has been implicated in the broader question of John’s sources.<sup>74</sup>

The first monograph in English on the topic of the OT citations in the Gospel of John was written by Edwin D. Freed in mid-1960. Freed’s meticulous study demonstrated that it is impossible to determine exactly the source-text for John’s citation of the OT. Evidence for John’s use of the Hebrew text (MT) is as strong as evidence for his use of the Greek (LXX), and in “several cases,” even the “tradition of the Targums” appears to have had its influence.<sup>75</sup> But the real difficulty in determining a single, definitive source, according to Freed, lies in the fact that “in every instance [John’s] quoted text appears to be adapted to its immediate context, to his literary style, and to the whole plan of the composition of his Gospel.”<sup>76</sup> No single “fixed text” guided John as he composed his Gospel. Ultimately, when citing from the OT, John was concerned to bring out the theological depth of the Scriptures as they pertained to the person of Jesus.<sup>77</sup> Freed contends, moreover, that the actual form of

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. C. Goodwin, “How Did John Treat His Sources?” *JBL* 73 (1954): 61-75.

<sup>75</sup> Edwin D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 130.

<sup>76</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 129.

<sup>77</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 129.



John's citations may have been determined by his "study of written texts."<sup>78</sup> In other words, John's Gospel was the product of a school, and the Gospel's incorporation of the Scriptures was not owing to John's lone – albeit admirable – "memory" of the OT and other traditions, but due to the studious labour of a likeminded group of Christians.<sup>79</sup>

While establishing John's sources for the OT citations is Freed's main concern, the other stated aims of his study include (a) assessing the evidence for John's use of an established *testimonia* collection as the source or *Vorlage* of his citations; and (b) questioning how the study of each individual OT citation in John bears upon the problem of John's relation to the Synoptics.<sup>80</sup> Freed eventually concludes that John did not rely upon early Christian *testimonia*, mainly because of the uniqueness of John's chosen citations and the contexts in which he places them in the Gospel.<sup>81</sup> Curiously, however, Freed concludes that John relied upon the Synoptic Gospels for some of his citations – a supposition that is highly disputed today.<sup>82</sup> In short, against earlier theses claiming that John relied exclusively on the Hebrew text for his citations, or exclusively on one source at all, Freed presses his case that John's influence was a motley combination of everything from the MT to the LXX, the Targumic traditions and the Synoptics.

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<sup>78</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 130.

<sup>79</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 130. The theory of a Johannine 'school' began to enjoy relative success after –but perhaps not because of – Freed's publication, cf. Oscar Cullman, *The Johannine Circle: Its Place in Judaism, among the Disciples of Jesus and in Early Christianity. A Study in the Origin of the Gospel of John* (London: SCM, 1976); R. Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School: An Evaluation of the Johannine School Hypothesis Based on an Investigation of the Nature of Ancient Schools* (SBLDS 26; Missoula: Scholars, 1975); Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, "Quest for the Johannine School: The Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 23, no. 4 (1977): 402-427.

<sup>80</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, lx.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 118-125, 128.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 130. Cf. D. Moody Smith, *John among the Gospels: The Relationship in Twentieth Century Research* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

Far more extensive in scope is the monograph of Günter Reim, published in German a decade after Freed's study.<sup>83</sup> Reim's work sought to uncover the sources of John's explicit OT citations, to determine their context (both in the OT and how they are recontextualised in the Gospel) and to assess the implications of John's relation to the Synoptics. In this respect, Reim's objectives parallel those of Freed, although his conclusions are very different. Reim's broader concern, moreover, is to investigate the OT allusions and motifs in the Gospel, as this too constitutes the OT "Hintergrund" permeating John's thought.<sup>84</sup> To this end, Reim concentrates particular attention on the Wisdom traditions and how they have been allusively incorporated into John's Gospel.<sup>85</sup>

With respect to source-dependency Reim concludes that John did not utilise *any* written version of the OT for his citations. Reim argues that the complex and varied manner in which John 'cites' Scripture indicates that all of the OT citations (except Ps 69 in John 2:17, 15:25, and 19:28) had in fact been present in the pre-Gospel traditions. John's citations were already shaped by oral tradition and the early Christian source material [i.e. for Reim, a Signs-Source, a Synoptic source (1:23; 12:13, 15; 13:18; 17:12; 19:36, 37), a "Jewish-Christian discussion" source (John 7:42; 12:34) and a Wisdom source (6:31, 45; 7:38; 10:34)].<sup>86</sup> John drew neither on the MT nor the LXX.<sup>87</sup> In fact, according to Reim, the only biblical 'book' with which John was acquainted and which he had at his disposal was Deutero-Isaiah. It is the Prophet figure of Deut 18:15-22, together with the Suffering Servant figure of Second Isaiah (42:1-9; 49:1-7; 52:13-53:12) that Reim argues had exclusively influenced the Johannine

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<sup>83</sup> Günter Reim, *Studien*.

<sup>84</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 97-188.

<sup>85</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 223-224.

<sup>86</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 189; cf. 94-95; 207-209.

<sup>87</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 189.

Christology.<sup>88</sup> Out of these insights, Reim proceeds to construct a highly original, complex – and ultimately very imaginative – theory of the Gospel’s composition, which need not be examined here.<sup>89</sup>

Reim’s work has had an ambivalent reception in the subsequent literature.<sup>90</sup> His assumption that John *knew* only of Deutero-Isaiah seems far-fetched as John may simply have restricted his *usage* of Isaiah. Furthermore, John’s Christology is delineated by a variety of motifs and traditions, not only the Deutero-Isaian ones, but also the Davidic and Mosaic. What deserves attention in Reim’s study is his notion that certain of the OT citations were present already in the pre-Johannine tradition, in the so-called “Jewish-Christian discussion source.” Reim understands this written source to have inscribed the historical, polemical arguments between Jews and Christians over the significance of Jesus. Christians brought forward certain ‘proof-texts’ from the Scriptures to bolster their claims that Jesus was one with God and equal to God.<sup>91</sup> These two citations (7:42 and 12:34) apparently reflect the Johannine community’s “lebendige Diskussion” (vibrant discussion) with fellow Jews about Jesus as Messiah. The current study puts forward a more integrative reading of the Gospel’s OT citations than Reim’s historical-critical approach; I understand the text to be a unified, literary whole in its final instantiation, and so read Jesus’ disputes with the Jews as part of the narrative’s design,

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<sup>88</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 162-182; 260-261.

<sup>89</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 239-240, 208-209. Reim argues for a no longer extant ‘fourth Synoptic Gospel’ upon which John drew (see page 211). According to Reim, the evangelist wrote a ‘first draft’ of his Gospel without consulting this ‘fourth Synoptic Gospel’, but used only his ‘Signs Source’ and his ‘Wisdom Source’. During a ‘second draft’, the evangelist made use of the fourth Synoptic Gospel, and it is for this reason, Reim states, that John’s Gospel appears so disjointed, sometimes crossing paths with the Synoptics and sometimes diverging from them (cf. pages 239-240; 245-246).

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 16-18.

<sup>91</sup> This ‘vibrant discussion’ was also somewhat apologetic, see Reim, *Studien*, 190. Cf. also Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations*, 23-24.

and the Jews response to the OT citations as a literary-rhetorical pattern at work in the text.<sup>92</sup> What is important in Reim's study in relation to this thesis is that he has noticed the special character of the OT citations specifically in relation to the Jesus-Jews polemic in the Gospel, although he expressed this in source-critical terms.

Maarten J. J. Menken contributed to this field of study through the publication of a series of articles on the OT citations in John over a period of eleven years (1985-1996). These articles were later collated into a monograph published in 1996.<sup>93</sup> Menken's contention was that previous studies on the topic had neglected the question of how John's OT citations were the product of his editorial activity. Although scholars had asked, "Which OT source is John using for this quotation?" they had not considered – according to Menken – whether John deviated intentionally from his sources to express something theologically unique. John's purpose in citing the Scriptures, therefore, was Christological and theological – John's obvious deviations from the source text are thus not to be ascribed to his "defective memory" but to his theological design.<sup>94</sup> According to Menken, John "adduces quotations to establish that what he tells his audience about Jesus, especially about the end of Jesus' ministry, agrees with the Scriptures and constitutes their fulfillment (12:15, 38, 40; 19:24, 36, 37)".<sup>95</sup>

Menken therefore takes a redaction and source-critical approach to the text of the Gospel, arguing that John used the LXX mostly, but freely modified the quotations for Christological reasons.<sup>96</sup> For example, in John 1:23, Menken argues that the evangelist drew upon Isa 40:3 LXX, modifying certain phrases in order to show how John (the 'Baptiser') stands in relation

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<sup>92</sup> This will be developed in more depth below (see section V).

<sup>93</sup> Maarten J. J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form* (CBET 15; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996).

<sup>94</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 13.

<sup>95</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 13.

<sup>96</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 15; 206-207.

to Christ as “witness” rather than as “precursor.”<sup>97</sup> Thus, the goal of Menken’s study is two-fold: to “establish as precisely as possible” the source-text John uses when citing Scripture and then to “explain the changes the evangelist made in [sic] the source.”<sup>98</sup> Of course, there could be some circularity of argumentation here: Menken later explains that understanding the Johannine redaction of a particular OT citation can *assist* in “determining the source” text precisely.<sup>99</sup> This demonstrates the overall difficulty of the modern scholarly quest to determine sources: does one assume the Johannine redaction as an *a priori*, or the source texts as we have them?<sup>100</sup>

Menken makes other subordinate claims in his study that are reminiscent of Freed and Reim. For example, he argues that John’s *selection* of OT citations is largely determined by the oral tradition (whereas Reim argued that the citations themselves came down to John through the tradition).<sup>101</sup> But his major claim is that John’s redaction of the LXX was motivated by Christological reasons, and by extension, by a Christological *perception* of the Scriptures themselves.

A study contemporaneous with Menken’s was that of Bruce G. Schuchard, whose monograph on the topic of the OT citations in John’s Gospel was published in 1992.<sup>102</sup> Schuchard’s work is self-consciously indebted to Menken’s: Schuchard notes that his premise is “similar” to Menken’s, as is his methodological procedure.<sup>103</sup> Schuchard’s investigation of John’s sources also “parallel” those of Menken’s, although Schuchard “sometimes” arrives at different

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<sup>97</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 35.

<sup>98</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 19.

<sup>99</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 19.

<sup>100</sup> Discussed below in more detail (see section II.C).

<sup>101</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 212.

<sup>102</sup> Bruce G. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture: The Interrelationship of Form and Function in the Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John* (SBLDS 133; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992).

<sup>103</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, xv.

conclusions to those of Menken.<sup>104</sup> Schuchard, like Menken, is more confident than Freed or Reim in ascribing a specific textual source for John's explicit OT citations (the Old Greek, or LXX).<sup>105</sup> Like Menken, he argues that John purposefully manipulated the sources with which he was working in order to make Christological points, specifically that the person and work of Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures.<sup>106</sup>

However, Schuchard's specific contribution to the question of John's use of the OT is to "characterise in detail the interrelationship of form and function in the explicit Old Testament citations in the Gospel of John."<sup>107</sup> According to Schuchard, previous studies (apart from those of Menken) had only considered the textual form of the citations, that is, whether they appear in John's Gospel as citations of the LXX, the Hebrew or other textual recensions. The "function" of the citations in the Gospel, however, had been "overlooked."<sup>108</sup> This is the caveat that Schuchard purports to fill. To do so, he covers familiar ground in setting out to assess (a) the "Johannine context" of each citation; (b) the use of these citations in the Synoptics and Paul; (c) the use of the same citations in various places in John; and (d) the "introductory formula" prefacing the citations in John.<sup>109</sup>

Unfortunately, Schuchard does not define the key terms with which he works, particularly that of the "function" of the OT citations in John. It becomes clear as the work progresses that Schuchard means to examine the theological or Christological function that the cited texts have in the narrative, not the rhetorical function of the cited texts as they impinge upon the response of characters in the text. In this respect, Schuchard's contribution lies very close to

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<sup>104</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, xvi.

<sup>105</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, xvii.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 154.

<sup>107</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, xiii.

<sup>108</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, xiii.

<sup>109</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, xv.

Menken's.<sup>110</sup> For example, after determining that the “form” of the Isaian citation in John 1:23 is that of the LXX, Schuchard explains that the “function” of the cited text is to “highlight the Baptist's identity as the quintessential disciple of and witness to Wisdom.”<sup>111</sup> This function is obviously a “conscious desire” on the part of the evangelist, so in this instance the ‘interrelationship’ between the ‘form and function’ of the Isaian citation is simply the dialectical interplay of source and redaction criticism that Menken pioneered in his earlier works, although Schuchard reads the evidence slightly differently.

### C. Evaluation of Previous Trajectories

The exploration of the sources behind John's explicit OT citations and the question of John's method of citation are both important issues. They will not, however, be resolved in this thesis. Indeed, there are reasons to question the ongoing relevance of such studies in light of recent research on the lack of a fixed Hebrew ‘canon’ in the first and second centuries CE, that is, the time that the NT writings were being produced.<sup>112</sup> As Crawford points out, “the Jewish community did not promulgate an official canon of Scripture until after the end of the Second Temple period.”<sup>113</sup> When scholars speak of John utilising an OT ‘source text’ for his citations they assume that John had at his disposal a particular collection of writings that was everywhere recognisable as sacred Scripture. If we think of a ‘canon’ in terms of a “closed list” of books officially accepted by a faith community as sacred and normative, then this is

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<sup>110</sup> Schuchard claims to have been “unaware” of Menken's seminal work, yet at the same time to have been indebted to it. See Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, xv.

<sup>111</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 15.

<sup>112</sup> Craig A. Evans, “From Prophecy to Testament: An Introduction,” in *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. Craig A. Evans (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 3.

<sup>113</sup> Sidnie White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 6.

something John (or any other NT writer) did not have at his disposal. Moreover, it was not always clear at the time of the Fourth Gospel's composition what could be considered as 'Scripture' and what could not be – according to Evans, some Jews would have held the *Enoch* writings as authoritative and sacred and quoted from them accordingly, whereas other Jews would not have done so.<sup>114</sup>

Thus John's reference to the 'Scriptures' was not to a canonical set of writings akin to the modern Bible. Nonetheless, in the second half of the Second Temple period, it is clear that there was "a generally accepted body of sacred literature that was considered by Jews to be uniquely authoritative, ancient in origin, and binding on the community for doctrine and practice."<sup>115</sup> This body of sacred literature included the five books of the Pentateuch (*Torah*), which was "recognised several centuries before the NT era."<sup>116</sup> It also included most of the Prophetic corpus (*Nevi'im*); the Writings (*Ketuvim*) were not "settled" until a much later period (cf. *m. Yad.* 3.5).<sup>117</sup> The discovery of the DSS enabled modern scholars to come to some tentative conclusion about which writings had gained the status of 'sacred Scripture' in second Temple Judaism, and of course the NT writings give some indication of which texts the early Christian communities held to be authoritative and sacred. 'Scripture', for the early Christians, was not determined by a canon, however, but by other criteria: whether the text was 'sacred' and carried a certain divine authority, i.e. whether it was 'inspired' or revelatory.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Evans, "Introduction," 3.

<sup>115</sup> Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture*, 112.

<sup>116</sup> Evans, "Introduction," 3.

<sup>117</sup> Evans, "Introduction," 3.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Evans, "Introduction," 3.



One must not assume, therefore, that every citation prefaced by an introductory formula in John's Gospel was viewed by all Jews as authoritative and sacred 'Scripture'. John's selection of cited texts was guided by whether the text "spoke" with a "prophetic voice,"<sup>119</sup> whether it was harmonious with his theological and Christological vision – as Menken and Schuchard have intimated in their redaction-critical studies. However, the criterion of 'inspiration' and the lack of a fixed 'canon' circa 90 CE, does make for some difficulty in searching for John's precise textual source. It is also part of the reason why there is no consensus on the amount of explicit OT citations in the Gospel; whether or not John 7:38-39 constitutes an explicit OT citation is a notorious crux in the research. This 'citation' is prefaced by John's distinctive formula but corresponds to no known textual variant of the MT, the LXX or the Targums. However, it was obviously an authoritative 'saying' for John and the Johannine community, and was in this sense to be considered as Scripture.

A second and related issue is the pluriformity of the ancient OT text. Not only were different translations circulating in the first few centuries of the Common Era (the Greek LXX, the Aramaic Targums, the Hebrew Codices, even the Old Latin pre-dating the Vulgate) but there were several *variants* of each translation. Qumran attests four different variants of the Hebrew Scriptures: proto-Masoretic, Samaritan, Septuagintal, and a previously unknown text.<sup>120</sup> With regard to the Aramaic *Targumim*, there is the extant Syriac version *Ktabe Qadishe* to consider, although its precise provenance and date are still disputed.<sup>121</sup> What this means is that the search for the 'original' source text of John's OT citations may in fact be in vain, since "what at first may appear as an inaccurate quotation (which in turn may be a

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<sup>119</sup> Evans, "Introduction," 3.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Evans, "Introduction," 4.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Evans, "Introduction," 8. Cf. M. McNamara *Targum and Testament: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible: A Light on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972).

quotation from the LXX, itself thought to be inaccurately translated from Hebrew) may be a quotation of an entirely different textual tradition.”<sup>122</sup> That textual tradition may or may not be extant or otherwise available to the modern scholar today.

A third and final issue to consider is what Achtemeier terms the high “residual orality” of cultures of late antiquity. The “orality” characterising ancient Mediterranean cultures was present residually in the written texts they produced. All writings of the period were vocalised, whether in dictation or in the process of reading out loud, or even in the oral performance of some texts.<sup>123</sup> In other words, texts were crafted to catch the ear rather than the eye, as it were, and Achtemeier contends that this is proven by certain linguistic and literary features inherent in the texts. For example, the frequent use of chiasm and repetition in many of the NT documents may indicate the presence of such “residual orality.”<sup>124</sup> Achtemeier’s major conclusions relate to source-criticism. What scholars have called ‘intercalations’ may in fact be the result of the evangelists’ “need to provide oral/aural clues to the one who listens to the document”.<sup>125</sup> In terms of referencing the OT, Achtemeier argues that NT writers were much more likely to have derived their citations from memory rather than from a written source.<sup>126</sup> Achtemeier then details the impracticalities of “scroll-rolling” in late antiquity to source a citation as further evidence that texts were cited from memory.<sup>127</sup> Finally, as to the NT writers ‘altering’ the material they cited, this was not,

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<sup>122</sup> Evans, “Introduction,” 5. Cf. also Richard B. Hays and Joel B. Green, “The Use of the Old Testament by New Testament Writers,” in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 222-238.

<sup>123</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, “Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity,” *JBL* 109, no. 1 (1990): 15.

<sup>124</sup> Achtemeier, “Omne Verbum Sonat,” 17.

<sup>125</sup> Achtemeier, “Omne Verbum Sonat,” 26.

<sup>126</sup> Achtemeier, “Omne Verbum Sonat,” 27.

<sup>127</sup> Achtemeier, “Omne Verbum Sonat,” 27.

according to Achtemeier, “deliberate deception” – it occurred precisely *because* writers were not functioning as modern writers do in an age of print.<sup>128</sup> Ultimately, seeking *the* source text of an OT citation in the NT is, according to Achtemeier, an “exercise in futility.”<sup>129</sup> All of the above points taken together demonstrate the problematic aspects of the *questions* previous scholars have asked about John’s citation of the OT.

### III. The Function of the Old Testament Citations in John’s Gospel

Seeking to determine John’s source-text or method of citing Scripture have been the major, traditional lines of inquiry into John’s citation of the OT. They have not, however, been the only questions asked. Moving beyond method and source questions, some have begun to ask how the OT citations function in the narrative of John’s Gospel or how they possibly functioned in the putative Johannine ‘community’. Thus, the ‘doctrinal’ and ‘apologetic’ functions of John’s OT citations have been investigated, although not in monograph form.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Achtemeier, “Omne Verbum Sonat,” 27.

<sup>129</sup> Achtemeier, “Omne Verbum Sonat,” 27; A similar conclusion from a narrative-critical perspective is put forward by Mark Allan Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star: Adventures in Biblical Reader-Response Criticism* (Louisville: John Knox, 2001), 99-101. Powell argues that ‘implied readers’ of the Gospel are “not expected to notice” the fact that John’s OT citations may not correspond exactly to a known source-text, and that such close scrutiny is the work of *real* readers of the Gospel. ‘Implied readers’ on the other hand, would simply ‘hear’ every resonance to the OT, especially in the case of “composite quotations” (cf. John 7:37-39). Real readers, Powell cautions, must “set aside their own knowledge” of the Scriptural canon and “simply take what is said ... at face value”. These theoretical considerations will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter. It is still worth noting that as groundbreaking as Achtemeier’s study was, it does not *necessarily* discount the idea that the evangelists had written sources at their disposal.

<sup>130</sup> Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*. An apologetic function for John’s ‘fulfillment formulae-citations’ is postulated by John Painter, “The Quotation of Scripture and Unbelief in John 12.36b-43,” in *The*

An important study by Andreas Obermann continued this general line of study, analysing the form and function of all of the OT citations across John's Gospel. Like the studies before him, Obermann considered John's Christology to be the motivating factor behind his citation of the OT and made certain judgments about which source John relied upon for his citations. However, unlike previous studies, Obermann filled an important gap in addressing the *rhetorical* function of the OT citations on the level of the narrative itself. More recently, the possible 'social' function of John's use of Scripture has been studied by Jamie Clarke-Soles, with attention to the 'sectarian' dynamics of the Johannine 'community'. Because the distinct contributions of Obermann and Clarke-Soles are seminal to this study, I will analyse these works in some depth.

#### A. Andreas Obermann: The Theological-Rhetorical Function of Scripture

As the title of Obermann's work suggests, the subject of his study is the 'Christological fulfillment' of Scripture in the Gospel of John. The subtitle of his work indicates that Obermann's specific concern is with John's distinctive hermeneutic as it pertains to the Scriptural citations in the Gospel. While both of these areas have been traversed in varying degrees of depth by previous scholars, neither had been the express subject of a monograph until Obermann's publication. As I have shown, a major focus of concern for scholars was the possible *sources* behind John's Scriptural citations. Indeed, Obermann acknowledges that although his work treats the question of sources and the wording of John's Scriptural citations – as previous studies before his had done – the "open questions" ("offene Fragen") with

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*Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Craig A. Evans and W. Richard Stegner, (JSNTSup 104; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 443.

which he deals have to do with the “hermeneutical premises of the Evangelist.” Obermann understands these premises to be John’s “methodological appropriation of Scripture as well as the meaning of Scripture for the theology and plan of the Gospel.”<sup>131</sup> Thus, Obermann aims to investigate the explicit OT citations in John’s Gospel for what they reveal about Christ as well as the “Scripture-understanding” (“Schriftverständnisses”) of the evangelist.<sup>132</sup>

Obermann’s work is divided into four parts. An introductory section is followed by an in-depth exegetical reading of all of the explicit OT citations in the Gospel; the third part provides a detailed analysis of what Obermann concludes to be John’s “Scriptural understanding” and the fourth and final part presents a summary of Obermann’s major observations. The first part – largely introductory in scope – deals initially with a review of the literature on John’s use of the OT Scriptures, and secondly, with a detailed clarification of terminology. In this latter sub-section, Obermann investigates the meaning of the semantic fields of “Scripture” (variously designated by the evangelist as ἡ γραφή (2:22; 5:39; 7:38, 4; 10:35; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24, 28, 36, 37; 20:9), το γράμμα (5:47; 7:15)<sup>133</sup> of the “Law” (ὁ νόμος; 1:17, 45; 7:19, 23, 49, 51; 8:17; 10:34; 12:34; 15:25; 18:31; 19:7),<sup>134</sup> and of “Moses” (1:45: ὃν ἔγραψεν Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, cf. 1:17; 3:14; 5:45, 46; 6:32; 7:19, 22a, 22b, 23; 9:28, 29) in the Gospel.<sup>135</sup> Each term can be used in the Gospel to mean the OT Scriptures generally, but carries a specific nuance determined by the context of the Gospel narrative.<sup>136</sup>

Arguably one of the most important contributions Obermann makes to the topic is his extensive consideration of the function and significance of the OT citations in the Gospel,

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<sup>131</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 35.

<sup>132</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 35.

<sup>133</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 38-50.

<sup>134</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 50-60.

<sup>135</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 60-61.

<sup>136</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 62-63.

particularly with regard to the types of ‘formulae’ John deploys when introducing a Scriptural citation. After determining the number of explicit OT citations in the Gospel (which comes to fourteen),<sup>137</sup> Obermann discusses the theological meaning of the citation formulas themselves.<sup>138</sup> Obermann distinguishes two main groups of introductory formulae in the Gospel. The first group of formulae is operative in what could be called roughly the first ‘half’ of the Gospel: up to and including John 12:15 (with the exception of the citations in 1:23 and 12:13), John consistently uses some variation of the *ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον* formula to preface his citations (cf. 6:31, 45; 10:34; 12:15), alternating at times with the periphrastic perfect *γεγραμμένον ἐστὶν* (cf. 2:17).<sup>139</sup> From 12:38 onwards, however, John’s second group of citation ‘formulae’ emerges: five times the OT citations are consistently introduced with the phrase *ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ* (12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24; 19:36).<sup>140</sup> The citations in 12:40 and 19:37 also fall within this group, as they follow closely on the previous citations of 12:28 and 19:36. The one exception to this rule is the citation of Ps 69:21 in 19:28, which is introduced with the expression *ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή*.<sup>141</sup>

These two different modes of Scriptural appropriation in the Gospel correspond to the two different stages of Jesus’ ministry. Thus, Scripture is shown to speak of Jesus in John 1:1-12:38 when Jesus is *ἐν παρρησίᾳ*, but when Jesus retires from the public ministry to ‘his own’ (13:1-17:26) to face his Passion (18:1-19:42), what was implicit in Scripture becomes

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<sup>137</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 69-77. See Chapter 3 (Section I) for a more detailed argument about what constitutes a Scriptural ‘citation’ in John’s Gospel.

<sup>138</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 78-89.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 78-79.

<sup>140</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 79. The subject is not always *ἡ γραφή*: see, *ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ αὐτῶν γεγραμμένος* (15:25).

<sup>141</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 79. The conceptual orbit is nonetheless the same, except that in this case Obermann argues for an intensification of Scripture’s fulfillment in Jesus’ death (see Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 350-364).

explicit in the ‘work’ of Jesus.<sup>142</sup> According to Obermann, the two distinct citation formulae found in the Gospel cannot merely be ascribed to stylistic variation on the part of the evangelist, but in fact reveals the two distinct conceptions of Scripture with which he was working.<sup>143</sup> So, Scripture is, firstly, the *Deutehintergrund* of the Christ-event, and the Christ-event is, finally, the explicit fulfillment of the Scriptures.<sup>144</sup>

While Obermann acknowledges the previous work of Faure in noting the two distinctive formulas, he reads the significance of this distinction not in terms of any source-hypothesis but in terms of the *function* the citation formulae have at the level of the text itself.<sup>145</sup> In the first half of the Gospel, Scripture is called upon as a written ‘witness’ to Jesus; Scripture is understood by the evangelist as something that has significance for the evangelist’s time, and as something in which God is revealed.<sup>146</sup> The seven OT citations in John 1:1-12:15 are integrated into the Gospel’s narrative or discourse in such a way that they form an essential part of the revelation of Jesus. Thus each OT citation is revelatory in content and spells out something significant about Jesus: that he is Lord (1:23), Temple (2:17), Living Bread (6:31, 45), Son of God (10:34) and King (12:15).<sup>147</sup> Scripture thereby functions to ‘make sense’ of

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<sup>142</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 325-350.

<sup>143</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 80-81.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 91; 215.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 333-334; 345-348; 78, for Obermann’s engagement with Faure.

<sup>146</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 80: “Die Schriften behalten als in mehr oder minder schon lange zurückgegender Vergangenheit verfaßte Texte den Character eines Wortes, in dem sich Gott offenbart.”

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 91-203. This also seems to discount the view of Beutler that “John is more interested in scripture as such than in particular texts pointing to Jesus.” See, Johannes Beutler, “The Use of ‘Scripture’ in the Gospel of John,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John in Honour of D. Moody Smith*, ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox), 154.

Jesus to those who constitute the textual audience of the narrative (and by extension, to the real readers of the narrative).

The ‘fulfillment-formula’ (Erfüllungsformel) utilised in the second half of the Gospel to introduce the OT citations indicates another characteristic of Scripture: it becomes something that is fulfilled or realised in Jesus.<sup>148</sup> According to Obermann, this is made clear in the shift from the verb πληρόω to τελέω in John 19:30: when Jesus breathes his last and states that it is “finished” (τετέλεσται), the deeper connotation is not only that his work is fulfilled but also that the Scriptures have been brought to their *completion*, as a veritable cluster of key OT texts are cited in this immediate context (cf. 19:24, 36, 37).<sup>149</sup> The Christological fulfillment of the Scriptures, moreover, indicates how closely Johannine Christology is linked to the evangelist’s distinct Scriptural hermeneutic. Scripture – as the Word of God – finds its final concretisation (*letztgültige Konkretion*) in Jesus as the personified *Logos* of God.<sup>150</sup> The divine glory that is present in Jesus, and the ‘glorification’ of Jesus in his death, are fundamental theological categories that help to explicate Jesus *and* the Scriptures (cf. 2:22; 12:16; 20:9).<sup>151</sup> John himself is seen to be a ‘Scripture-Theologian’ (*Schriftheologe*) whose indebtedness to Scripture is fundamental to his narrative portrayal of Jesus and his understanding of Jesus’ personal and theological significance.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 80. Cf. page 346: “Nach dem Ende des *parresia*-Wirkens Jesu unter ‘den Juden’ kommt die Schrift als primärer Offenbarungsträger zum Zuge sofern deren Erfüllung betont wird.”

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 355-356; Cf. Francis J. Moloney, “The Gospel of John as Scripture,” *CBQ* 67 (2005): 456.

<sup>150</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 426; cf. 381-382; 386; 387.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 428; 395-399.

<sup>152</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 430.



Four of Obermann's central claims will be developed in this thesis. The first is that the OT citations in John 1:1-12:15 – the section of the Gospel concerned with Jesus' public ministry – function rhetorically to make Jesus known to his interlocutors. Scripture 'witnesses' to Jesus in that it functions to *interpret* Jesus, to 'make sense' of Jesus to his audience in order to lead them to belief. Each OT citation in this section of the Gospel reveals something specific and unique about Jesus, situating him in the context of the wider biblical story (cf. 1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34; 12:15). Francis Moloney has, in a recent article, commented upon Obermann's thesis, stating that in John 1:19-12:15, "the Scriptures serve as background to support the Fourth Evangelist's claim that Jesus is Lord, Temple, Living Bread, Son of God and King. In the midst of misunderstanding and inability to understand, Scripture provides the correct explanation of who Jesus is while he is ἐν παρρησίᾳ."<sup>153</sup>

The second and related insight advanced by Obermann is that John presents Scripture as 'speaking' to the Jews, who are more or less the exclusive textual audience of each OT citation in the section of the Gospel concerned with Jesus' public ministry (John 1:19-12:15). The Jews therefore constitute the immediate audience needing to be persuaded about the Christological significance of the Scriptural citations.<sup>154</sup> As Jesus' 'hour' approaches he withdraws from the Jews and turns to 'his own' (12:36b; cf. 13:1). This is a critical turning point in the Gospel narrative. The evangelist proffers a commentary upon the unbelief of the people (12:37-42) and at the same time adduces Scripture as a reason for this (12:38, 40); this is the first instance in which the clause ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ is used to introduce an OT citation, a clause used consistently throughout the remainder of the Gospel.

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<sup>153</sup> Francis J. Moloney, "The Gospel of John as Scripture," *CBQ* 67 (2005): 458.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 341; 346; 427. Precisely how this thesis develops these claims will be made clear shortly.

The third point developed in this thesis is Obermann's contention that John, as a "Schriftteologie," *retains the contexts* of the OT citations when incorporating them into his Gospel. According to Obermann, John is not "atomistic" in his approach to Scripture because for him, the OT citations are determined by their theological relevance.<sup>155</sup> John cites from the OT "sovereignly and freely"; not, on the one hand, randomly or, on the other hand, because tradition compels him to do so, but as an active exegete of Scripture. John works the context of the biblical citations into his own text, changing words or phrases when it suits his Christological agenda.<sup>156</sup> One of the major ways this thesis develops Obermann's claim is that the contexts of the OT citations are retained *specifically* with regard to the Jews who are usually Jesus' interlocutors when Scripture is cited in the first half of the Gospel.

The fourth and final point that is relevant to this thesis is Obermann's claim that John is consciously writing a *neue Schrift* – a new Scripture – of his own. Obermann reflects upon the post-Easter Johannine community gathered under the guidance of the Paraclete, and argues that for this community, the Gospel functioned in a way similar to the ancient Scriptures of Israel. The ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται of 20:31 indicates the revelatory quality of John's *own* work, such that the Gospel is "a work of new holy Scripture" (*eine Art neuer heiliger Schrift*) for the community (cf. 20:9).<sup>157</sup> There is continuity between the (OT) Scriptures' witness to Jesus and the way the literary work 'John's Gospel' mediates eternal life to believers in the post-Easter epoch.<sup>158</sup> The Scriptures find their fulfillment in Jesus, but also in the Gospel itself as 'new Scripture', and as such, are of permanent relevance.

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<sup>155</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 336.

<sup>156</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 335. My own focus differs in that it is a reader-centred approach, whereas Obermann's is author-centred.

<sup>157</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 420-421.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 406.

Moloney, developing the thought of Obermann, adds that “the narrative tradition of the *graphē* of the OT continues in the Gospel of John.”<sup>159</sup> Moreover, according to Moloney, the biblical narrative is not only continued in John’s Gospel, but it also “comes to an end” in John’s Gospel.<sup>160</sup> This thesis takes the position that in writing *γραφή* of his own, John is ‘re-telling’ the biblical narrative, and that the Jews emerge as key players in this re-narration of Scripture. This surfaces clearly in the seven explicit OT citations found in John 1:19-12:15, where the Jews are not merely placed as Jesus’ interlocutors but are implicated in the wider contextual narratives of the citations texts.

## B. Jaime Clark-Soles: The Social Function of Scripture

One final study to be reviewed at length in this chapter is Jaime Clarke-Soles’ work on the function of Scripture for the Johannine community.<sup>161</sup> Clark-Soles premises a sectarian community behind the Fourth Gospel, a “break-away” group standing in “conscious opposition to the parent tradition” of second Temple Judaism.<sup>162</sup> According to Clark-Soles, the Johannine community developed a ‘sectarian’ mentality in the wake of a painful separation from mainstream Judaism that left them with “minority status” and an exclusivist outlook vis-à-vis their environment.<sup>163</sup> Clark-Soles bases this assumption upon the seminal work of J. Louis Martyn, following his influential hypothesis about synagogue-expulsion.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Moloney, “The Gospel of John as Scripture,” 457.

<sup>160</sup> Moloney, “The Gospel of John as Scripture,” 456. Moloney here develops the insights of D. Moody Smith, “When Did the Gospels Become Scripture?” *JBL* 119 (2000): 3-20.

<sup>161</sup> Jaime Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken: The Social Function of the Use of Scripture in the Fourth Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

<sup>162</sup> Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 316; 9; 14.

<sup>163</sup> Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 316.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 4-5; 316.

This same assumption is then substantiated by Clark-Soles' understanding of a 'sect' as it is commonly articulated in the Sociology of Religion.<sup>165</sup>

From this premise, Clark-Soles proceeds to "systematically [address] the ways in which *Scripture* contributes to the maintenance" of the community's "sectarian nature" and reinforces their group ideology.<sup>166</sup> In this respect, Clark-Soles consciously situates her work within the context of Wayne A. Meeks' well-known contribution to the field that argued for a specific social function of the Johannine 'myth' of the ascending/descending Redeemer.<sup>167</sup> To quote Clark-Soles: "just as Meeks moves *by analogy* from the literary level of the text to the social level, so do I."<sup>168</sup> The assumption of the Gospel's social referentiality underpins Clark-Soles' study; the Gospel text, she claims, helped the Johannine community to make sense of their lived experience as well as to create 'boundaries' between 'insiders' and 'outsiders.'<sup>169</sup> John's recourse to Scripture, particularly by means of explicit citation, played a central role in how such boundaries were created. Cited with a thoroughly Christological revisionist

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<sup>165</sup> Cf. Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 14. Clark-Soles follows the definitions set forth by Bainbridge: a 'sect' being a schismatic, break-away group from a 'parent tradition'; and a 'cult' being an innovative, non-schismatic group, not contingent upon a traumatic religious split; see William Sims Bainbridge, *The Sociology of Religious Movements* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 107.

<sup>166</sup> Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 13, her emphasis.

<sup>167</sup> Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 13; 7-8; 209. Cf. Wayne A. Meeks, "The Man From Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 (1972): 44-72. Meeks' conclusions were that the Johannine 'myth' of Jesus as the Sent One from heaven – and the riddling language of the Gospel in general – functioned on a social level to reinforce the community's sectarian status: only insiders could grasp Jesus' double entendre. The Gospel itself, by extension, could be read, according to Meeks, as an "etiology" of the sect.

<sup>168</sup> Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 209, (her emphasis). Clark-Soles also presumes Martyn's analogical model of interpretation wherein the Fourth Gospel is seen to be a 'two-level drama', cf. page 210.

<sup>169</sup> Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 211.

perspective, Scripture is “wrested away” from the community’s “opponents” so that only the Johannine Christians are said to have the “true insight” into Scripture.<sup>170</sup>

These opponents of the Johannine community are referred to by Clark-Soles as “those who have the devil as their father,” as those to be feared by new sect members (7:13; 12:42; 19:38; 20:19), and as those who have the power to kill sect members (16:2) as they did Jesus (5:18; 7:1, 19, 20, 25).<sup>171</sup> Although Clark-Soles does not explicitly name these opponents as the Jews, most of the texts she refers to here speak of the Jews and of their opposition to Jesus, or of ‘the world’ and its opposition to the disciples. Clark-Soles therefore reads off the Gospel text a social history of the community and its conflict situation. The Johannine ‘Jews’ represent real, flesh-and-blood Jews from whom the community of 90CE had broken away and with whom they stood in tension. The Gospel’s – and thus the community’s – use of Scripture operated as part of a sectarian dynamic, dividing Jews from Johannine Christians.

Finally, Clark-Soles’ study utilises a “comparative method of social history” to analyse the Johannine community’s sectarian dynamics.<sup>172</sup> Methodologically, Clark-Soles establishes a taxonomy which posits a variety of categories within which to interpret the ‘sectarian’ function of Scripture in John’s Gospel, as well as in the writings of the Qumran community and the sermons and writings of the modern American sect, the Branch Davidians.<sup>173</sup> Clark-Soles contends that in each sectarian community, Scripture is used to create and reinforce

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<sup>170</sup> Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 318.

<sup>171</sup> Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 318. Clark-Soles alludes to the infamous passage, John 8:44, where Jesus tells *the Jews* that they have the devil as their father. Clark-Soles does not provide a reference to the Gospel at this point.

<sup>172</sup> Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 8.

<sup>173</sup> Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 8-9; 54.

boundaries between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. In John’s Gospel, Scripture functions to obfuscate the revelation of Jesus to outsiders and to facilitate proper understanding of him to insiders, members of the Johannine sect. In the Gospel, a ‘special’ kind of interpretation of Scripture is called for by the narrative, one that only a special, closed-off group would – or should – understand.<sup>174</sup>

I wish to raise three points at which Clark-Soles analysis might be critiqued. The first is in her methodological move from a literary phenomenon (Scriptural citation and allusion) to an ostensible social situation (a sectarian community). Although Clark-Soles argues that “any serious study of the use of Scripture [in the Gospel of John] must take social circumstances into account”, I hesitate to concur with Clark-Soles that such circumstances can be verified with the clarity necessary to reach such solid conclusions.<sup>175</sup> The same criticism could be leveled at similar works influencing Clark-Soles, which seek to read John’s literary artifices as analogues of the community’s situation.<sup>176</sup> John’s story of Jesus – with all its literary artifice – is heavily cloaked in what could be called ‘mythical’ language: “it draws on ideas about transcendent powers and hidden origins, and it transforms what we take to be worldly matters into grand hypostatic powers engaged in a cosmic drama.”<sup>177</sup> Clark-Soles works on

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<sup>174</sup> Cf. Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 220.

<sup>175</sup> Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 54. Clark-Soles herself acknowledges the paucity of empirical evidence in this regard, stating that “because there is no direct evidence of how the scriptural echoes functioned for the Johannine community, I will rely on educated imagination” (see page 207).

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Meeks, *Man From Heaven*; Paul Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985). Herbert Leroy, *Rätsel und Missverständnis: Ein Beitrag zur Formgeschichte des Johannesevangelium* (Bonn: Frankfurt, 1968); Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998).

<sup>177</sup> Trond Skard Dokka, “Irony and Sectarianism in the Gospel of John,” in *New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives. Essays from the Scandinavian Conference on the Fourth Gospel, Aarhus, 1997*, ed.

the assumption that this mythical language can be translated into sociological categories. The use of Scripture in the Gospel is supposedly symptomatic of the community's sectarian status, just as Meek's descending/ascending Redeemer was. It remains possible that such a mythical worldview was prior to any actual split with the 'world' of Judaism, and not representative of it. It is also possible that the Gospel's mythical elements – including its depiction of the Jews and its Christological use of Scripture – obscure rather than reveal the historical situation of the community; the way the Jews are woven into the obvious re-narration of Scripture in the Gospel arguably precludes any clear, empirical analysis of the community's sectarian situation.<sup>178</sup>

The second point follows from the first. It is worth noting that anything that can be predicated of the Johannine community – including its apparent sectarian status – depends solely upon the Gospel text and the Johannine letters. Some problematic theoretical (and historiographical) issues are inevitably raised here. There are scholars who argue that the sect model is anachronistic when applied to the Gospels.<sup>179</sup> The Gospel's 'insider' language has been called into question by the 'missionary' motif present in the Gospel (c. 4:4, 29-30; 39-42; 10:16; 12:20-22; 2:-21) and has raised the question of *why* the Johannine sectarians would have attempted to communicate with 'outsiders' if the language they used – and the

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Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Pedersen (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 99. The term "hypostatic" here may be something of a philosophical import foreign to John's narrative world-view.

<sup>178</sup> I grant Clark-Soles' point about the social referentiality of narrative insofar as texts and genres are culturally and socially contingent, but that texts have a direct mimetic function seems to be undermined by post-structuralist intertextuality theory, where texts refer to a web of other texts (see Chapter 2, section III).

<sup>179</sup> See the recent criticism by Timothy J. M. Ling, *The Judean Poor and the Fourth Gospel*, (SNTSMS 136; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Others again question the very existence of a Johannine community, see recently, Edward W. Klink III, *The Sheep of the Fold: The Audience and Origin of the Gospel of John*, (SNTSMS 141; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Scriptures they cited – conventionally meant they would only be misunderstood.<sup>180</sup> Related to this is the question as to whether community ‘insiders’ were necessarily divided against synagogue Jews (the often postulated referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι), and whether an edict of expulsion precipitated this division.<sup>181</sup> Finally, there are also scholars who argue against an early ‘parting of the ways’ as it has been traditionally constructed in the scholarship.<sup>182</sup> None of this recent scholarship is engaged with on the part of Clark-Soles.

Thirdly, Clark-Soles’ comparative reading of the three sects (Johannine community, the Essenes at Qumran and the Branch Davidians) is sometimes forced. Modern Christian sectarianism does not seem an appropriate model against which to read the Johannine community’s text, not least because the ‘Scriptures’ both communities were working with are vitally different. The Branch Davidians had in their canon of Scripture the NT as well as the

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<sup>180</sup> See for example, Klink, *Sheep of the Fold*, 64-87; Stephen Barton, “Can We Identify the Gospel Audiences?” in *The Gospel for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 189-193.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Rabbi Burton L. Visotsky, “Methodological Considerations on the Study of John’s Interaction with First-Century Judaism,” in *Life in Abundance: Studies of John’s Gospel in Tribute to Raymond E. Brown*, ed. J. R. Donahue (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 91-107. See also W. Horbry, “The Benediction of the Minim and Early Jewish-Christian Controversy,” *JTS* 33 (1982): 19-61.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. Judith Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity*, (SNTW; London: T&T Clark, 2002). Cf. Daniel Boyarin, “The Ioudaioi in John and the Prehistory of ‘Judaism’,” in *Pauline Conversations in Context: Essays in Honour of Calvin J. Roetzel*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson, Philip Sellew, and Claudia Setzer (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 216-239; and published after Clark-Soles’ work: Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Boyarin draws on Althusserian theories of the discursive construction of an ‘Other’ (‘interpellation’) to mark out the early stages of ‘heresiology’ in the NT. Instead of seeing the vituperation with the Jews in the Gospel as evidence of a split between synagogue ‘Judaism’ and Johannine Christianity, following Boyarin, one could read it as the earliest stages of a trajectory of ‘othering’, of constructing an Other so as to define the ‘religious’ Self. This is essentially a *discursive* practice that has a powerful ideological force to bring a ‘religious’ Self/Other into being. I will revisit and comment further upon Boyarin’s proposal after my own analysis of the Johannine texts.



OT, whereas the Johannine Christians relied on no such fixed canon. The Branch Davidian community apparently did not see their own texts as ‘new Scripture’, whereas the Johannine community most likely did. Clark-Soles does not always draw connections between the respective communities with ease; her taxonomy is in several instances self-confessedly inapt or “not immediately relevant.”<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, Clark-Soles’ conclusions about the Johannine perception of the Scriptures do not always fit the Gospel evidence. For example, her case that the coming of Jesus has divested Scripture of its “remaining power” is hard to reconcile with the disciples’ ongoing study of the Scriptures under the guidance of the Paraclete (cf. 20:9).<sup>184</sup>

Despite these concerns, Clark-Soles’ work is important for the connections it draws between the way Scripture is used in the Gospel, and the way the Gospel presents the Jews. Clark-Soles investigates this connection from a socio-historical perspective, implying that the Johannine ‘Jews’ represent officials from post-70 CE synagogue Judaism, and that Scripture functioned to design identity boundaries between these Jews and the Gospel community. The current thesis investigates this same connection, but from a literary-critical perspective, arguing for a rhetorical function of the OT citations as they impact upon the Jews as characters within the Gospel text.

At this point, the two poles of the paradox stated at the beginning of this chapter have crystallised: the Fourth Gospel is often considered to be the ‘most’ and ‘least’ Jewish of all the Gospels, and these paradoxical elements of the Gospel uncomfortably coexist. While John’s recourse to Scripture helps to constitute his Gospel as the ‘most Jewish’ among the

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<sup>183</sup> Cf. Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 329; 319-320.

<sup>184</sup> Cf. Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken*, 323.

four, John's infamous, antagonistic portrayal of the Jews renders his Gospel not only, according to some, the 'least' Jewish, but in fact the epitome of Christian 'anti-Judaism'. Before outlining the hypothesis of this thesis, I must therefore consider this claim and the literature surrounding it.<sup>185</sup>

#### IV. Excursus: Anti-Judaism in the Gospel of John

The issue of Johannine anti-Judaism has generated a wealth of research for more than a century, based more or less, on attempts to understand and evaluate the overtly negative and polemical presentation of the Jews in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>186</sup> The terms Ἰουδαῖος/Ἰουδαῖοι occur approximately seventy times in John, far more than the Synoptic count, and is exceeded only by Acts, which has eighty instances of the term.<sup>187</sup> Stephen Wilson has argued that over half of all the occurrences of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel refer to this unbelieving group of characters and bear this negative tone.<sup>188</sup> Indeed, "whenever the [Gospel] narrative moves

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<sup>185</sup> The excursus below is somewhat condensed, as the aim is not to provide an exhaustive overview of the literature on this vast topic, but to succinctly identify the main contours of the research. The goal is to make the hermeneutical presuppositions of this thesis clear by specifying *how* John's Gospel can validly be called 'anti-Jewish'. Chapter 2 of this thesis treats the issue of the Johannine presentation of the Jews separately.

<sup>186</sup> See the early study by A. Hilgenfeld, "Der Antijudaismus des Johannesevangeliums," ZWT 36 (1893): 507-517. For the most extensive coverage of the field to date see the collection of essays in, Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville, eds., *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel: Papers From the Leuven Colloquium, January 2000* (Assen: Van Gorcum Press, 2001), and the ancillary volume, Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (eds.), *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

<sup>187</sup> The approximation is due to MSS variations.

<sup>188</sup> Stephen G. Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians, 70-170 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 74.

towards hostility it also moves towards the use of ὁ ἰουδαῖος.”<sup>189</sup> Moreover, the Gospel’s usage of the term is undifferentiated, not distinguishing between Jewish factions such as the Synoptics’ Pharisees and Sadducees, which has the rhetorical effect of broadly denoting ‘Jews’ *qua* Jews.<sup>190</sup>

Having stated the problem, the first issue to address is how to define it. Some scholars argue that John’s presentation of the Jews is anti-Semitic, while others counter argue that ‘anti-Semitism’ is an anachronistic appellation, the product of modern, secular racial-biological thinking.<sup>191</sup> These latter scholars aim to introduce a sense of history into the debate and so prefer to speak of Johannine anti-Judaism, a term that expresses an ancient theological position of the nascent Christian movement, rather than a racist or essentialist position.<sup>192</sup> ‘Anti-Judaism’ therefore refers to the rejection of Judaism as a religious system and path to God.

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<sup>189</sup> Judith M. Lieu, “Anti-Judaism, the Jews and the Worlds of the Fourth Gospel,” in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 171.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. Adele Reinhartz, “The Gospel of John: How the ‘Jews’ Became Part of the Plot,” in *Jesus, Judaism and Christian Anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament After the Holocaust*, ed. Paula Fredricksen and Adele Reinhartz (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 114: “The fact that the same word [the Jews] occurs numerous times and in a variety of contexts tends to blur the fine distinctions and nuances implied by these contexts and to generalize the meaning to its broadest possible referent, namely, to the Jews as a nation defined by a set of religious beliefs, cultic and liturgical practices, and a sense of peoplehood.”

<sup>191</sup> Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament*, 119, exemplifies this approach, arguing that John’s Gospel can be called ‘anti-Semitic’; those criticising this position on the grounds of historical anachronism include Daniel J. Harrington, “Is the New Testament Anti-Jewish? The Need to Develop a Sense of History,” *ITQ* 63 (1998): 123-132; E. H. Flannery, “Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism: A Necessary Distinction,” *JES* 10 (1973): 581-588; James D. G. Dunn, “The Question of Anti-Semitism in the New Testament,” in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, AD 70 to 135*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 177-212.

<sup>192</sup> Cf. Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 87-88.

Two problems are immediately apparent with this dichotomous construct. Firstly, it is too simplistic; it overlooks, on the one hand, the prevalence of γένος and its cognates in the Maccabean writings (cf. 1 Macc 3:32; 5:2; 12:21; 2 Macc 1:10; 5:22; 6:12; 7:16, 28, 38; 8:9; 12:31; 14:8, 9; 3 Macc 1:3, 2, 6; 6:4, 9, 13; 7:10; 4 Macc 5:4; 15:13; 17:10) and how early Christians conceived of themselves in what could be called ‘ethnic’ terms.<sup>193</sup> On the other hand, it does not attend to the ways in which modern European anti-Semitic discourse was permeated with quasi-‘religious’ ideologies, informed, no less, by New Testament proof-texts against the Jews.<sup>194</sup> To an extent, this problematises a sharp distinction between anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism. Secondly, it is clear that the Gospel of John does not reject ‘Judaism’ as a religious system *in toto*, and this being the case, the term ‘anti-Judaism’ does not necessarily seem more accurate. Moreover, where one scholar may interpret the Johannine Jesus as fulfilling or perfecting the rituals and feasts of Second Temple ‘Judaism’, another scholar will argue that Jesus claims to have superseded those same markers of Jewish identity.<sup>195</sup> The text of the Gospel is seemingly open to both readings. What is clear,

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<sup>193</sup> Cf. Judith M. Lieu, “Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel: Explanation and Hermeneutics,” in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 105; Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Richard Steigmann-Gall, “Old Wine in New Bottles? Religion and Race in Nazi Antisemitism,” in *Antisemitism, Christian Ambivalence and the Holocaust*, ed. Kevin P. Spicer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 285-308; Cf. Robert Michael, *Holy Hatred: Christianity, Antisemitism and the Holocaust* (Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 3.

<sup>195</sup> Scholars claiming that the Johannine Jesus ‘perfects’ or ‘fulfils’ the Jewish Scriptures include: Moloney, *The Gospel of John as Scripture*, 456-457; Bruce W. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 139; Michael Labahn, “Jesus und die Autorität der Schrift im Johannesevangelium: Überlegungen zu einem spannungsreichen Verhältnis,” in *Israel und seine Heilstraditionen im Johannesevangelium: Festgabe für Johannes Beutler SJ zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Michael Labahn, Klaus Scholtissek, and Angelika Strotmann (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004), 185-206; Scholars claiming that Jesus supersedes Judaism include A. J. Droge, “No One Has Ever Seen God: Revisionary Criticism in the Fourth Gospel,” in *From Prophecy to Testament*, 169-184, who takes the rather extreme

however, is that the way the Gospel rhetoric structures the Jews into the role of the unbelieving Other makes the text “dangerous” – whatever else one may call it – precisely because there exists a “real” group today who share that marker of Jewish identity.<sup>196</sup> This justifies – in my view – speaking of a peculiar anti-Judaism/anti-Semitism in the Gospel of John.<sup>197</sup>

Scholars working from an historical-critical perspective often contend that the term anti-Judaism is not only inaptly applied to John’s Gospel but is an outright misnomer. Because anti-Judaism is defined as a theologically driven antipathy towards a *religion*, and because ‘Judaism’ as a ‘religion’ was not at all homogenous – indeed one may only speak of Jewish factionalism or of Judaisms in the Second Temple Period – then, the argument goes, John’s Gospel cannot be anti-Jewish.<sup>198</sup> The notion of the many and varied ‘Judaisms’ obtaining in antiquity is now a commonplace in the research and does not exempt one from the task of investigating the problem of John’s violent language from a reader-response perspective. Indeed, rather than explaining the problem, the notion of a variegated Judaism only accentuates the peculiar fact that John uses an ‘undifferentiated’ term, ‘the Jews, instead of

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position that in the Fourth Evangelist’s opinion, the Scriptures are “unreliable, riddled with falsehoods, dangerous, evil,” (page 173); H.-J. Klauck, “Geschrieben, erfüllt, vollendet: Die Schriftzitate in der Johannespassion,” in *Israel und seine Heilstraditionen*, 140-157; Miller, “They Saw His Glory,” 143; Ashton, *Understanding*, 391. A middling position is reached by other scholars who are attentive to the ambivalent attitude to the Scriptures in John, see for example, William Loader, “Jesus and the Law in John,” in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. G. Van Belle, J. G. Van der Watt and P. Maritz (BETL 184; Peeters/Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 135-154, and in the same volume, Maarten J. J. Menken, “Observations on the Significance of the Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” 155-176.

<sup>196</sup> Cf. Adele Reinhartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple: A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 79.

<sup>197</sup> The problem may partly be due to the way *Ἰουδαῖσμος* (cf. 2 and 4 Macc) is translated into English, a term not used by John. The term *anti-Judaism* is a noun that attempts to express the same as the adjectives anti-Judaic and anti-Jewish.

<sup>198</sup> Dunn, “The Question of Anti-Semitism,” 200.

paying heed to various factional groups (Sadducees, Pharisees). Operating from a narrow definition of Johannine anti-Judaism that fails to take into account the rhetorical *function* of the Jews, therefore gives false credence to the argument that the Gospel, when understood in its original historical context, is not anti-Jewish.

Similar arguments have been advanced in the scholarship, again based on the assumption that knowledge of the historical setting of the Gospel attenuates the text's anti-Judaism. A claim commonly made is that the conflict John was describing in his Gospel between Jesus and the Jews referred, historically, to inner-Jewish factional bickering and so cannot be called anti-Jewish.<sup>199</sup> From this angle, John's hostile usage of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is explained in terms of a 'family-feud' model, bolstered by Martyn's hypothesis of the expulsion of Jewish-Christians from the synagogue.<sup>200</sup> Related to this is the argument that John's polemical language against the Jews (cf. 8:44) should be read against the background of ancient literary techniques of *vituperatio*, so that what first appears to modern readers as violent language later appears to be of no consequence, to be, in fact, "quite mild" compared with the standards of the day.<sup>201</sup> Finally, there are a number of scholars who have attended to the symbolic significance of the Jews and their representative role as characters in the text, rather

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<sup>199</sup> Cf. Dunn, "The Question of Anti-Semitism," 197; John Ashton, *Understanding*, 159; Gail R. O'Day, "John," in *The Woman's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 294.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. Martyn, *History and Theology*, 46-66; Robert Kysar, "The Promises and Perils of Preaching on the Gospel of John," *Dialog* 19 (1980): 219-20; Cf. Robert Kysar, *Preaching John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 25-26.

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Luke Timothy Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic," *JBL* 108 (1989): 441; Urban C. Von Wahlde, "You are of your Father the Devil' in its Context: Stereotyped Apocalyptic Polemic in Jn 8:38-47," in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, 437-448; Sean Freyne, "Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self: Matthew's and John's Anti-Jewish Polemic in Focus," in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, 'Others' in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner and E. S. Frerichs (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 117-144.

than to the text's historical dimension.<sup>202</sup> John has been said to “explore the heart and soul of unbelief through the Jews,” that is, to explore a theodicy through a specific literary artifice (characterisation).<sup>203</sup> Sometimes this view is also used to argue against the presence of Johannine anti-Judaism; for example, Moloney maintains the primacy of the category of belief in the Gospel, arguing that οἱ ἰουδαῖοι has “*nothing* to do with national, political or religious affiliation [... but] *everything* to do with the definite rejection of Jesus as the revelation of God”.<sup>204</sup>

These arguments can be questioned on a number of grounds. Firstly, it must be asked whether one ought to ascribe ethical priority to the Gospel's ‘originating’ historical situation when that situation can only be verified in the language of plausibility.<sup>205</sup> These well-meaning

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<sup>202</sup> These studies are engaged with in more depth in the following chapter. Cf. Robert Kysar, “Anti-Semitism and the Gospel of John,” in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans and D. A. Hanger (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 113-127; Craig R. Koester, “Hearing, Seeing and Believing in the Gospel of John,” *Bib* 70 (1989): 327-348.

<sup>203</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 129.

<sup>204</sup> Francis J. Moloney, “The Jews’ in the Fourth Gospel: Another Perspective,” in *The Gospel of John: Text and Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 40. Moloney argues that there are a number of “Jewish characters” in the Fourth Gospel, some are presented positively and others negatively. This narrative presentation depends upon a character's reception of Jesus as the revelation of God (Moloney, “The Jews,” 40). From this premise, Moloney states: “once this is clear it is easier to understand why a group of people, *unfortunately also called the Jews*, are consistently presented negatively” (Moloney, “The Jews,” 43, my emphasis). I do not find the issue so fortuitous: it is entirely possible that John's polemical portrayal of the Jews was calculated to encourage anti-Jewish attitudes in those who read the text in uncritical harmony with its ideological perspective; cf. Adele Reinhartz, “The New Testament and Anti-Judaism: A Literary-Critical Approach,” *JES* 25 (1988): 524-537. For more on this, see the following chapter.

<sup>205</sup> Cf. Lieu, “Anti-Judaism, the Jews and the Worlds,” 170, who states that if the earliest historical contextualisation of the Gospel *is* to have “hermeneutical priority ... then its reconstruction must persuade.” Different historical reconstructions of the Johannine community have been put forward by Stephen Motyer, James G. D. Dunn and Willis Hedly Salier, all of whom argue in their own way that the Gospel's “authorial audience” has some kind of priority in the interpretive task. See James D. G. Dunn, “Let John Be John: A Gospel for Its Time,” in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien. Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982*, ed. P.

historical studies are at best speculative and, at worst, reductionist. Secondly, the assumption that “grasping the conventional nature of the [Gospel’s polemical language] can rob such language of its mythical force and thereby its capacity for mischief” grossly underestimates the power of language to create new worlds of meaning irrespective of its historical context.<sup>206</sup> Philosophical hermeneutics teaches us that language, once inscribed, transcends its authorial moorings and creates a ‘surplus of meaning’, able to be re-contextualised in ever new situations.<sup>207</sup> As for those studies, such as Moloney’s cited above, that seek to understand the Jews as ciphers for unbelief/rejection, having nothing to do with religio-ethnic identity, it must be stated that Jesus was indeed rejected for reasons of ‘religious’ difference that no doubt also touched upon national and political aspects.<sup>208</sup> However, the Jews in John are not merely ciphers or symbols of an abstract ‘world’ opposed to God. As Lieu argues, there is an “historical particularity” to the Gospel story and a “truth that transcends” that particularity but can “only be told through it.”<sup>209</sup> The problem of the Jews in John, for Lieu, relates to how the ostensible, historical elements of the Gospel are inextricably linked to the Gospel’s “redemptive myth.”<sup>210</sup> Moreover, these mythical elements are not abstracted from

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Stuhlmacher, (WUNT 28; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 309-39; Stephen Motyer, *Your Father the Devil? A New Approach to John and the Jews* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997); Willis Hedly Salier, *The Rhetorical Impact of the Semeia in the Gospel of John* (WUNT 2/186; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). This is not to discredit historical criticism, but to make the point that such community reconstructions are not universally persuasive.

<sup>206</sup> For the passage quoted in this sentence see Johnson, “The New Testament’s Anti-Jewish Slander,” 419; cf. Gary A. Phillips, “The Killing Fields of Matthew’s Gospel,” in *A Shadow of Glory: Reading the New Testament After the Holocaust*, ed. Tod Linafelt (New York: Routledge, 2002), 233, for a similar critique. In light of the Shoah, Johnson’s term, “mischief” is potentially trivialising.

<sup>207</sup> Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University, 1976).

<sup>208</sup> Cf. Lars Kierspel, *The Jews and the World in the Fourth Gospel: Parallelism, Function and Context* (WUNT 2/220; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 35, n. 106. Kierspel gives no Gospel texts to support his point but one could look to John 11:45-52.

<sup>209</sup> Lieu, “Anti-Judaism, the Jews and the Worlds,” 178.

<sup>210</sup> Lieu, “Anti-Judaism, the Jews and the Worlds,” 178.



the historical claims of the Gospel but are interwoven with them. This arguably makes the issue of the Johannine Jews more – not less – problematic.

Finally, a major branch of the scholarship addresses the possible referent of οἱ ἰουδαῖοι, although no consensus has been reached on this point. Once more, these studies are often motivated by the noble intention of diffusing the anti-Jewish/anti-Semitic potential of the text, but are often flawed in their argumentation. For example, von Wahlde argued that οἱ ἰουδαῖοι refers to the ‘Jewish authorities’ and so should be translated as such.<sup>211</sup> A problem with this option is that the Jews are not always equated with the authorities in the Gospel text, but often with the common crowd (6:41). Moreover, since many ordinary Jewish people would have followed the authorities (the Jews), the term οἱ ἰουδαῖοι tends to broadly imply all Jews. Another major option is to argue for the referent and translation of οἱ ἰουδαῖοι as ‘the Judeans’, an approach popularised by Malcom Lowe.<sup>212</sup> The fact that οἱ ἰουδαῖοι underwent a semantic shift in the Hasmonean period when Idumeans and Itureans became part of the Judean ‘ethnos’ appears to militate against Lowe’s position: no longer simply an ethno-geographic appellation, οἱ ἰουδαῖοι became a signifier for religious and political aspects of ‘Jewish’ self-understanding as well.<sup>213</sup> Other scholars posit that the historical referent of οἱ ἰουδαῖοι is the rabbi’s at Yavneh;<sup>214</sup> a more “conservative segment” of the

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<sup>211</sup> Urban C. von Wahlde, “The Johannine ‘Jews’: A Critical Survey,” *NTS* 28 (1982): 33-60.

<sup>212</sup> Malcom Lowe, “Who Were the ἰουδαῖοι?” *NovT* 18 (1976): 101-130; cf. James H. Charlesworth, “The Gospel of John: Exclusivism Caused by a Social Setting Different from That of Jesus (John 11:54 and 14:6),” in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 256.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 70, 137.

<sup>214</sup> James D. G. Dunn, “The Embarrassment of History: Reflections on the Problem of ‘Anti-Judaism’ in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 46; Martinus C. De Boer, “The Depiction of the Jews in John’s Gospel: Matters of Behaviour and Identity,” in *Anti-Judaism and the*

religious Jews;<sup>215</sup> or recalcitrant ‘Crypto-Christians’<sup>216</sup> or even, indeed, the ‘Yahudim’, controlling the Temple State.<sup>217</sup> Each of these theories argues that the Gospel’s use of the Jews, when ‘properly understood’ is not ‘anti-Jewish’.

Exculpating John’s Gospel from the charge of anti-Judaism on the basis of hypothetical referents for οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is likewise unsound for hermeneutical reasons: first and foremost, to understand (and to translate) οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as anything other than the Jews leaves the scholar with what Levine calls a *Judenrein* (‘Jew-free’) New Testament.<sup>218</sup> This is obviously problematic – ‘Judean’, for example, strips οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι of any ethnic-religious connotations, and it is not a great step from this point to argue that Jesus the ‘Jew’ (cf. 4:9; 22) was not in

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*Fourth Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 149, 150.

<sup>215</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 151. A similar idea was posited quite early on by K. B. Bornhäuser, *Das Johannesevangelium: Eine Missionschrift für Israel* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1928). Bornhäuser argued that the Jews represented a group of ‘Torah-fanatics’ at the time of Jesus. Recently the same position has been adopted by Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Colorado: Paternoster, 2009), 39-40.

<sup>216</sup> Henk Jan de Jong, “The Jews in the Gospel of John,” in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 121-140.

<sup>217</sup> Boyarin, “The Ioudaioi in John and the Prehistory of ‘Judaism’,” 223-239. Boyarin’s argument is sophisticated and requires slightly more explanation. Rather than looking for a “rupture of identity” between church and synagogue, as the other scholars cited here do, Boyarin “looks backwards, as it were,” to a rupture within the people of Israel after the Exile (page 228). The Yahudim (in Ezra 4:23 LXX, the Ἰουδαῖοι) were literally the ‘children of Judah’, citizens of the small Temple State created in and around Judah after the Exile (pages 226-227). This “originally geographically based group” maintained a “pietistic version of Israelite religion” and excluded others from their ranks (237). The ‘*am ha’ares*’ were “second-class citizens,” marginalised Israelites not called the ‘children of Judah’; they resented the Yahudim (228). Boyarin argues that this hostility is present in John’s polemical portrayal of the Jews: the Ἰουδαῖοι are the Yahudim, and the Johannine community, the ‘*am ha’ares*’ (237).

<sup>218</sup> Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew*, 160. Levine here uses the term *Judenrein*, thereby implicitly alluding to the same politically-charged term that was used by the National Socialist Party to declare districts of Germany and Amsterdam ‘cleansed of Jews’, i.e. to signify that all Jews had been murdered or deported.

fact a ‘Jew’, but a Galilean.<sup>219</sup> Once more, whatever the Gospel’s original context, it now functions as a “literary given in a concrete human situation in which readers respond to what they encounter.”<sup>220</sup> Stephen Motyer quotes R. Lowry to the effect that “no matter what John ‘means’, what it says is the Jews.”<sup>221</sup> Indeed, the ‘sense’ of the term rather than its empirical referent, is the most intractable aspect of John’s usage of οἱ ἰουδαῖοι: the Jews are connoted with everything negative in the Gospel – with fear (7:13; 20:19), murmuring (6:41), murderous intent (5:18; 7:1, 20; 8:37, 40; 11:53; 18:28-32; 19:7, 12), diabolical origins (8:44), blindness (9:39; 12:40), darkness (1:5; 12:36) and death (8:24).<sup>222</sup> A satisfactory post-Shoah hermeneutic will contend with the Gospel’s troubling *Wirkungsgeschichte*, its redemptive mythology, and its capacity for recontextualisation.

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<sup>219</sup> This is not an unlikely interpretive stance; present in the Protestant biblical scholarship of Nazi Germany was the pervasive contention that the populace of ancient Galilee were Gentile whereas the populace of Judea were Jewish. This idea was used by the likes of Ernst Lohmeyer and Adolf Schlatter to argue that Jesus was racially non-Jewish, in short, that he was an Aryan Gentile; see Ernst Lohmeyer, *Galiläa und Jerusalem* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1936; Adolf Schlatter, *Geschichte Israels von Alexander dem Grossen bis Hadrian*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Auflage (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1925). Biblical scholars of the ‘historical-critical’ ilk supported their arguments with reference to the Babylonian devastation of Galilee in 587 BCE, claiming that from this point Jews never more inhabited the region. For a detailed discussion of these texts see Susannah Heschel, “Reading Jesus as a Nazi,” in *A Shadow of Glory: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust*, ed. Tod Linafelt (New York: Routledge, 2002), 31-33.

<sup>220</sup> Stephen Motyer, “Bridging the Gap: How Might the Fourth Gospel Help Us Cope with the Legacy of Christianity’s Exclusive Claim over against Judaism?” in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 144.

<sup>221</sup> R. Lowry, “The Rejected-Suitor Syndrome: Human Sources of the NT Anti-Semitism”, *JES* 14 (1977): 219-32, cited in Motyer, “Bridging the Gap,” 144.

<sup>222</sup> Kierspel, *The Jews and the World*, 165-167, argues that the term the Jews in the Gospel should be understood as a “subgroup of the world” (John 14-17). According to Kierspel, the Jews lose their prominence as antagonists once they are subsumed under the more general and universal category of the ‘world’. This seems to overlook the unique place the Jews have as respondents to Jesus in the Book of Signs (John 1-12), particularly in the context of the OT citations found therein, which witness to the Jews, and are prefaced by distinct ‘formulae’. When ‘the world’, as a ‘character group’, emerges in the Farewell Discourse, Scripture is cited with the ‘fulfillment’ formulae and the Jews do not appear. This seems, to me, to indicate that the Jews need to be understood apart from ‘the world’ even if the connotations of both terms coincide frequently.

In summary, it is reasonable to claim that the Fourth Gospel exhibits a definite ‘anti-Jewishness’ in its portrayal of those characters named the Jews, and that attempts to explain away this phenomenon have not, in my estimation, been successful. As this brief overview of the literature on the topic demonstrates, the issue of Johannine anti-Judaism is complex and many-faceted, having historical, sociological and theological dimensions. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore and develop the implications of every branch of the topic, although focused attention will be given to the intersection of the Scriptural citations and the Jews further on (chapters 3-5 of this thesis). Suffice it to say at this point that the conflict situation between Jesus and the Jews in the text of John’s Gospel contributes to the scholarly perception of the Gospel as the ‘least Jewish’ among the four. To speak of a Johannine ‘anti-Judaism’ is therefore to speak not of a “chimera” but of a “real concern.”<sup>223</sup> Having established a context of prior research, I now proceed to establish the contribution that this thesis makes to the topic.

## V. The Gap in the Literature

It is noteworthy that in all the literature on the Fourth Gospel’s ‘anti-Judaism’, no scholar has attended to the way in which one essentially ‘Jewish’ element of the Gospel (namely, its indebtedness to and citation of Scripture) functions vis-à-vis the Jews as characters within the plot. By the same token, in all the literature on the Gospel’s use of OT Scripture, attention has not been paid to how the OT citations function rhetorically *within the narrative* to construct the character and identity of the Jews. This thesis therefore seeks to bring together these

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<sup>223</sup> Lieu, “Anti-Judaism, the Jews and the Worlds,” 168.

seemingly contradictory aspects of the Gospel ('Jewish'/'anti-Jewish') in a new way by focusing on:

1. The *rhetorical* function of the explicit OT *citations* in the Gospel:

- (i) In this respect, the thesis goes beyond previous source-critical analyses of John's OT citations, and does not directly address the debate over whether the citations should be generically categorised as *midrash/pesher*;
- (ii) The focus of the thesis is clearly on *one* aspect of John's use of the OT Scriptures, namely the explicit citations in the first 'half' of the Gospel (1:19-12:15);
- (iii) While other studies have focused on the doctrinal, sociological or historical significance of the OT citations in John, the intention of this thesis is to investigate the *rhetorical* function of the OT citations vis-à-vis the Jews.

2. The role that the Jews play as *characters* within the text of the Gospel:

- (i) Thus, the broader issue of the Jews in John is brought to a finer focus; in this way I do not directly address the hypothetical considerations about who the Jews were in the history of the Johannine community.

The current thesis builds upon and extends the work of scholars such as Obermann, who demonstrated that in the Gospel's Book of Signs (chapters 1-12), the OT citations are consistently prefaced by some variation on the ἔστιν γεγραμμένον 'formula'. The content of

these citations, it was argued, have a distinct rhetorical character: they ‘witness’ to Jesus in the course of his public ministry and reveal something specific about him – namely, that he is Lord (1:23), the new Temple (2:17), the Living Bread (6:31, 45), the source of Living Water (7:37-39), the Son of God (10:34), and the King of Israel (12:15). What is unacknowledged in the literature is that the Jews are consistently presented as the audience of these citations, and that the citations function rhetorically to bring them to faith in Jesus – but ironically contribute only to their alienation from, and hostility towards, Jesus. The implication of this is that the content and contexts of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15 serve not only to characterise *Jesus*, but also to characterise the Jews. It is the contention of this thesis that the Scriptural citations in John 1:19-12:15 are therefore a contributing factor in the Gospel’s polemical ‘othering’ of the Jews.

#### A. Thesis Statement

The rhetorical design of the Gospel narrative encourages an ideal (contemporary) reader to construct a particular character portrait of the Jews in light of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15.<sup>224</sup> This readerly reconstruction is influenced not only by the response of the Jews to the OT citations at the surface level of the narrative, but also by the ways in which the wider, allusive contexts of those citations ‘echo’ for the reader and gain a particularly new salience vis-à-vis the Jews. The Jews thus function rhetorically as intertextual characters in the Gospel’s ‘retelling’ of the biblical story. Until we grasp this *rhetorical* relationship between the Gospel’s presentation of the Jews and its citation of Scripture we cannot properly understand how or why the Gospel is at once so ‘Jewish’ and ‘anti-Jewish’.

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<sup>224</sup> For more detail, see chapter Two, page 77, footnote 46.

## B. Outline of Thesis

In Chapter Two, I outline the theoretical and methodological presuppositions of the thesis, establishing the grounds for a narratological approach to John 1:19-12:15. The chapter presents a cumulative argument about reading the Jews in John's Gospel as characters from a narrative-critical perspective. The chapter analyses selected approaches to characterisation theory as formulated by literary theorists and applied to the Gospel of John, as well as bringing intertextuality theory to bear upon a character analysis of the Jews in the Gospel, particularly as they function as respondents of most OT citations found in John 1:19-12:15.

Chapters Three to Five present a close reading of the OT citations in the Gospel, and are divided according to three stages of Jesus' public ministry in the narrative. In Chapter Three, I closely analyse the first two citations in the opening stage of Jesus' public ministry (1:23 and 2:17), and preface this analysis with some discussion about how the reader identifies Scriptural citations and allusions in the Gospel. In Chapter Four, I analyse the four OT citations that take place in the middle of Jesus' public ministry, when Jesus is engaged in conversation and dispute with the Jews at three major Jewish festivals – Passover, Tabernacles and Dedication (6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34). In Chapter Five, I analyse the final OT citation in the Book of Signs that is prefaced by the *ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον* 'formula' (12:15) and which takes place at the close of Jesus' public ministry among the Jews, just as Jesus' 'hour' approaches.

Chapter Six draws the thesis to a close and reaches some conclusions based on the close reading presented in the thesis. The contribution of the thesis to knowledge is reinforced, and possibilities for further research are advanced.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERARY CRITICAL APPROACHES TO THE JEWS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

In the previous chapter I discussed and evaluated a range of literature on the topic of the OT Scriptures in the Gospel of John. It is commonly noted that Scripture is cited in two distinct ways in John's Gospel, corresponding to two distinct sections of the Gospel, the Book of Signs (1:19-12:50) and the Book of Glory (13:1-20:31) respectively. Obermann built upon this premise in his seminal work, arguing that the *form* of OT citation bears a correlative rhetorical function in the Gospel: the first half of the Gospel dealing with Jesus' public ministry is concerned to show how Scripture *witnesses* to Jesus, whereas the second half of the Gospel dealing with Jesus' death and departure is concerned to show how Scripture is explicitly *fulfilled* in Jesus. With regard to the Scripture's witness to Jesus, Obermann stated that the OT Scriptures are central to Jesus' self-revelation while he is ἐν παρρέσεια, as their content provides the background to his claims to be Lord (1:23), the new Temple (2:17), the living bread from heaven (6:31, 45), the true source of Living Water (7:37-39), the Son of God (10:34), and the King of Israel (12:14-15).

What often goes unnoticed in the literature is the fact that in John 1:19-12:15 the Jews are either the primary audience of these Scriptural citations (cf. 6:31, 45; 10:34) or they are in the 'vicinity' when Scripture is cited, either by the narrator or another character (cf. 2:17-22; 7:37-39), or again, are implicated in the general context of the citation passage (cf. 1:23 [19]; 12:14-15). The aim of this thesis is to examine the rhetorical function of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15 as they work to develop a particular characterisation of the Jews in the



narrative. While the Scriptural citations in John 1:19-12:15 function to reveal Jesus' heavenly identity to his interlocutors, the Jews – quite ironically – do not come to faith in Jesus but are progressively alienated by the witness of the Scriptures and what they purport to disclose about Jesus. As such, the content of the Scriptural citations in John 1:19-12:15 are not only revelatory of the character of *Jesus* but also of the Jews in the narrative.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the methodological and theoretical presuppositions of the thesis by engaging with a variety of aspects of modern literary criticism. I begin by considering how narratives work to *persuade* readers to accept certain ideological positions, in other words, by discussing the intrinsically rhetorical dimension of all narrative. This is important because the reader of the Fourth Gospel is persuaded to take up the Christological meaning of the Scripture's witness to Jesus even as the Jews reject it, and in so doing, to 'other' the Jews in the process of reading. Then, because the OT citation texts function rhetorically to construct a particular characterisation of the Jews, it will be necessary to evaluate literary theories of characterisation and how they are applied to John's Gospel. Before concluding this chapter, a section on intertextuality theory follows because of its relevance to any analysis of how one text incorporates another, especially through explicit citation, and especially how the Jews' are characterised *intertextually* in the Gospel's retelling of the biblical story.

The point of this will be to present various ways of reading the Jews at the level of the Gospel narrative as formulated within the fields of narratology and intertextual theory. The rationale for including a variety of literary theories is that a rounded, well-considered method of reading the Jews in the Gospel eventuates. While this thesis does not entirely eschew historical analysis, it does emphasise the importance of interpreting the Jews not only as characters in *John's* story but as players in a retelling of the wider biblical story. As such, the

Jews are written into the Gospel's 'mythical' structures which are themselves patterned by biblical themes and become concrete in the Jews' response to the Scriptural citations in John 1:19-12:15. This fact is often left unexplored in the scholarly literature.

The argument of this chapter can be schematised as follows:

### Literary Critical Approaches to the Jews in John's Gospel

- I. Modern Rhetorical Criticism in Literary Theory
  - A. The Implied Constituents of Narrative: Authors and Readers
    - i. Narrator and Narratee
    - ii. The Ideal Reader
  - B. Application to the Gospel of John
    - i. Reinhartz's 'Ethical' Reading of the Jews in John's Gospel
  - C. Summary
- II. Literary Theories of Characterisation
  - C. 'Round' Characters or 'Flat' Characters? The 'Ancient'/'Modern' Dichotomy
  - D. Characterisation or Character Reconstruction?
    - i. Modern Approaches to Character Reconstruction: Chatman
    - ii. Modern Approaches to Character Reconstruction: Ewen/Rimmon-Kenan
      - a. Direct Presentation
      - b. Indirect Presentation
      - c. Reliability and Unreliability
  - E. Application of the Methods to John's Gospel
    - i. Aristotelian Approaches to Characterisation in John's Gospel
      - a. Craig Koester
      - b. R. Alan Culpepper

- c. Cornelis Bennema's Critique
  - 1) Against Johannine Characters as Representative Types
  - 2) Dissociating Character from Response
  - 3) Explaining Johannine Dualism when Admitting Character Complexity
  - 4) The Jews as Characters in John's Gospel
- ii. Modern Approaches to Characterisation in John's Gospel
  - a. F. D. Tolmie's Character Analysis of the Jews in John's Gospel

### III. Intertextuality and the Old Testament Citations in John's Gospel

- A. Justifying a Maximal Approach to the Citations
- B. Intertextual Characterisation of the Jews in John
- C. Ideological Characterisation of the Jews in John: Monologism and the Reduction of Subjectivity

### IV. Synthesis and Conclusions

#### I. Modern Rhetorical Criticism in Literary Theory

The purpose of this section of the chapter will be to present a well-defined outline of the methodologies I will be working with when reading the Jews in the context of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:50. Rhetorical criticism, as utilised in narrative critical theory, has enjoyed a relatively lengthy history of application to the Fourth Gospel. Most attention has been given to terms such as the 'implied reader' and the 'implied author' when interpreting John. But although the terminology is nowadays ubiquitous in critical studies, there is nevertheless a certain degree of confusion between, specifically, real readers and the implied reader. This confusion is sometimes evident in Johannine studies as well, and therefore it is

necessary to provide definitional clarity on these issues. The argument I present below is cumulative and develops in several stages. I begin by defining the ‘implied’ constituents of narrative, relying on recent ‘secular’ literature and move into a discussion of the *ideal reader* – a real reader who is persuaded to accept the ideological point of view embedded in narrative. Applying this to John’s Gospel, I rely mainly on Adele Reinhartz’s thesis that the Jews are structured into the underside of a theological dualism in the Gospel narrative, and I add that the ‘ideal’ reader is persuaded to participate in ‘othering’ the Jews en route to the faith in Jesus that the narrator finds acceptable (cf. 20:31). I outline what I perceive to be the rhetoric of the Gospel at large and discuss how the Jews are implicated in that rhetoric. This establishes the grounds for reading the Jews in the context of the OT citations, which themselves play a large part in maintaining the Gospel’s binary rhetoric.

#### A. The Implied Constituents of Narrative: Authors and Readers

Rhetorical criticism is one branch of narratology and is often referred to as the ‘New Rhetoric’, distinguishing it from the ‘classical’ model of rhetoric prevalent in the ancient Greco-Roman world.<sup>1</sup> Whereas classical rhetorical criticism was concerned with persuasion

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘New Rhetoric’ emerged for the first time in the work of Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969). It is important to emphasise that classical rhetorical criticism and the ‘New Rhetoric’ nevertheless have much in common, for example, in terms of the way both approaches analyse characters in narrative in terms of the ‘judgments’ the reader is expected to make. On this, but from an Aristotelian perspective, see William M. Wright IV, “Greco-Roman Character Typing and the Presentation of Judas in the Fourth Gospel,” *CBQ* 71 (2009): 545. Judith Lieu argues that the ‘New Rhetoric’ when applied to the early Christian literature cannot be considered “anachronistic.” See Judith Lieu, “Us or You? Persuasion and Identity in 1 John,” *JBL* 127, no. 4 (2008): 807.

as rational argument, the ‘New Rhetoric’ encompasses instead what Kenneth Burke has called a “psychological” idea of rhetoric, that is, the “use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation” in readers.<sup>2</sup> This ‘cooperation’ between readers and texts is governed by “the ideology that is embedded in [a given] text” such that the text’s “very construction” can be seen as “precondition[ing] experience for both the writer and the reader.”<sup>3</sup> Narratives are intrinsically rhetorical: they seek to persuade readers to accept a particular ideological position (or ‘point of view’) by means of the dynamics of a projected ‘story-world’.

Narratological theory is built upon the basic premise that stories project a “represented world” which readers enter into; they temporarily ‘inhabit’ that world, engage with its characters and follow its plot.<sup>4</sup> This is achieved when readers align themselves with the perspective of the so-called implied reader of the text, which is a heuristic construct intrinsic to the ‘world’ of the text. The implied reader is ‘coded’ into the narrative by an implied author, the correlative heuristic construct with whom the implied reader is in tacit communication. This heuristic model effectively describes the rhetorical design inherent in a given narrative. It holds in tension the dynamic of a *real* reader relating to an implied reader; real readers are invited to accept or reject the ideological position of the implied author. Only

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<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 261-262. Cited in John C. Rodden, “How Do Stories Convince Us? Notes towards a Rhetoric of Narrative,” *College Literature* 35, no. 1 (2008): 166. Douglas G. Lawrie criticises Perelman’s theoretical approach on the grounds that his view of rhetoric is “limited” by its focus on “reasonable argument” at the expense of other, more “poetic” aspects of human language. According to Lawrie, Perelman does not account for the fact that an audience may accept a discourse as reasonable but *not* accept it “emotionally or ethically.” For this reason, Lawrie prefers Burke’s approach. See Douglas G. Lawrie, *Speaking to Good Effect: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Rhetoric* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2006), 105-106.

<sup>3</sup> Victor H. Matthews and James C. Moyer, *The Old Testament: Text and Context* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 30.

<sup>4</sup> Rodden, “How Do Stories Convince Us?” 153; cf. Peter Seitel, “Theorizing Genre – Interpreting Works,” *NLH* 34 (2003): 279-280.

to the extent that real readers identify with the construct of the *implied* reader, does ideological persuasion take place.<sup>5</sup>

The term ‘implied author’ was coined by Wayne Booth to account for the fact that the real, historically situated author of a text is never perfectly reflected in the authorial voice of a narrative; the implied author works rather as the real author’s ‘second self.’<sup>6</sup> The implied author of a narrative is the “omniscient consciousness responsible for the story as a whole.”<sup>7</sup> Likewise, the implied reader is not to be identified with real, historically situated readers of the text either, but is rather “a critical construct inferred from the text.”<sup>8</sup> The implied reader expresses the fact that a narrative is “an address, an invitation to be read, and of the fact that this reading will be more or less a controlled motion through the narrative world.”<sup>9</sup>

This means that the reader implied by the story is completely able to understand the elements of that story. Unlike real readers, the implied reader is ignorant of nothing in the story-world, yet because the implied reader emerges as a “forward looking textual effect” of the narrative, ‘it’ can only know as much as is unfolded in the story ‘page by page’ as it were.<sup>10</sup> The intentions of the historical implied author “can only be entirely grasped by the implied reader,

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Francis J. Moloney, “Narrative Criticism of the Gospels,” in *‘A Hard Saying’: The Gospel and Culture* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 99.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: Penguin, 1991), 138.

<sup>7</sup> Geert Hallback, “The Gospel of John as Literature: Literary Readings of the Fourth Gospel,” in *New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives. Essays from the Scandinavian Conference on the Fourth Gospel, Aarhus, 1997*, ed. Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Petersen (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 35. Although see the recent criticism of ‘omniscience’ in narrative made by Culler [Jonathan Culler, “Omniscience,” in *The Literary in Theory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 183-204].

<sup>8</sup> Hallback, “The Gospel of John as Literature,” 35.

<sup>9</sup> Hallback, “The Gospel of John as Literature,” 35-36.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Francis J. Moloney, “Who Is ‘The Reader’ in/of the Fourth Gospel?,” in *The Interpretation of John*, ed. John Ashton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 219. Article originally published in *ABR* 40 (1992): 20-33.

though the historical reader may speculate about them.”<sup>11</sup> Similarly, because the implied reader knows the narrative so fully, real readers can only partially, or imperfectly, construct its profile.<sup>12</sup> The theoretical necessity of drawing a boundary between real and implied readers/authors is clear in most standard works analysing narrative fiction.<sup>13</sup> Yet another component of narrative is often adduced by theorists to describe a further layer of complexity in narratives. This is the concept of the narrator and its corollary, the narratee.

i. Narrator and Narratee

The narrator is the ‘voice’ that tells the story and that speaks *directly* to the real readers of the text.<sup>14</sup> The narrator can take on the role of a character within the story or be voiced in the third person and so removed from the events of the story.<sup>15</sup> The narratorial voice is, moreover, a self-consciously intrusive voice: it interrupts the flow of the story to provide a commentary on the events or characters in the story. The term ‘narratee’ simply indicates that

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<sup>11</sup> William Nelles, “Historical and Implied Authors and Readers,” *Comparative Literature* 45, no. 1 (1993): 22.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Steve Motyer, “Method in Fourth Gospel Studies: A Way Out of the Impasse?” *JSNT* 66 (1997): 30.

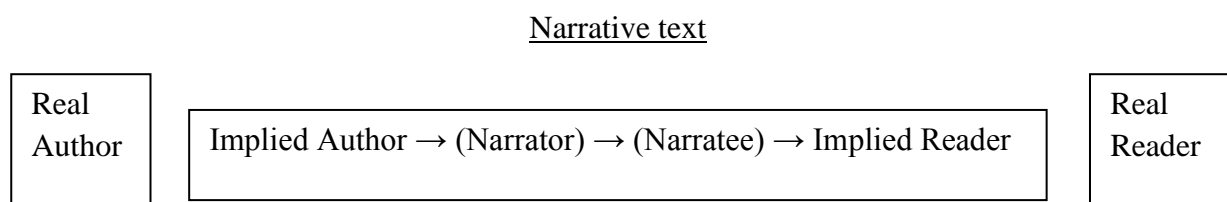
<sup>13</sup> The categories are blurred in some studies. See, for example, Brian Richardson, “Singular Text, Multiple Implied Readers,” *Style* 41, no. 3 (2007): 259-267; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 224-225, makes the implied reader into a sort of cipher for the intended reader. Jeffrey L. Staley argues that although the term ‘implied reader’ was coined by Wolfgang Iser, Iser’s own concept is “ambiguous”, denoting “real readers” *as well as* qualities immanent to the text that move the real reader. See Jeffrey L. Staley, *The Print’s First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel* (SBLDS 82; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 32. Cf. Wolfgang Iser, *Der implizite Leser: Kommunikationsformen des Romans von Bunyan bis Beckett* (Münich: Fink, 1972).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 16.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. George Eliot’s appeal to the ‘dear reader’, always voiced in the third-person, in such works as *Romola*, *Middlemarch* and *Adam Bede*. For other examples see Mieke Bal, *Narratology: An Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 18-29.

the story requires a listener to mirror the narrator, and that this listener has a “pre-knowledge of some circumstances in the narrative and a basic non-knowledge of others.”<sup>16</sup>

These six implied constituents of narrative are represented diagrammatically by Seymour Chatman in his influential work, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*.<sup>17</sup> Chatman’s diagram is reproduced below:



The purpose of the diagram is to illustrate that the real author and the real reader are extrinsic to the narrative, whereas the implied constituents are immanent to the narrative.<sup>18</sup> Nelles captures well the distinctiveness of each term by postulating that each has its distinctive function: “the historical author *writes*, the historical reader *reads*; the implied author *means*, the implied reader *interprets*; the narrator *speaks*, the narratee *hears*.”<sup>19</sup> It is worth noting that the real author is itself a ‘construct’ to some degree. Hayden White states that “the presumed concreteness and accessibility of the historical milieux .... are themselves products of the fictive capability of the historians who have studied these contexts.”<sup>20</sup> This caution granted,

<sup>16</sup> Hallback, “The Gospel of John as Literature,” 36.

<sup>17</sup> Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 151.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Dan Shen and Dejin Xu, “Intratextuality, Extratextuality, Intertextuality: Unreliability in Autobiography versus Fiction,” *Poetics Today* 28, no. 1 (2007): 48.

<sup>19</sup> Nelles, “Historical and Implied,” 22 (my italics).

<sup>20</sup> Hayden White, *Topics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 89. This is true in the case of Gospels where a great gap in time exist between historical authors and modern readers. Also see Elizabeth Clark: “If the ‘real’ is known only in and through its discursive construction, as established by an intra-linguistic system of difference, how could historians assume (as they customarily had)



the real author may be reconstructed to *some* extent by data *external to* the narrative, whereas the implied author can *only* be inferred from the narrative itself.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the usefulness of these distinctions on a theoretical and functional level – as argued for by Nelles – one can call into question the sharp distinction between the reader in the text and the reader outside of the text on a practical and applied level. Chatman's diagram presumes that the text controls the (real) reader. Reader-response critics, on the other hand, would argue that the (real) reader can control the text.<sup>22</sup> If the text is allowed to control the (real) reader, then we have what some literary theorists refer to as the emergence of an 'ideal' or 'paradigmatic reader.'<sup>23</sup> This means that real readers succeed in identifying with the heuristic cues of the text so that there is no discrepancy between the implied author's ideological point of view and that adopted by the real reader. However, the real reader may control the text; this occurs in the form of resistance to the implied author's ideological point of view. In this case, complete identification between the implied reader and the real reader does not take place and so the ideal reader does not emerge. This crucial point must be kept in mind when turning to the issue of the Jews in John's Gospel. At this stage I will briefly develop the notion of the ideal reader as it is theorised by Peter J. Rabinowitz.

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the adequacy of words to refer to things?" Elizabeth Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 5-6.

<sup>21</sup> Nelles, "Historical and Implied," 26.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Robert M. Fowler, "Who is the Reader in Reader Response Criticism?" *Semeia* 31(1985):10.

<sup>23</sup> See the discussion in section I.A.ii below. It should be clearly noted that the 'ideal' reader is in this sense not a textual construct but a real reader, either ancient or modern, and is moreover, a *re-reader* of the Gospel. The term 'ideal' refers not so much to literary competence as to adherence to the narrative's rhetorical and ideological agenda, as explained below. For a discussion of readerly competence, see section II.B. Note also Rimmon-Kenan's call for the 'implied author' and 'implied reader' to be depersonified so as to circumvent further confusion – if, according to theorists, the implied constituents of narrative are only textual constructs, norms implicit to the text, how can they be positioned as personified addressors/addressees in the communication situation (cf. Chatman's 'box')? See Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: Routledge, 2002), 89.

## ii. The Ideal Reader

The ideal reader of a narrative is defined by Peter J. Rabinowitz as a real reader who completely adopts the ideological perspective of the narrative. The ideal reader is one of four readers (or ‘audiences’) in Rabinowitz’s model of narrative analysis. The other three include (a) the ‘actual’ audience, that is, any ‘real’ flesh-and-blood readers of a narrative at any given time;<sup>24</sup> (b) the ‘authorial audience’, meaning the readers for whom the narrative was intended;<sup>25</sup> (c) the ‘narrative’ audience, which has a unique knowledge of the narrative and approximates to the implied reader as defined by other critics above.<sup>26</sup>

Rabinowitz’s four audiences are defined by the types of *beliefs* they hold or are expected to hold. As such, his model differs somewhat from the standard model of the implied constituents of narrative. To quote Rabinowitz,

“As a general rule, the distance between authorial audience and narrative audience tends to be along the axis of ‘fact’, either ‘historical’ or ‘scientific’. That is, the narrative audience believes that certain events could or did take place. The distance between the narrative audience and the ideal narrative audience tends to lie along an axis of ethics or interpretation. The *ideal* narrative audience *agrees* with the narrator that certain events are *good* or that a particular analysis is *correct*, while the narrative audience is called upon to judge him [sic].”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Peter J. Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction: A Re-examination of Audiences,” *CI* 4 (1977): 126.

<sup>25</sup> Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction,” 126-127.

<sup>26</sup> Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction,” 127-128.

<sup>27</sup> Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction,” 135 (emphasis mine).

The ideal narrative audience always “believes the narrator, accepts his judgments, [and] sympathizes with his plight.”<sup>28</sup> This fourth audience is therefore ‘ideal’ “from the narrator’s point of view;” an ‘ideal’ reader always “accepts uncritically” what the narrator “has to say.”<sup>29</sup> The ideal reading audience of a narrative is thus defined by *belief* and *sympathy*: belief in the way facts are presented (ideological point of view); and sympathetic engagement with the protagonist or the authorial voice. By distinguishing between “actual beliefs, authorial beliefs, narrative beliefs and ideal beliefs,” Rabinowitz argues that issues of ‘truth’ and ‘fictionality’ can be spoken about with “more clarity” than has “hitherto been possible.”<sup>30</sup>

The usefulness of Rabinowitz’s model for the present thesis lies in his definition of the ideal reading audience as those who make a genuine sympathetic connection with the ideological and ethical perspective demanded by the text. In this sense, Rabinowitz’s use of the term ideal differs markedly from that of Gerald Prince, whose notion of the *lecteur idéal* is not quite the same. Prince’s *lecteur idéal* admits a couple of different nuances. In the first case it is set in opposition to the *lecteur virtuel* and works in a similar way to the implied reader as articulated by Chatman and Nelles: “celui capable de déchiffrer l’infinité des texts qui, d’après certains, se recouperaient dans un texte spécifique.”<sup>31</sup> In the second case it refers more to a flesh-and-blood literary critic and does not have the ethical overtones of Rabinowitz’s ideal reader: “Pour un écrivain, le lecteur idéal serait sans doute celui qui

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<sup>28</sup> Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction,” 134.

<sup>29</sup> Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction,” 134.

<sup>30</sup> Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction,” 141.

<sup>31</sup> Gerald Prince, “Introduction à l’étude du narrataire,” *Poétique* 14 (1973): 178-96.

comprendrait parfaitement et approuverait entièrement le moindre de ses mots, la plus subtile de ses intentions.”<sup>32</sup>

Rabinowitz’s unique, ‘ethical’ conception of the ideal reader lends some depth to the standard discussion of the rhetoric of implied constituents in narrative. It allows belief to function as a variable in interpretation and also allows for the possibility that real readers may fill the place envisaged by the author, adopting “uncritically” the ideological viewpoint expressed. To that extent, narrative persuasion has occurred: real readers become ideal readers and share the perspective inscribed in the text. Surprisingly, Rabinowitz’s theory has not been taken up in a widespread fashion in New Testament scholarship.<sup>33</sup> However, it has been applied to John’s Gospel to a limited extent by Mark W. G. Stibbe, whose work will shortly be discussed. The next section of this chapter will develop Rabinowitz’s and Stibbe’s insights by applying them to the presentation of the Jews in John’s Gospel.

## B. Application to the Gospel of John

Despite several Johannine scholars voicing concern about the legitimacy of applying modern narratological approaches to the Gospel of John, I consider the methodological move appropriate for three reasons.<sup>34</sup> Firstly, although the Gospel genre is clearly not a work of

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<sup>32</sup> Prince, “Introduction,” 180. Compare Michael Riffaterre’s notion of ‘readerly competence’ based on a shared ‘sociolect’ in Michael Riffaterre, “Interpretation and Undecidability,” *NLH* 12, no. 2 (1981): 239.

<sup>33</sup> The concept is certainly presumed, however, in most Reader Response theories, which now thoroughly inform biblical studies.

<sup>34</sup> John Ashton, *Studying John: Approaches to the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 142-143, denigrates narrative-critical readings of the Gospels for being “easier” and “smoother” than the “rough” alternative of historical criticism. According to Ashton, narrative critics incorrectly take the Gospel text to be a

fiction in the sense that a novel is, it is nonetheless crafted as a *narrative* about the man Jesus, and as such tells a coherent *story*. It presupposes certain textual elements such as events, setting, characters and dialogue that when thematically or sequentially organised, make up the plot.<sup>35</sup> John's narrative engages real readers and seeks to persuade them to come to faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God (cf. 20:31). Of course, it does this through the particularities of its originating historical situation – but that historical situation can only be speculatively reconstructed. Secondly, while it is not the intention of this thesis to reject historical questions “wholesale”, the issue of the Gospel's genre and how it participates in

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“smooth,” unified composition, but redaction-critical analysis has exposed the fact that the Gospels were not composed in “a sitting.” Despite their composite nature, it must be said that the Gospels can still be *read* as a unified piece of writing. See further, David Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism: Practices and Prospects,” in David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni, eds. *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism* (London: T & T Clark), 2004, 267-268. Rhoads argues that literary coherence is only a working hypothesis, and that the point of narrative criticism is to recognise the Gospels as literary-historical artefacts, and to read the text in its own right, without it serving as a “handmaid to historical reconstruction”; Mark W. G. Stibbe, on the other hand, states that employing analytical techniques appropriate to the modern novel when reading John is ‘anachronistic’ [Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (SNTSMS 73; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 22-23]; Steve Motyer, “Impasse,” 34, argues that narrative critical approaches too readily reject historical questions wholesale; and Francis J. Moloney, “Who is the Reader?,” 220, advocates caution because John's Gospel is a historical text that makes historical claims. Raimo Hakola, *Identity Matters: John, the Jews and Jewishness* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), has trouble defining the contours of the Gospel genre, with implications for his methodology: the Gospel is alternately a “non-fictional narrative” (page 34), a “factual narrative” (page 34) and an “ideological novel” (page 37). Elsewhere, Hakola and Merenlahti make some critical points about the Gospels as “non-fictional narrative”, meaning that the Gospels can be read with narratological methods (they are still *narratives*) but that their truth-claims and eye-witness claims need to be taken seriously (cf. John 19:35). Hakola and Merenlahti claim that in non-fictional narratives (like biography and autobiography) the author and narrator are almost one and the same, but in fictional narratives the author and narrator are emphatically distinguished (cf. Chatman). See further, Petri Merenlahti and Raimo Hakola, “Reconceiving Narrative Criticism,” in Rhoads and Syreeni, eds. *Characterization in the Gospels*, 34-40. Finally, Eisen thinks narratological approaches fit the Gospels “exceedingly well” and that it is “urgent” to apply them; see Ute E. Eisen, “The Narratological Fabric of the Gospels,” in Jan Christoph Meister, ed. *Narratologia: Narratology Beyond Literary Criticism: Mediality, Disciplinarity* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 195-211.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 6-7.

historicity are beyond the scope of this thesis and are still highly disputed.<sup>36</sup> Thirdly, it is important to address the narrative-rhetorical dimensions of the Gospel itself in order to understand how the Gospel's implied author portrays the Jews in the context of the explicit citations from the OT.

Narrative critical readings of the Fourth Gospel continue to proliferate.<sup>37</sup> It is commonly acknowledged that their advent was heralded by R. Alan Culpepper's major literary study, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* over two decades ago. Culpepper applied the concepts of the 'implied author/reader' and 'narrator/narratee' to the Gospel of John, arguing that the persuasive force of the Gospel narrative lies in the way its proclamation about Jesus is communicated to the implied reader.<sup>38</sup> According to Culpepper, the Gospel narrative invites real readers to faith in Jesus by means of "recurring misunderstandings, sharp, witty irony, and profound, moving symbolism."<sup>39</sup> Stylistically, Johannine irony contributes to the profile of the implied reader insofar as it offers multivalent possibilities of words and phrases – the more obvious 'fleshly' meaning coexisting with the more subtle 'spiritual' meaning. Where other characters in the text may miss the more subtle meanings and so *misunderstand* the text's message about Jesus (cf. 3:4; 4:11-13; 12:34), the real reader – when following the interpretive cues laid down by the implied reader – can move through the text with a sense of

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<sup>36</sup> See Judith Lieu, "Anti-Judaism, the Jews, and the Worlds of the Fourth Gospel," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 178. Sandra Schneiders captures the tension well by arguing that the Gospel genre is at once story, history, and transhistory: see Sandra Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 114.

<sup>37</sup> For a recent survey see Tom Thatcher, "Anatomies of the Fourth Gospel: Past, Present and Future Probes," in *Anatomies of Narrative Criticism: The Past, Present and Future of the Fourth Gospel as Literature*, ed. Tom Thatcher and Stephen D. Moore (Atlanta, GA.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 1-38.

<sup>38</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 7-8; 15-16; 205.

<sup>39</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 7.

superiority to those misunderstanding characters.<sup>40</sup> Culpepper further specifies the categories of narrator and naratee within the Gospel story, identifying the narrator's voice at critical junctures in the story where a post-resurrectional perspective intrudes into the text (2:22; 7:39; 12:15).<sup>41</sup> Culpepper's analysis has been well-received in the subsequent scholarship, except that he is often (and rightly) criticised for confusing the categories of implied reader and intended (i.e. real) readers.<sup>42</sup>

Another landmark study in the application of narrative criticism to John's Gospel was Mark W. G. Stibbe's 1993 monograph *John as Storyteller*. Developing Rabinowitz's concept of the ideal reader, Stibbe argued that the Gospel of John constructs a "paradigmatic" reading position which real readers of the text are invited to adopt.<sup>43</sup> Paradigmatic readers of the Gospel are shaped by a "constant re-reading" of the text, instructed by the pedagogy of the narrative.<sup>44</sup> According to Stibbe, paradigmatic readers of John's Gospel "do not resist the narrator."<sup>45</sup> Rather, they become model readers, accepting completely the implied author's ideological viewpoint about Jesus: that he is the incarnate *Logos* of God and that the divine glory shines forth in his flesh (1:14); that he is Son of God and Messiah (11:27, 20:31); that he is one with God (10:30), sent by God (cf. 3:16; 5:23, 36; 6:44; 7:18, 28, 33; 8:16, 26, 29;

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<sup>40</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 7, 152-199.

<sup>41</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 7, 17.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Hallback, "The Gospel of John as Literature," 37; cf. Staley, *The Print's First Kiss*, 33. Culpepper also maintains that the voice of the implied author and that of the narrator are "hardly" distinct in John's Gospel (see *Anatomy*, 8).

<sup>43</sup> Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 16. Cf. Rene Kieffer, "The Implied Reader in John's Gospel," in *New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives. Essays from the Scandinavian Conference on the Fourth Gospel, Aarhus 1997*, ed. Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Petersen (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 48.

<sup>44</sup> Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 16. Contrast this with the implied reader who is always a 'first-time' – or as some scholars apparently prefer, a 'virginal' – reader in the text. Compare also the recent notion that the Gospel itself was shaped by constant 're-readings' in the process of composition. See Jean Zumstein, *Kreative Erinnerung: Relecture und Auslegung im Johannesevangelium* (ATANT 84; Zürich: TVZ, 2004).

<sup>45</sup> Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 16.

10:36; 11:42; 12:44, 45, 49; 17:26) and will return to God (cf. 7:33; 8:21; 14:2, 28). Paradigmatic readers also accept that Jesus is greater than Abraham (8:53), Moses (1:17-18; 6:32) and Jacob (4:12); and that he is the true reality symbolised by the cultic and institutional elements of the Judaism of his day (cf. 2:17-22). More importantly, paradigmatic readers of the Gospel ‘see’ (cf. 1:14b, 39; 3:3; contrast 8:39b; 12:40), ‘know’ (10:14; 14:17) and ‘love’ (14:28) Jesus and God. They receive ‘life’ (1:3-4; 3:16; 5:24; 10:10; 17:1-3), ‘light’ (1:3-4; 12:35, 46) and do not come to judgment (3:17; 5:24). Moloney expresses the crux of the matter succinctly when he writes that “[t]he implied reader... represents not so much what the intended reader *was*, but what the real author *wanted the intended reader to become*.”<sup>46</sup>

The Fourth Gospel’s ideological stance may thus be defined as including “the beliefs, norms, evaluations and value system of the text.”<sup>47</sup> Becoming an ‘ideal’ (or paradigmatic) reader of the Gospel means adopting this value system. Stibbe therefore – like Rabinowitz – speaks of the ideal Gospel reader not in terms of linguistic competence (as does Prince) but in terms of ethical compliance. This is essential when coming to read the position and portrayal of the Jews within the narrative, a point curiously overlooked by Culpepper and Stibbe. The ideological viewpoint of the Gospel is determined by a dualism that not only encourages an ‘ideal’ reader to accept its claims about Jesus but to stand with Jesus against a blind, dark and

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<sup>46</sup> Moloney, “Who is the Reader?,” 228 (emphasis mine). It should be strongly emphasised at this point that I use the term ‘ideal reader’ in this thesis to refer to a modern, twenty-first century reader, even though I am aware that the term can also legitimately refer to the original, intended readers of the Gospel. The latter would possibly not have been perturbed by the anti-Jewish rhetoric of the text, but rather, would possibly have accepted the positive value this rhetoric had in confirming them in their belief in Jesus as Messiah (cf. 20:31). A modern, ‘ethical’ reading of the text brings a different set of concerns to the reading process: in a post-Shoah context, real readers may not so easily succeed in becoming ‘ideal readers’ of the Gospel text, but may openly resist the demand to ‘other’ the Jews en route to faith in Jesus (see Chapter One, section IV, and further, Chapter Six, section A.ii).

<sup>47</sup> James Ressigie, *The Strange Gospel: Narrative Design and Point of View in John* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 4.



unbelieving ‘world’ (cf. 1:1-5). The ideal reader is invited to imitate those characters in the narrative who ‘see’ and believe in Jesus (cf. 20:8) and to reject the example of those who do not – those who, as such, represent the unbelieving ‘world’ opposed to God.

In the dualistic rhetoric of the Gospel narrative, a body of characters called the Jews are consistently portrayed as these negative characters; they reject Jesus and are hostile towards him.<sup>48</sup> They are accused by Jesus of never having ‘seen’ God’s ‘form’ and of not having God’s word ‘abide’ in them (5:37-38). They do not know God as Jesus knows God (cf. 7:28d; 8:19) and they do not ‘hear’ God’s ‘voice’ because they do not ‘believe’ in Jesus (8:46-47; 10:26). They seek Jesus’ death (cf. 5:18), and their willingness to kill him likens them, in Jesus’ own words, to the devil, who is a ‘murderer and the Jews’ ‘father’ (8:44). The Jews as characters are crafted into the underside of the Gospel’s dualism so that the ‘ideal’ reader will dissociate from them en route to faith in Jesus (cf. 20:31), and identify more strongly with those characters who are receptive to Jesus and to God. This position is argued for by Adele Reinhartz. Because I wish to understand what the OT citation texts in John 1:19-12:15 might contribute to this narrative-rhetorical construction of the Jews it is worth discussing Reinhartz’s analysis in some depth.

#### i. Reinhartz’s ‘Ethical’ Reading of the Jews in John’s Gospel

Reinhartz has described the Fourth Gospel’s dualistic agenda – its “rhetoric of binary opposition” – in the most comprehensive and systematic manner to date. Her work on this

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<sup>48</sup> These points are developed further in this chapter. At the same time, the nuanced picture of the Jews in John is not to be overlooked (see page 1 of the thesis).

subject is rich and finds its most developed expression in her 2001 book, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple: A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John*.<sup>49</sup> In this work, Reinhartz approaches the issue of the Jews in John from the standpoint of ‘ethical criticism’ as formulated by Wayne Booth.<sup>50</sup> The metaphor governing this approach is that of ‘reading as relationship;’ the implied reader of the Gospel – whom Reinhartz identifies as the Beloved Disciple – establishes a ‘friendship’ with real readers by offering them a *gift*. This gift is ‘eternal life’ in Jesus’ name and is “framed ... in ethical terms.”<sup>51</sup> Reinhartz argues that the Beloved Disciple “exercises ethical judgment with respect to his readers by separating those who are good – who believe – from those who are evil.”<sup>52</sup> Reinhartz takes her cue from John 3:19-21 which states that there are two kinds of people in the ‘world’: those who do ‘evil deeds’ and ‘hate the light and avoid it’, and those who ‘do what is true’ and who come into the light and who are ‘in God.’ She concludes that the implied author of the text thus creates a binary opposition wherein one is ‘evil’ for rejecting the gift of eternal life, but one is ‘good’ for accepting it.<sup>53</sup> The Beloved Disciple “aligns” one group of readers with himself and “consigns all others to the role of ‘the Other.’”<sup>54</sup> In the Gospel, the Jews are cast “in the role of the Other who resist and oppose the Gospel’s message of truth.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Adele Reinhartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Continuum, 2001). See also Matthew Kraus, “New Jewish Directions in the Study of the Fourth Gospel,” in *New Currents through John: A Global Perspective*, ed. Francisco Lozada Jr. and Tom Thatcher (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 141-166.

<sup>50</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 19-20. Cf. Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

<sup>51</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 25.

<sup>52</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 25.

<sup>53</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 25, cf. Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction,” 135.

<sup>54</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 25

<sup>55</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 20. Cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 129: the Jews are “associated with all the negative categories and images in the Gospel: the world, sin, the devil, darkness, blindness and death.”

Reinhartz's theoretical perspective is 'ethical' in the sense that she attempts to gauge *what kind of people we become* when we read the Gospel of John as 'paradigmatic readers' (to use Stibbe's terminology). Reinhartz's own related term is that of a *compliant* reading of the Gospel – this, she argues, is one of four possible reading positions one may adopt when interpreting John's Gospel. A "compliant" reading accepts the gift of the Beloved Disciple, identifying with those characters in the narrative who also accept that gift. This type of reading intrinsically entails 'Othering' the Jews throughout the reading process.<sup>56</sup> But this is only one of four possible positions that Reinhartz identifies. A "resistant" reading *rejects* the gift of the Beloved Disciple, identifying with the Jews in the text and reading their objections to Jesus as legitimate.<sup>57</sup> A compliant and resistant reading participates in the Gospel's binary rhetoric; the only difference is whose 'side' is taken throughout the reading process.<sup>58</sup> Reinhartz's third and fourth reading positions attempt to break the bounds of the Gospel's binary rhetoric. A "sympathetic reading" treats the Beloved Disciple as "colleague," focusing only upon aspects of commonality and ignoring temporarily the divisive aspects of the text.<sup>59</sup> Whereas an "engaged reading" accepts the fact that the distances between a modern Jewish reader of the Gospel and the dualistic perspective of the Gospel's implied author are too great to cross. An engaged reading faces these problems directly.<sup>60</sup>

Reinhartz proceeds to read the Gospel from all four positions, dividing her interpretation between three "distinct but interrelated" levels present in the narrative.<sup>61</sup> Reinhartz refers to these levels as 'tales' – the "historical tale" is the Gospel's narrative about Jesus and his

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<sup>56</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 54-80

<sup>57</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 81-98.

<sup>58</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 144.

<sup>59</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 99-130. This reading might approximate to what I called the "most-Jewish" side of the Fourth Gospel in the previous chapter.

<sup>60</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 131-160.

<sup>61</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 33.

disciples; the “cosmological tale” is the story of the pre-existent Logos coming into the ‘world’ to give ‘life’ to humankind (1:1-18; 3:16); and the “ecclesiological tale” is the story of the Johannine community ostensibly present in the narrative.<sup>62</sup> Reinhartz’s model thus generates twelve readings of the Gospel text. I will now attend to the ‘compliant’ and ‘resistant’ readings of the Gospel that Reinhartz articulates, as these clearly reinforce my argument about the Gospel’s negative rhetorical construction of the Jews.

A ‘compliant’ reading of the Gospel’s ‘historical tale’ requires the reader to accept the Beloved Disciple’s gift “in the terms in which he offers it.”<sup>63</sup> To quote Rabinowitz once more, this means that the reader “accepts uncritically” what the narrator “has to say.”<sup>64</sup> A compliant reader of the Gospel’s ‘historical tale’ would engage sympathetically with the protagonist (Jesus) or other characters (the disciples), take on the authorial perspective and accept the judgments of the narrator. Indeed, as Reinhartz states, characters are a “powerful tool for urging compliance” on the reader.<sup>65</sup> The reader is enjoined to evaluate negatively the figures refusing Jesus’ gift. These latter characters are always called the Jews in John (5:37-47; 8:59; 10:22-33; 9:22; 12:42; 16:2; 18:3, 12, 28-40).<sup>66</sup> The term Ἰουδαῖος is never used to refer to Jesus’ disciples.<sup>67</sup> According to Reinhartz, a definite binary opposition is therefore in place between Jesus and his disciples on the one hand, and the Jews on the other, in the Gospel’s “historical tale.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 34-53.

<sup>63</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 54.

<sup>64</sup> Rabinowitz, “Truth in Fiction,” 134.

<sup>65</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 55.

<sup>66</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 64-65.

<sup>67</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 63.

<sup>68</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 63. Lieu, “Anti-Judaism, the Jews and the Worlds,” contends that the Jews have no “antithetical counterpart” in the dualistic worldview of the Gospel. While the Jews can certainly be situated in

This picture is compounded by the Gospel's 'cosmological tale' which is framed around a theological mythology about the journey of the pre-existent Logos of God into the 'world' (1:1-3). The Logos is incarnate in Jesus (1:14) and comes into the world to dispel the darkness (1:5) and to rid the world of the 'prince of darkness' (or 'prince of this world'), before returning to his Father in heaven (14:2-28). Jesus' 'hour' of 'glorification' – his death on the cross – destroys the hold of the devil on the world (12:31-32). This mythology – which indeed, using the words of Lieu, might be termed the Gospel's "redemptive myth" – intersects with the Gospel's 'historical tale' at various points in the narrative, as shown below.

For example, Reinhartz explains how the implied author of the Gospel frames his soteriology around "contrasting states of being, such as light/darkness, life/death, from above/from below, being from God or not being from God."<sup>69</sup> Each state of being arises from (or gives rise to) contrasting activities such as "believing/not believing, accepting/not accepting, doing good/doing evil [and] loving/hating."<sup>70</sup> It is Reinhartz's contention that the Jews as characters exclusively inhabit the negative sphere of this soteriological construct. They "possess the attitudes and engage in the actions that from a Johannine perspective will exclude them from salvation."<sup>71</sup> The metaphorical pair 'light/darkness,' for example, is used to contrast Jesus with the Jews: Jesus is the Light of the world (1:2; 8:12; 12:46), but the Jews rejection of Jesus leaves them in the darkness (12:37; cf. 3:19), blinded by their unbelief (12:37-42). In terms of contrasting activities, belief in and acceptance of Jesus/God is demonstrated by the

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the dualistic framework (cf. 8:23, 47), they are not "obviously" or "explicitly" polarised against Jesus or the disciples (page 179).

<sup>69</sup> Adele Reinhartz, "'Jews' and Jews" in the Fourth Gospel," in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001), 215. Cf. Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 67-70.

<sup>70</sup> Reinhartz, "'Jews' and Jews," 215.

<sup>71</sup> Reinhartz, "'Jews' and Jews," 217; Cf. Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 69.

disciples (1:11-12, 16; 15:12-17) but the Jews do not believe in or see God (5:38); they are not children of God but of the devil (8:39-44).<sup>72</sup> The Jews more or less consistently reject Jesus (except see 8:30-33); in the Fourth Gospel, rejecting Jesus is “tantamount to hating God” (cf. 8:42).<sup>73</sup> Only the Jews execute “violent, death-dealing” and “evil” acts.<sup>74</sup> Only the believing disciples are called ‘Israel’ (1:45), but are never called ‘Jews’. In sum, a compliant reading of the Gospel of John entails that one understand the Jews/the Jews to represent the “forces that stand in opposition to Jesus and hence to God.”<sup>75</sup>

A “resistant” reading of all three ‘tales’ involves reading “from the point of view of the Other.”<sup>76</sup> It means reading “against the grain of the text” to empathise with the Jews.<sup>77</sup> Simply put, this type of reading opens up the possibility of seeing the Jews as “victims” of the implied author’s polarised rhetoric.<sup>78</sup> It also means considering the possibilities that the Jews voice legitimate complaints against Jesus, particularly with regard to Jesus’ own claims

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<sup>72</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 69.

<sup>73</sup> Adele Reinhartz, “The Gospel of John: How the Jews Became Part of the Plot,” in *Jesus, Judaism and Christian Anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust*, ed. Paula Fredricksen and Adele Reinhartz (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox, 2002), 106. Jerome H. Neyrey, “In Conclusion... John 12 as a Rhetorical *Peroratio*,” *BTB* 37 no. 3 (2007): 106, 108, 111-112, speaks of how, in John’s Gospel, “rejecting Jesus means rejecting God” (104) and argues further that *hate* is an emotion aroused in the reader towards those characters who display hatred towards Jesus. Neyrey uses the ancient Greco-Roman rhetorical approach to reach similar conclusions to – but independently of – Reinhartz (cf. Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 70-72). This pertains to Reinhartz’ “ecclesiological tale” about the putative Johannine community – an aspect of the scholarship not directly addressed in this thesis.

<sup>74</sup> Reinhartz, “‘Jews’ and Jews,” 217. It might be somewhat short-sighted an assessment to say that only the Jews “execute violent and death-dealing acts” in the Gospel when Judas, a disciple, is the primary agent of Jesus’ betrayal (13:2-3, 26-27). But one should also note the correlation between ἰουδαῖος and ἰουδᾶς and the disturbing *Wirkungsgeschichten* that have arisen from this verbal and semantic correspondence (see Lieu, “Anti-Judaism, the Jews and the Worlds,” 179, n. 30).

<sup>75</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 70.

<sup>76</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 81.

<sup>77</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 82.

<sup>78</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 87.

to be equal with God – “a god in his own right” (10:33).<sup>79</sup> Finally, it suggests that one ‘read’ the community ‘history’ behind the text as presenting a biased, one-sided picture of what was, no doubt, a two-sided debate between two parties; the voice represented by the Jews in the text is silenced to an extent, retold only through the lens of the evangelist and his polemical agenda.

Nevertheless, a resistant reading of the Gospel’s presentation of the Jews falls short of Reinhartz’s ‘ethical’ interpretation because it replicates the binary oppositions inherent in the text, but simply ‘others’ Jesus and the disciples and denies any value to the implied author’s ideological viewpoint.<sup>80</sup> An ‘engaged’ reading of the Gospel seeks to rectify this situation, with implications for how one understands Jewish-Christian dialogue today. The constraints of the present thesis do not permit a thorough application of Reinhartz’s model; I only focus on a ‘compliant’ and ‘resistant’ reading because they adequately explain the type of rhetoric operating in the Gospel narrative. Reinhartz’s arguments substantiate the works of Rabinowitz and Stibbe examined above: Rabinowitz formulated the notion of an ‘ideal’ reading community for any narrative, and Stibbe, a paradigmatic reader of the Gospel of John. Reinhartz’s ‘compliant’ reader of the Gospel can be also understood in this light.

In conclusion, Reinhartz’s main thesis can be tabulated below:

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<sup>79</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 93.

<sup>80</sup> Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 161.

Type of ‘tale’	Characters on positive axis	Characters on negative axis
“Historical”	Jesus and the disciples	the Jews, Pharisees, Chief Priests, Levites
“Cosmological”	The Logos/Son of God	The Evil One/Prince of this world
“Ecclesiological”	The Johannine Community	Supposedly – Pharisaic Judaism

The table shows that characters in each of the three levels of the Gospel narrative that Reinhartz investigates sit on either a positive or negative axis, replicating the Gospel’s dualistic worldview. Characters on the positive axis stand opposed to those on the negative axis and vice-versa. Moreover, all characters inhabiting the positive sphere of John’s dualistic agenda across each ‘tale’ can be read in parallel fashion, and so with those on the negative sphere.

### C. Summary

In sum, the categories of implied author, implied reader and ideal reader demonstrate how narratives are intrinsically rhetorical, inviting real readers to take on ideological positions. A tacit ‘contract’ is formed between implied and real readers in the initial reading process, and in the *re*-reading process, readers may be shaped into ideal readers. I have gone into some detail with the secular narratological theories because it is important to have definitional clarity when reading the Gospel of John from this perspective. I have shown how these theories apply to the Gospel of John, specifically with regard to the portrayal of the Jews. On



the whole, the Jews represent the negative side of the Gospel's overarching dualism.<sup>81</sup> Reinhartz's in-depth treatment of this issue and her contention that the narrative structures of the Gospel itself encourage – indeed *require* – a 'compliant', 'anti-Jewish' reading of the text deserve more consideration in future studies. In the next section I discuss literary theories of characterisation in relation to the Gospel of John. The groundwork will then be laid for a discussion of the Jews as respondents to Jesus' self-revelation in the context of the Gospel's OT citations.

## II. Literary Theories of Characterisation

At this point it will be necessary to draw on another theoretical model to guide one's reading of the Jews in the Gospel in light of their place as Jesus' interlocutors when Scripture is cited in John 1:19-12:15. This section of the chapter will engage with literary theories of characterisation in order to substantiate and extend what has been discussed so far in terms of rhetorical criticism. Firstly, I discuss some key issues that dominate the field of characterisation in literary theory, and then discuss their application to the Gospel of John.

### D. 'Round' Characters or 'Flat' Characters? The Ancient/Modern Dichotomy

There is a well-known distinction, originating with E. M. Forster, between two types of characters in narrative: characters can be either 'round' (multi-dimensional) or 'flat' (one-

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<sup>81</sup> Part of the problem (and the paradox) of the Gospel, is that one can only say 'on the whole': the nuanced picture of the Jews, particularly as it emerges in John 8:31-33, does not entirely undermine Reinhartz's thesis but it does give pause to a stringently 'black-and-white' perspective of the Jews in the Gospel.

dimensional).<sup>82</sup> In Forster's formulation, flatness of character simply denotes that the character is organised around a single defining theme or idea, or a group of like ideas – in other words, that the character functions as a literary type, signifying a universal human disposition, such as greed or naiveté. But flatness may also equate to a lack of development in the character over the course of the narrative, such that the character remains stable and predictable. On the other hand, if a character is 'round' it means he or she is able to surprise the reader, to change and develop as the story unfolds.

What is more, flat characters are often associated with ancient Greek literature: Aristotle famously stated that character is fixed and subordinate to plot (*Poet.* 6:15-22; 39). Character, according to Aristotle, is equivalent to an agent's 'nature' (*Poet.* 6:12). But more importantly, every 'agent' is defined by the action he/she performs (*Poet.* 6:17-18). Character is inextricably related to *action*, such that an agent's actions *reveal* his or her character: in Aristotle's words, "character is that which reveals the moral purpose of the agents" (*Poet.* 7:8-9).<sup>83</sup> Roundness of character, on the contrary, is frequently associated with the novel, and can be situated within the broader context of modernity's interest in the individual as personality in a psychological sense.<sup>84</sup>

This polarised construct can be problematised in two respects. Firstly, the assumption that roundness or complexity of character is found only in modern narratives while flatness of character typifies ancient narrative is coming under steady critique. For example, some classicists have sought to demonstrate how agents in Euripidean texts are actually more

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<sup>82</sup> E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (New York: Penguin, 1976 [orig. Publ. 1927]), 73-81.

<sup>83</sup> See, *The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts and Ingram Bywater (New York: Random House, 1954), 231-232.

<sup>84</sup> See Petri Merenlahti, "Characters in the Making: Individuality and Ideology in the Gospels," in David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni (eds.) *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 51.

‘rounded’ than is often assumed.<sup>85</sup> Likewise, some biblical scholars argue that characters can fluctuate between being types to being individuals, and that it is therefore better to think of degrees of characterisation as points on a continuum rather than a polarised dichotomy.<sup>86</sup> Round characters, it is argued, are not exclusive to modern novels, and flat characters are not the sole property of ancient Greek literature, including the NT. Cornelis Bennema explains the main difference between ancient and modern characterisation thus: it is not so much that one is round and the other flat, but that in ancient literature there are *less* instances of ‘direct’ characterisation, so that readers must infer much about characters and fill in ‘gaps’ so to speak; but in modern literature there are *more* instances of ‘direct’ characterisation, allowing the reader to have less recourse to inference.<sup>87</sup>

Secondly, the very usefulness of such categories as round and flat when applied to characters (in either ancient or modern literature) can be called into question. In fact, one can find examples of the deliberate and strategic use of flat characterisation in the post-modern novel that aims to debunk the notion that characters can possess complex individuality. Post-modern narratology would then see round characters as “sorts of ideological gymnasias within which we learn how to conform to politically correct definitions of subjectivity and within which we become trapped.”<sup>88</sup> Indeed, the eagerness with which some scholars set out to prove that characters in ancient literary works are *not* flat but round results partially from the

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<sup>85</sup> See for example Jacqueline de Romilly, *A Short History of Greek Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 71-72, cited in Cornelis Bennema, “A Theory of Character in the Fourth Gospel with Reference to Ancient and Modern Literature,” *BibInt* 17 (2009): 384.

<sup>86</sup> See Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), 32. See also Bennema, “A Theory,” 382, and Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (Colorado: Paternoster, 2009), 13-14. Bennema will be engaged with specifically later in this chapter; notably, Bennema does not draw on Berlin’s earlier work.

<sup>87</sup> Bennema, “A Theory,” 398. ‘Direct’ and ‘Indirect’ presentation of a character is discussed in section B.ii.a and B.ii.b below.

<sup>88</sup> See Lee Kostantinou, “Round or Flat?” *Centre: A Journal for the Literary Arts* 8 (2009): 79-80.

fact that these descriptive categories had accrued a curious “moral and political valence” not explicitly present in Forster’s *Aspects of the Novel*.<sup>89</sup> In the literary theory subsequent to Forster, roundness of character signified a certain moral agency whereas flatness signified that a character was simply a mindless automaton. In the opinion of Mieke Bal, this sort of misguided realism that read characters as though they were people resulted in egregious misinterpretations of both ancient and modern works.<sup>90</sup>

And so it seems more appropriate to speak of ‘character-effects’ than to speak of a character who it is assumed, has the competence and power to act, to think, and to display depth of psychological development or personality – and moreover, to assume that to the degree a character approaches a realistic, complex portrait of a human person, that character approaches also a kind of moral agency denied the flat character.<sup>91</sup> The anthropomorphism of a literary character is at once the appeal of that character but also that which opens the character to interpretive fallacies.<sup>92</sup> A ‘character-effect’ occurs when an “anthropomorphic figure” in a narrative text is invested with specifically ‘human’ features and characteristics, and these together create a relatively coherent “character-effect.”<sup>93</sup> To this end, then, I must

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. Kostantinou, “Round or Flat?” 79.

<sup>90</sup> See Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 113-115. Bal gives as an example a common but mistaken reading of the character of Albertine in Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu*: because scholars try to read Albertine as a “real girl” she only comes across as “irritating and antipathetic” while the character-narrator appears to be a “selfish monster”, objectifying Albertine out of his own obsessive tendencies. Once it is grasped that Albertine in fact has no psychological ‘depth’ as a character it is easier to see how Proust has used Albertine to make a point about “the relation between jealousy, love and knowledge,” which, once made, dispenses with the character of Albertine altogether, and she dies (see pages 114-115). Bal contends that if Albertine were reduced to realist norms the appeal of *À la recherche du temps perdu* would be lost.

<sup>91</sup> Bal, *Narratology*, 113.

<sup>92</sup> This is discussed in more detail in section B.i below.

<sup>93</sup> Bal, *Narratology*, 112.

now outline and discuss the means by which a reader comes to appreciate character-effects, or in other words, to detect indicators of character in a narrative.

#### E. Characterisation or Character Reconstruction? The Return of the Reader

When it comes to analysing characters in a narrative one may speak of characterisation or character reconstruction. Characterisation usually refers to the author's depiction of a character and involves asking questions of the text that centre upon what the author intended in portraying characters the way he or she did. Character reconstruction, on the other hand, circumvents issues of authorial intention and involves asking questions about how the *reader* comes by information about a character in a narrative and how the reader builds up a coherent picture of a character (or a character-effect).<sup>94</sup> Character reconstruction is the method of analysis generally used in narratological studies.

Yet this immediately begs the further question: '*which* reader is it that reconstructs a character from information in a narrative?' Is it the implied reader (the 'reader' that is encoded within the narrative and responds to the 'implied author')? Or is it a real reader, who of course follows the cues of the implied reader in coming to an adequate interpretation of the narrative? In the first section of this chapter I argued that the rhetorical design of John's Gospel relies on how it elicits a 'compliant' reading from an ideal reader of the text. In this sense, the 'ideal reader' is someone who adheres to the ideological viewpoint of the Gospel; so the term 'ideal' is emphatically not employed in a Platonic sense and set in opposition to the 'real', but rather *denotes* the real (reader).

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<sup>94</sup> On this distinction see, Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 18.

But when the issue of character reconstruction arises in narratology, the issue of readerly competence also comes into the fore. The ‘ideal’ reader can then also mean any real reader (ancient or modern) who is equipped to pick up on the many textual clues required to build up a portrait of a character. In this sense, the term ‘ideal’ denotes not only ideological compliance but that which embodies a certain standard of (readerly) perfection. In what follows it will be important to keep both of these nuances in mind when I use the term ‘ideal reader’. Admittedly, the latter nuance can be difficult to work with critically as there is no guarantee that real readers (ancient or modern) would all succeed in constructing the same character in an ideally competent manner; all real readers have varying levels of education, abilities and differing circumstances that impact upon their reading. Indeed, “the neat and convenient division so often made between an inscribed reader (pure, constant, text-bound) and real (culturally conditioned) audiences” can be misleading.<sup>95</sup> The question of literary competence also raises the issue of the impossibility of objectivity in describing what the real (ideal) reader will or will not select in reconstructing a character in a narrative, for it is the critic/scholar who assigns certain competencies to the reader based on what he or she is able to read in a given text.<sup>96</sup> However, within the narrative world of a text there are certain rhetorical features that assist the reader in reconstructing character and these *can* be detailed and described with some objectivity. To these I now turn.

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<sup>95</sup> John A. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 21.

<sup>96</sup> In saying this I acknowledge the subjective nature of my own interpretations of John.

ii. Modern Approaches to Character Reconstruction: Chatman

Seymour Chatman's modern literary theory of characterisation purports to be "a more open, functional notion of character" than that articulated by Aristotle.<sup>97</sup> Chatman attempts to show how character is "reconstructed by the [reading] audience from evidence announced or implicit" in the text.<sup>98</sup> Readers are thus actively involved in determining character in narrative; they "construct" what characters are "like" in terms of what Chatman calls a "paradigm of traits," a trait being "any distinguishable, relatively enduring way in which one individual differs from another."<sup>99</sup> Character traits may be "unfolded, replaced, or may even disappear" as the narrative progresses.<sup>100</sup> In this respect, Chatman's work is another gloss on Forster's 'round/flat' distinction and he deals mainly with the round characters of modern fiction. According to Chatman, while flat characters are distinguished by a single dominant trait which makes their behaviour highly predictable, round characters have a variety of "conflicting traits" and are capable of surprising the reader. Characters in the novel are generally of the latter kind, round and "open-ended," so that readers "come to anticipate, indeed to demand, the possibilities of discovering *new* and *unsuspected* traits."<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 119.

<sup>98</sup> Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 119.

<sup>99</sup> As defined by personality psychologist Joy Paul Guilford, *Personality* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1959), in Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 121.

<sup>100</sup> Francis D. Tolmie, "The *λοῦδοι* in the Fourth Gospel: A Narratological Perspective," in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. G. van Belle, J. G. van Der Watt, and P. Maritz (BETL 184; Peeters Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 337.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 132, (emphasis mine).

A word of caution is to be sounded here, as Chatman himself acknowledges: “trait names are not themselves traits.”<sup>102</sup> The names that readers invent to describe character traits are “socially coded signs and not perfect designations.”<sup>103</sup> This alerts one to the subjective factor in Chatman’s approach. Traits only acquire names according to the interests peculiar to certain times and places; they are essentially culturally conditioned.<sup>104</sup> What one reader imputes to a character as a trait today may differ from what another reader may have imputed to that same character even a decade ago. I will return to this issue, as it bears special significance for the Jews as characters in the Gospel of John. A less psychologising perspective on character-reconstruction is put forward by Rimmon-Kenan, whose work will now be discussed.

## ii. Modern Approaches to Character Reconstruction: Ewen/Rimmon-Kenan

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan memorably disseminated the work of Joseph Ewen on the textual indicators of character in narrative, work that was previously available only in the Hebrew.<sup>105</sup> Based on the work of Ewen, Rimmon-Kenan identifies two basic types of character indicators in a narrative: direct definition and indirect presentation. Both types enable the reader to construct as full a portrait as possible of a particular character.

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<sup>102</sup> Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 124.

<sup>103</sup> Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 124.

<sup>104</sup> Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 123.

<sup>105</sup> See Joseph Ewen, “The Theory of Character in Narrative Fiction” (in Hebrew) *Hasifrut* 3 (1971): 1-30; Joseph Ewen, *Character in Narrative* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Sifri’at Po’alim, 1980) – titles translated by Rimmon-Kenan and the content of the works disseminated in Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 59-71. Ewen’s work was seminal in establishing the Tel Aviv school of poetics.



#### a. Direct Definition

Direct definition is the most explicit type of character indicator and can name a characteristic outright or use an adjective to describe a ‘trait’ (for example, ‘she was thoughtful’). Even abstract nouns can be used for this type of character indication, for example, (‘his childlikeness was endearing’) or a part of speech can be utilised (‘she does not like many people’).<sup>106</sup> It is important to note that the explicit naming of a characteristic can only be considered reliable when it proceeds from the most authoritative ‘voice’ in the narrative (e.g. a supra-temporal narrator or the protagonist). If the direct definition of a characteristic proceeds from the ‘villain’ in the story and it is, for example, the protagonist who is being characterised, the reader is justified in holding those words suspect. The words of the villain may then reflexively serve to characterise the *villain* more than they do the protagonist.<sup>107</sup>

#### b. Indirect Presentation

The second type of character indicator in a narrative is called ‘indirect presentation’ because it is less explicit than direct definition and concerns the ways in which a ‘trait’ is exemplified

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<sup>106</sup> Cf. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 59-60.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 60. An example in John’s Gospel might be Chapter 8, where the Pharisees accuse Jesus of testifying invalidly (8:13), and the Jews accuse Jesus of being a Samaritan and of possessing a demon (8:48). Because the Jews and the Pharisees are not the most authoritative ‘voice’ in the Gospel narrative (in fact, as the ‘villains’ they may be the least authoritative) the reader gives less weight to these examples of direct definition when Jesus is being characterised. On the other hand, when Jesus accuses the Jews of being the devil’s children (8:44) and of being ‘dishonoured’ by the Jews (8:49), the reader gives more weight to these characterisations, as Jesus’ voice, along with the narrator’s, is the most authoritative in the Gospel.

rather than mentioned.<sup>108</sup> In this case, the reader has more recourse to inference, and the reader's "frame of reference" plays a crucial role in the way characteristics are deduced: for example, a character who deserts military service might be either a pacifist or a coward – a reader may come to either conclusion without further information from the narrative.<sup>109</sup> Generally there are a number of ways in which a character is indirectly presented to the reader: through *action*, through *speech*, through *external appearance* and through *environment*.<sup>110</sup>

When a character is presented to the reader through his or her *actions*, two kinds of actions are notable: 'one-off' (or non-routine) actions, and habitual actions. Non-routine actions often arise in the climax of a narrative, revealing the unexpected or dynamic nature of a character formerly thought to be incapable of performing that action. This does not mean that such non-routine actions are uncharacteristic of a character, but that they are reserved for a point in the narrative where dramatic momentum will enhance the plot. By contrast, habitual actions reflect the 'constant' or 'static' aspect of a character.<sup>111</sup> Both routine and non-routine actions can be further classified as 'acts of commission,' 'acts of omission', or a contemplated or intended action.<sup>112</sup> A character may also be presented to the reader indirectly through his or

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<sup>108</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 60.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Bal, *Narratology*, 132, for this example.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 61-67.

<sup>111</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 61. It could be said that this analytical framework presents a more plausible and subtle way of classifying a character than does the 'round/flat' debate. Every character possesses some static and dynamic elements which are revealed indirectly to the reader by various means and at differing points in the narrative.

<sup>112</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 61-62. Applying this to the Jews in John's Gospel for illustrative purposes: under 'acts of commission' one could look to the verbal hostility of the Jews towards Jesus (cf. 2:17-19), to their attempted stoning of Jesus (cf. 10:31) and to their attempted arrest of Jesus (10:39); under 'acts of omission', one could count the way the Jews fail to give Jesus 'honour' (8:48); for their 'contemplated' actions, one could include their un-verbalised intentions to kill Jesus (cf. 5:18; 7:1); and for their non-routine, one-off

her speech. This speech may be in dialogue with other characters or take place in silent monologue. Also, as mentioned, what one character says about another may function to reflexively characterise that character, depending upon the reliability of his or her voice.<sup>113</sup>

A character's external appearance and environment can also serve as indicators of traits.<sup>114</sup> These two means of indirect presentation have little bearing on the reconstruction of character in John's Gospel, as the description of a character's appearance or gestures are minimal. However, they cannot be ruled out entirely: the physical environment of characters in John often holds some symbolic import for how that character is to be understood.<sup>115</sup> For example, Nicodemus comes to Jesus 'by night' (3:2), perhaps indicative of the fact that he is unwilling to 'come into the light' and follow Jesus.<sup>116</sup> A character's external appearance is also not altogether irrelevant for characterisation, as Chad Hartsock, in his recent study on

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action that gives dramatic moment to the story, one could include their belief in Jesus (8:30-33), particularly if the past-perfect is read from πιστεύω and that once-given-but-now-retracted belief highlights their ongoing lack of belief in Jesus.

<sup>113</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 63-64.

<sup>114</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 65-66.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Susan E. Hylen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2009), 7-9. Hylen argues that metaphor plays a crucial role in characterisation in John.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Hylen, *Imperfect Believers*, 8. This detail serves to identify Nicodemus later in the narrative: when he comes to anoint the dead body of Jesus he is referred to as the one who "had at first come to Jesus by night" (19:39). The symbolic importance of physical environment is not the only aspect to consider but also the stereotypical significance of physical geography, in other words, of a person's "origins." Jerome Neyrey has contributed to the discussion of how character is understood in John's Gospel by arguing that the ancient Greco-Roman genre of *encomium* praised or vilified a person based on fixed categories such as "origins, parents, nurture, virtues and death;" see Jerome H. Neyrey, "Encomium versus Vituperation: Contrasting Portraits of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 125, no. 3 (2007): 529. Neyrey argues that in John, Jesus' enemies vilify him on the basis of these fixed categories or *topoi*, while his friends praise him on precisely the same grounds, leading to two different characterisations of Jesus in the Gospel. For a tabulated summary of how Jesus' enemies vilify Jesus on the basis of 'origins' see Neyrey, "Encomium," 540.

physiognomics in Luke-Acts has demonstrated.<sup>117</sup> The ‘blindness’ of the Jews and the Pharisees would, in this light, activate a literary *topos* wherein assumptions about moral degeneracy and even obduracy are central.<sup>118</sup> Having outlined the two main means of reconstructing character in a narrative, I now briefly return to Rimmon-Kenan’s concept of reliability in narrative because it is relevant to how ‘accurate’ a reader may be in judging character.

### c. Reliability and Unreliability

According to Rimmon-Kenan, narrators (whether ‘third-person’ narrators or character narrators) can be reliable or unreliable. The ‘voices’ of other characters in a narrative can also be reliable or unreliable. A reliable narrator “is one whose rendering of the story and commentary on it the reader is supposed to take as an authoritative account of the fictional truth.”<sup>119</sup> On the other hand, “an unreliable narrator ... is one whose rendering of the story and/or commentary on it the reader has reasons to suspect.”<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, there are degrees of reliability and unreliability in narration. Rimmon-Kenan specifies several signs of unreliability, stating that reliability in narration can be “negatively defined” in the absence of these signs.<sup>121</sup> The main sources of unreliability in narration are as follows:

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<sup>117</sup> Chad Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts: The Use of Physical Features in Characterization* (BInS 94; Leiden: Brill, 2008).

<sup>118</sup> Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness*, 61. See also, from a different methodological perspective, Judith M. Lieu, “Blindness in the Johannine Tradition,” *NTS* 34 (1988): 83-95.

<sup>119</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 101.

<sup>120</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 101.

<sup>121</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 101.

- The narrator's limited knowledge
- Personal involvement of the narrator in the narrative
- A "problematic" value-scheme.<sup>122</sup>

An example of the first point could be a narrator who is young or adolescent and thus possesses 'limited knowledge' and a suspect narratorial voice.<sup>123</sup> An example of the second point could be a character-narrator who is personally involved in the story in such a way that he or she distorts other characters out of subjective bias.<sup>124</sup> And finally, narrators may be unreliable because they colour their account by a "questionable value-scheme."<sup>125</sup> By 'questionable' Rimmon-Kenan further states: "a narrator's moral values are considered questionable if they do not tally with those of the implied author....if they implied author does share the narrator's values then the latter is reliable in this respect, no matter how objectionable his views seem to some readers."<sup>126</sup> Finally, unreliable narrators can be

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<sup>122</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 101.

<sup>123</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 101. This hardly pertains to John, because the narrator has complete knowledge even of Jesus in his pre-existent state with God (1:1-18). Jesus too, whose 'voice' often crosses with the narrator, has a sort of supernatural knowledge of persons and events (cf. 2:24; 12:23-28; 13:1-2). In this respect, the voice of the narrator and of Jesus is reliable, and thus the characterisations that proceed from these voices are too.

<sup>124</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 101. Although Jesus is not exactly a character-narrator in John, his perspective is strongly aligned with the narratorial perspective, and so is to be trusted by the reader – or 'complicated' with – in Reinhartz's terms. And yet, at the same time the 'we-voice' of the Prologue (1:14-18) and the eye-witness claims of 19:35 (cf. 20:30-31) indicate personal involvement of the narrator in the narrative.

<sup>125</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 101.

<sup>126</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 102. An example could be Jesus' characterisation of the Jews as children of devil and as 'from below' (8:44, 47). This accords completely with the dualistic worldview of the narrator and his 'cosmological tale', and thus, despite the objectionable nature of this characterisation, from a reader-response perspective, it is to be considered 'reliable'.

detected when the outcome or a narrative proves the narrator wrong, so to speak.<sup>127</sup> This latter point means that prolepsis is a significant boon to reliability in narrative (cf. John 2:20-22; 7:39; 12:15-16).

### C. Application of the Methods to John's Gospel

In this section I consider and evaluate the work of a number of scholars who have applied these methods of character analysis to the Gospel of John. I begin with two scholars (Craig Koester and R. Alan Culpepper) who take what one might call an 'Aristotelian' approach to the Johannine characters, assuming the characters are stereotypical or representative types. Then I bring in Cornelis Bennema's recent critique of such views, also evaluating Bennema's own claims. In the second part of this section I present and assess Francois D. Tolmie's character analysis of the Jews in John's Gospel based on the work of Chatman and Rimmon-Kenan.

#### i. Aristotelian approaches to characterisation in John

##### a. Craig Koester

One of the earliest scholars to analyse characters in John's Gospel using Aristotle's *Poetics* as a guide was Craig Koester, who works on the assumption that John's Gospel should be

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<sup>127</sup> Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 102.

studied in the context of its ancient literary environment. Koester argues that intended readers of John's Gospel would have assumed that the narrative depicted real people from the past, but that readers were nonetheless aware of how John deliberately shaped the historical tradition with which he worked.<sup>128</sup> In terms of a character's defining action, in John this is translated into the choice of whether or not to accept the words of Jesus. Not every character in the Gospel will respond the same way in the situation of encounter with Jesus, and the way that they respond – either “positively or negatively” for Koester – determines their character.<sup>129</sup>

Koester chooses to analyse the character of the Jews under the broader category of ‘the crowds.’ His rationale for doing so rests upon the fact that the Jews represent but one faction among many in the general crowd.<sup>130</sup> The emergence of the Jews as hostile faces in an otherwise Galilean ‘crowd’ in John 6:41-42 indicates, for Koester, that the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is used not as a “blanket appellation for the inhabitants of a region” [i.e. Judea], but for those who “exhibit certain [negative] types of faith responses.”<sup>131</sup> Koester somewhat summarily states that the Jews represent a “world hostile to God” in the plot of the Gospel.<sup>132</sup> The Jews respond with increasing disbelief and hostility to Jesus and their response reveals them to be God's adversaries. In the Gospel, the Jews altercations with Jesus are transposed to the cosmic level, becoming a conflict between “the power of God and the power of the devil.”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 39.

<sup>129</sup> Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 37; Cf. Peter Dschulnigg, *Jesus begegnen: Personen und ihre Bedeutung im Johannesevangelium* (Th 30; Münster: LIT, 2002), 1-7. Dschulnigg argues that the Johannine characters are ideal types, models for the implied reader. But oddly, of the 21 characters analysed in Dschulnigg's monograph, the Jews receive no mention.

<sup>130</sup> Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 55.

<sup>131</sup> Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 59.

<sup>132</sup> Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 61.

<sup>133</sup> Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 62. Koester supplies no texts from the Gospel to support his point.

The Jews are thus one-dimensional characters, according to Koester's appropriation of Aristotle's theory, representing a typified faith-response to Jesus' self-revelation. Certain other approaches to the characterisation of the Jews in John agree on this point, although without drawing on Aristotle specifically. Robert Kysar, for example argues that the Jews fill the typical role of "antagonists" in the Gospel necessary for the persuasiveness of the narrative to be successful.<sup>134</sup> As such, the Jews carry a symbolic value, standing for human rejection of the divine.<sup>135</sup> Stephen Wilson correctly notes that the Jews as characters are "woven tightly" into John's theological perspective and that as such they "epitomize everything that is dark and diabolical."<sup>136</sup> Taking together the so-called 'flat' characterisation of the Jews in John and their contiguous symbolic function, the Fourth Gospel could be said to "tell a narrative" but also "[to] construct a worldview" through the Jews.<sup>137</sup> According to the argument of this thesis, this 'worldview', or 'redemptive myth' is heavily cloaked in Scriptural associations and comes to the foreground of John's narrative when Scripture is cited vis-à-vis the Jews.

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<sup>134</sup> Robert Kysar, "Anti-Semitism and the Gospel of John," in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans and D. A. Hanger (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 115, 117. On page 124, Kysar claims that the Gospel's negative portrayal of the Jews arises from "a literary necessity and a historical accident."

<sup>135</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 129.

<sup>136</sup> Stephen G. Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians, 70-170 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 80. Cf. John Ashton, "The Identity and Function of the Ἰουδαῖοι in the Fourth Gospel," *NovT* 27 (1985): 65: for Ashton, in the Gospel the Jews are made the "symbol of the human shadow."

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Lieu, "Anti-Judaism, the Jews and the Worlds," 173, 178. Lieu cautions that John's dualistic worldview is not fortuitously told through the Jews, and that they are not mere ciphers for unbelief in general. The Gospel genre blends "historical particularity" and "redemptive myth" in such a way that it is problematic to focus attention strictly on the Jews as symbolic characters *or* as (historically) representative characters.



Without explicitly adopting an Aristotelian approach to characterisation, Culpepper, like Koester, nevertheless argues that the Johannine characters are not suited to modern methods of character analysis. This is because the Fourth Evangelist was “not a novelist whose great concern is full-blown development of his characters.”<sup>138</sup> Rather, the Johannine characters simply fulfil a role in the narrative, a role that is singularly expressed in the nature of the characters’ response to Jesus.<sup>139</sup> The minor characters in the narrative personify a single ‘trait’ that defines them, for example, Thomas doubts and Peter is impulsive.<sup>140</sup> As such, Culpepper considers the Johannine characters to be flat, representative figures more suitable to structuralist (actantal) or formalist analysis.<sup>141</sup> Culpepper substantiates this claim by

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<sup>138</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 102.

<sup>139</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 102, 104.

<sup>140</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 102.

<sup>141</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 102. Although Culpepper does not specify or rely on any formalist or structural theorists, A. J. Greimas is the scholar responsible for the actantal model of narrative analysis [see Aldigras Julien Greimas, *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method*, trans. Daniele McDowell et al (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983; idem., “Actants, Actors and Figures,” in A. J. Greimas, *On Meaning: Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory*, trans. Paul J. Perron and Frank H. Collins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 106-120; see also Joseph Courtés, *Analyse sémiotique du discours: de l’énoncé à l’énonciation* (Paris: Hachette, 1991); idem., “The Cognitive Dimension of Narrative Discourse,” *NLH* 8 (1976): 433-447]. A discussion of Greimas’ actantal model is beyond the scope of this thesis, yet it should be emphatically noted that actants are not characters per se, but abstract ‘roles’ supposedly inherent in the structure of the narrative (such as ‘Helper’, ‘Opponent’, ‘Sender’, ‘Receiver’ and so on): one character can fill the position of many actants, and many characters can fill the role of just one actant. Greimas’ model is structural in that it studies a structure of actantal relations; it does not, therefore reduce characters to actants, since characters can only be read as actants in the process of abstraction from the ‘story’ (*sûzjet*), actants themselves filling the *fabula* dimension of the text. For more discussion see Bal, *Narratology*, 112-113. For an application of the actantal model to John’s Gospel see Mark W. G. Stibbe, “Return to Sender: A Structuralist Approach to John’s Gospel,” *BibInt* 1 (1993): 189-206.

referring to the dualistic worldview of the Gospel narrative which positions each character as a “particular sort of chooser” and allows each character a choice only for or against Jesus.<sup>142</sup>

Turning to the Jews as characters, Culpepper states that on the whole they are “closely associated with the response of unbelief” towards Jesus.<sup>143</sup> But at the same time, Culpepper acknowledges that some of the Jews are receptive to Jesus (cf. 8:30), while others do not accept his revelation.<sup>144</sup> The role that the Jews fill within the text accords with the dual function that Culpepper notices in the evangelist’s characterisation: (1) that in their interactions with Jesus, characters operate to bring out aspects of Jesus’ own character; and (2) Johannine characters thereby represent different, stereotyped responses to Jesus so that the reader may better perceive the consequences of accepting or rejecting Jesus.<sup>145</sup> The Jews are thus held up as types who misunderstand and reject Jesus for the benefit of the reader, who is persuaded to make a choice ‘for’ Jesus throughout the course of the narrative.

### c. Cornelis Bennema’s Critique

In two recently published works, Cornelis Bennema claims to have broken new ground in terms of a theory and interpretation of character in the Gospel of John.<sup>146</sup> Drawing in part on the work of Ewen (already referred to in section II.B.ii above), Bennema seeks to analyse and classify the entire cast of Johannine characters – excepting Jesus – along three dimensions:

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<sup>142</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 104.

<sup>143</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 126.

<sup>144</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 128.

<sup>145</sup> Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 145.

<sup>146</sup> See Bennema, “A Theory,” and idem., *Encountering Jesus*.

character complexity (which is determined by whether he or she exhibits a single trait or a web of trait), character development (which depends upon the character's ability to 'surprise' the reader), and a character's 'inner-life' (whether the reader is allowed a glimpse inside the 'mind' of the character or not).<sup>147</sup> Having done this, Bennema's aim is to plot each character along a continuum to show their "degree of characterization," ranging from the typically Aristotelian agent, through to type and up to "personality" and even "individuality."<sup>148</sup> Bennema argues that his approach to the Johannine characters is unprecedented and that previous approaches to characters in John have fallen short of the requisite breadth and depth to draw solid conclusions. Before evaluating the success of Bennema's study (which I will do by looking closely at his analysis of the Jews) it will be important to outline the three main stated differences between Bennema's study and previous scholarship.

#### 1) Against Johannine Characters as Representative Types

Bennema argues that Johannine scholars' too-ready assessment that the Gospel characters conform to Aristotle's tragic 'agents' is incorrect.<sup>149</sup> He expends considerable energy refuting the notion that characters in John's Gospel are necessarily flat, arguing that the Johannine characters ought rather to be understood along a continuum which posits degrees of characterisation. Bennema considers this flattening tendency to be "reductionistic" and the approaches that are used to flatten the Johannine characters (Aristotelian or actantal)

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<sup>147</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 14.

<sup>148</sup> See Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 13.

<sup>149</sup> Bennema, "A Theory," 382. Similarly, Hylen, *Imperfect Believers*, 1.

misguided.<sup>150</sup> Instead, according to Bennema, Johannine characters are complex and varied and should be approached using “non-reductionist” methods like those of Chatman, Ewen and Rimmon-Kenan.<sup>151</sup> Bennema also argues that the lack of consensus in the literature over what each minor character in the Gospel is meant to represent precisely means that the standard discussion of the characters as types is in need of correction.<sup>152</sup>

## 2) Dissociating Character from Response

Bennema aims not only to classify all of the Johannine characters along a continuum of development/complexity, but also to classify the responses of each character to Jesus.<sup>153</sup> Bennema argues that it is not the characters *themselves* that function as representative types, but it is the *response* of each character which is typical.<sup>154</sup> According to Bennema, the belief-responses of the Johannine characters can be evaluated as positive or negative, as adequate or

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 5-8. Bennema bases this claim on a mistaken reading of Greimas’ actant model, which he claims is merely ‘reductionistic’, making characters into mere types and subordinating them to plot function (see also Bennema, “A Theory,” 389). An exceptional article that argues for a ‘representative’ or ‘moral’ value for characters in John’s Gospel, particularly that of Judas, can be found in Wright, “Greco-Roman Character Typing,” 544-559. Wright looks beyond Aristotle’s focus on tragedy to ancient Greco-Roman ‘biography’ and the *progymnasmata* and how characters are stereotyped therein. Without using Forster’s frame of ‘round/flat’, Wright simply argues that “in Greco-Roman antiquity, the drawing of characters as moral types was an established compositional practice” (550). Bennema’s study might have benefited from a broader analysis of ancient Greco-Roman genres.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 5.

<sup>152</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 12, following Colleen M. Conway, “Speaking through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel,” *BibInt* 10 (2002): 324-341.

<sup>153</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 14-15.

<sup>154</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 14.

inadequate and so reduced to one of two types.<sup>155</sup> To substantiate this point, Bennema notes that a ‘typical’ response may not necessarily be restricted to one character: so for example, Peter, Judas, the Jews and the ‘disciples’ all at different stages exhibit the response of defection; at the same time, one character is not restricted to one type of response, for example, Peter responds ‘adequately’ and inadequately’ on different occasions.<sup>156</sup>

While this is an important observation, it resembles the kind of actantal analysis of the Gospel narrative that Bennema so strongly objects to, since ‘response’ is a kind of action or ‘role’ that may be played differently by different characters – although Bennema does not seem to be aware of this resemblance. It is also worth questioning whether all of the Johannine characters can have their responses to Jesus so neatly cordoned off from their character – and after all, in the Gospels, where many ‘modern’ kinds of character indicators are absent (physical description, emotive display), response is vitally integral to who the character is. Indeed, Bennema himself admits the validity of this critique when he states that in the case of Judas and the Jews it is difficult to “differentiate between character and response since both are negative/inadequate throughout the Gospel with almost no glimmer of hope.”<sup>157</sup> And so Bennema’s argument that a character’s *response* to Jesus may be typical but that the responding character may *not* seems to be a facile distinction.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 204. This is not quite what previous scholars have meant by a ‘typical’ or ‘representative’ value for the characters.

<sup>156</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 207.

<sup>157</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 207.

<sup>158</sup> Bennema, “A Theory,” 415, 418.

### 3) Explaining Johannine Dualism when Admitting Character Complexity

The chief reason Bennema deems it necessary to differentiate between a character and that character's response to Jesus in the Gospel revolves around the issue of Johannine dualism. Bennema himself poses the question: if the characters in John's Gospel are *not* mono-dimensional or 'flat,' but "complex and ambiguous," how do they fit with "John's dualistic worldview which only seems to offer the two choices of belief and unbelief?"<sup>159</sup> If Bennema can classify the *response* of a given character as "adequate" or "inadequate" based on the ideological stance of the implied author – but not judge the character him- or herself in the same way – then he can circumvent the necessity of flattening the character to typify that response. And in fact, this is the logical move that Bennema makes, but he does not go as far as Conway when she argues that the Johannine characters are so varied that they undermine entirely the Gospel's binary rhetoric.<sup>160</sup>

The results of Bennema's study point to variation even in *response* to Jesus, although they can still roughly be categorised as 'adequate' or 'inadequate'. Bennema must then ask the further question of how such a broad spectrum of responses coordinates with the Gospel's obvious dualism. He answers the question by arguing that "the Johannine characters reflect the *human* perspective, representing the gamut of responses people make in life, while from a *divine* perspective these responses are ultimately evaluated as acceptance or rejection."<sup>161</sup> The *terminus ad quem* of this divine evaluation, for Bennema, is the Parousia, where all character

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<sup>159</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 12.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 211.

<sup>161</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 210 (emphasis his).

responses will “crystallize” into one of these two options, revealing whether that character belongs to ‘the world’ or to God.<sup>162</sup> A unique explanation to be sure, but is it correct? I would argue that it is not, based on the heavily ‘realised’ nature of John’s eschatology and dualistic framework, where the personal, human response to Jesus made in the story-world of the Gospel *already* reflects their allegiance either to God or the ‘devil’, or reflects the ‘judgment’ made upon them (cf. 8:44; 10:26; 12:48).<sup>163</sup> Having outlined the major tenets of Bennema’s contribution to the topic, I now analyse his specific treatment of the Jews as characters.

#### 4) The Jews as Characters in the Gospel of John

One of the chapters in Bennema’s book, *Encountering Jesus* centres upon the Jews as a character group. Bennema states that the Jews are “a composite [character] group with a historical identity.”<sup>164</sup> Two issues immediately arise from such a statement: 1) how to delineate the Jews as a character group, considering them as a homogenous group and yet accounting for the multidimensionality necessitated by their composite nature; and 2) how to determine the nature of their ‘historical identity’. With regard to the latter point, Bennema correctly observes that because the Gospel makes eye-witness claims, it is an ‘historical’ narrative and therefore that the Johannine characters must have an historical referent.<sup>165</sup> And yet very little in the scholarship is more disputed than the historical referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι,

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<sup>162</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 211.

<sup>163</sup> One could likewise argue that a divide between the ‘human’ and ‘divine’ is not quite so stark in John’s Gospel, where the Incarnation of the Word takes centre-stage (cf. 1:1-18).

<sup>164</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 10.

<sup>165</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 13. This is the implication of Hakola and Merenlahti’s argument about the Gospel genre as non-fictional narrative.

as demonstrated in the previous chapter. Bennema's own view is that the Jews denoted "a particular religious group of Torah and temple-loyalists found especially, but not exclusively in Judea."<sup>166</sup>

With regard to the former point, and related to this, Bennema defines the composite nature of the Jews as follows: the chief priests or Temple authorities are the leadership of the Jews and the Pharisees constitute the lay branch of the group.<sup>167</sup> Bennema's delineation of the Jews as a character group is somewhat forced to fit his argument about the historical referent of the group, when they are not always distinguished this way in the Gospel. Sometimes the Pharisees are opposed to the Jews (cf. John 11:45; 12:42), and sometimes they are merged together (cf. ch. 9); sometimes even 'the crowd' is part of the Jews (cf. ch. 6), and sometimes it is distinguished from them (cf. ch. 7); sometimes the Jews report to the chief priests as a separate body (cf. 11:45-46) and are not always coextensive with them. The boundaries are more fluid than Bennema's reading admits.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 39. Bennema does not acknowledge that roughly the same argument was advanced by Bornhäuser in 1928; see K. B. Bornhäuser, *Das Johannesevangelium: Eine Missionschrift für Israel* (Berlesman: Gütersloh, 1928). If this were so, I wonder about the significance or value it would hold for the first audience(s) of the Gospel in the 90's CE, when the Temple and the Temple-state in Judea were already destroyed. The 'classic' argument, despite its problems, of the referent of the Jews as the emerging rabbinic movement in conflict with the Johannine community, is less counterintuitive.

<sup>167</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 39.

<sup>168</sup> Bennema's reading remains forced throughout most of the chapter. He argues that in the first half of the Gospel the conflict Jesus faces is mainly from the Pharisees and centres upon "religious-theological" matters, but in the second half of the Gospel, the conflict centres upon "religious-political" matters, and comes from the chief priests (page 39). To make his textual analysis *fit this assumption*, Bennema is forced to argue that *all* of the conflict scenes Jesus' faces before chapter 11 of the Gospel have to do with the *Pharisees* as opponents. The most strained example is Bennema's statement that "prior to John 5, Jesus faces little opposition from the Jews" (page 39). Thus Bennema explains away the Temple-cleansing scene of 2:13-22 (where the Jews, not 'the Pharisees', are explicitly mentioned) as an interpolation that would have, in the historical tradition, been placed at the end of Jesus' public ministry (pages 39-40). Such a suggestion is clearly out of place in a study that purports to be strictly narratological in methodological approach.



When it comes to analysing the Jews as a character group, Bennema claims that although the Jews provide Jesus with almost constant opposition and hostility they are not uniformly hostile towards him, nor are they “impenetrable” – they are often divided amongst themselves over Jesus’ words (9:16; 10:19-20).<sup>169</sup> As a *group*, Bennema claims they “fulfil a negative role” and like ‘the world’, are “unchanging,” but that this does not mean that *individuals* from within the group cannot come to belief in Jesus.<sup>170</sup> Bennema then summarises the results of his analysis, saying that the Jews are ignorant of God, they are enslaved to sin, are arrogant, resistant, hostile, murderous, and lacking in belief. Bennema argues that they show *development* to a minor degree, because although they are continuously hostile, Jesus can penetrate the group and elicit a positive response (cf. 8:30). They also show some *inner life* in that they claim to know who Jesus is (9:34) but do not really understand (8:14, 27, 43, 47), and in that their style of speaking resembles soliloquy (6:52; 7:35-36; 9:16; 10:21-22).<sup>171</sup> When placed along the character continuum of the Gospel, the Jews are relatively complex characters with some development and some inner life.

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<sup>169</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 43.

<sup>170</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 44. Hylen, *Imperfect Believers*, 118-120, likewise argues that the Jews as a composite group is a “conflicted character.” By this Hylen means that the diversity in response exhibited by the Jews does not indicate division *between* the Jews but division *within* the Jews as a character group. Hylen therefore argues that the Jews are an ambiguous character, like the disciples, who sometimes come to faith and sometimes do not (page 123). Hylen suggests that this implies that the Jews “no longer exist on the wrong side of a deep dualistic divide, as the exemplars of Jesus’ opponents” (page 127). I think this is not necessarily a logical conclusion, as they are still aligned with ‘the world’, the ‘devil’ and ‘below’, whereas the disciples are not.

<sup>171</sup> Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 45.

ii. Modern Approaches to Characterisation in John's Gospel

a. F. D. Tolmie's Character Analysis of the Jews in John's Gospel

Apart from Bennema, the only scholar to have specifically analysed the Jews as characters in the Gospel of John using modern methods of character analysis is Francois Tolmie, using Chatman's model of a 'paradigm of traits' (discussed in section II.B.i above). Tolmie seeks to find out how the "implied reader" of the Gospel works out associated traits for the Jews each time they are encountered in the reading process. Upon each encounter, the implied reader "sorts through the paradigm of traits already associated with [the Jews] in order to account for any new information provided in terms of the traits already identified."<sup>172</sup> If some of those traits do not 'fit' with what the implied reader has already encountered, the implied reader will proceed to "make sense of the new information .... by adding a new trait, or by reformulating, replacing or even removing an existing trait."<sup>173</sup>

Tolmie relies further on Rimmon-Kenan's notion of the readerly reconstruction of character by 'direct' and 'indirect' means of presentation (see section II.B.ii above).<sup>174</sup> Applying these methodological tools to the Gospel of John, Tolmie's considers the way the Jews are constructed by the implied reader from their first appearance in the text to their last.<sup>175</sup> By way of preface to his analysis, Tolmie distinguishes between the uses of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in

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<sup>172</sup> Tolmie, "The Ἰουδαῖοι," 377.

<sup>173</sup> Tolmie, "The Ἰουδαῖοι," 377. Tolmie never defines who the "implied reader" is – again this shows why it was important to define the nomenclature so carefully in sections I.A and II.B of this chapter. Tolmie's implied reader comes very close to the 'real' reader, especially as he relies on Rimmon-Kenan who argues against a 'personified' implied reader.

<sup>174</sup> Tolmie, "The Ἰουδαῖοι," 377-378.

<sup>175</sup> Tolmie, "The Ἰουδαῖοι," 377.

John's Gospel that refer to a separate group of characters who "act in certain ways to change the course of events" and the use of the same term to refer to "background information" about Jewish customs.<sup>176</sup> In what follows I will summarise the findings of Tolmie; for the purposes of this thesis I will concentrate strictly on his analysis of the Jews in John 1:19-12:15.

The first mention of the Jews in the Gospel occurs in the context of the testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus (1:19-28). John testifies in response to a pressing interrogation from "chief priests" and "Levites" about his own identity. The deputation of priests and Levites is sent to John by the Jews (1:19). At their first appearance, then, the Jews are presented as "separate characters" (from other authoritative figures) and consequently, the implied reader opens a specific 'paradigm of traits' for them. In this passage the Jews are not present, so they are 'indirectly characterised.' The traits revealed of the Jews include their association with Jerusalem, their authority to delegate, and their curiosity – and possible scepticism – about John (the Baptist).<sup>177</sup>

The Jews feature directly in the plot for the first time in John 2:13-22, where they conflict with Jesus over his prophetic words about the Temple. Tolmie argues that this passage indicates the Jews' concern with "religious matters, specifically religious festivals."<sup>178</sup> From 2:18 onwards the Jews emerge as a specific group of characters who play the part of Jesus' opponents. They question his authority to speak as he does and are unable to understand Jesus' response. Tolmie suggests that the implied author is again utilising the technique of indirect characterisation for the Jews: newly revealed traits are their "rejection of Jesus'

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<sup>176</sup> Tolmie, "The Ἰουδαῖοι," 378.

<sup>177</sup> Tolmie, "The Ἰουδαῖοι," 378-379. Tolmie calls their attitude 'sceptical' but this may be exaggerating the matter.

<sup>178</sup> Tolmie, "The Ἰουδαῖοι," 380.

authority” and their “inability to understand Jesus.”<sup>179</sup> The former trait implies, moreover, that they bear a hostile attitude towards Jesus.<sup>180</sup>

The techniques of indirect and direct characterisation are used of the Jews in John 5:1-47 where they play a major role in the plot. The Jews are indirectly characterised as “concerned with Sabbath regulations” as they follow up the case of Jesus’ Sabbath healing (5:10). As they question Jesus over the healing, he replies that his unity with the Father exempts him from Sabbath restrictions (5:17). The narrator interjects to mention that this made the Jews intent on killing Jesus (5:18a) for “breaking the Sabbath” (5:18b). Thus the Jews are directly characterised as bearing a murderous intent towards Jesus. In accord with what was revealed of them in 2:13-22, they reject Jesus’ authoritative claims.<sup>181</sup> Now the implied reader searches through the paradigm of traits earlier associated with the Jews and modifies them somewhat: the Jews move from an inability to understand Jesus to an actively hostile will to kill him.<sup>182</sup> Further in the passage the reasons for their rejection of Jesus and his claims “are explored by means of direct characterisation from Jesus’ perspective.”<sup>183</sup> Here new traits are added as Jesus levels a host of accusations against the Jews: they have never heard nor seen God; they do not have God’s word in their hearts, nor have they any love of God; their study of the Scriptures is futile; they seek human glory over divine glory and hope in Moses rather than Jesus (cf. 5:37-38, 39-47).<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Tolmie, “The Ioudaioi,” 380.

<sup>180</sup> Tolmie, “The Ioudaioi,” 380. Because Nicodemus is not a hostile ‘leader of the Jews’ (3:1), the implied reader reforms and modifies the paradigm of traits listed thus far; his character “only partly overlaps with the Ioudaioi” (Tolmie, “The Ioudaioi,” 381).

<sup>181</sup> Tolmie, “The Ioudaioi,” 382.

<sup>182</sup> Tolmie, “The Ioudaioi,” 382.

<sup>183</sup> Tolmie, “The Ioudaioi,” 382.

<sup>184</sup> Tolmie, “The Ioudaioi,” 383.

At this point in the Gospel the paradigm of traits associated with the Jews is firmly established. Few new character traits are added to this ‘paradigm’ henceforth in the narrative, although existing ones are highlighted and explored, such as the Jews rejection of Jesus’ claims (6:1-59) and their inability to understand his words (7:15, 35-36).<sup>185</sup> In the lengthy altercation between Jesus and the Jews in 8:12-59 no new character traits are revealed of the Jews, but the traits of “ignorance and disbelief” are brought to the fore.<sup>186</sup> In a climactic moment, the Jews directly characterise themselves as “children of Abraham” (8:33), but Jesus counters this self-designation by labelling them children of the “devil” (8:44).<sup>187</sup> The traits which principally characterise the Jews – their “ignorance and disbelief,” according to Tolmie – are then re-emphasised at continuing points in the narrative (10:22-42).

Tolmie then helpfully summarises the paradigm of traits he has drawn for the Jews in the narrative: the ‘Jews’ are associated with Jerusalem; they have authority over others and are sceptical of John the Baptist (1:19-28); they reject Jesus’ authority and are unable to understand Jesus (2:13-22); they are concerned about religious rites (4:1-42) and are “obsessed” with Sabbath regulations (8:12-59); they have never seen God or heard his voice (5:1-47); they have the devil as their father (8:12-59); they behave sympathetically to other Jews (11:1-57); they are cunning and hypocritical (18:1-19:42).<sup>188</sup> These traits are both explicitly and implicitly expressed in the Gospel through direct and indirect means of characterisation.

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<sup>185</sup> Tolmie, “The Ἰουδαῖοι,” 384-385. Importantly, Tolmie devotes attention to the nuanced picture of the Jews in chapters 7-8 of the Gospel and the range of responses to Jesus that they exhibit.

<sup>186</sup> Tolmie, “The Ἰουδαῖοι,” 386.

<sup>187</sup> Tolmie, “The Ἰουδαῖοι,” 387.

<sup>188</sup> Tolmie, “The Ἰουδαῖοι,” 397.

The value of Tolmie's character analysis of the Jews lies in its close attention to the text of the Gospel and how the Jews are characterised by their own words and actions, as well as by the words of Jesus and the words of the narrator. Tolmie is very specific about which traits the 'implied reader' will associate with the Jews; at the same time this is the downfall of his analysis, particularly when it comes to reading the way the Jews are *indirectly* characterised. For example, the concern of the Jews over religious rituals (4:1-42) might not be a pejorative characteristic, as Tolmie appears to indicate. This weakness derives from the limitations of Chatman's own method, as noted above (see section II.B.i), but also has to do with the fact that Tolmie confuses the 'implied reader' with the real readers' work of character imputation (i.e. his own). The issue of 'naming' the traits of the Jews without succumbing to the anti-Judaism culturally embedded in previous Johannine scholarship is a critical one.

Finally, the Jews do not seem to *develop* in the way that Chatman's "open-ended" model of characterisation would imply. The key words Chatman uses when speaking of characters in fiction are "variety" and "conflicting traits." Readers "demand" the possibility of "discovering new and unsuspected traits" in characters (section II.B.i). If anything – with the possible exception of John 8:31 and 11:33 – it could be said that the Jews do not satisfy this readerly demand.<sup>189</sup> What the *ideal* reader discovers and anticipates with regard to the Jews is in fact 'more of the same': a *predictable* pattern is found to be at work in the text, so that "unsuspected" traits are kept to a minimum. If anything, I consider Tolmie's analysis to have shown the relative stability of the Jews as characters. The major benefit of Tolmie's study is the way it considers the Jews as characters in the Gospel from start to finish, thereby gaining

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<sup>189</sup> They do conflict with other groups over Jesus' identity, however (7:13, 25, 45-52) and appear to be divided amongst themselves (6:52).

as full a portrait of the Jews as possible.<sup>190</sup> However, Tolmie does not provide a clear outline of the nuances found in Rimmon-Kenan's method, nor does he consider how crucial reliability in narration is as a factor in character analysis. This thesis aims to build on Tolmie's work in this sense and to cover these lacunae, but specifically in the context of the OT citations in 1:19-12:15.

In the next and final section of this chapter I wish to briefly argue a case for reading the Jews as intertextual characters in the Gospel – operating as part of the implied author's retelling of the biblical story – something that surfaces particularly when the OT is cited in John 1:19-12:15. As such, the theoretical framework will be completely set for what is the major contribution of the thesis.

### III. Intertextuality and the OT Citations in John's Gospel

Any study, like the present one, that deals with the reception of the OT in the NT might be expected to employ theories of intertextuality in order to clarify its methodological presuppositions. While such theories are valuable, I have chosen not to include their discussion for a number of reasons. Firstly, the focus of the present chapter has been squarely on the Jews in the Gospel rather than the citations themselves, which are the focus of the following chapters. I have sought to establish how the Jews are placed in the Gospel's

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<sup>190</sup> The current thesis only analyses the character of the Jews within the context of the OT citations in 1:19-12:15, and so it could be said that it does not thereby gain a full picture of their characterisation. However, I also argue that there is something specific about how the citations function for the reader to build up a portrait of the Jews that takes seriously their role as intertextual characters (see next section III).

“redemptive myth” by means of its “rhetoric of binary opposition,” and by means of characterisation theories.

Secondly, the usefulness of intertextuality theory as a hermeneutical category in biblical studies is often simply assumed without being subjected to critical analysis.<sup>191</sup> Discussion of intertextuality in the secular literature – particularly in its postmodern guises – revolves around evasion of definition, which makes it difficult to apply to NT texts.<sup>192</sup> Indeed, intertextuality has become something of an *idée reçue* in the literature without having a generally accepted or understood definition. The *concept* of intertextuality, which one may concisely define as “the elaboration of a text in relation to other texts”, is valid as a heuristic guide to exegesis but the *theoretical* debates involved in the dense field of ‘intertextuality’ are rarely given serious consideration in biblical studies.<sup>193</sup> One of the most problematic aspects of a thorough application of the theory to the Gospels lies in the post-modern “reduction of the self” – the corollary of Barthes’ ‘Death of the Author’ – which denies an “active, responsible” role for the reader in interpretation.<sup>194</sup> Feminist author Nancy Miller has

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<sup>191</sup> Cf. Gail R. O’Day, “Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31: A Study in Intertextuality,” *JBL* 109, no. 2 (1990): 259-267. Such studies are open to vagueness, not clarity, when the term ‘intertextuality’ is used, because in literary theory it is defined so variously.

<sup>192</sup> ‘Intertextuality’ is often used as a catch-all word; possibly the reason why biblical scholars use the term but fail to provide serious discussion of the theory is because of its nebulosity. In poststructuralist intertextuality theory the aim is dispersal, not circumscription, of definition (cf. Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 61-94). Exceptions include Bloom’s theory of influence, which is helpful but for the psychoanalytical component and its anti-theological stance, cf. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); and Genette’s more circumscribed structuralist approach dealing with quotations, cf. Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 1-2.

<sup>193</sup> For this quotation see John Frow, *Marxism and Literary History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 152.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Anthony T. Thiselton, “Biblical Studies and Theoretical Hermeneutics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 105.



argued, for example, that when there is no ‘author’, but only a web of texts, women are written out of history and out of stories.<sup>195</sup>

Nevertheless, much of what the broad spectrum of intertextuality theory implies is assumed in this thesis. All texts are ‘traces’ of other texts; no text can be understood in isolation from other texts. Textual meaning is never as fixed as the most stringent structuralist theories presume, but is always open to revision as new texts emerge and “disturb the fabric of existing texts”, recontextualising existing meaning.<sup>196</sup> What this means in practice is that the relationship of one text to another may be “conflictual,” with the new text displacing the old as the definitive locus of authority and thus representing *discontinuity* with the received tradition, *or* that relationship may be “harmonious”, representing *continuity* with the precursor text and its traditions.<sup>197</sup> Textual citation is one aspect of intertextuality; of vital importance is the possible stance indicated either for or against the texts cited and the traditions embodied in and by those texts.

Intertextuality theory seems to be a logical choice for the study of the OT citations in John, but citations are simply explicit examples of how all texts ‘work’ in general. Michael Fishbane states, “it is the essence of biblical texts to be reinterpreted” and continues that this is not simply a matter of theological ‘playfulness’ but “arises out of a particular [social]

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<sup>195</sup> Cf. Nancy K. Miller, *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 104, 106.

<sup>196</sup> Steve Moyise, *Evoking Scripture: Seeing the Old Testament in the New* (London: T & T Clark/Continuum, 2008), 138.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. Patricia Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah* (SBLDS 161; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 68; A. J. Droge reads the evidence differently, claiming that John works out of a “revisionary hermeneutic”, such that the Johannine Jesus is seen to be ‘correcting’ Scriptures that are inherently “corrupt”, “unreliable, riddled with falsehoods, dangerous, evil.” This extreme position cannot be substantiated by the Gospel itself, in my view. See A. J. Droge, “No One Has Ever Seen God,” 173. Boyarin argues correctly that intertextuality has both disruptive and reconstructive features; cf. Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 25.

crisis.”<sup>198</sup> In the previous chapter I examined the work of Clarke-Soles as she attempted to determine the crisis that the Johannine community underwent and how this impacted upon the community’s use of Scripture. Yet Fishbane’s first point deserves equal attention: in the literature of the Second Temple Period the phenomenon of the ‘re-written bible’ was very widespread (cf. *Ant.* 6.7.4; and all of *Jub.*)<sup>199</sup> One of the contributions of the current thesis is that the wider theological contexts of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15 bear significance for the characterisation of the Jews. As such, the Jews in John’s story can be understood by their intertextual referent(s), not just by their historical referent, as has been the focus of previous studies.<sup>200</sup> The following two sub-sections now develop this claim.

#### A. Justifying a Maximal Approach to the Citations

If the Jews in John’s Gospel are to be understood as intertextual characters, then the OT citations that the Jews ‘encounter’ in the narrative world of the text would need to bear some relevance for character analysis. In short, the broader, allusive contexts of those citations would necessarily be evoked and play a part in characterising the Jews. But to make this claim, a couple of methodological assumptions must be clarified. Firstly, is there any

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<sup>198</sup> See Michael Fishbane, “Inner Biblical Exegesis: Types and Strategies of Interpretation in Ancient Israel,” in G. H. Hartmann and S. Budick, eds. *Midrash and Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 19-37. Cited in Gail R. O’Day, “Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31,” 260.

<sup>199</sup> Cf. John J. Collins, “The Literature of the Second Temple Period,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, ed. Martin Goodman, Jeremy Cohen and David Sorkin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 65; Sidney White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Adele Reinhartz, “Rewritten Gospel’: The Case of Caiaphas the High Priest,” *NTS* 55, no. 2 (2009): 160.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. Mark E. Biddle, “Ancestral Motifs in 1 Samuel 25: Intertextuality and Characterization,” *JBL* 121, no. 4 (2002): 617-638. Biddle argues that “an intertextual reading of 1 Sam 25” reveals “subtleties in the characterization of the leading figures” in the narrative (page 620).

evidence that a citation from Scripture would have always evoked the immediate surrounding context in which it was originally placed on the basis of 1<sup>st</sup> century CE Jewish exegesis? And secondly, are there sound theoretical grounds for suggesting that cited texts evoke wider allusive contexts for the *reader* today?

With regard to the first point, there is ample evidence from the Jewish exegetical sources prior to 70 CE that a citation from Scripture would frequently evoke its immediate context. In his seminal work on the topic, David Instone Brewer has demonstrated that many of the *middoth* ('rules') attributed to Hillel indicate this awareness of broader allusive contexts, for example, *derash*, *peshet*, *gezerah shavah*, and 'Hillel's' seventh *middah*, (דבר הלמד וינעם): *dabar ha-lamed me-'inyanô*: 'meaning is learned from the context').<sup>201</sup> Of the seventh *middah*, Brewer gives the example of an interpretation of Psalm 116:1 by the house of Hillel, where their statement about the 'balanced person' being saved by God's mercy cannot be understood with reference to Ps 116:1, but only to the thematic thrust of the Psalm as a whole, which is a thanksgiving Psalm about salvation from Sheol.<sup>202</sup>

Of course, when applying these insights to the Gospel of John, the assumption would be that the *author* of the Gospel was a contextually aware exegete, something proposed by Obermann in his work analysed already in the previous chapter of the thesis.<sup>203</sup> It is somewhat problematic to assume that the historical author of the Gospel 'intended' even the

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<sup>201</sup> See David Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE* (TSAJ 30; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 226.

<sup>202</sup> Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, 169.

<sup>203</sup> Also a position taken by C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952), 126. It is a stance generally criticised by Thomas R. Hatina, *In Search of a Context: The Function of Scripture in Mark's Narrative* (JSNTSup 232; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

slightest contextual allusion to an OT passage when he cited it in the Gospel, simply because it is difficult to gauge with certainty the real author's intention about anything (see section I.A). But is it any more reasonable to suppose that the *reader* (whether first readers or modern readers) of the Gospel would have necessarily picked up on the original context of a cited verse as it was recontextualised in the Gospel? It is possible to answer this question in one of two ways. The first is to speak of the implied reader, that is, the reader encoded in the text who basically 'knows all', so to speak. It is not the *author* who characterises the Jews, but the implied reader who builds a character portrait of the Jews as they appear in the text from start to finish; this implied reader would automatically know the allusive significance of the OT citations.<sup>204</sup> The second point to note here, partially in response to the first, is that the implied reader is in this sense too 'personified' – the work of identifying citations and allusions and of interpreting the meaning of a cited text as it stood in its original context *and* as it is recontextualised in the Gospel, is the work of real, historically situated readers, or, as I argue, of *ideal* readers.

According to post-structuralist intertextuality theories, the reading process *does* work in this manner: texts are endlessly referential of other texts, and single words and phrases can activate an entire prior context or tradition (see previous section III).<sup>205</sup> But this still raises the perennial question of how to define the (real) reader who approaches a text and activates an intertextual frame of reference in the reading process. If it is the ideal reader, the issue in fact touches not so much on ideological compliance as on readerly competence (which is why the renowned intertextual theorist Rifattere imagined a 'Super-reader who had a refined

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<sup>204</sup> This was basically the position of Tolmie (without a focus on the OT citations), as I have already shown. However, Tolmie tended to confuse the implied reader with the real reader.

<sup>205</sup> See for example, Genette, *Palimpsests*, 381-400, for the notion of the 'Hypertext' and the 'Hypotext' – the latter is the prior work, and the former, the new work that incorporates the old. The Hypotext's entire contextual field interacts with the Hypertext. Quotations are therefore never cited or used atomistically.

knowledge of the canon of secular literature). So even the ideal reader (as a real reader) is an heuristic construct: ideal readers will always vary in degrees of compliance *and* competence.<sup>206</sup> With this variable in mind, it is still important to state that citations, as explicit examples of intertextuality, evoke something of their surrounding context – to mean anything, the citation must resonate with audiences. Not all of these connotations will be noticed by every reader because of the particularities of each reader’s historical and social situation. But it should be recalled that the ideal reader is a re-reader of the Gospel, not a ‘first-time’ reader, and that the discussion of Rimmon-Kenan’s means of character analysis allows for diversity in how real readers will actively construct characters (section II.B.ii). Methodologically and theoretically, it is sound to argue that the Gospel of John invites the ideal reader to characterise the Johannine characters, including the Jews, in light of the OT.<sup>207</sup>

## B. Ideological Characterisation of the Jews in John: Monologism and the Reduction of Subjectivity

It is necessary to address one final issue by way of concluding this chapter, namely, how the ‘monologic’ voice of John’s Gospel influences the way the Jews are characterised by the

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<sup>206</sup> It might be said that I have merely inverted the matter, taking away assumed competence from the real author (the evangelist) and transferring it to the real reader (as superbly competent). Rather than an either/or situation, it must be emphasised that whatever real readers may or may not perceive in terms of textual allusions reflects something of what the real author may or may not have intended.

<sup>207</sup> An illustrative case of intertextual characterisation can be found in studies on the relation between Moses and Jesus in John’s Gospel. For a long time scholars argued that the portrait of Moses in the Torah informed the Johannine picture of Jesus (cf. Enz, “The Book of Exodus”). Recently Harstine has called attention to the way *Moses* is characterised within the *Gospel* [see Stan Harstine, *Moses as a Character in the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Ancient Reading Techniques* (JSNTSup 229; London/New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002)]. Just as an OT character can find a place within John’s Gospel as a character, so can the Jews of John’s Gospel be characterised with reference to other OT characters.

author and reconstructed by the reader.<sup>208</sup> Petri Merenlahti has applied Bakhtin's concept of monologic rhetoric to a reading of character in the Gospels, and he argues forcefully that Gospel characters are "shaped and reshaped by distinct ideological dynamics," not crafted to "fill out a quota of round and flat characters."<sup>209</sup> Although Merenlahti does not specifically analyse John's Gospel, much of what he claims can be applied to John. What makes *some* Gospel characters 'full' or subtle, and other characters appear to be mere agents, with little "voice or vision" and a reduced "subjectivity"? According to Merenlahti, it is the Gospel's monologism, the ideological perspective of the text.<sup>210</sup> Those Gospel characters who "are most liable to lose their share of narrative subjectivity are those characters whose actions, words or points of view somehow contest a dominant ideology."<sup>211</sup>

One could easily see the Jews in John's Gospel contesting the 'dominant ideology' of the text.<sup>212</sup> Because of this, a 'resistant' reading of the Gospel text is entirely possible (see section I.B.i). It is also why the Jews have appeared to many scholars to be mere agents or

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<sup>208</sup> 'Monologic' is a term coined by Mikhail Bakhtin, and is usually (but not always) set in opposition to the 'polyphonic' novel and the 'dialogic' event of interaction. A 'monologic' narratorial voice is a unifying voice, and represents the ultimate authority in a story; it dominates and effectively silences other 'voices' and ideologies in the narrative. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. M. Holmquist; trans. C. Emerson and M. Holmquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); idem., *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (ed. and trans. C. Emerson; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). Cited in Petri Merenlahti, "Characters in the Making: Individuality and Ideology in the Gospels," in *Characterization in the Gospels*, 49, fn 1. This is a valuable insight, but must be held in tandem with the fact that the Gospel of John also appears to be 'polyphonic', admitting a wide range of 'voices' within itself, at least in terms of its incorporation of various genres and sub-genres. See Ruth Sheridan, "John's Gospel and Modern Genre Theory: The Farewell Discourse (John 13-17) as a Test Case," *ITQ* 75, no. 3 (2010): 294-295.

<sup>209</sup> See Merenlahti, "Characters in the Making," 50.

<sup>210</sup> Merenlahti, "Characters in the Making," 49.

<sup>211</sup> Merenlahti, "Characters in the Making," 49-50.

<sup>212</sup> Cf. Adele Reinhartz, "John 8:31-59 from a Jewish Perspective," in John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell-Meynard eds. *Remembering for the Future 2000: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocides*, vol. 2 (London: Palgrave, 2001), 787-797.

types, representing a stance of unbelief towards God, and are denied the degree of subjectivity and ‘individuality’ found in disciples like Peter and Mary Magdalene.<sup>213</sup> This also relates to the concept of *focalisation* expressed in narratology.<sup>214</sup> John’s third-person narrator correlates to what Genette calls ‘external focalisation,’ where the events and characters are seen ‘from without’ – focalisation is thus the ‘perspective’ or ‘prism’ through which the reader views the story. But the focalised subject can also be ‘seen’ from without or within, and in John, Jesus as protagonist-subject is seen from both without *and* within – his subjectivity corresponds to the monologic voice of the narrator and is given pre-eminence. The ideology of the narrator-focaliser can also be thought of in terms of “restricted and unrestricted knowledge”: the narrator-focaliser knows all (cf. John 1:1-18) but restricts that knowledge to *some* characters and denies it completely to others. As such, the ideology of the focaliser is “authoritative” and other ideologies (e.g. those of the Jews) are “subordinated to it and must be evaluated from it.”<sup>215</sup> This accords with what has been argued so far in this chapter (see I.B.i).

#### IV. Application of the Methods

This chapter has presented a cumulative argument about reading the Jews in John’s Gospel as characters from a narrative-critical perspective. More than simply reviewing the literature, I

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<sup>213</sup> This is not to discount Bennema’s important point about how the Jews are shown to have some ‘inner life’ (i.e. narrative subjectivity), but their ‘inner’ thoughts, their point of view and their way of seeing Jesus, in the rhetoric of the narrative, is denied validity. It seems to me that because of his concern to work out how the ‘complex and varied’ Gospel characters ‘fit’ the dualistic worldview of the text, Bennema has missed the point about how the ‘monologic’ rhetoric of the narrative determines how ‘complex’ a character is.

<sup>214</sup> See Gérard Genette, *Figures III* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), English version: *Narrative Discourse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), and Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 76-81.

<sup>215</sup> Cf. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 80.

have aimed to make my own contribution to the topic clear by critically evaluating the literature. In the first section of the chapter I defined what is meant by a ‘narrative-rhetorical’ approach to literature in general and the Gospel in particular, and established the ‘ideal reader’ as the guiding heuristic construct of this study. Adele Reinhartz’s ‘ethical’ approach to the Jews in the Gospel was shown to accord with this narrative-rhetorical perspective. In section II, I analysed specific approaches to characterisation theory as formulated by literary theorists and applied to the Gospel of John. The final section of the chapter brought some aspects of intertextuality theory to bear upon a character analysis of the Jews in the Gospel, particularly as they function as respondents of most OT citations found in John 1:19-12:15.

The narrative-rhetorical reading of the Jews that is advanced in this thesis brings together the above aspects of narratological and intertextual theory in an unprecedented way. Some of what has been presented in this chapter serves as necessary ‘background’ material, while other parts are applied more directly to the close reading that is to follow. The main contention of the thesis is that the ideal reader constructs a particular characterisation of the Jews in light of the OT citations in the Gospel’s Book of Signs. I will therefore apply, where relevant, Rimmon-Kenan’s method of character reconstruction to my reading of the Jews (i.e. ‘direct’ or ‘indirect’ means of character presentation), and bring in the crucial category of narratorial reliability, to show how this character analysis accords with a ‘compliant’ reading of the text. The most unique aspect of the thesis lies in my claim that the broader, allusive contexts of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15 function as a means of ‘indirect’ character presentation for the Jews, who thus play a part in John’s retelling of the Scriptural story. The specifics of how these allusive contexts inform a character analysis of the Jews will be detailed in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER 3

### THE OLD TESTAMENT CITATIONS AND THE JEWS – PART I:

#### THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY (JOHN 1:23; 2:17)

The previous chapter established the methodological and theoretical presuppositions of the current thesis, outlining a method of procedure for reading the Jews as characters in the Gospel narrative. A text-focused approach to the issue of the Jews in the Gospel of John can be justified on the basis that “[a] text creates a particular narrative world, employs language and symbols, depicts characters and events in an attempt to engage a reader.”<sup>1</sup> The symbolic ‘world’ of any given narrative not only engages a reader but attempts to *persuade* a reader to accept an ‘ideological’ position in the process of reading. Narratives, in other words, are intrinsically *rhetorical* in purpose and design.

The ‘ideological’ position of the implied author of John’s Gospel is made explicit: the reader is supposed to come to faith and life in Jesus’ name through belief in him (19:35; 20:31). This involves believing that Jesus is the new and definitive locus of the divine δόξα, the enfleshed Logos of God (1:14). True recognition of Jesus is tied to recognition of the δόξα present in his σάρξ. The argument of the previous chapter was that the Gospel’s polemical construction of the ‘Jews’ as the ‘Other’ plays a key part in the overall rhetoric of the narrative that is designed to bring readers to faith. The negative characterisation of the Jews invites the implied reader/ideal reader to side against the Jews in order to respond to Jesus in a way the

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<sup>1</sup> Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001), 7.

Gospel considers adequate. As already mentioned, the Jews are the primary recipients of Jesus' teaching when he cites the OT Scriptures in the course of his public ministry (cf. 1:23; 6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34), or they are present in the narrative context when the Scriptures are cited by the narrator (2:17; 12:15-16). Each of these texts will therefore be subjected to close analysis over the course of the next three chapters.

Each of these explicit OT citations has the purpose of revealing something about Jesus and his unique relationship to God: Jesus is proclaimed as the coming 'Lord' (1:23); he declares himself to be the new 'Temple' (2:17); he is the living Bread from Heaven (6:31) and the one through whom will come universal divine instruction (6:45); he is the true source of Living Water (7:37-39); the Son of God (10:36) and the King of Israel (12:15). Each citation is prefaced with some variation on the 'formula' ἔστιν γεγραμμένον and has the correlative rhetorical function of *witnessing* to Jesus, of making him known. When Scripture is cited in this manner, Jesus' primary interlocutors are the Jews, yet they consistently respond to these citations with misunderstanding and disbelief. A pattern is thus at work across the course of Jesus' public ministry wherein the Jews grow more obdurate towards Jesus as the plot progresses. Ironically, the Jews reject 'their own' Scriptures in rejecting Jesus (cf. 10:34; 5:47), and in rejecting Jesus, they reject God, who is the Father of Jesus (5:38; 8:43, 47; 10:35) and the Voice of Scripture (10:35). The 'ideal' reader, on the other hand, is encouraged to perceive and understand the Christological meaning of Scripture in order to arrive at full and perfect faith in Jesus.

The structure of the following three chapters will be determined by a close reading of the seven explicit OT citations found in the first half of John's Gospel (1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34; 12:15). The chapters will be devoted to analysing each citation in the Gospel narrative as they occur sequentially, and assessing the rhetorical function of the citations as

they impact upon the portrayal of the Jews as characters in the text. The analysis of the citations is divided into three separate chapters based on three distinct phases of Jesus' public ministry discernible in the Gospel narrative. The initial phase of Jesus' ministry concerns his revelation firstly to 'Israel' heralded by John, the gathering of his first disciples, and subsequent journeys through Cana in Galilee (2:1-12), to Jerusalem (2:13-3:1-21) and Judea (3:22). The OT citations occurring here (1:23; 2:17) see Jesus located within the 'world' of Judaism.<sup>2</sup> In 4:1-54 Jesus moves beyond Judaism into the territory of the Samaritans and on his return to Cana he encounters a court official who may be a Gentile.<sup>3</sup> These initial chapters thus consider the faith-response to Jesus by various characters both within and beyond Judaism.<sup>4</sup>

From the beginning of John chapter 5, a new phase of Jesus' public ministry opens. John 5:1 declares, "there was a feast of the Jews" (μετὰ ταῦτα ἦν ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων). The narrative then follows Jesus through a number of encounters with the Jews in the context of the religious feasts of Judaism – Sabbath (5:10), Passover (6:4), Tabernacles (7:1-10:21) and Dedication (10:22). "The narrative moves from one feast of the Jews to another" in chronological fashion, across the annual festival calendar.<sup>5</sup> The narrator appears to be concerned to answer a 'problem' posed by the Gospel's opening presentation of Jesus as the new locus of the divine encounter (1:1-18), namely, what Israel's "traditional place of

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Francis J. Moloney, "Reading John 2:13-22: The Purification of the Temple," *RB* (1990): 436.

<sup>3</sup> Textually it is impossible to determine if βασιλικὸς (4:46) is a Jew or Gentile. Moloney considers him to be Gentile because "this passage is the concluding section of the Gospel dedicated entirely to Jesus' presence to non-Jews (4:1-54)." See Moloney, *John*, 160.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed development of this 'faith-response' theme see Francis J. Moloney, "From Cana to Cana (Jn. 2:1-4:54) and the Fourth Evangelist's Concept of Correct (and Incorrect) Faith," *Salesianum* 40 (1978): 817-843.

<sup>5</sup> Francis J. Moloney, *Signs and Shadows: Reading John 5-12* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 203.

encounter with YHWH in the celebration of its feasts” might be once Jesus appears.<sup>6</sup> Jesus interacts with the Jews during each of these feasts and in these contexts Scripture is cited to bolster his claims as the divine emissary par excellence (6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34). The focus of the narrative is more or less narrowed to Jesus’ presence in Jerusalem (5:1; 7:14-21; 10:22) but Jesus’ presence in Galilee is also mentioned as the Passover feast draws near (6:1; cf. 7:1, 9). A third and final phase of Jesus’ public ministry is inaugurated when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44). This action allegedly leads directly to Jesus’ own death at the instigation of the Jews, the high Priest Caiaphas, and the Pharisees (11:45-54). Jesus’ final entry into Jerusalem incorporates several references to Scripture (12:13, 15, 37, 40), one of which will be the subject of close analysis in this thesis (12:15). This final phase of the public ministry hints at Jesus’ approaching death and ‘glorification’, as some Greeks arrive, wishing to ‘see’ Jesus (12:20-21), hinting at a process of universal ingathering put into effect by Jesus’ approaching ‘hour’ (12:23, 31-32) that comes to fruition at his death on the cross (19:25-27).

The content and original context of each OT citation will also be analysed for what it might reveal about the characterisation of the Jews. It will be argued that the meaning of each citation gains a new salience in the context of the Jesus-Jews conflict of the Gospel. I have argued in the previous two chapters that John is a contextually aware exegete of the Scriptures, and with Obermann, I posit that the contexts of these citations are retained, but *specifically* with regard to the Jews. The wider allusive contexts of the citations show that a pattern is at work in the Gospel narrative: these contexts speak of hope and life, or alternatively judgment and death. This imitates the template of the larger biblical narrative that presents Israel’s journey with YHWH in terms of promise and loss of promise. The Jews

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<sup>6</sup> Moloney, *Signs and Shadows*, 203.

as characters therefore function rhetorically as players in a Johannine retelling of the Scriptures, and this is made concrete when the OT is explicitly cited.

Prior to this analysis, two preliminary issues need to be considered: (i) how a ‘citation’ of the OT may be defined, particularly in contradistinction to an ‘allusion’ or an ‘echo’ of the OT; and (ii) which texts in John’s Gospel constitute a ‘citation’ so defined. These issues will be considered together in the section below. The argument of the present chapter can be schematised as follows:

### 3. The Old Testament Citations and the Jews Part I: The Beginning of Jesus’ Public

#### Ministry (1:23; 2:17)

- I. Identifying Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John
- II. Close Reading of the Explicit OT Citations vis-à-vis the Jews
  - A. John 1:23: The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness (Isaiah 40:3)
    - i. Outline of the Johannine Text
    - ii. The Context of Isaiah 40:3 for an Understanding of John 1:23
    - iii. The Response and Characterisation of the Emissaries of the Jews
    - iv. Conclusion
  - B. John 2:17: Zeal for Your House (Psalm 69:9)
    - i. Outline of the Johannine Text
    - ii. The Context of Psalm 69:9 for an Understanding of John 2:17
    - iii. The Response and Characterisation of the Jews

## I. Identifying Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John

Dennis Stamps has argued that there is a lack of consensus in the scholarship about how to define commonly used terms such as “quotation,” “allusion,” or “echo” when it comes to discussing the presence of the OT in the New Testament.<sup>7</sup> An OT ‘quotation’, according to Stamps, should be relatively simple to define, as it is usually prefaced by an introductory ‘formula’ in the NT. But even here confusion can be generated, because some OT citations appear to be “explicit” but lack an “introductory formula.”<sup>8</sup> Stamps further bemoans the confused usage of such slippery terms as ‘allusion’ and ‘echo,’ as these generally designate OT references that are “indirect, implicit and informal”, and so are much harder terms to define than ‘quotation/citation.’<sup>9</sup>

Despite these concerns, several scholars do put forward sufficiently clear definitions of the terminology with which they work. One exceptionally clear example is that of Jocelyn McWhirter, who aims to define literary ‘allusions’ in the Gospel of John.<sup>10</sup> An allusion can be defined as an “evocation of a person, character, place, event, idea, or portion of text” in another text, generally through implicit reference.<sup>11</sup> However, considerable difficulties are presented when attempting to identify allusions, and certain questions need to be asked, such

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<sup>7</sup> Dennis L. Stamps, “The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament as a Rhetorical Device,” in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 12. Stamps uses ‘quotation’ whereas I use ‘citations’.

<sup>8</sup> Stamps, “The Use of the Old Testament,” 13.

<sup>9</sup> Stamps, “The Use of the Old Testament,” 13.

<sup>10</sup> Jocelyn McWhirter, *The Bridegroom Messiah and the People of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 21-31. Cf. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 29-32.

<sup>11</sup> This definition is taken from Wendell V. Harris, “Allusion,” *Dictionary of Concepts in Literary Criticism and Theory* (New York: Greenwood, 1992), 10, (cited in McWhirter, *Bridegroom*, 21).

as “who leads what reader to associate [allusive references] with the originating text?”<sup>12</sup> And if the evoked text corresponds to one or more “precursor text,” how does one decide upon an exact referent?<sup>13</sup> Working with these questions, McWhirter sets out some specific guidelines for identifying allusions to the OT in John, building on the categories established by Richard Hays in his analysis of the Pauline corpus. According to Hays’ categories, an ‘allusion’ can be confirmed in the Gospel text only if the ‘originating text’ was available to the evangelist,<sup>14</sup> if there is a sufficient degree of verbal or thematic correspondence between the evoked and current text;<sup>15</sup> if the evoked text is a familiar one rather than an obscure one (“prominence”) or is frequently cited or alluded to otherwise (“recurrence”);<sup>16</sup> and if it was quite plausible that readers may have understood the author to be making such an allusion to another text.<sup>17</sup>

McWhirter’s modified version of Hays’ criteria for identifying ‘allusions’ to the OT in John is necessarily complex, as allusions are generally implicit references and so hard to define, whereas ‘quotations’ or ‘citations’ of the OT are generally understood to be explicit references. As Stamps noted above, citations are usually qualified by the presence of an introductory ‘formula’, such as “it is written.” They are immediately identifiable as referring to a source, whether the source is specified by the NT author or not.<sup>18</sup> But there is little consensus among Johannine scholars about the exact number of OT citations in the Gospel of John. For example, Craig Evans counts twenty ‘citations’ of the OT in the Fourth Gospel:

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<sup>12</sup> McWhirter, *Bridegroom*, 21.

<sup>13</sup> McWhirter, *Bridegroom*, 22.

<sup>14</sup> McWhirter, *Bridegroom*, 23.

<sup>15</sup> McWhirter, *Bridegroom*, 25, 29.

<sup>16</sup> McWhirter, *Bridegroom*, 28.

<sup>17</sup> McWhirter, *Bridegroom*, 30.

<sup>18</sup> John specifies ‘Isaiah’ as his source on two occasions (1:23; 12:38), otherwise, ‘your Law’ (10:34; 15:25), the Prophets (6:45), or ‘it is written’ (6:31, 45; 7:37-38), or even ‘the disciples remembered the words of Scripture’ (2:17).

fifteen of these are marked by an introductory ‘formula’ of some sort (1:23; 2:17; 6:31; 6:45; 7:42; 10:34; 12:14; 12:38; 12:39; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24; 19:28; 19:36 and 19:37). Two other ‘citations’ have no formula attached to them (1:51; 12:13), and three texts are headed by a formula but have no identifiable reference in the Scriptures (7:39; 17:12; 18:32).<sup>19</sup> Evans notes the regularity of the γεγραμμένον ἔστιν formula which precedes the citations in the first ‘half’ of the Gospel (e.g. 6:31, 45; 12:14) and the consistency with which the ἵνα πληρωθῇ clause is used as a formula introducing the citations in the second half of the Gospel (12:38, 39; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24, 28, 36, 37).<sup>20</sup>

Menken, on the other hand, lists seventeen texts as ‘citations’ (1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 7:38, 42; 8:17; 10:34; 12:15, 34, 38, 40; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24, 36, 37), including one text omitted by Evans (viz. 7:38-39).<sup>21</sup> Menken’s definition of a ‘citation’ is “a clause... from Israel’s Scriptures that is ... rendered verbatim (or anyhow recognizably) in the NT and that is marked as such by introductory or concluding formula (e.g., “for so it is written by the prophet, Matt. 2:5).”<sup>22</sup> Later, Menken modifies his list, leaving out John 8:17 (“And in your Law it is written *that* that testimony of two human beings in true), 7:41 (“Does not Scripture say *that* the Christ comes from... Bethlehem?”), and 12:34 (“We have heard from the Law *that* the Christ remains forever”).<sup>23</sup> These texts Menken considers to be John’s “rephrasing of the content of an OT passage,” but they are not expressed in John’s characteristically ‘formulaic’ manner.<sup>24</sup>

Other scholars list even fewer citations: Freed finds fifteen citations in the Gospel (1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 7:37-38; 42; 10:34; 12:13-15, 38-40; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24, 28, 36, 37),

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<sup>19</sup> Craig A. Evans, “On the Quotation Formulas in the Fourth Gospel,” *BZ* 26 (1981): 80.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Evans, “On the Quotation Formulas,” 80.

<sup>21</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 11-12.

<sup>22</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 11.

<sup>23</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 16-17; my emphasis.

<sup>24</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 17.



including ones “sometimes not treated as quotations” such as 7:38-39. Freed’s criteria for assessing a citation is simply the presence of an “introductory formula.”<sup>25</sup> Obermann finds fourteen explicit OT citations in John (1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 10:34; 12:13, 15, 38, 40; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24, 36, 37). The criterion by which Obermann judges a ‘citation’ is likewise that of an introductory formula, either the formulaic γεγραμμένον ἐστίν (cf. 2:17) or καθὼς ἐστίν γεγραμμένον (cf. 6:31), or the later ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῇ construction (13:18, cf. also ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή, 19:28).<sup>26</sup> Other quasi-formulaic introductions to the citations occur in the case of 1:23 (with reference to the Prophet Isaiah). Obermann takes exception to the case of 12:13, however, where no explicit ‘formula’ is present, but a well-known text from the LXX is rendered verbatim.<sup>27</sup> Schuchard includes only thirteen (1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 10:34; 12:14-15, 38, 40; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24, 36, 37), excluding John 7:38, 42; 17:12 and 19:28 on the basis that “no discrete OT passage is actually cited” even though formulae direct the reader’s attention to the OT.<sup>28</sup>

Clearly, the diversity of opinion among scholars over what constitutes a ‘citation’ is influenced by two factors: first, whether a clause is marked by an introductory formula of some description, and second, whether a clause has a distinctly identifiable reference point in the Scriptures as they have come down to us (i.e. the MT or ‘Hebrew Bible’ and LXX). For

<sup>25</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, xii.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 71-73. Ruben Zimmerman also finds fourteen (1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 10:34; 12:13, 15, 38, 40; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24, 36, 37). See Ruben Zimmerman, “Jesus im Bild Gottes: Anspielungen auf das Alte Testament im Johannesevangelium am Beispiel der Hirtenbildfelder in Joh 10,” in *Kontexte des Johannesevangeliums*, ed. Jörg Frey and Udo Schnelle (WUNT 2/175; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 86.

<sup>27</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 73.

<sup>28</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, xiii-xiv; Cf. Mogens Müller, “Schriftbeweis oder Vollendung? Das Johannesevangelium und das Alte Testament,” in *Bekenntis und Erinnerung*, ed. Klaus-Michael Bull and Eckart Reinmuth (Münster/Hamburg: LIT, 2004), 153, who finds thirteen cases of explicit citation with formulas (1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 10:34; 12:14-15, 38-39, 40; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24, 36, 37).

the purposes of this study a ‘citation’ of the OT is defined as a clause or series of clauses that is introduced by a characteristic ‘formula’, as the ones noted above. These formulaic constructions signal to the implied reader that authoritative tradition is being drawn upon to witness to Jesus. Importantly, for a clause to be considered a ‘citation’ in John’s Gospel, it need not display an exact verbal correspondence with a source text. Verbatim correspondence is more of a concern for the modern scholar, *not* the implied reader of the Gospel, and perhaps not even for the original readers of the Gospel. If a cited text corresponds ‘verbatim’ to a source known *to modern readers* then this better assists readers in the task of interpretation. But given the lack of a fixed canon at the time the Gospel was composed and the markedly ‘oral’ culture obtaining, it is more precise to speak of John’s recall of ‘Scripture’ as a recall of what was, to John and the Johannine community, authoritative, sacred tradition.

In this respect, the ‘Scripture’ called upon in John 7:38-39 can be considered a ‘citation’, since the expected formula is present, even if modern readers (who possess a canon) cannot recognise the text. Johannine audiences may have held the text to be ‘Scripture’ in the sense that it was an authoritative and sacred saying that also had allusive and thematic parallels to many aspects of Scripture as a whole. Therefore, the list of texts considered here to be ‘citations’ in the section of the Gospel dealing with Jesus’ public ministry (1:19-12:15) are: 1:23; 2:17; 6:31; 6:45; 7:38-39; 10:34; and 12:15. These seven citations are closest to Menken’s modified list and to Freed’s (with the exclusion of 7:42). This list includes one citation with no *distinct* verbal parallels to a known OT text (7:38-39) but excludes other clauses that repeat Scripture verbatim but have no introductory formula preceding them (1:51; 12:13). It also excludes those clauses that are like citations but are modified by a ὅτι clause and so read as ‘rephrasings’ of the OT, as Menken explains (7:41; 8:17; 12:34). With

these citation texts established I move on to a close reading of those texts associated with Jesus' initial ministry (1:23; 2:17), with particular attention to the role and response of the Jews.

## II. Close Reading of the Explicit OT Citations in the Book of Signs vis-à-vis the Jews.

### A. John 1:23 – The Voice Crying in the Wilderness (Isaiah 40:3)

#### i. Outline of the Johannine Text

The first explicit OT citation in the Gospel occurs in the context of the testimony of John, who is described in the Prologue as a man 'sent from God' (1:6), and who understands himself to be 'sent' by God (1:33). John's purpose in being 'sent' is to be a 'witness to the light' so that others might 'believe through him' (1:7). He describes his public action of baptising as facilitating Jesus' eventual revelation 'to Israel' (1:31). John's testimony stretches across a period of four days (1:19-28; 29-34; 35-42; 43-51), but his incorporation of the OT into his testimony takes place immediately on the 'first' day (1:19-23).<sup>29</sup> Here, John, somewhat enigmatically, describes his role as 'witness to the light' by citing Isaiah 40:3, 'I am the voice of one crying out, "in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord," as the

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<sup>29</sup> Francis Moloney links these series of 'days' – culminating in the 'third day', where at Cana, Jesus reveals his 'glory' (2:11) – with the gift of the Torah at Sinai (Exodus 19). At Sinai, the people prepared themselves for three days by doing all that was commanded of them by YHWH (19:7-9). The goal of this self-preparation was to behold the revelation of God upon the mountain, who appeared to the people in 'glory' (כבוד) on the third day (19:15). See Francis J. Moloney, *John* (SP 4; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 50. The significance of this 'glory' motif in relation to the Jews' emissaries (the 'Priests and Levites of John 1:19), will shortly be made clear.

prophet Isaiah said' (1:23).<sup>30</sup> This cited text is placed on the lips of John in the Gospel, rather than spoken by the voice of the narrator as in the Synoptic tradition (Mark 1:2-3; Matt. 3:3; Luke 3:4), but its function in all four Gospels is to unfold the significance of John in relation to Jesus. In John 1:23, Isaiah 40:3 not only discloses John's identity as the 'Voice', but also reveals who *Jesus* is – namely, the 'Lord' – so that others may come to faith in him. John's use of Isaiah 40:3 thus begins to indicate the revelatory function of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:50 which are designed to make Jesus intelligible, in Scriptural terms, to characters in the narrative and readers of the text.

The textual audience of John's testimony, and therefore of the Isaian citation, is a delegation of 'priests and Levites from Jerusalem.' These are 'sent' by the Jews to interrogate John about his messianic status (cf. 1:19). This is the first time that the Jews are mentioned in the Gospel, and their identity – as much as the 'Coming One' of whom John speaks (cf. 1:27) – is obscured. The implied reader has not yet encountered Jesus or the Jews in the text, but this pericope (1:19-28) will hint at the conflict between Jesus and the Jews that will drive the plot of the Gospel. At this point, the Jews act 'behind the scene' as it were, and the implied reader learns of them only through the words and actions of their emissaries. What is more, because the emissaries are sent from Jerusalem, and are 'Priests', 'Levites' and 'Pharisees' (1:24), it is likely that they represent the Judean authorities of the Sanhedrin.<sup>31</sup> John's stereotyped,

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<sup>30</sup> The issue of how to punctuate this text is discussed further in section II.A.ii.

<sup>31</sup> John uses the term συνέδριον with the indefinite article in 11:47 to describe a 'council' that met to orchestrate the execution of Jesus. Assumptions about the relationship between John's use of the word and similar usages in the ancient sources should be made with caution. The word συνέδριον is widely attested in the Greek literature to indicate general "meetings or assemblies" (see Anthony J. Saldarini, "Sanhedrin," *ABD* 5:976). Josephus uses the term in a less than technical sense to describe the five districts of Roman dominated Palestine and the civil assemblies held there (*J.W.* 1.8.5 par. 170). The highest legislative council of a Hellenistic-Roman city was often called a βουλή, but Josephus also uses this term with some variety (*Ant.* 18-19; cf. *ABD* 5:976). The rabbinic sources attest to the word 'Sanhedrin' to denote the judicial courts (see *m. Sanh.* 1.5; 11.2) and

pejorative usage of the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι only gradually emerges, particularly when the Jews appear *outside* of Jerusalem (cf. 6:41). In this opening scene of the Gospel, the Jews are later identified as ‘Pharisees (1:24).<sup>32</sup>

The ‘priests and Levites’ begin their interrogation of John by asking him, ‘Who are you?’ (1:19). The issue of *recognition* immediately confronts the reader of the text. Correct recognition of John and his role in God’s plan is crucial for a genuine recognition of Jesus, the ‘Coming One’ of whom he speaks (1:28). Apart from Jesus, only John is said to be ‘sent from God’ (1:6) in the Gospel, and apart from Jesus, only the Baptist defends himself with an ἐγώ εἰμι statement (1:23).<sup>33</sup> The reader will come to perceive that the Jews are the opponents of Jesus in the Gospel story; here, although not quite “the opponents of his witness,” as Bultmann expresses it, the emissaries of the Jews are at least interrogative.<sup>34</sup> The impression created is that these leaders “exercise constant surveillance” upon those “whom they have not authorized.”<sup>35</sup> But John, like Jesus, is authorised by God (1:6).

John’s initial response to his interrogators is framed in negatives: he is *not* the Messiah, *nor* is he Elijah, *nor* is he ‘the Prophet’ (1:20-21). This in itself “constitutes part of [the Baptist’s]

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sometimes uses the word with the definite article to denote the ‘Great Sanhedrin’ (*m. Sanh.* 1.5-6; *m. Mid.* 5.4; cf. *ABD* 5:977). The legal system described in the Talmudic literature, should not, however, be retrojected back into the NT, as it does not accurately reflect the pre-70 situation that Jewish society faced (*ABD* 5:978).

<sup>32</sup> This is an interpretive crux for many commentators, since the Priests and Levites are more likely to belong to the Sadducees rather than the Pharisees, who were a ‘lay’ group of men.

<sup>33</sup> Compare Jesus’ statements in John 6:35; 8:12; 10:9, 11; 14:6; 15:1. This kind of language also recalls the name God gave to Moses in Exod 3:13. A major study of the Johannine ‘I Am’ statements can be found in D. Ball, *“I Am” in John’s Gospel: Literary Function, Background and Theological Implications* (JSNTSup 124; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

<sup>34</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 86.

<sup>35</sup> Warren Carter, *John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006), 30.

positive witness ... to Jesus as the Christ.”<sup>36</sup> When pressed further, John declares himself to be the ‘voice crying in the wilderness’, whose clarion call is to ‘make straight the way of the Lord’ (1:23, Isaiah 40:3). The import of this statement is lost on John’s interlocutors; instead of responding to his enigmatic use of Isaiah, they inquire into John’s authority for baptising, since he has denied the applicability of all messianic titles to himself (1:24). Again, John gives an elusive answer, deflecting attention from himself as he announces the arrival of ‘one who is coming after’ him (1:27). John’s baptism is only with water, but the ‘Coming One’ (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) will hold a greater authority than John, so much so that John will be unworthy to perform the slaves’ task of untying his sandal (1:27, cf. 1:15). Finally, the ‘Coming One’ is said to already ‘stand among’ the Priests and Levites, but John asserts that they ‘do not know him’ (cf. 1:26). So concludes the pericope narrating John’s initial testimony to Jesus (1:19-28).

The implied reader of the text is already aware that the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ, was in the ‘world’ but was unknown by the ‘world’ (1:10). When John states that the ‘Coming One’ is ‘among’ his interrogators but unknown to them, the implied reader understands the connection between the Prologue and John’s testimony. John’s mention of the one who ‘comes after’ him (1:27) also alludes to the Prologue, where John is said to have testified that ‘he’ (the ‘Word of God’) ‘comes after’ John but ‘ranks before’ him (1:15). The implied reader therefore knows that the ‘Coming One’ of whom John speaks in 1:27 is Jesus, the Word who was with God from the beginning (1:1-3). The implication, of course, is that the ‘Lord’ (κύριος) whose ‘way’ John prepares is to be identified with Jesus (1:23). The ‘Coming One’ who ranks ahead of John because he existed before him (cf. 1:15) is Jesus, whose exalted and unique status is captured in the Isaian title of ‘the Lord’.

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<sup>36</sup> Donald A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 143.

This interpretation is favoured by several exegetes. Schnackenburg states that the other titles that John gives to Jesus ('Lamb of God', 1:29, 36, 'Son of God', 1:34) supports the view of Jesus as the Isaian 'Lord' (יהוה in the MT, and ὁ κύριος in the LXX).<sup>37</sup> Menken argues that the later, 'Christological' usage of ὁ κύριος in John suggests that here also the term is subject to Christological interpretation (cf. 4:1; 6:23; 11:2; 13:13, 14; 20:2, 13, 18, 20, 25, 28).<sup>38</sup> Even if, for John the Baptist, 'the Lord' of Isaiah 40:3 referred to God, in the Fourth Evangelist's perspective, God and Jesus are one (cf. 10:33).<sup>39</sup> Arguing a similar case, Obermann mentions how the use of κύριος in the LXX – which he surmises to be John's *Vorlage* for Isaiah 40:3 in 1:23 – in fact means 'God', and so John's 'Christological' use of κύριος is by no means unlikely.<sup>40</sup> Thus, "the way of the Lord proclaimed by John the Baptist is none other than the coming of Jesus."<sup>41</sup> Jesus is to be "included in the referent of the title 'Lord'" because the "coming of the Lord and his salvation is made visible in Jesus."<sup>42</sup>

## ii. The Context of Isaiah 40:3 for an Understanding of John 1:23

The original context of the Isaian citation is worth analysing for what it reveals about John's appropriation of the text and the 'priests and Levites' response to the citation. Isa 40:3

<sup>37</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, trans. Cecily Hastings et al (New York: Seabury, 1980), 283.

<sup>38</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 30.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 30.

<sup>40</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 110.

<sup>41</sup> Catrin H. Williams, "Isaiah in John's Gospel," in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and M. J. J. Menken (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 104.

<sup>42</sup> Williams, "Isaiah in John's Gospel," 104; cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 110, 111. Cf. also Andrew C. Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John*, WUNT 2/158 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 241. Brunson argues that the Baptists' presentation of Jesus as the 'Coming One' is deliberately associated with the coming of YHWH, proclaimed by the Isaian 'voice' of Isa 40:3.

introduces a major section in what is commonly known as ‘Deutero-Isaiah’ (40-55), occurring in the context of a ‘prologue’ concerned with the revival of prophecy (Isa 40:1-8). The MT opens with the report of a speech of YHWH, pronouncing a triple imperative to other prophets (40:1-2).<sup>43</sup> The commands given are: to comfort and speak tender words to ‘Jerusalem’ (i.e. the people), and to proclaim that Jerusalem is liberated from servitude and ‘debt’ (40:1-2). The message of hope and salvation is carried further in the prophetic proclamation to ‘clear in the wilderness (מִדְבָּר) a way for YHWH’ and to ‘level in the desert (עֲרֵבָה) a highway’ for God (40:3). The prophet envisages ravines being filled in and mountains levelled and every ‘crooked place’ made ‘straight’ so that ‘all humanity’ shall see the ‘glory’ (כְּבוֹד) of YHWH revealed (40:4).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The question of who is addressed by this speech is a vexed one in the literature. The LXX presupposes that members of the priestly class are addressed, while the Targums, as well as Medieval commentaries, seem to suggest the audience is a prophetic multitude; see for further discussion, Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 178, 179. Scholarship in the English language almost entirely assumes the view that the audience are supernatural beings (members of YHWH’s entourage), as only these are capable of carrying out the orders YHWH gives; see for example Frank Moore Cross, “The Council of YHWH in Second Isaiah,” *JNES* 12 (1953): 274-277; and idem., *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 187-188. Blenkinsopp disagrees with this latter view, as such ‘entourage’ scenes in the Bible are deliberative in nature, and do not depict God giving orders as here in Isaiah 40:3 (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 179).

<sup>44</sup> The Hebrew root כָּבַד has the basic meaning of ‘to weigh heavily’. The noun כְּבוֹד developed from this to connote ‘importance’, no doubt deriving somewhat from the secular sense of the word, which meant ‘honour’. When predicated of God, כְּבוֹד implied “the force of His [sic] self-manifestation” (see, Gerhard von Rad, “כְּבוֹד” *TDNT* II: 238). The noun even came to be used to describe the cosmological phenomena accompanying theophanies, thus clearly denoting God’s invisible presence now made manifest (cf. Exod 19:16; 24:15; Ezek 1:1); see von Rad, *TDNT* II: 239. In the Deutero-Isaian tradition the noun כְּבוֹד came to signify eschatological expectations wherein God’s כְּבוֹד would be revealed to the world (von Rad, *TDNT* II: 241-242). The meaning of δόξα and δόξαζεν in the Hellenistic Jewish and Christian writings derives from the LXX translation of כְּבוֹד. Before the LXX, δόξα denoted social status or human opinion (e.g. in its ‘secular’ usage in Herodotus and Homer). The LXX, however, uses δόξα almost exclusively with reference to God, giving the sense of “God’s divine manifestation or revelation” (Gerhard Kittel, “δόξα,” *TDNT* II: 233; cf. von Rad, *TDNT* II: 244). It is commonly accepted that John was influenced by the LXX version of Isaiah for his use of the word δόξα [see



The LXX of Isa 40:3 differs from the MT in several respects. The most significant difference is that while the MT speaks of the מדבר as the place where a ‘way’ is to be ‘cleared’ for the Lord, the LXX has the ἔρημος as the place where the nameless prophetic voice cries out. The LXX rendering is thus closer to the Johannine appropriation of Isaiah, as John identifies himself with the ‘voice of one crying in the wilderness’ (1:23). This of course, influences the decision in reading a comma in John’s text before ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ rather than before εὐθύνετε. Furthermore, in the LXX ‘the way’ of the Lord (τὴν ὁδὸν Κυρίου) is to be ‘prepared’ (ἐτοιμάσατε) rather than ‘cleared’ (Isa 40:3), and the ‘paths’ of God (τὰς τρίβους τοῦ Θεοῦ) ‘made straight’ (εὐθείας ποιεῖτε) – although John renders this simply as εὐθύνετε (1:23), and, if John has ‘relied’ upon the LXX version of the text, he thus compresses two parallel lines into one.<sup>45</sup>

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Nicole Chibici-Revneanu, *Des Herrlichkeit des Verherrlichten: Das Verständnis der δόξα im Johannesevangelium* (WUNT 2/231; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 383]. John’s use of the terms δόξα and δόξαζειν nevertheless goes beyond Isaiah’s use of the term [cf. Jesper Tang Nielsen, “The Narrative Structures of Glory and Glorification in the Fourth Gospel,” *NTS* 56 (2010): 346, n. 12]. The δόξα of God is now present in Jesus (John 1:14) and signifies his ‘divinity’: “not only his incarnation but also his ministry, in its ‘signs’ and works, represents the manifestation of glory; above all, the cross reveals glory because there God’s true being is disclosed in its fullness” [see Dorothy Lee, *Flesh and Glory: Symbolism, Gender and Theology in the Gospel of John* (New York: Herder, 2002), 35]. Yet John also uses δόξα in its ‘secular’ sense of ‘repute’ or ‘human opinion’, as the Jews seek δόξα from each other instead of from God (5:44; 12:43; cf. 7:18). John’s overall use of the term δόξα is therefore intricately tied up with the notions of choice and *recognition* – Jesus’ interlocutors will either recognise Jesus’ divine identity, manifest through his σάρξ (and so come to belief in him), or they will not recognise his δόξα and will reject him instead (cf. Nielsen, “Narrative Structures,” 366). The relevance of this understanding of δόξα and δόξασειν to the Gospel’s presentation of the Jews will unfold in the course of this thesis.

<sup>45</sup> A number of theories have been put forward to try and explain why John would have compressed two lines into one. For example, Menken suggests that John was meant to be understood not as a precursor to Jesus but as a contemporaneous witness to him, since the connotations of ἐτοιμάζω suggest the prior completion of a task or ‘path’ before another may follow it through. See Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 31, 33. See also Mary L. Coloe, “John as Witness and Friend,” in Paul N. Andersen, Felix Just and Tom Thatcher (eds.), *John, Jesus and History, Vol 2: Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 50-51.

Despite these differences, in both the MT and the LXX, the broader thematic connotations of Isa 40:3 centre upon the coming of God to his people. Commentators often speak of Isaiah 40:1-8 as pronouncing the promise of a return from the Babylonian exile, and the clearing of a highway in the wilderness as a means of facilitating the transport of those returning to Jerusalem.<sup>46</sup> The divine imperative to ‘prepare’ a ‘road’ in the מִדְּבָר was thought to be addressed to angels or other supernatural beings capable of levelling the land on a grand scale.<sup>47</sup> However, in Isa 40:3 there is no explicit mention of a route being prepared for those returning from exile, nor is this route to be prepared exclusively by ‘angels’.<sup>48</sup> This is usually assumed in the literature because of the juxtaposition of Isa 40:1-8 with Isa 39:5-8, which speaks of the promise of a proximate return from exile.<sup>49</sup> The suggestion of Isa 40:3 is, rather, that YHWH himself is to ‘return’ to his people through the wilderness, and a “processional way”, like the ‘way’ prepared for the visit of a dignitary, is to be laid out.<sup>50</sup> In Isaiah 40-55, the ‘way’ (דֶּרֶךְ) connotes God’s coming to save his people, and “his presence through the wilderness to Jerusalem (40:3-5, 9-11; 42:16; 49:10-11; 52:7-12).”<sup>51</sup> The דֶּרֶךְ of God in the Isaian tradition is thus ‘spiritualised,’ becoming a figurative means of expressing Israel’s journey with God (cf. 57:14; 30:21).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Øystein Lund surveys the field well on this point; see his, *Way Metaphors and Way Topics in Isaiah 40-55*, (FAT 2/28; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

<sup>47</sup> Raymond E. Brown adopts this line of interpretation with regard to John’s Gospel. See Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, (AB 29-29a, vol. 1; New York: Doubleday, 1966), 50. Cf. Carson, *The Gospel*, 144, who agrees with Brown but argues that the address is to the prophets of Israel rather than the angels.

<sup>48</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 181; cf. 179-180.

<sup>49</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 180.

<sup>50</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 181. I do not think that the theme of the ‘new exodus’ and the appearance of YHWH’s are mutually exclusive here.

<sup>51</sup> Williams, “Isaiah in John’s Gospel,” 104.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 182. This view was popularised by Hans M. Barstad, *A Way in the Wilderness: The ‘Second Exodus’ in the Message of Second Isaiah* (JSS Monograph 12; Manchester:

The LXX rendering of Isa 40:3, with its focus on ‘making straight’ the ‘paths of [our] God’ (εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ Θεοῦ), and the Johannine expression, εὐθύνετε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου (1:23b) have been interpreted as signifying a figurative understanding of the way of God and of Jesus. Freed argues that John’s use of εὐθύνετε (rather than ἐτοιμάσατε) indicates a reliance on the Wisdom tradition, wherein the ‘way’ (ὁδὸς) takes on a “moral and ethical” meaning.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Schuchard understands John’s use of εὐθύνετε to be an abbreviated rendering of κατεὐθύνετε, often paired with ὁδὸς in the Wisdom literature.<sup>54</sup> In like manner, Williams reads τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου (John 1:23b), with its use of the singular ‘way’ rather than plural ‘paths’, as a subjective genitive, denoting “Jesus’ own way.”<sup>55</sup> What this means is that the ‘way’ of Jesus – figuratively speaking, his path or his journey – is “made straight” by John’s testimony.<sup>56</sup> Freed expresses the same idea when he speaks of John setting “the ethical and moral way Jesus was to go.”<sup>57</sup> However, Freed’s notion that John ‘sets’ an ‘ethical’ way (by means of moral example) for Jesus to follow is entirely incongruous with the Gospel’s theological thrust. Jesus, as the incarnate Word, has ontological priority over John (1:1-2, 15, 18), thus, no one but God could have established the ‘way’ for Jesus.<sup>58</sup> Williams’ claim that John ‘makes straight’ the figurative ‘path’ of Jesus can be critiqued on the same grounds. Rather than reading τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου (1:23b) as a

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Manchester University Press, 1989), 33. The same idea is developed in Lund, *Way Metaphors*, 81-89, where the position is advanced that the ‘desert’ of Isaiah 40:3 is to be understood as a metaphor for human desolation. YHWH’s appearance in ‘glory’ (Isa 40:5) is a theophany that announces salvation (page 89). Lund does not account well for the fact that this ‘way’ is *prepared* or what such preparation entails.

<sup>53</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 11, 15.

<sup>55</sup> Williams, “Isaiah in John’s Gospel,” 104.

<sup>56</sup> Williams, “Isaiah in John’s Gospel,” 104.

<sup>57</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 6. The Qumran community likely saw themselves as preparing a way for the Lord in the wilderness by living an ethical life by the Torah, 1QS 8:13-16.

<sup>58</sup> John’s Gospel depicts Jesus himself as ‘the Way’ par excellence, cf. 14:6. Nevertheless, the presence of an epexegetical genitive is not detectable in Isaiah 40:3, in my opinion.

subjective genitive and understanding it in a metaphorical sense, it is preferable to read it simply as an objective genitive expressing the physical ‘coming’ of Jesus and his approach to his people, that is, his self-revelation to ‘Israel’ (1:35) and to the Jews.

The focus of much recent research on John 1:23 (and the wider context of 1:19-28) has been upon the ‘way’ that John ‘makes straight’ for Jesus, and what this indicates about their relationship.<sup>59</sup> Related to this is the focus upon which textual version John made use of and how (and why) he modified his verbs to suit his purposes. However, the emphasis in the Isaian passage lies not so much on what kind of ‘way’ or road is to be constructed, but on how the ‘way’ will facilitate the coming of God in glory (כבוד), cf. 40:5. The category of divine *glory* (δόξα) constitutes a *leitmotif* of the Gospel of John, particularly as that glory is revealed in the person of Jesus and ultimately in his ‘hour’ of glorification, i.e. his death and resurrection (cf. 7:39; 12:23, 27-28; 13:31-32; 14:13; 17:1, 4) and is contrasted with the ‘human’ glory sought by the Jews (5:44-45; 7:18; 8:50; 12:43). It does not seem too far removed from John’s literary and theological purpose in this pericope (1:23-28) either. In fact, the citation of Isaiah 40:3 in John 1:23 is conditioned primarily upon the notion of divine glory and only secondarily upon the nature of the ‘way’ (τὴν ὁδὸν) that John lays out. John’s preparation of the ‘way’ is a readying for the entry of the divine δόξα into the world in the person of Jesus.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 31; 33; Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 15; Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 6.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. footnote 29. Reim states that the central theme of the Isaiah citation is the “kommenden Offenbarung der Herrlichkeit Jahwes.” Cf. Reim, *Studien*, 5.

Three factors support this interpretation and indicate how the ‘glory’ motif of the Isaian passage is given fresh salience when it surfaces intertextually in John 1:23.<sup>61</sup> Firstly, as Blenkinsopp demonstrates, a recurring motif in Isaiah is that of ecological restoration, the transformation of the wasted land, razed by the Babylonian conquest, into an abundant and fertile land once more.<sup>62</sup> In Isa 40:3-5 MT the מדבר and the ערבה are to be cleared for YHWH and thus will his כבוד be seen; in Isaiah 35:1-5, the מדבר will be ‘glad’, the ערבה will ‘rejoice and blossom’ and the כבוד of the Lord will be seen (35:1-2) as he comes with salvation for his people (35:4b).<sup>63</sup> Many other Deutero-Isaian passages repeat this theme (cf. 41:17-20; 43:19-21; 49:8-13; 57:14; 62:10-12).<sup>64</sup> Isa 51:3 especially bears a close resemblance to 40:3, with its statement that the מדבר and ערבה will be ‘comforted’ and ‘consoled’ (cf. 40:1-2) in being restored.<sup>65</sup> This ecological restoration, Blenkinsopp argues, constitutes the very revelation of God’s כבוד promised in Isa 40:5. The preparation of a ‘way’ for YHWH in the מדבר heralds and takes part in YHWH’s restorative activity of the מדבר which in turn reveals his כבוד: his ‘glory’ or his ‘radiance’.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> My argument in this thesis about the recontextualisation of the OT ‘glory’ motif in John finds some parallels with the recent work of Nicole Chibici-Revneanu, although Chibici-Revneanu’s focus is more on the allusive incorporation of the various nuances of the terms כבוד and δόξα in John, rather than the instances of explicit OT citation. Still, Chibici-Revneanu presents a striking discussion of the way in which YHWH’s כבוד constituted Israel as a community in the OT and how the Johannine δόξα likewise constitutes a believing community over against an unbelieving world. It is the Jews in John’s Gospel who cannot recognise the divine glory in Jesus, and who seek a ‘human glory’ for themselves (5:41. 44), and thus remain outsiders to God’s revelation in Jesus (see Chibici-Revneanu, *Die Herrlichkeit*, 443-449; 626). My thesis makes similar claims, but focuses upon this dynamic at the narrative level; moreover, Chibici-Revneanu makes no special case for reading the Jews in John against this dynamic.

<sup>62</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 182.

<sup>63</sup> First Isaiah also presents this theme, even though structurally and historically distinct from Deutero-Isaiah.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 182.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 182.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 182.

The notion of ecological restoration is closely tied to the ‘new Exodus’ theme in the Deutero-Isaian corpus, as David Pao argues. The Exodus paradigm is “eschatologized” in Isaiah, meaning that it is spoken of as a future event, but still rooted in Israel’s past history. The repeated contrast between ‘former things’ and ‘new things’ illustrates this point well (cf. Isa 42:9; 43:18-19).<sup>67</sup> But the ‘new Exodus’ is also a *creative* event, such that the original Exodus tradition of provision in the wilderness becomes a promise of cosmic restoration: YHWH will make the “wilderness like Eden” once more (51:3; cf. also 40:12-31; 42:5; 44:24; 45:9-18; 48:12-13; 51:12-16).<sup>68</sup> The Exodus paradigm is re-told against the backdrop of such creation myths as God’s defeat of Rahab and the Sea (50:2; 51:9-11), concepts already paired in the Hebrew traditions of the Torah and Wisdom literature (cf. Exod 15; Deut 32:7-14; Ps 74:12-17; 77:12-10; 89:5-37). These themes not only express the sense of the creation of the cosmos but the formation of a people as God’s own.<sup>69</sup> In John’s Gospel, Jesus, the coming ‘Lord’ who embodies the divine ‘glory’ (Isa 40:3), gathers a new people to himself once John has witnessed to him (1:35-57).

Secondly, there is the possibility of a connection between Isa 40:3-5 and the notion of the *rebuilding* of the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>70</sup> In an example of Isaian intra-textuality, Isa 62:10-12 quotes Isa 40:3-5, commanding a ‘highway’ to be ‘built up’ and ‘cleared of stones’ so that YHWH’s salvation may be seen, this time in the context of the Temple’s restoration in Jerusalem (cf. Isa 62:7). The sanctuary of the Temple was the place of residence for the כבוד, the place where the presence of YHWH could be experienced (cf. Isa 6:1-4).<sup>71</sup> Indeed the noun כבוד attempts to “combine transcendence and immanence, to give symbolic expression

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<sup>67</sup> David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (WUNT 2/130; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 56.

<sup>68</sup> Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 56.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 57-58.

<sup>70</sup> See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 181.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 182.

to the real presence of the invisible God.”<sup>72</sup> For John, the incarnate Logos is the locus of the divine presence and the holy place where divine transcendence and immanence meet, so when he announces the presence of the Logos in history (cf. John 1:1-18), he draws upon cultic and wisdom traditions to demonstrate that Jesus is the embodiment of the δόξα of God. This ‘glory’ motif finds implicit expression in John’s citation of Isa 40:3 in John 1:23. The next OT citation in the Gospel builds upon this specifically in the context of Jesus’ claim to be the ‘new Temple,’ in a dispute with the Jews over his claims to ‘rebuild’ the Temple (2:18-22; cf. Isa 62:10-12). Jesus thus implicitly claims to be the symbolic sanctuary, the locus of the divine כבוד or δόξα. The context of Isa 40:3 demonstrates how, in John’s appropriation of the text, Jesus reveals the divine δόξα, and how John witnesses to this by identifying with the prophetic voice.

Thirdly, in the biblical tradition, the ‘wilderness’ is not only a figurative expression for human desolation, but is the place of divine encounter, a place of hope (cf. Jer 2:2; Hos 2:16-17). The revelation of the glory of God took place in the heart of the wilderness, at Mount Sinai (Exod 14-15). It is the place of divine provision as well: God gave manna and water in the wilderness to sustain God’s people.<sup>73</sup> Isaiah 43:16-21 alludes to this aptly; YHWH speaks of making a ‘way in the wilderness’ (43:19b), and giving his people ‘water’ to drink, even making ‘rivers in the desert’ (v. 20b) so that the people he has formed may praise him (v. 21). These themes of hope and provision are clearly present in the Isaian text cited by John (Isaiah 40:3, cf. 40:1-8): the levelling of hills and the filling of valleys implies that regions once distinct and separate from each other can now be unified, as transportation from one region to another would be possible.<sup>74</sup> John’s appropriation of this text reveals more than a call for road

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<sup>72</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 182.

<sup>73</sup> These themes are picked up in the other citation texts yet to be examined (cf. 6:31, 7:37-39).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Matthews and Moyer, *The Old Testament*, 28.

construction or royal procession; it implies that all people will be brought together and unified under the Lord of glory, who is Jesus (cf. 12:13-15).

### iii. The Response and Characterisation of the Emissaries of the Jews

The question now arises of how the ideal reader is invited to construct the emissaries of the Jews as characters in the context of this first OT citation. There is sufficient textual evidence in John 1:19-34 to suggest that the representatives of the Jews demonstrate a lack of positive response to the witness of John, and thereby to the revelation of Jesus. While their response cannot yet be deemed overtly ‘hostile’ (cf. 6:41; 7:1-2) or ‘sceptical’<sup>75</sup> it is clearly an uncomprehending response. The ignorance of the emissaries of the Jews over John’s identity – and by extension of the coming revelation of the Lord of glory – is not entirely innocuous: the Jews understand *something* of John’s import, else they would not have delegated ‘Priests and Levites’ to interrogate him (1:19-22). Their ‘surveillance’ of ‘unauthorised’ figures lends ominous tones to the meeting of John with the Priests and Levites.<sup>76</sup> The latter’s inability to grasp the significance of the Isaian citation in this context is all the more ironic because the witness of Scripture is supposed to make Jesus intelligible, insofar as it situates the revelation he brings within the ‘story’ of Israel’s relationship with God.

Utilising Rimmon-Kenan’s method of character analysis, the primary means by which the emissaries of the Jews are portrayed to the reader is through *indirect presentation*, specifically through the *speech* of the Priests and Levites. They are depicted asking question after question of John: twice they ask John who he is (1:19, 22a) and on what authority he is

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. Tolmie, “The ἰουδαῖοι,” 378-379.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Carter, *John*, 30.



baptising (1:24). They ask John, ‘Are you Elijah?’ (1:21a), and ‘Are you the Prophet?’ (1:21b), and further, ‘What do you say about yourself?’ (1:22b). Since John declares that he is neither of the messianic figures specified, his interlocutors want to know, further, why he baptises (1:25)? John’s positive self-identification with the prophetic voice of Isaiah 40:3 should have sufficiently answered that question, as it indicated what the ideal reader of the story already knows, namely, that John has been ‘sent’ by God as ‘witness to the light,’ although he was not himself that light (cf. 1:6-9). Since the priests and Levites have not understood this, however, John points to the ‘Coming One’ (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) who has greater authority than himself. The ‘Coming One’ already ‘stands among’ them, but they do not ‘know’ him (1:26-27). The significance of John’s baptism is to “make known the unknown one who is already present.”<sup>77</sup> No further response from the priests and Levites is detailed – their lack of knowledge thus reads as the Gospel’s final judgment of them (1:28).

Therefore, the most prominent way in which the representatives of the Jews are constructed in their response to this OT citation is as inquisitive but ‘unknowing’ characters. Their urgent questioning results from their consciousness of having been ‘sent’ by the Jews (1:19) and ‘the Pharisees’ (1:24) to obtain some answers about John’s identity. These details constitute *direct* character definition, because the narrator specifically interjects to qualify these characteristics. The ideal reader is aware that the Jews are *senders* – but their emissaries come face to face with John, a man who has been ‘sent by God’ (1:6-9). The ideal reader therefore interprets the Jews as characters in light of what he or she already knows about John, and concludes that the Jews are a rival group of ‘senders’ to God, the ultimate Sender, the one who has ‘sent’ John ahead of Jesus, who is the ‘Coming One’ of whom the Priests and Levites know nothing (1:26-27).

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<sup>77</sup> Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 91.

The emissaries of the Jews are also characterised *directly* by John as ‘not knowing’ the ‘Coming One’ (1:26-27), which is portentous indeed by the Gospel’s standards of judgement. Because John’s ‘voice’ is aligned with the Prophetic ‘Voice’ of Isaiah 40:3, and because John has been ‘sent’ by God (1:6-9) and has direct commune with God (1:33-34), his characterisation of the Priests and Levites is significantly influential because it is highly *reliable*. The ideal reader is already aware from the Prologue that Jesus alone is the one who makes *God* known (1:18). Part of John’s role in this opening scene of the Gospel narrative is to make *Jesus* known. ‘Knowledge’ is thus distributed somewhat unevenly between characters in the story: John ‘knows’ Jesus because God gave him special insight (1:33-34), and the ideal reader – who has read the Prologue – surmises that the Priest’s and Levites’ ignorance falls short of a genuine recognition of God’s promised Messiah. The reader is aware that the one ‘coming into the world’ (1:1-3) is the ‘Coming One’ about whom John testifies (1:27; cf. 1:8). Based on this, the ideal reader is able to evaluate the response of the emissaries of the Jews in a negative light.

Raymond Brown considers that John’s statement about Jesus standing ‘among’ them as one unknown is in fact neutral and not condemnatory. Brown argues that John himself admits further that he did not ‘know’ Jesus until God spoke to him (1:33-34). Rather, Jesus is ‘unknown’ to them because the Evangelist is concerned to reflect a “popular tradition” about the “hidden Messiah” in this passage.<sup>78</sup> By contrast – and I think more correctly – Schnackenburg argues that John’s words are “heavy with foreboding”: John is “open to the

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<sup>78</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 1:53. Marinus de Jonge claims that there may have been some refutation of the tradition of the ‘hidden Messiah’ (cf. *1 En.* 48:6; *2 Bar.* 29:3; 39:7; 73:7; *4 Ezra* 7:28; 12:32; 13:26, 32, 52; 14: 9) on the part of the Gospel here: whereas the ‘hidden Messiah’ could only be revealed after Elijah anointed him, Jesus does not depend on any such figure for his self-revelation, and John acts only as a witness to Jesus, not a precursor. Cf. Marinus de Jonge, “Jewish Expectations About the ‘Messiah’ According to the Fourth Gospel,” *NTS* 19 (1973): 246-270. Cf. Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1972), 107.

divine” while his interrogators are not.<sup>79</sup> The contrast of ἐγὼ with ὑμεῖς in 1:26a-b suggests that John already ‘knows’ Jesus, that he is already aware that he ‘makes straight’ or makes clear the way for someone greater.<sup>80</sup> Even though John twice repeats that he did not ‘know’ Jesus (1:31, 33), he *has* ‘seen’ Jesus and ‘testified’ that he is the ‘Son of God’ (1:34). According to Schnackenburg, the “divine revelation is not given [to the emissaries of the Jews] and they also lack the readiness to accept it.”<sup>81</sup> When understood in light of the Prologue (cf. 1:10-12) the ideal reader glimpses that the ignorance of the ‘Priests and Levites’ is not momentary but hints at a more “profound estrangement.”<sup>82</sup> Bultmann goes so far as to say that this early passage opens a recurring theme in the Gospel, namely, the ‘blindness’ of the Jews when faced with divine revelation.<sup>83</sup> Jesus remains ‘unknown’ to them as they demonstrate even here an unwillingness to transcend their limited messianic expectations (‘Elijah’, ‘the Prophet’) and embrace the coming of the ‘Lord.’<sup>84</sup>

Several other factors indicate that the response of the Jews emissaries to John’s citation of the OT functions to construct them as ‘outsiders’ to the revelation present in Jesus. There may be a subtle contrast between John’s witness to the representatives of the Jews in 1:19-28 and his witness to the first disciples in 1:35-51 over the next three days in the narrative. While John’s testimony to the delegation from the Jews leads no one to Jesus, his testimony to his own two disciples leads them to Jesus (1:35-42). Upon seeing Jesus for the first time, John declares that his own purpose in baptising was so that Jesus might be ‘revealed to Israel’ (1:29-31).

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<sup>79</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 1:295.

<sup>79</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 1:295.

<sup>80</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 1:294.

<sup>81</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 1:295.

<sup>82</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 1:295.

<sup>83</sup> Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 91. Again, Bultmann may be exaggerating the matter here: another reading might argue that the Priests and Levites are doing their legitimate business and are merely seeking information.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Moloney, *John*, 52.

But the audience of this pericope (1:29-34) is unnamed. This raises the question of *who is meant* by the term ‘Israel’ in 1:31. I would argue that it prefigures the group of disciples mentioned in the following section and on the following ‘day’ in the narrative (1:35-42; 43-51), because Jesus – the ‘Coming One’ – is ‘revealed’ to them and positively received by them. Indeed the final disciple to come to Jesus in this opening section of the Gospel is Nathanael, who is called a ‘true Israelite’ by Jesus (1:47). The positive usage of ‘Israel’ compared with the pejorative usage of the Jews in the Gospel is well noted in the literature.<sup>85</sup> Already in 1:19-42 the σχίσμα driving the plot of the Gospel to divide believers (Israel) from unbelievers (the Jews) is at work (cf. 10:19).<sup>86</sup>

Finally, another means of *indirect* character presentation of the emissaries of the Jews can be found in the way the allusive context of the OT citation ‘echoes’ for the ideal reader in 1:19-28. In this close reading I have shown that Isaiah 40:3 is incorporated into the Gospel as a post-exilic ‘restoration’ text, bearing themes of *hope* and salvation in the ‘wilderness.’ In John’s appropriation of the text, the ‘wilderness’ and its ecological restoration stands for a place of encounter with the coming ‘Lord of glory’ (Isa 40:5), who is identified with Jesus in John 1:28. The ‘question’ that the ideal reader appears to confront is whether the emissaries of the Jews – and therefore the Jews themselves who will hear their report – will accept the hope held out to them, whether they will accept Jesus as the ‘Lord of glory’. This contextual motif begins to emerge in the opening scene of the Gospel (1:19-28) and will become

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<sup>85</sup> Cf. 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 Gospel*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001), 191-194.

<sup>86</sup> On the notion of *schisma* as a key theme in the Gospel see James D. G. Dunn, “The Question of Anti-Semitism in the New Testament,” in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, A.D. 70-135*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 177-212. Cf. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 1:283, who argues that the Johannine theme of the ‘ingathering’ begins with John (the Baptist), and resistance to Jesus also begins in the same moment.

recurrent across the rest of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15 to influence the rhetorical characterisation of the Jews.

#### iv. Conclusion

In the Fourth Gospel, John functions to give ‘voice’ to Jesus before he appears. He bears ‘witness’ to Jesus and he cites the OT Scriptures which in like manner, bear witness to Jesus. His audience, the emissaries of the Jews, fail to perceive the Christological significance of the Isaian citation as John proclaims it. Here, it reveals that Jesus is the ‘Lord’ who embodies the divine δόξα and who is coming with salvation. As this analysis has shown, motifs of divine glory inform the broader background of the Isaian text cited in 1:23. Scripture functions rhetorically to ‘make sense’ of Jesus, and to lead his audience to faith. The irony in 1:19-28 is that the citation effects just the opposite: the emissaries of the Jews are left unknowing by the Scripture’s Christological witness. This opening Gospel scene depicts an emissary of God – John the Baptist – in a tense, confrontational situation with emissaries of the Jews. The next time Scripture is cited in the Gospel, Jesus is present in the Temple (2:17), where, for the first time, he meets the Jews face to face.

## B. John 2:17: Zeal for Your House (Psalm 69:9a)

### i. Outline of the Johannine Text

The second explicit OT citation in the Gospel occurs in the context of what is commonly designated in the literature as the ‘Temple cleansing’ scene (John 2:13-22).<sup>87</sup> The scene can be divided into two sections (2:13-17 and 2:17-22, with both sections concluding with the expression, ‘his disciples remembered’, vv. 17, 22). In the first section, Jesus is described as ‘going up’ (ἀνέβη) to Jerusalem as the feast of Passover nears (2:13). There he enters the Temple and is immediately depicted as violently driving out money changers and the ‘sheep’ and ‘oxen’ required for the cultic oblations (2:16). Jesus ‘pours out’ the money and even overturns the money-changers’ tables (2:15b). The source of Jesus’ provocation appears to be implicit in his command, ‘stop making my Father’s house (οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου) into a marketplace (οἶκον ἐμπορίου)’ (2:16). At this point, Jesus’ disciples – who have presumably journeyed with him (cf. 2:12) – emerge as subjects in a narrative aside, and are described as spontaneously ‘remembering’ a text of Scripture (... ὅτι γεγραμμένον ἐστίν) that aptly

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<sup>87</sup> Schuchard considers this term inapt, as it incorrectly implies a prior ‘profanation’ of the Temple (cf. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 22-23). Coloe likewise finds the term misleading because it misses the real point of the pericope, which is about the abrogation of the Temple cult, (cf. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 73-74). Debate about the appropriateness of the term ‘Temple-cleansing’ has taken place in E. P Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 61-76, where the position was advanced that Jesus’ action was in fact a portentous symbol for the Temple’s destruction. This position was countered in Craig A. Evans, “Jesus’ Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?” *CBQ* 57 (1989): 237-270. Glancy perceptively argues that Jesus’ action itself could be read as a profanation rather than a ‘cleansing’ because it violently displaces the space of the ‘other’ and seeks to make his “definition of reality the dominant one.” See Jennifer A. Glancy, “Violence as Sign in the Fourth Gospel,” *BibInt* 17 (2009): 100, 102. Contra Glancy, the ideal reader who knows from the Prologue that Jesus, as the tabernacling Word (1:14) and the only Son (1:18) has the right to possess and define what happens in his “father’s house” (2:16).

reflects Jesus' actions: 'Zeal for your house will consume me' (2:17). This passage corresponds almost exactly to Psalm 69:9a (MT; 68:10a LXX).

The second section of the Temple-cleansing scene opens with the response of the Jews to Jesus' actions. This is the first time that the Jews appear in the Gospel text, although they were referred to in 1:19-22, where they acted 'behind the scenes' as it were. In this pericope, the connective particle οὖν (2:18) assumes their prior presence at the scene.<sup>88</sup> It is their first encounter with Jesus and it takes the shape of a tense confrontation. The Jews demand (ἀπεκρίθησαν) a 'sign' from Jesus that would authenticate his dramatic actions (2:18). In response, Jesus enigmatically states, 'Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up' (2:19). Thence follows a classic example of Johannine 'misunderstanding' based on the deliberately polyvalent use of the term 'Temple' (ἱερὸν and ναός).<sup>89</sup> The Jews take Jesus' words on the literal "superficial" level, and "naturally remark their absurdity."<sup>90</sup> How indeed can a building (τὸ ἱερὸν) that has been under construction for 'forty-six years' be raised in three days? (2:20). The narrator then intrudes into the text for a second time, to alert the reader to the fact that Jesus' words have a deeper significance that is lost on the Jews: Jesus really spoke of the 'Temple (ὁ ναός) of his body' (2:21). The narrator concludes the scene by adding that the disciples later 'remembered' (ἐμνήσθησαν) Jesus' saying after he was 'raised from the dead', and furthermore, that they thereby 'believed the Scripture and the word' that

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<sup>88</sup> Cf. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 76.

<sup>89</sup> Three words are used to refer to the Temple: ἱερὸν (vv. 14-15), οἶκος (vv. 16-17) and ναός (vv. 19-20). Readers must infer the significance of these nuances since the narrator does not interject to explain them. This is taken up in more depth below. O. Michel, "ναός," *TDNT* IV: 882, states that in the NT usage, the terms ἱερὸν and ναός are not semantically distinct; both terms refer to the Jerusalem Temple, but the latter (ναός) takes precedence of the various other terms when referring to the sanctuary. In the NT generally, on the other hand, τὸ ἱερὸν is used with reference to the whole Temple complex (see, Gottlob Schrenk, "ἱερον, etc.," *TDNT* III: 235). This slight distinction in range is not hard and fast in the case of John 2:13-22.

<sup>90</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; London: SPCK, 1978), 200.

Jesus had spoken (2:22a-b). This is the first of three ‘prolepses’ introduced by the narrator with regard to the disciple’s later comprehension of Jesus in light of the Scriptures after his death and resurrection (cf. 7:39; 12:15; 20:8).

The structure of the Temple-cleansing scene can thus be understood as a ‘dyptich,’ with two corresponding halves or ‘panels’ that are placed side by side.<sup>91</sup> In the first half, the action of Jesus (2:15) is followed by the explanatory words of Jesus (2:16) and the disciples’ ‘remembering’ of the Scriptures as they pertain to Jesus (2:17); in the second half, the action/reaction of the Jews (2:18) is followed by the explanatory words of Jesus (2:19) and the misunderstanding of the Jews (2:20). The disciples’ later, post-Easter ‘recollection’ of the scene and of the Christological significance of the Scriptures is then mentioned, together with their all-important response of *belief* (2:21-22). It is reasonable to state that Jesus’ disciples and the Jews are therefore contrasted with each other in terms of their response to Jesus – where the Jews exhibit misunderstanding, the disciples exhibit theological perception and belief.

But it is crucial to note that in both places where the ‘remembering’ of the disciples is mentioned and their insight into and belief in the ‘Scriptures’ detailed, the omniscient voice of the narrator is speaking (2:17; 2:21-22). The Jews in fact are not privy to the elucidative commentary of the narrator. As characters in the story they know less than the implied (and real) reader of the text. The contrast between Jesus’ disciples and the Jews is thus for the benefit of the *ideal reader* who is thereby drawn into the conflict and persuaded to accept the deeper, ‘spiritual’ meaning of Jesus’ words (2:21) over against the misunderstanding of the Jews. The OT citation in John 2:17 is *remembered* by the disciples; the Jews do not know this or hear the words of the psalm and thus respond only to the *actions* of Jesus, not to the

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 1:344.



explicit citation of Psalm 69:9a. The Jews are *not* said to recall that same text of Scripture, nor do they ‘remember’ the ‘word’ of Jesus in light of it. Only in a post-resurrection era is it possible to understand the full import of Jesus’ ‘word’ *and* the ‘word’ of Scripture as its wider context. The modern ideal (or ‘compliant’) reader of the Gospel lives in this post-resurrection era and so is able to come to a ‘correct’ reading of the Johannine γράφη and the Scripture cited therein. In this sense, the reader and the disciples – whose later recollection of Jesus’ words is proleptically detailed – are in a position to construct the response of the Jews to Jesus as inadequate from the perspective of faith.<sup>92</sup> The audience of the citation of Psalm 69:9a in 2:17 is not primarily the Jews or even the disciples, since the latter are the agents of the Psalm’s recollection, but the *reader* who is thus tutored to construct the Jews as ‘outsiders.’

## ii. The Context of Psalm 69:9a for an Understanding of John 2:17

There is a lack of agreement in the literature as to whether one can ascertain the source text upon which John relies for his citation in 2:17. That John utilises Psalm 68:10a (LXX; 69:9a MT) is not disputed, but whether John draws upon the LXX or the MT is a moot point.<sup>93</sup> The reason lies in the fact that where the Hebrew has the perfect אכלתני (‘zeal for your house *has*

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. Moloney, “Reading John 2:13-22,” 436. Moloney argues that the response of the Jews must be understood in terms of the Gospel’s “criteria of true faith” that has emerged so far in the text. John 1:1-51 has shown disciples coming to Jesus and responding to him in a number of different ways; the mother of Jesus responds with full and perfect faith in her specific situation (2:1-12). The narrative sets up a contrast between such true disciples and those who respond to Jesus only on the strength of his ‘signs’ (cf. 2:23-25).

<sup>93</sup> Menken argues for the LXX as John’s source (see Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 39), as does Reim (see Reim, *Studien*, 10).

*consumed me*’) and the LXX renders this in the second aorist form, third person, with κατέφαγεν, John uses the future middle voice, rendering it in the third person καταφαγέται, ‘zeal for your house *will consume* me’ (2:17). The majority of scholars who hold that John relied upon the LXX for this citation argue that John simply changes the aorist into the future.<sup>94</sup> However, the matter is complicated by the fact that certain variants of the LXX also have the future middle καταφαγέται, and this is usually explained by the later ‘christianisation’ of these texts via John 2:17.<sup>95</sup>

Psalms 69:9a (MT), 68:10a (LXX) is a lengthy and complex Psalm of Lament. The Psalmist prays in his distress and confesses his sins to God (69:1). The Psalmist appears to be sick to the point of death (69:3) and to be wrongly accused of theft as well (69:5c).<sup>96</sup> He imprecates against his accusers (69:24-28) and at the last, praises God for the intervention he expects on his behalf (69:29-36). Verses 10-11 of the psalm in particular show the Psalmist lamenting the fact that his zeal for the Temple is misunderstood by his enemies and that his zeal has “placed him in an invidious position.”<sup>97</sup> Moreover, because of his commitment to the Temple, the Psalmist is ‘alienated’ and ‘estranged’ even from his own ‘brothers’ (69:8). Ultimately, beyond his affliction, the Psalmist hopes in God’s coming justice and the fact that his fate will be transformed (69:29-30). It is often noted in the literature that the reception of this Psalm in the NT centres almost exclusively upon Jesus’ Passion and death, showing him to be the Righteous Sufferer of the Psalm (69:21; cf. John 19:28; Matt 27:34, 48; Mark 15:36;

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<sup>94</sup> For example, Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 39; Reim, *Studien*, 10; Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 10.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Barrett, *The Gospel*, 198. Most textual variants are in the future (P<sup>66</sup> P<sup>75</sup> ⋈ B Θ ω, Origen, Eusebius). The aorist is preferred as the original LXX reading for two reasons: it is a typical translation of the Hebrew perfect, and a number of aorists coalesce around Ps 68:8-12 (see Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 39). This is discussed in more depth below.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II: 51-100* (AB 17; New York: Doubleday, 1968), 156.

<sup>97</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 180.

Luke 23:36; Rom 15:3).<sup>98</sup> John's usage of Psalm 69:9a is, however, unique in the NT in its application to Jesus. In John's appropriation of the Psalm a connection exists between the Psalmist's estrangement from his brothers – which is re-read as Jesus' estrangement from the Jews – and an eventual 'consumption' through death. This, as will be seen below, is justified largely on the basis of John's aforementioned change in the temporal sense of κατεσθίω from its perfect form in the MT (אכלתי), to the aorist in the LXX, to the future middle voice in John 2:17.

The first question that John's use of Psalm 69:9a raises concerns the context in which he has placed it. Does it refer to Jesus' actions in the Temple (i.e. the preceding scene of 2:13-16) or to the dispute with the Jews that follows (i.e. the scene of 2:18-20)? Freed argues that the verb κατέφαγειν in the LXX was changed to καταφάγεται in John 2:17 because John was concerned to show how the Psalm was really a prophecy that was fulfilled in Jesus' cleansing action.<sup>99</sup> Thus the citation 'explains' as it were, the preceding scene of 2:13-16, demonstrating that the 'zeal' of the Psalmist is fulfilled in Jesus' profound commitment to the Temple and his desire that right worship be found there.<sup>100</sup> Other scholars disagree with this position, arguing that if this were so, the change in verbal tense was not necessary.<sup>101</sup>

Rather the future tense, καταφάγεται, indicates that the disciples realised, in light of the ensuing conflict between Jesus and the Jews in the Temple, that Jesus' actions would lead him into a "life-and-death struggle."<sup>102</sup> John 2:17 refers to the fact that Jesus' zealous actions have set in motion a series of events that will lead to his 'consumption' in death at the hands

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<sup>98</sup> Cf. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 41.

<sup>99</sup> Freed, *The Old Testament Quotations*, 10.

<sup>100</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 9; cf. Barrett, *The Gospel*, 198-199.

<sup>101</sup> So Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 40.

<sup>102</sup> Moloney, *John*, 77.

of his enemies. The future καταφάγεται announces Jesus' death "which still belongs to the future from the perspective of the disciples."<sup>103</sup> More particularly, the Psalm "speaks of how Jesus will be 'consumed' on the cross at the hands of the Jews."<sup>104</sup> Jesus is himself the "Temple which the Jews will destroy and who will shortly afterward rise up anew."<sup>105</sup>

Quite reasonably, however, καταφάγεται may be understood in both senses in John 2:17. So, Jesus displays an all-consuming zeal for the Temple (in the sense of a total dedication) *and* a zeal that will have malignant consequences.<sup>106</sup> However, there is a third nuance to the term which is important to this argument, and which has been convincingly developed recently by Daly-Denton.<sup>107</sup> Daly-Denton begins by critiquing the commonly held assumption that Jesus' dramatic action in the Temple had to do with his dislike of "mercantile activity" or of others "profiteering from religious requirements."<sup>108</sup> Nor was it specifically about Jesus denouncing 'impure' worship.<sup>109</sup> Instead, it symbolised the "obsolescence of the entire cultic structure represented by the Temple" since the reality of that representation was

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<sup>103</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 40. Obermann expresses a similar idea in a characteristically succinct manner: "Die Grundintention der johanneischen Tempelreinigung wird deutlich: Im ersten Passa ist das letzte Passa in seiner Ausrichtung schon enthalten." See Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 123.

<sup>104</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 31.

<sup>105</sup> Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 128; cf. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 124. Of course, Jesus died at the hands of Roman authorities, Jews not having the legal authority to execute criminals. These remarks by Schuchard and Bultmann reflect the bias of the Johannine passion narrative, but may also reflect a tacit anti-Judaism in the Johannine scholarship.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 301.

<sup>107</sup> See Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 125-130.

<sup>108</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 122. Schuchard, for example, makes this assumption, stating that Jesus was provoked by the conducting of business for "secular profit" in the Temple precincts. Cf. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 24.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 179, 180; cf. George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC 36; Waco: Word Books, 1987), 39.

now present in Jesus.<sup>110</sup> Similarly, Coloe argues that John understood the Temple cult to be abrogated and replaced by the coming of Jesus.<sup>111</sup> Jesus' action in the Temple was a 'symbolic action' in the prophetic sense, and is later 'explained' by 2:14-15: Jesus acts as he does because he is the Son in his Father's house (τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρός μου).<sup>112</sup> He appropriates the Temple space to himself because of his divine sonship.<sup>113</sup> This speaks of Jesus' absolutely unique relationship with God, indicating that he is the new locus of the divine presence, sent to communicate that presence to others who encounter him. Jesus is the "true Temple, the house of God."<sup>114</sup>

In light of this consideration, the use of Psalm 69:9a in John 2:17 must be understood in a "sacrificial context."<sup>115</sup> There are wider, sacrificial connotations in John 2:13-22, as well as the forward-looking thrust of καταφάγεται, which implies that Jesus will be consumed by death.<sup>116</sup> However, as Daly-Denton rightly queries, if Psalm 69 points to the death of Jesus in John 2:17, why is Jesus 'consumed' by death? The suggestion that Jesus is to fall victim to powerful forces he cannot control is not characteristic of Jesus' death in John's Gospel.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 122.

<sup>111</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 74; cf. Dodd, *The Interpretation*, 302-303.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 73.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Moloney, "Reading John 2:13-22," 441.

<sup>114</sup> Anthony T. Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel: A Study of John and the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 43.

<sup>115</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 74.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 74; cf. Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 127.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 125. I am not convinced by Orchard's argument that Jesus is portrayed as a victim in the Gospel, or that he develops a "victim consciousness" in the Gospel, even if he does come under the threat of – or suffer actual – "severe physical violence" in the course of his ministry (cf. 7:30, 32, 44; 8:20, 59; 10:31, 39; 18:12, 22; 19:1, 2, 3, 17, 18, 34). Jesus is in 'control', always eluding his oppressors and remaining in charge of events even at his crucifixion. Cf. Helen C. Orchard, *Courting Betrayal: Jesus as Victim in the Gospel of John* (JSNTSup 161; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 29-30; 95-149.

Nor is the idea of Jesus' death as a 'sacrifice' strongly present in the Gospel.<sup>118</sup> In answer to this question, Daly-Denton searches the LXX for the uses of κατεσθίω when predicated of God. Often it is used to refer to a consuming, destructive fire blazing forth from God upon his enemies, or is used to depict the anger of God when he comes in judgment (cf. Num 11:1; Ezek 23:25; Ps 20:10; Lev 10:2; Deut 32:22; Jer 17:27).<sup>119</sup> But another type of divine fire is the "manifestation of the divine good pleasure (cf. Gen 15:7-21)."<sup>120</sup> In the OT, God indicates the acceptance of a sacrifice by sending down a consuming fire on the offerings (cf. Lev 9:24; 2 Chr 7:1; 1 Kg 18:38).<sup>121</sup> The passage from 2 Chronicles is particularly illuminating in this regard. Solomon has recently finished building the Temple (2 Ch 3:1-5:1), and has had the Ark – which housed the 'glory of the Lord' (2 Ch 5:14) – brought into the Temple (2 Ch 5:2-13). Solomon and the Israelites then dedicated the Temple, praying and offering animal sacrifices to God (2 Ch 6:1-42). At this point, 'fire came down from heaven and consumed (κατέφαγε) the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord (δόξα Κυρίου) filled the Temple' (2 Ch 7:1).

Daly-Denton uses 2 Chr 7:1 as an exemplary case and applies it to Jesus in the Gospel. The 'consuming' or 'devouring' of Jesus that Psalm 69:9a in John 2:17 speaks of "is a manifestation of God's presence."<sup>122</sup> Before his death, Jesus will consecrate himself (17:19) and on the cross, "God's glory [will fill] the new Temple of his Body".<sup>123</sup> Daly-Denton claims that when these parallels are taken into account, one can appreciate the sacrificial undertones of John's portrayal of Jesus' death, which come through to the surface of the

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<sup>118</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 127.

<sup>119</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 125-126.

<sup>120</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 126.

<sup>121</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 126.

<sup>122</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 127.

<sup>123</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 127.

Gospel at points and are not altogether buried underneath John's high Christology.<sup>124</sup> Daly-Denton therefore argues that there are three levels at which John's use of καταφαγέται in 2:17 can be understood: as a 'consuming' commitment (cf. Freed); as an intimation of Jesus being 'consumed' in death; and as "the Father's acceptance of that death as the perfect sacrifice".<sup>125</sup> With 2 Chron 7:1 in mind, it also indicates that Jesus' body is the 'new' Temple that will be raised up after 'three days' (2:21-22).

The significance of the preceding discussion for this argument lies in the conclusion of Daly-Denton that in Jesus' death on the cross – which is depicted as the climax of his commitment to doing the 'work' of his Father (cf. 4:34) – God has judged in favour of Jesus as in favour of a 'perfect sacrifice'.<sup>126</sup> Reading this in light of the Temple scene and the citation of Ps 69:9a found therein, it can be added that, by implication, God has *not* judged in favour of the Jews, who in rejecting the words of Jesus (cf. 2:18-20), have failed to see the divine δόξα shining in him. This accords with what was argued in the discussion of the Isaian citation in John 1:19-28, where the emissaries of the Jews failed to understand that the 'Coming One' would be the personification of the glory of God, the 'Lord', as indicated in the wider context of the Isaian citation. Here, in this programmatic Gospel text (2:13-22), the Jews fail to see the 'glory' of the 'Son' in his 'Father's house' (2:16). The ideal reader, on the other hand, is persuaded to appreciate that Jesus' death will be "a moment of great revelation" and a moment that displays the glory of God.<sup>127</sup> The ideal reader of the Gospel begins to see Jesus as the enfleshed glory of God (cf. 1:14), and to perceive resonances of this when the OT is explicitly cited. The reader of *the narrative* recognises Jesus to be something that he does not

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<sup>124</sup> Cf. Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 127, n. 40.

<sup>125</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 126.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 127.

<sup>127</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 130.

appear to be by characters *in the narrative*; the disciples recognise this only in the post-resurrection era, but that moment of recognition ('remembrance') is retrojected into the Gospel story at this point (2:18). The Jews in the text, as will be shown below, are not given this opportunity of remembrance: they do not recognise Jesus as the embodiment of divine glory spoken of in the Scriptures.

### iii. The Response and Characterisation of the Jews

I turn now to the question of how the Jews are can be constructed as characters in the context of this second OT citation (2:13-22). While there is some *direct* character definition of Jesus by the narrator (2:21) and of the disciples by the narrator (2:17, 22), there is no narratorial qualification of the Jews.<sup>128</sup> The ideal reader is left to infer their character from the way they are *indirectly presented*. The way in which their character is revealed is mainly through their *speech*, which takes the form of a *reaction* to Jesus' violent actions in the Temple. The Jews are depicted as questioning Jesus twice about his actions: they ask him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' (2:18) and incredulously ask Jesus if he will really 'raise' the Temple in 'three days' (2:20).

According to Moloney, "the first appearance of the Jews in the Fourth Gospel portrays them in a situation of unbelief, rejecting the words of Jesus."<sup>129</sup> They display not only incredulity when Jesus predicts the raising of the new Temple, but a closed-off, 'insolent' attitude.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> In some ways, the insight that the reader is given into the mind and motivations of Jesus and the disciples reinforces the 'monologic' rhetoric of the Gospel that I discussed in the previous chapter. It illustrates how the legitimacy of the Jews complaints is sidelined, and how their narrative 'subjectivity' is narrowed accordingly.

<sup>129</sup> Moloney, *John*, 79.

<sup>130</sup> Moloney, *John*, 79.



This can be read in the way they ‘throw’ Jesus’ words back at him: Jesus states, καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν (2:19), while the Jews reply, καὶ σὺ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερεῖς αὐτόν (2:20).<sup>131</sup> In the ensuing dialogues between Jesus and other characters, conversation is kept open by the characters’ asking further questions (3:4; 4:11-12). In these later instances, the misunderstanding of Jesus’ interlocutors in fact provides the opportunity for Jesus to deliver a typically Johannine ‘revelation discourse.’<sup>132</sup> In other words, the misunderstanding of these characters is fruitful: they seek clarification by asking further questions. The response of the Jews in 2:13-22 is quite different, intimating the beginnings of an obduracy that will preclude any understanding of Jesus and any ‘abiding’ in Jesus as the plot of the Gospel progresses.<sup>133</sup>

The request that the Jews make for a ‘sign’ (2:18) has a more subtle, ‘negative’ nuance: it “stigmatizes [them] as unbelievers.”<sup>134</sup> The Gospel frequently implies that belief in Jesus based solely on the ‘signs’ he performs is ‘inadequate’ belief: Jesus himself would not ‘trust himself’ to those who sought him only for his signs (cf. 2:23-25; 6:26-27). The Jews do not request a ‘sign’ in order to come to faith in Jesus; the symbolic action of Jesus in the Temple and the words Jesus uses have already revealed that he is the ‘Son’ in his ‘Father’s house,’ i.e. that he embodies the δόξα of God. Jesus’ enigmatic words about raising the new Temple will, ironically, demonstrate to the Jews that he is the visible manifestation of the divine δόξα, and in that sense it will also ‘authenticate’ his actions. Although, technically, the terms ἱερῶν and ναὸς when used of the Temple in this scene are semantically indistinguishable,

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<sup>131</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 77.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. Wayne A. Meeks, “The Man from Heaven,” 44-72.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 116-117, who states that the crux of the matter is not understanding but *abiding* in Jesus’ love.

<sup>134</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 1:349.

Jesus *has* made a distinction between them in this text.<sup>135</sup> Jesus is the *ναὸς*, the inner heart of the Temple's holiness, that will rise anew, but the Jews understand his prediction to be about the *ἕρπον* of stone whose sacrificial system they oversee. Jesus' words speak of the destruction of the *ναὸς* of his body. In the words of Moloney, "The rhetoric of the passage demands that we see the failure of the Jews in their rejection of the words of Jesus," particularly in light of what has gone immediately before in the narrative (cf. 2:1-12).<sup>136</sup>

To expect the Jews, as characters in the text, to glimpse the later, 'correct' understanding of events that the disciples reached would seem "absurd."<sup>137</sup> What the Jews have not 'understood' in this scene – and nor have the disciples grasped the depth of it in the timeframe of the pericope – is Jesus' claim to be the Son in his Father's *οἶκος* (2:16). This is the unsettling claim that 'authorises' Jesus' actions, legitimating his self-appropriation of the Temple space. The disciples grasp the full extent of this claim only *after* Jesus has 'risen from the dead' (2:21-22). But the disciples are also said to have recalled the words of Scripture (Psalm 69:9a) when Jesus performed his radical action in the Temple, even though the fuller meaning of Scripture was not clear to them *at that time*. No such Scriptural recollection is said to have automatically happened to the Jews.

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<sup>135</sup> Cf. Moloney, *John*, 78.

<sup>136</sup> Moloney, "Reading John 2:13-22," 447.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Trond Skard Dokka, "Irony and Sectarianism in the Gospel of John," in *New Readings in John*, 97. Dokka states that "the Jews understood precisely what Jesus wanted them to understand." Mark Allan Powell argues that when it comes to character analysis in the Gospels, the categories 'understanding/misunderstanding' are evaluative and unhelpful. The 'descriptive' categories 'expected/unexpected' are to be preferred, in Powell's opinion. Although Powell does not apply these insights to the Gospel of John, one can argue that the Jews in fact give an 'expected' response and the disciples, an 'unexpected' (albeit 'post hoc') response. See Mark Allan Powell, "Expected and Unexpected Readings of Matthew: What the Reader Knows," *ATJ* 48 (1993): 41-51; cf. Mark Allan Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star: Adventures in Biblical Reader-Response Criticism* (Louisville: John Knox, 2001), 57-74.

The issue of narratorial *reliability* and its influence on characterisation is relevant here. The narrator interjects twice (2:17, 22) to inform the reader of what constitutes a ‘correct’ perspective on Jesus’ actions. The use of the particle *ὅτι* in 2:21 emphatically indicates that the Jews’ understanding of Jesus’ words is to be contested, and the ‘reliable’ view of the narrator – bolstered by another proleptic interjection (2:22) – is to be adopted by the reader. In some ways, the insight that the reader is given into the mind and motivations of Jesus and the disciples reinforces the ‘monologic’ rhetoric of the Gospel that I discussed in the previous chapter. It illustrates how the legitimacy of the Jews’ complaints is sidelined, and how their narrative ‘subjectivity’ is narrowed accordingly.

Finally, the allusive context of the OT citation in 2:17 has some significance for how the reader will construct a character portrait of the Jews. In this close reading I demonstrated how the citation of Psalm 69:9a in 2:17 implies that Jesus’ ‘zeal’ will lead to his being ‘consumed’ by death. Jesus’ death will be a moment of revelation, showing that Jesus is the ‘perfect sacrifice’ consumed by the ‘fire’ of God’s good pleasure, and that his risen body is the Temple that is filled with the glory of God. As such, the ‘glory’ motif emerges once more (cf. 1:23) in the context of this second OT citation, and indirectly characterises the Jews as (a) the inevitable instigators of Jesus’ death because of their hostility towards his ‘zeal’ (cf. 11:45-54); and (b) as characters who do not perceive the ‘glory’ of the Son in his Father’s house. The wider context of Psalm 69:9a is relevant insofar as the disciples identify Jesus with the Psalmist, who laments that his zeal has ‘alienated’ and ‘estranged’ him from his ‘brothers’ (Psalm 68:8-9). The Righteous Sufferer of the Psalm can thus be read as a figure of Jesus.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> So Dodd, *The Interpretation*, 301. Hanson goes as far as to say that John regards Psalm 69:9a as an “utterance of the pre-existent Christ” (cf. Hanson, *Prophetic Gospel*, 43).

In like manner, the Jews can be read intertextually as Jesus' would-be 'brothers' if only they believed in him.<sup>139</sup>

#### iv. Conclusion

The citation of Psalm 69:9a (MT; 68:10a LXX) in John 2:17 is uniquely introduced by the clause ἐμνήσθησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι γεγραμμένον ἔστιν (2:17). The disciples 'remember' this Psalm because it signifies that Jesus' zealous actions will lead him on a path that terminates with his death. A narrative pattern has been established in the Gospel text which has set up a series of expectations for the implied reader. When Scripture is cited, it speaks in some way of Jesus, revealing something unprecedented about himself. As Isaiah 40:3 in John 1:23 revealed that Jesus, the 'Coming One', was the 'Lord' so the citation of Psalm 69:9a in John 2:17 – particularly with the shift from the aorist to the future to read, 'zeal for your house *will* consume me – reveals that Jesus is the 'new Temple' (cf. allusions to 2 Chr 6-7). The Jews, who appear in the Gospel for the first time, do not associate Jesus' actions with any passage from Scripture. They are depicted in this scene as rejecting the word of Jesus. While the broader allusions behind the Isaian citation in John 1:23 were of hope, promise and salvation, the allusions of the Psalm citation in John 2:17 are about suffering, estrangement and death.<sup>140</sup> Jesus' death is the primary allusion, but the fate of the Jews in rejecting Jesus' words is ominous (cf. 1:5, 9b-11).

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<sup>139</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 124: "Jesus als allein Handelnder in 2, 14-16 ... entspricht der Klage des Psalms, nach dem Beter seine Entfremdung – seine Isolation von seinem Brüdern – ausdrückt (LXX Ps 68,9)."

<sup>140</sup> And ultimately hope in God's intervention and the Psalmist's justification in the eyes of his persecutors, as per every lament psalm.

Both citations from the OT so far have implied that Jesus is the embodiment of the divine ‘glory’: the acceptance or rejection of this determines whether the Johannine characters receive ‘life’ and salvation (20:31) or ‘death’ and judgment (cf. 12:44-50). Both texts in this initial phase of Jesus’ public ministry (1:23, 2:17) cast the Jews in a negative light. The Jews have a power to ‘send’ emissaries that appears to compete with God’s power to send Jesus and John as his witness (1:6, 19-20). They are also portrayed as demanding a ‘sign’ from Jesus that would legitimate his right to act as he does (2:18). Scripture is cited in the context of these confrontational scenes to assist the reader in determining Jesus’ place in the divine plan. This is how the Gospel’s rhetoric works to tutor the reader to appreciate the response of different characters to Jesus. The Jews are ironically presented as not knowing their own Scriptures and of not *recognising* Jesus in light of those Scriptures— and problematically, this is exactly what the ideal reader of the Gospel is invited to accept as part of the narrative’s rhetoric.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE OLD TESTAMENT CITATIONS AND THE JEWS – PART II:

#### JESUS AMONG THE ‘FEASTS OF THE JEWS’ (6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34)

##### I. Introduction

The previous chapter examined the initial stages of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee and Jerusalem. In both locations the OT citations (1:23; 2:17) were analysed for how they contributed to the reader’s characterisation of the Jews. This next chapter situates Jesus within the religious heart of Judaism, as it is celebrated in the great festivals of Passover (6:1-66), Tabernacles (7:1-10:21) and Dedication (10:22-42). In these contexts, Scripture is cited to witness to the fact that Jesus reveals God in a definitive way, appropriating to himself the major symbolic features of Judaism’s religious feasts; specifically, Jesus is the ‘true’ and ‘living’ Bread symbolised by the manna that the ancient Israelites ate as they sojourned in the wilderness (cf. 6:30-32), he is also the source of new life-giving waters that all who are thirsty may drink (7:37-39), and the Son of God who is also one with God (10:34). The festive settings of these narratives also play an important role in how the ideal reader characterises the Jews, and so attention will also be given to these settings as an aspect of indirect character presentation.

The argument of this chapter can be schematised as follows:

## I. The Old Testament Citations and the Jews – Part II: Jesus among the ‘Feasts of the Jews’

(6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34)

### A. John 6:31b: Bread from Heaven to Eat (Ps 77:24 LXX/ Exod 16:4)

- i. Outline of the Johannine Text
- ii. The Contexts of Ps 77:24 LXX and Exod 16:4 for an Understanding of John 6:31b
  - a. Ps 78:24 LXX
  - b. Exod 16:4
  - c. Excursus: Wisdom 16:20
- iii. The Response and Characterisation of the Jews
- iv. Conclusion

### B. John 6:45a: They Shall All Be Taught by God (Isaiah 54:13)

- i. Outline of the Johannine Text
- ii. The Context of Isaiah 54:13 for an Understanding of John 6:45a
- iii. The Response and Characterisation of ‘the Jews’
- iv. Conclusion

### C. John 7:37-39: From His Heart Shall Flow Streams of Living Water (Ps 77:15-16 LXX/Ezek 47:1-2)

- i. Preliminary Considerations
- ii. Outline of the Johannine Text
- iii. The Contexts of Ps 77:15-16 LXX and Ezek 47:1-2 for an Understanding of John 7:37-39
  - a. Punctuation and Referent of αὐτοῦ
  - b. Source and Contexts of the Citation
    - 1) Psalm 77:15-16 LXX

- 2) Ezek 47:1-2
- iv. The Response and Characterisation of the Jews
- v. Conclusion
- D. John 10:34: I Said, 'You Are Gods' (Ps 82:6)
  - i. Outline of the Johannine Text
    - a. John 10:25-30
    - b. John 10:31-39
  - ii. The Context of Psalm 82:6 for an Understanding of John 10:34
    - a. The angels
    - b. Israel's Judges
    - c. Israel at Sinai
  - iii. The Response and Characterisation of the Jews
  - iv. Conclusion
- A. John 6:31b: Bread from Heaven to Eat (Ps 78:24 LXX/ Exod 16:4)
  - i. Outline of the Johannine Text

The third and fourth OT citations in the Gospel occur in the context of Jesus' return to Galilee (6:1) and the lengthy discourse that he delivers at Capernaum to the large crowds (cf. 6:22-59). The temporal setting for this discourse is the imminent feast of the Passover (6:4), and the narrative setting is the miracle of the loaves (6:1-15) that fed over 'five thousand



men' (6:10).<sup>1</sup> Once more, the audience of the discourse is 'the crowd' (ὁ ὄχλος, 6:22) who are later specified as the Jews (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, 6:41).<sup>2</sup> This is the 'crowd' that had the previous day been the recipients of the great feeding miracle (6:5) and whom the narrator described as pursuing Jesus merely because of the impression his 'signs' made upon them (6:2). Jesus' subsequent discourse is aimed at eliciting from the 'crowd' a deeper faith response to the divine revelation he embodies. A third and fourth group emerge as Jesus' interlocutors later in the discourse, namely 'many' (πολλοὶ) of Jesus' followers and disciples (μαθητῶν, 6:60, 61) and later 'the Twelve' (6:67), and these groups also are challenged in their faith (cf. 6:60-71). Throughout chapter 6 each group interacts with Jesus, giving the Bread of Life discourse a 'dialogical' character that could also be said to govern its structure and form. This is represented in the structural outline below:

The 'Bread of Life Discourse' (John 6:1-71).<sup>3</sup>

- A. vv. 1-4: Exposition (place, characters, time)
- B. vv. 5-15: The Feeding-Miracle for the crowd (Jesus, the disciples, and the crowd)
- C. vv. 16-21: The 'self-revelation' of Jesus on the Sea (the disciples and Jesus)
- D. vv. 22-59: Jesus' 'Bread of Life' Discourse (Jesus, the crowd, v. 22/the Jews, v. 41)
  - a. vv. 22-24: Frame: The seeking of Jesus at Capernaum
  - b. vv. 25-27: Dialogue
    - i. vv. 24-25: The crowd's question: 'When did you come here?'
    - ii. vv. 26-27: Jesus' answer: 'Do not work for food that perishes'

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<sup>1</sup>John 6:10a uses 'people' (ἀνθρώπους) and yet 6:10b uses οἱ ἄνδρες to denote the same group numbering 'five thousand'.

<sup>2</sup> I discuss the narrative's sudden shift from 'the crowd' to the Jews in more depth below.

<sup>3</sup> This outline is taken and adapted from Klaus Scholtissek, *In ihm sein und bleiben: Die Sprache der Immanenz in den johanneischen Schriften*, (HBS 21; Freiburg: Herder, 2000), 196. Scholtissek structures the discourse in this way to emphasise its dialogic and rhetorical character.

- c. vv. 28-29: Dialogue
  - i. v. 28: The crowd's question: 'What must we do?'
  - ii. v. 29: Jesus' answer: 'Believe in the Sent One'
- d. vv. 30-33: Dialogue
  - i. vv. 30-31: The crowd's question: 'What sign will you give?'
  - ii. vv. 32-33: Jesus' answer: 'It was not Moses who gave you the bread...'
- e. vv. 34-40: Dialogue
  - i. v. 34: The crowd's request: 'Sir, give us this bread always'
  - ii. vv. 35-40: Jesus' answer: 'I am the Bread of Life...'
- f. vv. 41-51: Dialogue
  - i. vv. 41-42: the Jews' question: 'How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven?'
  - ii. vv. 43-51: Jesus' answer: 'Do not complain... it is written in the prophets, 'They shall all be taught by God?'
- g. vv. 52-58: Dialogue
  - i. v. 52: the Jews' question: 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'
  - ii. vv. 53-58: Jesus' answer: 'Unless you eat [my flesh] you have no life'
- h. Frame, v. 59: The synagogue at Capernaum
- E. vv. 60-71: Division in the circle of disciples: Turning away and Confession of Faith (Jesus, the disciples)
  - a. vv. 60-66: Dialogue
    - i. v. 60: The 'many disciples' question: 'Who can accept [this teaching]?'
    - ii. vv. 61-65: Jesus' answer: 'Does this offend you?'
    - iii. v. 66: The turning away of 'many disciples'

b. vv. 67-71: Dialogue

- i. v. 67: Jesus' question to the Twelve: 'Do you also wish to go away?'
- ii. Simon Peter's answer: confession of faith: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life'
- iii. Jesus' *Vorausverweis* of Judas.<sup>4</sup>

The above outline shows how the question-and-answer pattern of the discourse guides the implied reader of the text. The questions (6:24-25, 28, 30-31, 41-42, 52), the request (6:34) and the repeated misunderstandings of 'the crowd'/the Jews (6:30-31, 41-42, 52) gives Jesus the opportunity to further unfold the significance of his self-revelatory claim (6:35-40), and to reinforce it with recourse to the Scriptures' witness (6:31, 45). Structuring the text in this manner also bears implications for how the genre of the Bread of Life discourse is understood. It was once widely recognised that the discourse reflected a sermon in the homiletic midrash tradition, but recent research has demonstrated that it is generically a "sequence in dialogue form" with the purpose of presenting a "Christological reflection" of Jesus.<sup>5</sup> Anderson argues that the genre of the Bread of Life 'discourse' is not so much a

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<sup>4</sup> 'Vorausverweis' is a German word that has no direct equivalent in the English language, and so has been retained in the text of this thesis. It connotes Jesus' foreknowledge of Judas' betrayal and at the same time expresses Jesus' rebuke of Judas 'in advance', as it were.

<sup>5</sup> Jean Zumstein, "Die Schriftrezeption in der Brotrede (Joh 6)," in *Kreative Erinnerung: Relecture und Auslegung im Johannesevangelium* (ATANT 84; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2004), 136. Peder Borgen popularised the notion of the genre of the discourse as a midrashic homily in his highly influential and seminal monograph, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo* (NovTSup 10; Leiden: Brill, 1965). Cf. Peder Borgen, "Observations on the Midrashic Character of John 6," *ZNW* 54 (1963): 232-240. Borgen argues that the 'Bread of Life' discourse could conceivably fit the template of a synagogue homily typical to late 1<sup>st</sup> CE Judaism. Thus, the first part of the cited OT text in John 6:31 ('He gave them bread from heaven') is 'exegeted' by Jesus in vv. 6:32-48; the second part of the cited text ('to eat') is then explained in 6:49-58. Exodus 16 functions as the *seder* text in John 6:31, according to Borgen, and the second OT citation from Isaiah found in 6:45a functions as the *haphtarah* text. See

midrashic homily as an exhortation calling for a “Christo-centric response to God’s revealing and saving activity in Jesus as the life-producing bread.”<sup>6</sup> Chapter 6 thus reflects the wider concern of the Gospel itself, which is “God’s dialogue with humanity” in Jesus.<sup>7</sup> The twin OT citations found in chapter 6 (vv. 31, 45) also reflect this concern, as they illustrate the Christological purport of the Scriptures as such. The first of these citations is framed in the periphrastic perfect ἔστιν γεγραμμένον (6:31) and is placed on the lips of the ‘crowd’, who question Jesus about his ‘credentials’ to speak and act as he does (6:30-31). In the narrative so far, the OT citations (1:23; 2:17) have been voiced from the “perspective of faith.”<sup>8</sup> The OT citation in 6:31, however, is a “challenge hurled at Jesus from the standpoint of unbelief.”<sup>9</sup> This becomes clear when the immediate context prior to the citation is taken into account, together with the cited text itself (‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat,’ 6:31).

Briefly, the prior narrative context of 6:31 concerns Jesus’ claim to provide the crowd with a “food that endures for eternal life” (6:27), that is, a type of nourishment that does not perish as would the material bread that recently satisfied their hunger in the great feeding-miracle (cf. 6:10). This recent ‘sign’ of Jesus’ evidently failed to produce true belief in the crowd, as they continue to follow Jesus in order to see more wondrous ‘signs’ (cf. 6:30b). They do not heed Jesus’ promise of imperishable ‘food’, and instead seek to know how best to carry out ‘God’s work’ (6:28). Instead of ‘works’ in the Jewish sense of obedience to the Torah, an

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Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, 33-58. There is no reason why the discourse cannot be considered a dialogue that develops in the style of a midrashic homily, particularly when one understands the fluidity of genre itself; see further, Ruth Sheridan, “John’s Gospel and Modern Genre Theory: The Farewell Discourse (John 13-17) as a Test Case,” *ITQ* 75, no. 3 (2010): 287-299.

<sup>6</sup> Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6* (WUNT 2/78; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 104.

<sup>7</sup> Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*, 105-106.

<sup>8</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 131.

<sup>9</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 131.

obedience that was said to permit “direct access to God,”<sup>10</sup> Jesus calls for belief in himself as the Sent One (6:29), the Son of Man on whom the Father ‘has set his seal’ (6:27b). Doing God’s ‘work’ in other words, means believing in Jesus, and only this will guarantee that one has ‘direct access’ to God.<sup>11</sup> The crowd presumes that such belief should be conditioned upon some further ‘sign’ or ‘work’ of Jesus (6:30a) which would thereby establish his credentials to *act* as the ‘Sent One’ of the Father and to provide a nourishment that never fails. They ask, ‘What work will you do .... which will make us believe in you?’ (6:30b), suggesting that their faith could only be awakened by a sign superior to that of the ‘manna’ that their ‘fathers ate in the desert’ (6:31). The crowd then present a proof-text from the OT, stating, ‘as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’

Taking up the challenge to exegete the crowd’s citation from Scripture, Jesus offers a response that contains a three-fold negation. Evidently, the crowd assumes that the subject of the verb ἔδωκεν (‘he gave’) is Moses.<sup>12</sup> Jesus corrects the crowd, saying that it was God, not Moses, who has given (δέδωκεν) their ancestors ‘bread from heaven’ (ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ); that God, Jesus’ Father, continues to give (δίδωσιν) this bread in the present time; and that Jesus himself is this ‘bread,’ the ‘true’ bread which ‘comes down from heaven and gives life to the world’ (6:32-33).<sup>13</sup> The three main contrasts Jesus sets forth may be illustrated thus:

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Moloney, *John*, 208.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Moloney *John*, 209.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 51.

<sup>13</sup> Most scholars interpret Jesus’ words in light of the three-fold negation set out above. See Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:42; Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 136; Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 54; Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 42-43.

## THE CROWD

## JESUS

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*Moses* gave the bread

*God* gave the bread

Moses *gave* the bread

God *gives* the bread

Moses gave *the bread from* heaven

God gives *the true bread which comes down from* heaven

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This well-noted set of contrasts has led several scholars to argue that the central motif underlying the Bread of Life discourse is a type of Moses-polemic that the Johannine Christians were engaged in at the time of the Gospel's composition.<sup>14</sup> Menken developed this idea extensively in his monograph, arguing that because no biblical text actually states that *Moses* worked the manna miracle, the crowds' ascription of the miracle to Moses can only reflect a type of Moses piety alive at the time of the Johannine community that set Moses on par, almost, with God.<sup>15</sup> This 'Moses piety' flourished at the close of 100 CE but was later suppressed by the burgeoning rabbinic movement, only to resurface around 300-400 CE. It is this type of 'piety' that Jesus is supposed to be countering in John 6, according to Menken, which is why he offers a 'correct' interpretation of the biblical text cited by the crowd.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See Reim, *Studien*, 15; Hakola, *John, the Jews and Jewishness*, 173.

<sup>15</sup> Menken, *The Old Testament Quotations*, 56; cf. Meeks, *The Prophet King*, 286-319; cf. Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 137, footnote 84, for a list of contemporaneous Jewish texts expressing the sort of Moses-divinisation Menken alludes to here. Compare Georg Richter, "Die alttestamentlichen Zitate in der Rede vom Himmelsbrot, Joh 6,26-51a," in *Schriftauslegung Beiträge zur Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments und im Neuen Testament*, ed. J. Ernst (München: Schöningh, 1972), 193-279. Richter goes as far as to argue that the source of the citation in John 6:31a is not the OT but a Jewish anti-Christian Haggadah presenting Moses as the Manna-giver.

<sup>16</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 57; Schuchard follows Menken's argument in *Scripture within Scripture*, 45.

Menken substantiates his argument by stating that Jesus' correction resonates with other parts of the Gospel that portray Jesus in contradistinction to Moses (cf. 1:17; 7:22).<sup>17</sup>

In response to this it is worth mentioning the various Jewish sources that identify the gift of the heavenly manna with the Mosaic gift of the Law (Sir 24:21; Wis 16:26).<sup>18</sup> For Philo, the manna that the fathers ate in the desert was a 'heavenly food for the soul' likened to divine Wisdom, and directly equated with God's word (cf. *Leg.* 3:169-176; see also *Mut.* 259-260; *Fug.* 114-118; *Her.* 79). The divine Wisdom and Word was to be found in the Torah (cf. Isa 55:10-11; Sir 15:3; Wis 16:20-26) and thus the manna of Exod 16 came to be symbolic of the Torah.<sup>19</sup> In the subsequent wisdom tradition the heavenly manna was said to have had healing and restorative properties; the Torah also, on a spiritual level, was thought to heal and restore, and bring its adherents to life (cf. Ps 119).<sup>20</sup> Chapter 6 of John's Gospel reflects these

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 56-57; cf. Ruth Edwards, "XAPIN ANTI XAPITOS (John 1:16): Grace and Law in the Johannine Prologue," *JSNT* 32 (1988): 3-15. Edwards convincingly argues for a meaning of the preposition ἄντι that resonates with its most common usage in the period ('instead of'), but insists that John does not imply a negative view of the 'Law', supporting this by the absence of antithetic parallelism in 1:16 (i.e. the absence of ἄλλὰ or δέ), see p.8, 10. Curiously Edwards still uses loaded terms like "superior", "replaced" and "superseded" (pp. 8-9) when speaking of the "grace" that came through Christ in relation to "the Law." A slightly different perspective has recently been advanced by Susan Hylen, *Allusion and Meaning in John 6* (BZNW 137; Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), 129-130, n. 29. Hylen likewise argues that an antithetical parallelism is not to be detected in John 1:17-18, and also steers away from a reading of ἄντι that would suggest supersessionism.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Moloney, *John*, 212, following Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, 148-164. Cf. also Dodd, *The Interpretation*, 336.

<sup>19</sup> Post-biblical Jewish texts also attest to this connection, with the Torah symbolised by the manna (*Mek. Exod* 13.17). In the biblical and post-biblical traditions, Wisdom was also equated with the Torah, or embodied in it (cf. Deut 8:3; Isa 55:10-11; Sir. 15:3; Wis 16:20-26; Prov 9:15; *Gen. Rab.* 70:5). Thus, the implicit identification of *manna* and *Wisdom* is made explicit in the texts of Philo just cited. Cf. Marianne Meye Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 132 for further discussion of these texts.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Moloney, *John*, 214.

traditions associating the gift of the manna with the gift of the Torah, the gift of the Torah with divine Wisdom, and the divine Wisdom with the gift of the manna.<sup>21</sup>

The ascription of the manna miracle to Moses can be explained by understanding the symbolic import of the manna in relation to the divine gift of the Torah. Thus, Menken's argument about the *centrality* of a Moses polemic in John 6 is not strictly necessary – and indeed is used by Menken mainly to determine a source text for the OT citation in John 6:31.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the crowd do not take offence at Jesus' negation of Moses' role in the provision of manna; rather, they ask that Jesus give them the superior, life-giving bread that he promises (6:34). Jesus' contrast between Moses' 'gift' of manna and *God's* gift of life-giving bread addresses the crowd's challenge for Jesus to perform a great sign. The rabbinic notion of the 'second redeemer' has some relevance here: the replication of the gift of the manna was understood as a sign of eschatological hope, where the 'second redeemer', the prophet like Moses, would prove himself like the 'first redeemer.'<sup>23</sup> The crowd expects Jesus to be the promised Prophet who will work 'signs and wonders' like Moses (Deut 18:15, 18; cf. 1QS 9-11), and so they try to make Jesus 'king' by force (6:14). In a way, then, the crowd "tests Jesus' messianic pretensions."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The sapiential undertones in the Bread of Life discourse can be adduced as further evidence for this claim. The use of the words 'eat' and 'drink' in 6:5, 31, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56 recall personified Wisdom's invitation to 'eat and drink' of her instruction in Prov. 9:5 (cf. Sir 24:19; Wis 8:13). Cf. M. Scott, *Sophia and the Johannine Jesus* (JSNTSup 71; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 116-119; Cornelis Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel* (WUNT 2/148; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 196-208; Petrus Maritz and Gilbert van Belle, "The Imagery of Eating and Drinking in John 6:35," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John*, ed. Jörg Frey, Jan G. Van der Watt and Ruben Zimmermann (WUNT 2/200; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 333-352.

<sup>22</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 63-64.

<sup>23</sup> See Str-B I, 68f., 85ff., IV, 798; 2 Bar. 29:8, where the manna is said to come again at the dawn of the eschatological age.

<sup>24</sup> Dodd, *The Interpretation*, 336.



The implication of what many scholars have taken to be a “stark Moses/Jesus contrast”<sup>25</sup> in this section of the discourse is that Jesus supersedes or “surpasses” the Torah, symbolised by the manna. Thus, Moloney argues that in claiming to *be* the ‘bread of life’ – a claim and phrase unparalleled in most of the extant Jewish literature – Jesus claims to surpass both the gift of manna and the gift of the Law that it represents.<sup>26</sup> According to Hakola, the manna and the Torah were not the ‘true’ (ἀληθινός) gifts from heaven and have no further “life-producing capacity;” Jesus, on the other hand, is presented as the true gift of God, and as the “superior alternative to the past traditions.”<sup>27</sup> Indeed Hakola states: “It seems inevitable that John’s view of the Scriptures as a witness for Jesus leads to the denial of the relevance of the Scriptures in their original context as the sacred story of God’s saving acts.”<sup>28</sup>

Such a view is not consistent with the fact that the very citation formulae employed by John to introduce the Scripture’s witness to Jesus (καθὼς ἔστιν γεγραμμένον) indicates that the Scriptures remain valid and are not made redundant by Jesus.<sup>29</sup> A better way to understand John’s retelling of the manna story and Moses’ role within that story (6:32) is to situate it within the context of John 5:45-47 where Moses – and not Jesus – is presented as the one in whom the Jews put their hope. Yet true belief in Moses is in fact true belief in Jesus, about whom Moses wrote (5:46).<sup>30</sup> The Torah thus remains a “relevant source” for the study of

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<sup>25</sup> Glenn Balfour, “The Jewishness of John’s Use of the Scriptures in John 6:31 and 7:37-38,” *TynBul* 46, no. 2 (1995): 363.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Moloney, *John*, 214.

<sup>27</sup> Hakola, *John, the Jews and Jewishness*, 164, 169.

<sup>28</sup> Hakola, *John, the Jews and Jewishness*, 171. Cf. also Andersen, *Christology*, 203-207 who states that the manna was the “death producing bread” and that the Torah is thereby “implicitly depreciated” in John’s perspective.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Zumstein, “Der Schriftrezeption,” 129.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Zumstein, “Der Schriftrezeption,” 134: “Der Ankläger der ‘Juden’ vor Gott wird nicht Jesus sein, sondern Mose, der Hoffnungsträger Israels bis zu dieser Stunde ... Die entscheidene These wird in v. 46 formuliert: Der wahre Glaube an Mose ist in Wirklichkeit der Glaube an Christus, den über diesen hat Mose

“faith in Christ;” the main objective of the retelling of the Exodus story found in John 6 is to centralise the role of Jesus, not to demote Moses.<sup>31</sup> This is clear in what follows in the Gospel text. Although the crowd ask Jesus for the ‘bread’ he promises (6:34, cf. 4:15), Jesus later tells them that they do not ‘believe’ in him in spite of having ‘seen’ him (6:36). Their request only indicates their curiosity and their hunger for ‘signs.’ They have not grasped the significance of Jesus’ claim to be the bread which *comes down* from heaven (ὁ καταβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, 6:33) and so ‘gives life’ to the world. Nor do they immediately understand what Jesus means by saying that he has ‘*come down* from heaven’ to do the will of the one who sent him (6:39). Moses gave the ‘bread *from* heaven,’ but Jesus *is* the bread which *comes down* from heaven. This is the most telling feature of the discourse at this point, and for Jesus, is the true meaning of the Scriptural text cited. In other words, the chief objective is not to present a supersessionist perspective but to emphasise that Moses ‘wrote of Jesus’, and that the Scriptures witness to Jesus *if read correctly*. Jesus *is* the living bread (6:35), he *is* the manna symbolic of Torah, and he *is* the personified divine Wisdom (cf. 1:1-4; 14).<sup>32</sup>

Concluding this outline of the narrative context of John 6, it is noteworthy that Jesus’ claim to have ‘come down’ from heaven is precisely what provokes the incredulity and hostility of Jesus’ audience. How can Jesus claim to have come from heaven when the Jews *know* who his parents are (6:42)? This is a classic example of Johannine characters ‘misunderstanding’ Jesus’ words, which here, as elsewhere are used with double ‘entendre.’ The Jews ‘know’ Jesus’ father and mother (6:42); that is they understand the question of Jesus’ origins in terms of his physical descent. In this regard, they *misunderstand* the deeper meaning of Jesus’

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geschrieben.” Nevertheless, the diversity of scholarly opinion on the issue indicates a certain ambivalence in the Gospel text – it may be as open to a supersessionist reading as to Zumstein’s reading.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Zumstein, “Der Schriftrezeption,” 134.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 104. Boyarin takes the position that in John’s Gospel Jesus is the Logos Ensarkos to the Logos Asarkos (the Torah), and that when Jesus speaks, “he speaks Torah.” This is discussed further below.

words that point to his unique relationship with God, whom he calls ‘Father’ (6:37, 39, 44, 45, 65). In other words, the Jews’ ‘knowledge’ of Jesus’ origin in fact becomes complete ignorance. This theme permeates the Gospel text (cf. 7:27-29; 8:14, 19), and functions, at the level of the narrative, to divide ‘insiders’ from ‘outsiders.’ So, according to Ashton, “ignorance of the Messiah’s origins is restricted to those *outside* the circle of Jesus’ disciples ... it has become the mark of the uninitiated.”<sup>33</sup> To the Jews, Jesus’ claim to have come from God only reveals that Jesus is an enigma, further obfuscating the mystery of his origin to them. To the ‘insiders,’ however, to those who believe and who ‘come to Jesus’ (6:37, 40, 45, 50, 66-69), his claim to have come from God – here elucidated with recourse to *Scripture* – reveals that Jesus is the ‘true bread of life’ (6:35). Jesus is both ‘gift’ and ‘giver’: the gift from heaven and the giver of life.<sup>34</sup>

Importantly, as soon as Jesus’ audience begins to respond in a hostile and incredulous manner, they are no longer called ‘the crowd’ (ὁ ὄχλος) but the Jews (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, 6:41). This provides evidence to counter scholarly positions that the referent of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is strictly the Jewish ‘authorities’ or the ‘Judean’ people.<sup>35</sup> The Galilean crowd is here called the Jews and this strongly demonstrates that whenever the Gospel text “moves towards hostility, it moves towards the use of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.”<sup>36</sup> As Schnackenburg notes, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι is the “pejorative term of choice” in John’s Gospel.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, at this point one need not “assume a change in audience or embark on any critical surgery” to the text.<sup>38</sup> The Jews

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<sup>33</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 305, my emphasis.

<sup>34</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 2:37.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter One, section IV.

<sup>36</sup> Lieu, “Anti-Judaism, the Jews and the Worlds,” 171.

<sup>37</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 2:49, but see John 11:31, and perhaps 8:30-33.

<sup>38</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 2:49. Cf. Zumstein: “[t]here are no grounds for the assumption that both concepts [the crowd/the Jews] designate different groups.” [“Es gibt keinen Grund zur Annahme, dass die beiden Begriffe zwei verschiedene Gruppen bezeichnen,” see Zumstein, “Der Schriftrezeption,” 137]. John

emerge organically from ‘the crowd’ as the narrative begins to focus upon a hostile response to Jesus. One can understand the change in terminology by means of the fact that the verb ‘to murmur’ (γογγύζω) is used of the Jews, alluding to the murmuring of their ‘fathers’ in the desert (cf. 6:31; cf. Exod 16:8). John’s choice of the term οἱ ἰουδαῖοι here accentuates that he is using the ancient Israelites as a type for the Jews.<sup>39</sup>

The verb γογγύζω is used very specifically in John: elsewhere the people in the ‘crowd’ and the Pharisees are said to ‘murmur’ (cf. 7:12, 32) but the connotation, while negative, is not ominous. But when the Jews ‘murmur’ against Jesus in John 6, what is recalled for the reader who is aware of the biblical tradition is the ‘murmuring’ of the Israelites in the wilderness (cf. Exod 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num 11:1-4; 14:1, 27). Even as they ate the heavenly manna, the Israelites continued to ‘murmur’ against God and Moses (cf. Exod 16). John’s irony is heavy: the Jews do not believe in Jesus any more than their ancestors believed in God despite the ‘sign’ of the manna.<sup>40</sup> What is more, the verb γογγύζω in the LXX is always used to express a stance of rebellion against God (cf. Exod 16:8). To ‘murmur’ against God is to lack belief in God (cf. Ps 105:24-25 LXX) and even to be disobedient to God (Isa 30:12 LXX).<sup>41</sup> The

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Painter, “Tradition and Interpretation in John 6,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 443, contends to the contrary, that the change of subject denotes a change of time and of location.

<sup>39</sup> Zumstein, “Der Schriftrezeption,” 137. Hylan, *Imperfect Believers*, 120, argues that the characterisation of the Jews against the backdrop of the Israelite’s wandering in the wilderness is not necessarily “hostile” or “negative.” This is because, according to Hylan, despite their grumbling, the Israelites still believed in God (Exod 14:31). So also the Jews who ‘murmur’ against Jesus’ words still believe in those words. Once more, I do not find this a convincing parallel, as the Jews are not said to believe in Jesus in John 6, and their questions are not merely “exploratory” (Hylan, *Imperfect Believers*, 120), but provocative (6:30) and hostile (6:52).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 131.

<sup>41</sup> The word γογγύζειν occurs 15 times in the LXX, and all of its variants are derived from the root word ἰλι (see particularly, Exod 15-17 and Num 14-17). To ‘murmur’ (ἰλι) is to tempt God (Exod 17:2), to scorn God (Num 14:11) and it merited God’s wrath and condemnation (see, Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, “γογγύζω, etc.,” *TDNT* I: 730-731). In the LXX, all γογγυ- words, derived from the ἰλι stem, took on this “distinctly religious accentuation” (Rengstorff, *TDNT* I: 731) to express a rebellion against God made by the ‘whole person.’ It is

implication in John 6:41-42 is that the Jews – in the inadequacy of their response to Jesus’ revelatory words and works – are likewise rebelling against God. This leads into the next section of this analysis, which deals with the original narrative contexts of the OT citation in 6:31. I now turn to consider these contexts for what they reveal about the Jews and their response to Jesus in John 6. Source questions are necessarily involved in such an examination, but will be the preliminary (not the primary) focus of the following section.

ii. The Contexts of Ps 77:24 LXX and Exod 16:4 for an Understanding of John 6:31b

Scholars are divided over the possible source for the OT citation in John 6:31. An exact source text is hard to determine because the citation, as John renders it, appears to be a conflation of various OT texts that speak about ‘bread from heaven,’ rather than a verbatim rendering of one text. The most direct source texts are Ps 78:24 (MT; Ps 77:24 LXX) and Exod 16:4, 15.<sup>42</sup> In favour of Ps 77:24 LXX, it is often noted that the Hebrew  $\text{לֶחֶם}$  is translated

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instructive to note that even in the secular Greek literature the word  $\gammaογγύζειν$  suggested a reactionary attitude that was unseemly for the person displaying it (Rengstorf, *TDNT* I: 728-729 cites P. Oxy. 1:3, colon 3, 14), and which “marks one as a ἀμαρτωλός” (Rengstorf, *TDNT* I: 729). As instructive as this array of references may be, it must not be forgotten that this interpretation might here be influenced by what scholars now know to be Kittel’s (and other contributor’s) distinctly anti-Semitic views; see Maurice Casey, “Some Anti-Semitic Assumptions in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*,” *NovT* 41, no. 3 (1999): 280-291; Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann* (SJHC 20; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 417-530.

<sup>42</sup> Scholars favouring Ps 78:24 as a source text include: Barrett, *The Gospel*, 284; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 257; Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel*, 85; Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 45; Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 132-136; Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 65 (Ps 77 LXX); Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 43, 133;. Scholars favouring Exod 16 include Reim, *Studien*, 15 (Exod 16:4, 15 MT). Those scholars who hold that John loosely conflated both Ps 78:24 and Exod 16:4 include Freed,

ἄρτος rather than the usual ὄϊτος.<sup>43</sup> Ps 78:24 MT (Ps 77:24 LXX) is also the only OT text where all three key terms ‘bread’ (ἄρτος), ‘heaven’ (οὐρανοῦ) and ‘to eat’ (φαγεῖν) are found in close proximity.<sup>44</sup> Daly-Denton argues further that it was common in the extant *relecture* of the Second Temple Period to find “examples of Pentateuchal stories being recalled *via* their poetic recital in the Psalms.”<sup>45</sup> Menken argues that Ps 77:24 proves the most likely ‘contender’ because only this text lends itself best to a shift of subject from God to Moses as the referent of the pronoun ‘he’ in v. 24. No other text under consideration has the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (masc.) as a pronoun, and this ambiguity is what Menken supposes allows the crowd to assume Moses as the ‘giver’ of the manna in John 6:31-32.<sup>46</sup> However, Menken’s argument rests tenuously on the assumption that a ‘Moses polemic’ is the central theme of the Bread of Life discourse. Other contextual arguments can be found by those who state that because Psalm 78:24 (MT; Psalm 77 LXX) is concerned with defection to pagan gods or the “dreadful consequences of disobedience,” John has this psalm in mind in his portrayal of the Jews as hostile respondents to Jesus.<sup>47</sup>

In favour of Exod 16:4, 15, is the argument that the verb φαγεῖν is present (Exod 16:15), as well as the ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (Exod 16:4), rather than simply τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (Ps 78:24). The latter is important because the ‘Johannine *ek* of origin’ becomes central to the discourse in 6:41-44 as the Jews ‘murmur’ against Jesus precisely on the basis of his claim to have come

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*Old Testament Quotations*, 12, 14, and Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 286. Other possible source texts include Deut 8:3, 16; Num 11:6-9; Josh 5:12; Neh 9:15, 20; Ps 105:40; Prov 9:5; Wis 16:20; 2 Bar. 29:8, (see Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 12).

<sup>43</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 49; Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 133.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 15.

<sup>45</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 133.

<sup>46</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 63-64.

<sup>47</sup> Hanson argues that the division among the followers of Jesus and the rejection of Jesus by the ‘many’ in vv. 60-70 is like a defection to other ‘gods’. See Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel*, 86. For the latter argument, see Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 257, where the Jews are “disobedient” and must face the ‘consequences’ of this.

down ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Borgen favours a combination of Exod 16:4, 15 as the source for the citation in John 6:31 because only Exod 16:4, 15 makes reference to ‘bread from heaven’ *and* the ‘murmuring’ of the recipients of that bread.<sup>48</sup> This is an important point, because while Ps 78 as a whole speaks of the ‘rebelliousness’ of the Israelites towards God in the face of God’s signs and wonders (cf. Ps 78:1-8), only Exod 16 speaks specifically of the ‘murmuring’ of the Israelites in the wilderness as they ate the heavenly bread (Exod 16:2, 7, 8, 9, 11; cf. Num 11:4-6, 10, 14).

In short, there are sound reasons – both contextual and grammatical – to consider Ps 78:24 *and* Exod 16:4, 15 as the basis for John’s Scriptural citation in 6:31. Specifying *one* source text is not germane to the argument of this thesis, as indeed it appears that John 6:31 is a conflation of two (or maybe more) possible texts that focus upon God’s gift of nourishment to his people and the rebellious response of that people to God. Even if one argues that John utilises a midrashic method of Scriptural interpretation, it is to be noted that characteristically, such a method often draws upon several associated texts.<sup>49</sup> I now turn to examine the wider contexts of Ps 78:24 and of Exod 16:4, 15 in order to understand the depiction of Jesus as the one to whom the Jewish Scriptures testify, and the pejorative depiction of the Jews in John 6:41-70 as rebellious respondents.

a. Ps 78:24 (MT; Ps 77:24 LXX)

The two commonly favoured source texts for John’s citation in 6:31 (viz., Exod 16 and Ps 78) are obviously closely related.<sup>50</sup> Psalm 78 is a “synopsis of Israel’s history in the form of a

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<sup>48</sup> See Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, 40-41; 51, 65.

<sup>49</sup> So Borgen, *Bread from Heaven*, 33-58.

<sup>50</sup> Jeffrey M. Leonard, “Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case,” *JBL* 127, no. 2 (2008): 241-265. Leonard has listed the main scholars who discuss whether Ps 78 consciously ‘retold’ (and relied on)

hymn.”<sup>51</sup> Exod 16 forms part of the wider story of Israel’s wandering in the wilderness following their liberation from slavery (Exod 12:37; 15:21) and the covenant made between God and Israel at Sinai (19:1-34:35). Both Exod 16:4 and Psalm 78 are concerned with God’s promises to Israel and with the loss of those promises due to Israel’s infidelity to God. Both texts also speak of the resumption of relationship between God and his people because of God’s ultimate fidelity and compassion towards his people.

Psalm 78 MT declares how later generations of Israelites were just as ungrateful and rebellious to God as their ancestors were when they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. The psalmist begins by declaring ‘things that we have heard and known’ to ‘the coming generation’ (78:3-4), i.e. he declares the ‘glorious deeds’ and ‘wonders’ of the ‘Lord’ (78:4b). The purpose of this solemn cultic declaration is so that the next generations will not ‘forget’ the ‘works of God’ and be ‘stubborn and rebellious’ like their ‘ancestors’ (78:7b-8). However, this is precisely what happens: in turning to idols, the next generation prove to be ‘faithless like their ancestors’ (78:57-58). God’s provision of manna in the desert (78:23-24) followed upon the rebelliousness Israel showed in ‘testing’ God (78:18). But even as they ate the manna, God’s ‘anger rose against them’ and he ‘killed’ them – the sign of the manna was thus a sign of judgment against them (cf. 78:30-31).

The ‘crowd’ in John 6:30-31 seek to know how to ‘do the work of God’ and later demand that Jesus perform a ‘sign’ like that of the bread their ancestors ate in the desert. When Jesus declares that he *is* the ‘bread’ to be eaten – and that he *is* thus the ‘sign’ they seek – the Jews suddenly ‘murmur’ against Jesus, expressing the same stance of rebellion against Jesus that their ‘ancestors’ did against God. As Hanson states, John regards the Jews in 6:40-41 as

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Exod 16/Torah, or whether the relationship was the other way around (see pp. 244-245, footnotes 14, 15, 16). Leonard eventually decides for influence in the direction of Torah – Psalm (page 258).

<sup>51</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 43.



“representatives of their ancestors on Sinai.”<sup>52</sup> The story of the Exodus rebellion which is retold in cultic form in Psalm 78 MT is also retold in John 6 in the context of the Passover festival. The allusions of death and judgment captured in Ps 78 – which are expressed as being the consequence of disobedience to God – are paralleled in the Bread of Life discourse when Jesus claims that *unless* one ‘eats’ of his flesh, one cannot ‘have life’ (6:53). Death and life now depend upon one’s response to God in Jesus. God’s judgment against Israel is explicitly referred to in Ps 78 in terms of God’s angry fire ‘consuming’ his people (cf. 78:21, 63). In John, this judgment rests upon human decision.<sup>53</sup>

The structure of Psalm 78 MT is informed by various patterns that show how often “divine activity is motivated by human sinfulness.”<sup>54</sup> This too is instructive for a comparison with John 6, as will shortly be demonstrated. Psalm 78 MT is repetitive in structure, continually stating how God performed wonders for Israel, *but* that despite these wonders, Israel ‘sinned’ against God (cf. 78:5, contrast 78:10; 78:13-16, contrast 78:17-19; 78:23-28, contrast 78:30-32), continually ‘testing’ God (v.18: וינסו־אל; v. 56: וינסו). Another repetitive pattern emerges in that *despite* the disobedience of Israel, God is merciful towards them (cf. 78:36, contrast 78:38-40; 78:40-41, contrast 78:52-55). In the end, God’s patience wears thin, and when the people rebel once more and are ‘faithless like their ancestors’ (78:57), God is said to have abandoned his ‘dwelling’ among them (78:60) and to have ‘rejected (מָאָס) the tent of Joseph’ (78:67, cf. v. 59 where God ‘rejected’ Shiloh). The Psalm culminates with God’s alternative choice of – and love for – the tribe of Judah as the place where God will build his sanctuary

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<sup>52</sup> Hanson, *The Prophetic Gospel*, 75.

<sup>53</sup> Contrast the consuming fire of God’s ‘good pleasure’ in the contextual background of Ps 68:9a in John 2:17 (see Chapter Two, section II.B.ii).

<sup>54</sup> Melody D. Knowles, “The Flexible Rhetoric of Retelling: The Choice of David in the Texts of the Psalms,” *CBQ* 67 (2005): 241.

(78:68-69). For the psalmist, God's rejection of Israel and choice of Judah/David (i.e. the Southern Kingdom) constitutes the highpoint of the history of God's people.

If the wider context of Ps 78:24 is retained vis-à-vis the Jews in John 6, the irony at this point is heavy indeed. Ultimately, in rejecting Jesus, the Jews reject God, the Father who sent Jesus into the world (cf. 6:57). Representing a disobedient and rebellious – indeed idolatrous – Israel, the Jews are here seen to be rejected by God. Psalm 78 MT indicates that God's choice of 'David' is a "response to the people's religious rebellion."<sup>55</sup> The original function of the Psalm is clearly didactic, encouraging the adherents of Shiloh (and the Northern tribes) to "accept Zion and the Davidic leadership."<sup>56</sup> In retelling the Exodus wilderness narrative in this way, the Psalmist gave fuller emphasis to God's response to Israel's idolatrous sin by couching that response in terms of Davidic election. In John 6, the "religious rebellion" – if it could so be called – of the Jews/the crowd, is expressed in their 'murmuring' against Jesus. Jesus' exposition of the Scriptural citation in 6:31 itself leads to his own rejection by the Jews, alienating them rather than leading them to him. John has retold Ps 78, and through it, Exodus 16, in keeping with the larger 'didactic' function of his own Gospel, namely, that readers may come to believe in Jesus and share his life (20:31). The pedagogical way of the Gospel narrative instructs the implied reader to learn from the example of the Jews in this instance: they do not believe (6:41-42, 52) and therefore do not 'have life' (6:53).

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<sup>55</sup> Knowles, "The Flexible Rhetoric of Retelling," 242.

<sup>56</sup> Knowles, "The Flexible Rhetoric of Retelling," 242.

b. Exod 16:4, 15

Turning to Exodus 16, this part of the Torah tells in narrative form the giving of the manna ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. As in Psalm 78 MT, a repetitive pattern can be discerned in the wider context of Exod 16, wherein the Israelites ‘murmur’ against Moses and Aaron (and therefore against God, cf. 16:8b), stating that slavery in Egypt would have been preferable to certain death in the wilderness (cf. 14:11; 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; cf. 32:1). Despite the fact that this ‘murmuring’ indicates a stance of rebellion, God nonetheless tells Moses that he will ‘test’ his people and make promises to them contingent upon these tests (cf. 15:25-26; 16:4). The gift of the manna from heaven is one such ‘test’: the people ‘murmur’ to Moses about their hunger, saying that the ‘bread’ they ate in Egypt had in fact satiated them (16:3). God, in response, promises bread that is even more abundantly satisfying than what they had consumed in Egypt (cf. 16:4).

At this point, an element not present in Ps 78 is to be found. God promises to Moses and Aaron, and the latter declare to the people, that in the morning when the heavenly manna appears, the ‘glory’ (כבוד) of the Lord will also appear (16:7). This also seems to be a ‘test’ for the people, since the reason given is the very ‘murmuring’ that displeases God (16:7b). As mentioned earlier, the notion of the *glory* of God in the Torah connotes the ‘presence’ of God, insofar as that all-transcendent ‘presence’ can be experienced by humans. So it is often expressed in metaphorical language such as God ‘pitching his tent’ or dwelling with the Israelites, or God ‘appearing’ in the ‘cloud’ that rested on Mount Sinai (cf. Exod 24:16). The ‘glory’ of God is also manifest in the fire that travelled with the Israelites (Exod 40:37-38). In Exod 16:10a, the Israelites look into the distance and the *glory* of the Lord appears in a ‘cloud.’ From the cloud, God ‘speaks’ to Moses, commanding him to tell the Israelites that

they shall have their fill of bread (16:12a). God then utters the quasi-formulaic conditional, 'then you shall know that I am the Lord your God' (16:12b). The manna itself becomes a sign of God's presence with his people, a wonderful 'work' that reveals the 'I AM' (16:12; cf. John 4:26). The gift of the manna is a tangible symbol of the *glory* of God and ought to bring Israel to 'knowledge' of God. If the purport of the OT citation in John 6:31 is concerned with retelling the Scriptural story of the 'murmuring' in the wilderness and is thus based on Exod 16, it is reasonable to suppose that in declaring himself to be the 'bread come down from heaven', Jesus also declares himself to be the manifestation of the glory of God. The divine כבוד rested in a cloud on the day the manna was sent to the people in the wilderness; the divine glory now rests in Jesus for those willing to 'come' to him (cf. 1:14; 2:11).

Despite having eaten their fill of the manna, the ancestors of the Jews continued to 'murmur' against God (Exod 17:3, 7). In the end, their unbelief led them to demand that Aaron, 'make us gods who shall go before us' (Exod 32:1). God's anger then blazed out against them, 'consuming' them as 'fire' (32:10). The wider allusions of Exod 16, as in the case of Ps 78, are about death and judgment. In John 6:49 Jesus tells the Jews that their ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness 'and they died'. This can be taken in two senses: firstly, they ate bread but died anyway, and thus the manna was only capable of providing temporary physical nourishment. Secondly, they ate the manna and it led directly to their death at the 'hands' of God, because of their unbelief (cf. the irony in Exod 16:4, and cf. Ps 78:30-31). But Jesus is the life-giving bread that provides nourishment that endures into eternity (6:50-51). Jesus is the Bread *leading* to life, whereas the manna that the Jews' ancestors ate was the manna that led to death. By 'murmuring' against Jesus, John means to suggest that the Jews

may suffer a similar fate to that of their ancestors.<sup>57</sup> But the allusions to death go further: Jesus is the bread of ‘life’, yet he must be handed over to death before he can give life in the fullest sense.<sup>58</sup> Ironically, the Jews themselves will be the direct instigators of Jesus’ death (11:45-53; 19:7, 12, 21).

c.       Excursus: Wisdom 16:20

Scant attention has been paid to the possibility that John’s ‘OT’ citation in 6:31 derives from Wisdom 16:20, which reads, ἀνθ’ ὧν ἀγγέλων τροφήν ἐψώμισας τὸν λαόν σου καὶ ἔτοιμον ἄρτον ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ παρέσχες αὐτοῖς ἀκοπιάτως πᾶσαν ἡδονὴν ἰσχύοντα καὶ πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀρμόνιον γεῦσιν.<sup>59</sup> The text of Wisdom 16:20 lacks φαγώ, unlike Psalm 77:15, and so it is not a serious contender as a *source* text for John 6:31. Nevertheless, there are a number of important thematic elements in Wis 16:20, and in the Book of Wisdom more broadly, that require brief discussion in relation to John 6 for their commonality. I want to reinforce that by investigating the ‘commonality’ between John 6 and Wisdom 16:20 I do not blindly ascribe to what Sandmel has called “parallelomania” in studies of the early Christian texts and ancient Jewish literature.<sup>60</sup> The relevance for considering Wisdom 16:20 at this

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<sup>57</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 2:54. Cf. Hakola, *John, the Jews and Jewishness*, 161: “By murmuring against Jesus the Jews of the story show that they repeat the unbelief of the wilderness generation who were stubborn and rebelled against God.” Cf. Zumstein, “Der Schriftrezeption,” 140.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 2:54.

<sup>59</sup> However, Freed does acknowledge the possibility of Wisdom 16:20 as a source but does not discuss the text (see n. 43 page 186 of this thesis). Wisdom 16:20 is overlooked largely because the seminal scholarship done on John, particularly in the commentaries, was performed by Protestant scholars who do not hold the book of Wisdom to be part of the OT canon.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Samuel Sandmel, “Parallelomania,” *JBL* 81 (1962): 1-13, esp. page 1.

point lies, firstly, in the fact that Wisdom 10-19, just like John 6, is something of a ‘retelling’ of the Exodus event, and secondly, in that the wisdom literature has obviously informed much of the Johannine portrait of Jesus as already indicated.

Chapters 10-19 in the Book of Wisdom have been called “an example of Hellenistic Jewish midrash,” despite their many similarities with ancient Greek literature in style and vocabulary.<sup>61</sup> These chapters imaginatively retell personified Wisdom’s role in the early history of Israel, overlaying the retelling with a didactic view of history that explains why the righteous are rewarded and the wicked or foolish perish – for their worship of the true God, or for their idolatry respectively.<sup>62</sup> This familiarly Deuteronomic ‘deeds-consequence’ relationship is transposed onto the Exodus event: Wisdom was the one who led the Israelites out of Egypt and through the wilderness so that they may know and worship God (10:15-11:14; cf. 19:6-12) but the ‘enemies’ of the Israelites – the Egyptians – suffered the punishment due to the wicked (11:3-20; 12:23-27; cf. 19:13-17). The plagues visited upon the Egyptians and the blessings Israel received in the desert are detailed in almost alternate and contrasting fashion in 16:1-19:21, and yet Israel, ‘the righteous’ are not exempt from ‘the experience of death’ which ‘touched’ them in the desert (18:20). On the whole, however, Wisdom does not focus upon death as punishment for the *Israelites* and their ‘murmuring’ – an aspect of the Exodus tradition seemingly picked up in John and placed on the lips of Jesus (cf. John 6:49-50) – but upon death as punishment for the *Egyptians* and for idolaters.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> See Lester L. Grabbe, *Wisdom of Solomon* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 39.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. James Miller Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom and Its Consequences* (AnBib 41; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1970), 144-145.

<sup>63</sup> An emphatic point made in the Book of Wisdom is how the wicked made a ‘covenant’ with ‘death’ (cf. 1:16) and that this was the cause of their evil behaviour. For more on this see Kathleen M. O’Connor, *The Wisdom Literature* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 168. Possibly the Wisdom writer alludes to the covenant made

Wisdom 16:20 occurs within a larger literary unit (16:15-29) that contrasts what came from the heavens upon the Egyptians (the plague of hail and lightning, cf. 16:15-19) with what came from the heavens upon the Israelites (the manna, cf. 16:20-29).<sup>64</sup> This contrast is signalled emphatically by the use of ἀντι in 16:20 to introduce the gift of the manna: while God punished the Egyptians, he ‘unstintingly’ gave the Israelites the ‘food of angels’ which had the power to change according to the particular taste desired by each one (16:20-21).<sup>65</sup> The word *manna* is not used in Wisdom 16:20, but rather, ἄρτον ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ and ἀγγέλων τροφήν, as well as more creative appropriations like ‘sustenance’ (16:21), ‘snow and ice’ (16:22), and ‘your all-nourishing bounty’ (16:25), which serve to reflect the author’s understanding of the manna as God’s gift to Israel.<sup>66</sup> Indeed the lesson Israel is to learn from the gift of the manna, according to the author of Wisdom, is remarkably close to Deut 8:2-3, namely, that Israel is nourished not merely by physical food but by every ‘word’ that God speaks (cf. Wis 16:26).<sup>67</sup> Finally, the author’s pedagogical aim in retelling the Exodus event is linked to his ‘Deuteronomic’ theodicy: the plague of hail and lighting that afflicted the Egyptians in Exod 9:13-35 becomes in Wis 16:22 ‘fire’ and ‘rain’ – two essential

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between God and the Israelites in the wilderness and contrasts this with the ‘covenant’ made by the wicked with death.

<sup>64</sup> This follows on from two other contrasts in chapter 16, namely, the different ways God treated the Egyptians and Israelites (16:1-4), and what happened to the Egyptians and the Israelites in the plagues of locusts and flies (16:5-14). For more discussion about these contrasts see Daniel J. Harrington, *Invitation to the Apocrypha* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 56-72.

<sup>65</sup> The NRSV translates ἀκοπιάτως in 16:20 as ‘without their toil’, possibly following Philo who designated the manna as ‘food that cost no toil or suffering, food that came without the cares and pains of men’ (*Congr.* 173). To sharpen the contrast between God’s behaviour towards the Israelites and the Egyptians it is also possible to translate ἀκοπιάτως to mean ‘unwearyingly’ or ‘unstintingly’ to reflect the activity of *God* instead of Israel. See Samuel Cheon, *The Exodus Story in the Wisdom of Solomon: A Study in Biblical Interpretation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 63, n 91, who also prefers this translation.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Cheon, *The Exodus Story*, 65. The author refrains from an identification of the manna with Wisdom or Torah; rather, Wisdom was she who guided Israel out of captivity (cf. 10:15-11:14).

<sup>67</sup> See also André Feuillet, *Johannine Studies* (New York: Alba House, 1966) 62-63.

cosmological elements that defeat the Egyptians but which hold back their destructive power for the Israelites (16:23). This structure of thought emerges repeatedly throughout the book of Wisdom, for example in the author's view that creation itself will defend the righteous but punish the wicked (cf. 16:17; cf. 11:5).<sup>68</sup>

This 'simplistic' view on the rewards of righteousness and the consequences of wickedness/idolatry is not present in John, although the evangelist does betray a dualistic agenda that positions those who receive Jesus (John 1:12) against those who reject him (1:11), and those who do good against those who do evil (cf. 3:20-21; 5:29). While Wisdom was the guiding force who freed the Israelites from slavery (cf. Wis 10-11), in John's Gospel, Jesus is Wisdom personified (cf. 1:1-3) who entered the world (1:10-14) and who claims to be the manna, the 'bread from heaven' par excellence (6:35). Both Wisdom 10-19 and John 6 present something of a midrash on the Exodus tradition, but John emphasises the rebelliousness of the Jews as they unwittingly imitate the 'murmuring' of the ancient Israelites, whereas the author of Wisdom sidelines anything negative about the Israelites, God or Moses, and reserves his ire for the wicked, the idolaters and the Egyptians.

### iii. The Response and Characterisation of the Jews

I am now in a position to discuss how the Jews can be constructed by the 'ideal' reader of the Gospel in response to the OT citation found in John 6:31. As in the previous citation text analysed (2:13-22), the crowd and the Jews are characterised *indirectly* by means of their *speech*, usually in the form of repeated questions. When Exod 16/Ps 77 LXX is cited in John

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<sup>68</sup> See Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; New York: Doubleday, 2002), 90; and also Cheon, *The Exodus Story*, 57.



6:31, it is the curious ‘crowd’ who speaks. They are depicted as seeking Jesus for the ‘signs’ he works – in other words, they show limited faith (cf. 2:23-25). In citing Scripture *to* Jesus they ‘test’ him to produce a greater work than that of the heavenly manna. When Jesus responds that God is now giving a ‘true’, ‘life-giving’ bread, they seem to want that bread immediately (6:34). But after further explanation, Jesus indicates that he himself is that living bread, able to give life to others because he has ‘come’ down’ from heaven and has his origins in God (6:32-33, 37-38, 46, 50, 51, 57).

At this point (6:41) the crowd become the Jews and their response becomes markedly hostile and rebellious. This is indicated by the narrator’s statement that they began to ‘murmur’ amongst themselves – an instance of *direct* character definition that proceeds from the most reliable ‘voice’ in the story. The reason for the murmuring of the Jews is given, as they ask, ‘How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’ (6:42) – for to the Jews, Jesus’ genealogy is well known (6:41-42). the Jews characterise Jesus *directly* by his ‘earthly’ origins, but because the ‘voice’ and viewpoint of the Jews are marginalised in John’s story and so, are not ‘reliable’ (in a narratological sense), this statement serves to reflexively characterise them more than it does Jesus: the ideal reader knows that the Jews in fact do not ‘know’ Jesus at all.

Staying with the notion of reliable ‘voices’ for a moment, it can also be said that Jesus’ ‘voice’ in this discourse almost merges with that of the narrator, and attains the highest degree of reliability. This can be illustrated by appreciating the way that the Bread of Life discourse places the ideal reader on one pole of its ‘binary’ rhetoric, and places the Jews (and all who do not believe) on the other pole. There is a group in the discourse clearly designated by Jesus in terms such as ‘he who...’ (6:35, 47), or ‘all who...’ (6:37, 39, 40, 45), and again, as ‘anyone who...’ (6:50, 51) and ‘no one ... unless’ (6:44, 65). This is what John Dominic

Crossan calls the ‘I-He’ mode of discourse, and is to be contrasted with the ‘I-You’ mode of discourse found earlier in the text (6:26, 30, 32a, 34).<sup>69</sup> The ‘I-He’ mode of discourse dominates Jesus’ interaction with the Jews in John 6:35-57, displacing the ‘I-You’ mode that specifies ‘the crowd’ as Jesus’ listeners, and signalling the emergence of what I have termed the ‘ideal reader’. Jesus now speaks to the ideal reader, inviting him/her to believe in a way that the Jews cannot or do not. The ‘I-He’ persona in the discourse becomes the “most important recipient” so that “He-who-believes-in-me” functions as the “counterpart of the ‘I’ of Jesus.”<sup>70</sup> To recall Booth’s terminology from chapter 2, the ideal reader thus becomes like a ‘second self’ to the implied author, whose ‘voice’ merges with Jesus’ own. The rhetoric of the discourse casts the Jews in the polar opposite position: they are the negative foil against which the ideal, ‘He-who’ persona is to be understood.<sup>71</sup> In this way the Jews are indirectly characterised by means of negation: they do not believe, and so do not have life.

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<sup>69</sup> John Dominic Crossan, “It is Written: A Structuralist Analysis of John 6,” in *The Gospel of John as Literature: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Perspectives*, ed. Mark W. G. Stibbe (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 154-156. Crossan does not use the term ‘implied reader’ or ‘ideal reader’ but prefers Greimas’ ‘narrative actant’ and ‘discourse actant’. For the sake of simplicity I have substituted Crossan’s use of the term ‘actant’ with the less technical term ‘persona’, because I deliberately refrained from developing Greimas’ actantial model in chapter 2 of this thesis.

<sup>70</sup> Crossan, “It is Written,” 156.

<sup>71</sup> Note that the binary opposition is not set between the Jews and the *disciples*, the latter of whom are also accused by Jesus of ‘murmuring’ (6:61, γογγύζουσιν). The words of Jesus ‘scandalise’ all who hear (σκανδαλίζω, 6:61b), and the disciples are not exempt from failure to understand or believe. The ‘Twelve’, on the other hand, appear to place their faith in Jesus despite the defection of all others in the crowd (6:67-69). Thus Reinhartz’s “rhetoric of binary opposition” (see Chapter Two, section I.B.i) needs to be carefully nuanced, as Jesus/the disciples are not always paired in the evangelist’s ‘ethical’ perspective, nor are the disciples and the Jews always set in mutual opposition. Hylen, *Allusion and Meaning*, 184, finds it hard to “draw any clear distinction between the disciples and the Jews” because both ‘murmur’ against Jesus and therefore both character groups represent the Israelites in the wilderness narrative. The scope of Hylen’s analysis is strictly on John 6; I argue that the Jews here represent murmuring Israel more than the disciples do, and support this contention by the fact that the ‘wilderness’ motif allusively arises in other instances when Scripture is cited vis-à-vis the Jews in John (1:23; 7:37-39; 10:34).

This position can be supported further by my argument that the allusive contexts of the OT citation(s) in John 6:31 bear some significance for how the Jews are characterised. Their ‘murmuring’ activates the entire context field of the Exodus traditions, when the ancient Israelites murmured against Moses and so against God, warranting death. In Psalm 77 LXX/ Psalm 78 MT, this is manifestly a “religious rebellion,” to quote Knowles once more, and in John 6 takes the shape of an unwillingness to share in the divine life mediated by Jesus (6:52).<sup>72</sup> The turning away of the Jews from Jesus can be read in connection with God’s final rejection of ‘Israel’ in favour of Judah/David, a divine response to rebellious idolatry.

Finally, the wider narrative context of Exod 16:4 presents the Israelites as unperceptive to the divine revelation. As in the first two citations from the OT (1:23 and 2:17), so here in John 6:31, one finds intertextual points of contact between Jesus as the incarnate δόξα of God and the notion of God’s כבוד in the OT. For the ancestors of the Jews at Sinai, God’s glory was seen prior to the manna miracle; in John 6, Jesus implicitly claims to embody God’s glory insofar as he reveals himself to be the life-giving bread from heaven. And as in the Exodus story, where the ancestors did *not* come into a deeper knowledge of God as a result of beholding his glory, so the Jews – despite claiming to ‘know’ Jesus (6:42) – do not know him, do not receive his life and do not know God (cf. 6:45-46).

#### iv. Conclusion

In John 6:41-42, for the first time in the Gospel text, the Jews emerge outside of Judea. The ‘ideal’ reader of the Gospel, following the cues of the implied reader, should thus far have constructed a ‘paradigm of traits’ for the Jews: they have already appeared in confrontational

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. Knowles, “The Flexible Rhetoric of Retelling,” 242.

situations with Jesus (cf. 2:13-17), and have come to the point of wishing to kill him (5:18). As characters, the Jews are therefore the hostile opponents of Jesus. But they are not to be identified with the ‘Judeans’ only: they now emerge as characters who serve a particular rhetorical function. This is amplified by the way the narrator has crafted the Bread of Life discourse as a ‘retelling’ of the Scriptural story of Israel’s rebellion in the wilderness. The Jews represent once more the ancestors who ate the manna and yet did not believe. No more do the Jews of John 6:41-42 believe in Jesus as he reveals himself to be the Bread of Life. In light of the way the narrative *contexts* of the OT citation (Ps 78:24/Exod 16:4) are retained in John 6, the ideal reader of the Gospel is invited to characterise the Jews as rebellious ‘murmurers.’

Each of the OT citations in the Gospel thus far have been spoken from the perspective of faith and have functioned at the level of the narrative to lead Jesus’ audience – and the ideal reader – to faith (1:23; 2:17). The ideal reader of the Gospel has become aware of a rhetorical pattern, however: the Jews – who are so far the primary audience of the OT citations (1:23; 6:31) or are in the narrative context when Scripture is cited diegetically (2:17) – are not led to faith but are alienated by the citations and the Christological meaning ascribed to them. The citation of Ps 78/Exod 16:4, 15 in John 6:31 is actually spoken by the incredulous ‘crowd’ and represents a stance of unbelief. It is a challenge thrown to Jesus to prove himself by his works. When Jesus unfolds the meaning of the Scriptural text(s) for his audience, claiming to embody a unique and unprecedented revelation of God, the Jews emerge as the hostile face of the crowd. The ideal reader is aware of the ominous value that their ‘murmuring’ holds in the biblical tradition, connoting rebellion against God and inviting death.

The story of the wilderness wanderings is retold in John 6 and introduced by the OT citation in John 6:31.<sup>73</sup> The Jews function as representative characters in the Gospel's 'ideological' re-telling of Scripture. Alternating with 'retold' stories that speak of God's promises to his people are those that speak of the loss of promise. John 6 is a case in point with its broad allusions to rebellion and death following on from the allusions of hope found in 1:23 (citing Isa 40:3) and the allusions of death found in 2:17 (citing Psalm 68:9a). Whereas the 'wilderness' motif emerged in 1:23 as something that connoted hope and restoration, it emerges here as something that connotes rebellion against God and death.

Finally, this analysis has not found grounds for reading a supersessionist perspective in John 6, at least as far as the role of Moses as mediator of the Torah is concerned. In later Judaic traditions the heavenly manna came to symbolise the heavenly gift of the Law, a gift in which the Jews of the Gospel are said to strongly put their faith (cf. 5:39, 45). As the 'true' bread come down from heaven, Jesus *does* claim to offer a revelation of God that is unprecedented and unique, but that does not deny the original and ongoing relevance of the Torah itself. Thus while Jesus' extended interpretation of the OT texts central to the Exodus tradition aim to show that his self-revelatory claims reach beyond the Scriptures to something unheard of and admittedly quite 'scandalous' (6:61b), his claims are also consistent with the Scriptures, which continue to bear witness to him.

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<sup>73</sup> Zumstein speaks of 6:31 as the "semantic matrix" of the entire chapter; see Zumstein, "Der Schriftrezeption," 139.

## B. John 6:45a: They Shall All Be Taught by God (Isaiah 54:13)

### i. Outline of the Johannine Text

The fourth OT citation in the Gospel occurs in the same context as the preceding citation, namely, in the ‘Bread of Life’ discourse (6:45a, citing Isaiah 54:13). After the Jews ‘murmur’ over Jesus’ claim to have come down from heaven (6:42), Jesus responds abruptly: ‘do not complain (μὴ γογγύζετε) among yourselves’ (6:43), and then continues:

No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God’. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father’ (6:44-45 NRSV).

This is the first occasion in the Gospel where Scripture is cited by Jesus directly to the Jews (contrast 1:23; 2:17; 6:31). Jesus’ citation from ‘the prophets’ (ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον ἐν τοῖς προφήταις) addresses the question put forward by the Jews about Jesus’ origins: how can Jesus claim to have heavenly origins when his physical lineage is well-known (6:42)? The Jews claim to ‘know’ Jesus’ father and mother (6:42), that is, they claim a knowledge of Jesus that is governed by earthly things (3:12); Jesus, on the other hand, speaks of “heavenly things” (3:12). Because Jesus’ origins are in God (6:32-33, 37-38, 46, 50, 51, 57; cf. 1:1, 18) he can only be understood by those who are ‘taught’ by God, which is essentially the force of the OT citation in 6:45a. This kind of ‘understanding’ is couched in peculiarly Johannine

language: one ‘comes to’ Jesus as a result of learning from God and simultaneously comes to Jesus to learn of God (6:44a; cf. 6:37).

Jesus then reiterates his claim to be the ‘bread of life’ (6:48), concluding the section of the discourse begun in 6:35. A new element is added at this point, however: Jesus is the ‘living bread’, causing all who ‘eat’ him to have life (6:51a).<sup>74</sup> The metaphor is extended again when Jesus states that ‘eating’ him means eating his ‘flesh’ (6:51b), and the Jews respond with even greater incredulity, perhaps even indignation (6:52). Again Jesus adds another element: unless one eats his flesh and drinks his ‘blood’ one cannot have ‘life’ (6:54). The theme of ‘coming’ to Jesus (6:37, 44-45) becomes the theme of partaking of his ‘flesh and blood’ – his

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<sup>74</sup> The question of whether and at what point the ‘Bread of Life’ discourse becomes ‘Eucharistic’ is not resolved in this thesis. John 6:51c-58 is often thought to signal a change with the introduction of the terms ‘flesh’ and ‘blood’, raising the question of a Eucharistic connection. For a helpful survey on the various interpretations of John 6:22-59, see Maarten J. J. Menken, “John 6,51c-58: Eucharist or Christology?” *Bib* 74 (1993): 1-26. Responses to the issue vary from, on the one hand, the claim that Jesus’ discourse reflects, (or indeed influenced) early Christian liturgical practice (e.g. Edward J. Kilmartin, “Liturgical Influence on John 6,” *CBQ* 22 (1960): 183-191; K. Matsunga, “Is John’s Gospel Anti-Sacramental? – A New Solution in the Light of the Evangelist’s Milieu,” *NTS* 27 (1980-81): 516-524; Ludger Schenke, “Die literarische Vorgeschichte von Joh 6,26-58,” *BZ* 29 (1985): 68-89), to the claim that the terms ‘flesh’, ‘blood’ and ‘to eat’ are merely metaphorical, referring to Jesus and his sacrificial death rather than to Eucharistic elements (cf. Menken “John 51c-58: Eucharist or Christology?” 3; James D. G. Dunn, “John VI – A Eucharistic Discourse?” *NTS* 17 (1970-71): 328-338). Dunn’s study may be slightly disingenuous insofar as it presents a disguised attempt to make Jesus espouse the values of liberal Protestantism; Dunn not only plays down a ‘Eucharistic’ interpretation of John 6:51c-58 (what he calls the dominant “Orthodox” view), but has *Jesus himself* explicitly refute such an interpretation, criticising “sacramentalism” in favour of “Word” and “Spirit” (pp. 335-337). A compromise position is made by Schürmann, who argues that 6:51c is ‘Christological’ but that vv. 53-58 refer to the Eucharist; see H. Schürmann, “Joh 6,51c – ein Schlüssel zur großen johanneischen Brotrede,” *BZ* 2 (1958): 244-262; Francis J. Moloney, “When is John Talking about Sacraments?” *ABR* 30 (1982): 10-33. Elsewhere Moloney points out that the use of the word τρώγων in 6:54, 56-57 signals a literal ‘chewing’ of Jesus’ flesh and hints at his violent death at the instigation of the Jews (see, *John*, 221-222).

very life – so that one may have the ‘eternal’ life he promises.<sup>75</sup> It is twice reinforced that Jesus’ flesh and blood is superior to the manna that the ancestors of the Jews ate in the desert, for they died (6:48, 58b). As the ‘true’ bread from heaven, Jesus is the preeminent gift of God the Father who is able to give *eternal* life to all who believe in him. The language of ‘eating’ Jesus’ flesh and blood extends the theme of ‘coming to’ Jesus and being ‘taught by God’ explicated in 6:44-45.

It is necessary to attend to the way in which John has paired the OT tradition of διδασκτοὶ θεοῦ with ‘hearing and learning from the Father’ in 6:44-45. Often one finds in the literature the claim that John here establishes a subtle, adversative contrast between the ‘teaching’ that comes through Jesus, and the divine instruction embodied in the Torah. In the Judaism of Jesus’ day, it was believed that learning the Torah was equivalent to being directly instructed by God.<sup>76</sup> Whereas God formerly instructed Israel through the Torah, Jesus’ coming has set in motion a process – foretold long ago in the Scriptures – whereby all people can learn of God through Jesus. There is thus a double revelation in Jesus’ claim: “No longer is Israel the *object* and the Law the *source* of God’s instruction. It is aimed at all believers without limitation of race or nation, and it comes through Jesus.”<sup>77</sup> Freed goes so far as to deny the ongoing relevance of the Torah in its capacity to lead one to God: “[t]he way to God is not through the Law (cf. Prov 4:1-13) but through Jesus, the Sent One of God, and the bread of

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<sup>75</sup> See also Sandra Schneiders, “The Resurrection (of the Body) in the Fourth Gospel: A Key to Johannine Spirituality,” in John R. Donahue (ed.) *Life in Abundance: Studies of John’s Gospel in Tribute to Raymond E. Brown* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press), 168-198. Schneiders argues that the Johannine anthropology is thoroughly “Semitic” and terms such as ‘flesh and blood’ “denote the *whole person*” (page 170, her emphasis).

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 2:51. There is also a tradition behind διδασκτοὶ θεοῦ in DSS (CD 20:4) and in the earliest Christian tradition (1 Thess 4:9). See Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 68.

<sup>77</sup> Moloney, *John*, 218, (my emphasis).



life is for all who believe”.<sup>78</sup> This may be something of a ‘stereotyped’ view of Judaism in the late Second Temple period, which posits a dichotomous contrast between a particularistic and nationalistic Judaism and a more open and ‘universalistic’ Christianity.<sup>79</sup>

Another way of assessing the matter is to read John 6:44-45 as a synthetic parallelism, or in other words, to read one reality in light of the other. Thus, the content of the OT citation (being ‘taught by God’) is further explained as ‘hearing and learning’ from the Father. Although only Jesus has ‘seen’ the Father, all people may ‘hear’ the Father’s voice and so ‘learn’ of the Father. The result is true knowledge of Jesus and faith in Jesus as the One who has ‘come down from heaven’ (6:33, 38, 51, 58). Scripture itself testifies to this (6:45a), and true recognition of Jesus’ as the Sent One of the Father rests in part upon genuine recognition of the Scripture’s witness to Jesus. In the words of Williams, “[t]he divine teaching foretold by [the Scriptures] and eagerly awaited, according to Jewish expectations, in God’s teaching of the Torah, is, according to John, presently encountered through hearing and believing in Jesus, God’s authoritative agent from heaven.”<sup>80</sup>

Obermann has expressed the same ideas in a series of perceptive insights. The prophetic tradition of διδασκτοὶ θεοῦ (cf. Isa 54:13; Jer 31:31-34) takes on a Christological dimension in John 6:45a where to be taught by God means to hear and learn from the word of Jesus.<sup>81</sup> “This eschatological ‘learning-of-God’ occurs in the encounter with Jesus, the only one to

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<sup>78</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 20.

<sup>79</sup> This is taken up in more depth below. See Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew*, 184.

<sup>80</sup> Williams, “Isaiah in John’s Gospel,” 107.

<sup>81</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 164.

have seen the Father (6:46, 45b) and to have made him known (cf. 1:18).”<sup>82</sup> Thus, John “speaks in chapter 6 not of the Law [...] or of obedience to the Law, but of a general knowledge of God, which takes place in the recognition of Jesus as the enfleshed Word of God.”<sup>83</sup> Ultimately, according to Obermann, the citation of Isaiah 54:13 in John 6:45a indicates that “... in the person of Jesus all hearing and learning about the Father is concentrated. The person of Jesus is the content of the revelation of God – in him and through him is the exclusive eschatological divine immediacy already present in the mode of faith.”<sup>84</sup>

The traditional Jewish idea of the Scriptures teaching a person from within (cf. Jer 31:31-34) is therefore made concrete in the Johannine notion of Jesus as the one who mediates the inner divine instruction. The words of God found in the Scriptures are now taken up and realised in Jesus himself, who is the Word of God made flesh. In the most extraordinary sense, then, Scripture ‘witnesses’ to Jesus in the pericope under analysis (John 6:45a). This is in accord with other passages in the Gospel that indicate that the words of Scripture and the words of Jesus are on par in status and authority (cf. 2:21-22; 18:9).<sup>85</sup> Indeed, as Boyarin argues,

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<sup>82</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 155-156: “Dieses eschatologisch erwartete Von-Gott-Gelehrtsein vollzieht sich in der Begegnung mit Jesus, der als einziger den Vater je gesehen hat (so 6, 46 nach 6,45b) und von ihm Kunde gibt (vgl. 1,18).”

<sup>83</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 162: “Denn der Evangelist redet in Joh 6 nicht im Kontext des Gesetzes [...] sondern auf eine umfassende Gotteserkenntnis, welche sich in der Erkenntnis Jesu als dem fleischgewordenen Wort Gottes vollzieht und ereignet.”

<sup>84</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 167: “....in der Person Jesu alles Hörens- und Lernenswerte über den Vater konzentriert ist. Die Person Jesu ist der Inhalt der Offenbarung Gottes, in ihm und durch ihn vollzieht sich exklusiv die eschatologisch Gottunmittelbarkeit schon in der Gegenwart im Modus des Glaubens.”

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Miller, “They Saw His Glory and Spoke of Him,” 131: “Scripture is ... completed, superseded and even replaced by the living words of Jesus.” Ashton, *Understanding*, 417: “For John a single saying of Jesus can have the status of a verse of Scripture (18:9). Even more startlingly, Jesus himself can become the object of midrash (5:39).” Cf. Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 104.

“[w]hen the incarnate Logos speaks, he speaks Torah.”<sup>86</sup> This in turn supports Boyarin’s reading of the Johannine Prologue that emphasises how the coming of Jesus is to be read as a “supplement” to the Torah (cf. 1:17-18), not as a strict, temporal supersession of it.<sup>87</sup> Jesus is the “Logos Ensarkos” while the Torah was the “Logos Asarkos” (cf. 1:17-18); in this sense Jesus stands as the supreme ‘exegete’ of Torah.<sup>88</sup> John’s Logos/Torah typology thus rests on the assumption that Jesus’ oral teaching, “more authentic and transparent than [the] written text” of the Torah, would be better received.<sup>89</sup> The incarnation of the Word of the Torah in the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ gains a certain particularity in John 6:41-59 where all people without reservation are invited to ‘eat and drink’ Jesus’ ‘flesh and blood’ and so be ‘taught’ by God the Father and partake of God’s eternal life.

These considerations spell out the significance of the Gospel’s fourth OT citation for the argument of this thesis. The Jews stand as Jesus’ primary interlocutors when he cites ἐν τοῖς προφήταις in John 6:45a. As with all the OT citations in the Gospel examined thus far, this citation aims to lead Jesus’ audience to faith. If Jesus is the locus of the divine self-communication, the sole person who has seen the Father and so stands as the One through whom all are instructed by God; and if Jesus is the ‘Logos Ensarkos’ whose oral teaching is supposedly more ‘transparent’ than the written Logos found in the Torah, the question arises as to whether Jesus’ teaching in John 6 *is in fact* better received than was the ‘Logos

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<sup>86</sup> Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 104.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 104, 107.

<sup>88</sup> Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 104.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 104. Larsen later expresses a similar idea, claiming that the *Logos* of John 1:9 does not refer to the *Logos* as embodied in Jesus but to its pre-existent presence in the *kosmos*. According to Larsen, John 1:9-11 deals not with the *Logos Ensarkos* but with the *Logos* between Adam and John the Baptist, as it were. The *Logos Ensarkos* (Jesus) is a form of manifestation “more easily comprehensible by human beings” who are themselves, *sarx*, than the “anonymous light of the Logos Asarkos,” (Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger*, 80-82; transliterated Greek fonts in original).

Asarkos', i.e. the Torah itself. Does the apparent universalism of John 6:45a include the Jews, holding out to them the opportunity for divine instruction? Or, in their inadequate response to Jesus, are they indicted as ones who stand in need of divine instruction, as those yet to 'learn of God', or indeed as ones who do not know God at all (cf. 5:37b-38)? An in-depth analysis of the context of the cited OT text in John 6:45a will be of assistance in answering these questions.

#### 4.2.2 The Context of Isaiah 54:13 for an Understanding of John 6:45a

Most scholars agree that Isaiah 54:13 LXX is the source of Jesus' explicit citation of the OT in John 6:45a, although many other prophetic texts express the motif of divine eschatological teaching (cf. Jer 24:7; 31:34; Joel 2:27; Hab 2:14).<sup>90</sup> The use of the plural ἐν τοῖς προφήταις to introduce the citation in 6:45a is unique in John's Gospel and appears to suggest to some scholars either that John was uncertain of his source or that he had in mind several related OT texts.<sup>91</sup> However, Menken, Schuchard and Obermann have all refuted this

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<sup>90</sup> Scholars who consider Isaiah 54:13 LXX to be John's source include Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 50-53; Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 76; Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung*, 151-154; Williams, "Isaiah in John's Gospel," 106; Barrett, *The Gospel*, 295, considers John 6:45a to be a "sufficiently exact paraphrase" of Isaiah 54:13 LXX. Reim considers Isaiah 54:13 MT to be the source text (see Reim, *Studien*, 16); Freed argues that John's "main source" is Isa 54:13, but is unsure whether John used the MT or LXX, (see Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 18); see Stephen Witmer, "Overlooked Evidence for Citation and Redaction in John 6:45a," *ZNW* 97, no. 1 (2006): 134-138, for a similar opinion to Freed. Witmer argues that the presence of καὶ in John 6:45a indicates that John relied on a *written* source text (see Witmer, "Overlooked Evidence," 138).

<sup>91</sup> For those who argue for John's uncertainty about his source see especially Goodwin, "How Did John Treat His Sources?" 61-75.

notion, arguing that the plural form can nevertheless refer to a single OT passage.<sup>92</sup> That this single passage is Isaiah 54:13 rests on several tenets, not the least of which is the frequency with which John has recourse to the writings of Isaiah in his Gospel (cf. Isa 40:3 in John 1:23; Isa 53:1 in 12:38 and Isa 6:10 in 12:40).<sup>93</sup> Whereas elsewhere, however, Isaiah is explicitly named as a prophet who ‘witnesses’ to Jesus (cf. 1:23; 12:40), in John 6:45a Isaiah is called upon in a more implicit manner. The emphasis here is thus on the “prophetic testimony of scripture in support of Jesus’ claims rather than upon the spoken witness of Isaiah in his role as an individual prophet.”<sup>94</sup>

Another major reason for considering Isaiah 54:13 as John’s source text in 6:45a is the high degree of verbal correspondence between both texts. Isaiah 54:13 LXX reads, ‘all your sons shall be taught by God’ (καὶ πάντας τοὺς υἱὸς σου διδακτοὺς Θεοῦ) while John 6:45a reads, ‘they shall all be taught by God’ (ἔσονται πάντες διδακτοὶ θεοῦ). Moreover, both texts display a markedly eschatological character. Isaiah 54:13 constitutes part an “apostrophe to Zion” (Isa 54:1-17a) in the conclusive part of Second Isaiah (Isa 40-55).<sup>95</sup> The thrust of Isaiah 54:1-17a concerns God’s promise to restore Jerusalem to its former splendour and to console God’s people for all they have suffered in exile. Isaiah 54:1-17 describes a ruined Jerusalem, razed by the Babylonian conquest (cf. Isa 51:17-20), and awaiting its restoration. God’s loving concern for the city and its people is expressed in metaphorical – indeed, near fanciful – language, as the prophetic voice promises the rebuilding of Jerusalem entirely from precious stones (54:11-12). In the midst of this ‘new Jerusalem’ the covenant

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<sup>92</sup> See Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 69; Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 48; Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 156.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. F. W. Young, “A Study of the Relation of Isaiah to the Fourth Gospel,” *ZNW* 46 (1955): 215-233.

<sup>94</sup> Williams, “Isaiah in John’s Gospel,” 106.

<sup>95</sup> So Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 357.

will be renewed (54:10), and God's people will be vindicated in the sight of their enemies (54:14-17) and the next generation of Israelites will be taught directly by God (54:13). This latter promise sums up the essence of the eschatological age for the 'servants of Yahweh' (cf. Isa 54:17a): the safety and "well-being" of Jerusalem's children will rest upon "study of the Law" (cf. Isa 2:3b).<sup>96</sup> The eschatological character of John 6:45a is evident in Jesus' promises that all who come to him will be 'raised up' on the last day (6:39, 54). In the words of Reim, "the true bread of life is for the end-time" and is available *now* to all who are drawn to God and taught by God through Jesus.<sup>97</sup>

There is, nonetheless, a vital difference between Isaiah 54:13 LXX and John 6:45a. God promises through Isaiah that 'all your sons' will be 'taught by God', but in John 6:45a this has become an absolute 'all' (πάντες). So, what explains John's omission of 'your sons' if Isaiah 54:13 LXX was the source text upon which he relied? It is often thought that John's 'universalism' explains the omission of 'your sons' from the Isaian citation in 6:45a. The absolute πάντες in this case supposedly accords with other parts of John's Gospel which express a 'universalistic' theology: God so loved 'the world' that he sent his Son so that all might have life (3:16; cf. 1:10).<sup>98</sup> Freed likewise argues that in Isaiah 54:13, "the theological view is national in scope. 'Your sons' are sons of Zion. But in John 6:45 the author's

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<sup>96</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 365.

<sup>97</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 17; cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 151-155.

<sup>98</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 159. Cf. R. Alan Culpepper, "Inclusivism and Exclusivism in the Fourth Gospel," in *Word, Theology and Community in John*, ed. John Painter, R. Alan Culpepper and Fernando Segovia (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2002), 85-108.

theological view is universal in scope ... *anyone* whom the Father draws can come to Jesus.”<sup>99</sup>

Schuchard argues that the main reason for John’s modification of the Isaian text lies in the fact that the verses immediately following Isaiah 54:13 speak of proselytes being welcomed into the new Jerusalem (Isaiah 54:14-15 LXX).<sup>100</sup> Isaiah’s vision of proselytes being included in the eschatological Jerusalem possibly motivated John to delete ‘your sons’ from the citation and thereby place more emphasis on the absolute πάντες. Here Schuchard draws on the arguments of Menken, who explains that the issue comes down to how the Septuagint has translated the MT. Plausibly, the translator took גור יגור from the verb גור (‘to dwell as a stranger’), which in the middle Hebrew and Aramaic reads in the piel as ‘to make a proselyte.’<sup>101</sup> Thus the LXX of Isaiah 54:15 reads, ‘behold, *proselytes* will come to you through me’ (ἰδοὺ προσήλυτοι προσελεύσονται σοι δι’ ἐμοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ σὲ καταφεύξονται). John possibly presumed that the “eschatological people of God” would be made up of both “sons of Jerusalem and proselytes” and this encouraged him to modify the text in his citation.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 19. As a cautionary note it is worth stating that John’s view is not therefore *anti-nationalistic*: Jesus does speak to the Jews in this instance, and his ‘lifting up’ is supposed to draw a new *ethnos* together to himself.

<sup>100</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 53.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 76. This also accords well with the Johannine language of ‘coming’ to Jesus, cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 160-161. The MT reads גור in the sense of ‘to attack’ while the LXX interprets the same verb in the sense of ‘to dwell’; the MT translation suggests that Jerusalem will now be equipped for self-defence. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 366.

<sup>102</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 76. This is, of course, assuming, that the LXX is the source, as the MT reads very differently.

Schuchard, however, does not concede that John's universalistic orientation was the primary motivating factor in his modification of the Isaian citation – indeed Schuchard calls into question the very notion of a Johannine universalism.<sup>103</sup> Schuchard's argument runs as follows: the most significant issue in John 6:41-51 is that of *origins*, both 'heavenly' and 'worldly'. Jesus' citation of Isaiah 54:13 suggests that "only one whose 'origin' is heavenly (i.e. only one drawn by the Father in heaven) can come to Jesus (cf. 6:44, also vv. 27, 29, 35-39 and 37) ... all those who come [to Jesus] are 'taught by God' (6:45a) ... they have 'heard and learned' from the Father (6:45b)."<sup>104</sup> Jesus is thus emphasising in 6:45a-b that one may believe in Jesus only if the Father generates faith in the believer.<sup>105</sup> The word πάντες, in this instance, cannot therefore mean "all in general," nor does it reflect a 'universalism' inclusive of Jews and Gentiles against a strictly Jewish 'nationalism.'<sup>106</sup> Schuchard contends that John's main concern is to focus upon the "necessity of heavenly rather than earthly origins," and therefore "John leaves Isaiah's reference to 'sonship' out of his citation in order to emphasize that it is only the child of God (1:12-13) born from above (3:3) and taught by God (6:45) who may approach Jesus (11:51-52) and not die (6:49, 50, 58)."<sup>107</sup> The Jews in the dialogue do not appreciate Jesus' heavenly origins (6:40-42) and, as the reader will later

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<sup>103</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 56.

<sup>104</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 54-55.

<sup>105</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, footnote 51, on page 55.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 56. The issue of 'universalism' in Isaiah 40-66 is itself a disputed one. Against the notion of a 'universalistic' perspective implying that the 'nations' share in the election and salvation of Israel, see Joel Kaminsky and Anne Stewart, "God of All the World: Universalism and Developing Monotheism in Isaiah 40-66," *HTR* 99, no. 2 (2006): 139-163; see also A. Gelston, "Universalism in Second Isaiah," *JTS* 43 (1992): 377-398; earlier studies tended to argue for a universalistic mission to the Gentiles, cf. Carroll Stuhlmueller, "Deutero-Isaiah: Major Transitions in the Prophet's Theology and in Contemporary Scholarship," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 1-29.

<sup>107</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 56.



learn, are accused by Jesus of having origins in the underworld – to wit, of being ‘born of the devil’ (cf. 8:44).

Thus, Schuchard’s argument draws attention to the function that the Jews have as characters in the context of John’s citation of the OT, but in one important respect his argument is unconvincing. Schuchard does not explain why John would use an apparently unqualified, absolute term such as πάντες only to qualify it (to the point of contradiction) by implying that it refers to “*only* the child of God.”<sup>108</sup> In fact Schuchard’s argument would have been more convincing if John had left ‘your sons’ *in* his citation rather than omitting it, for in the Gospel of John, the ‘sons’ of God (or children of God) are born from above (1:13; 3:3), that is, they are described as having heavenly origins.

The complex issue of Johannine ‘universalism’ in John 6:45 is approached in slightly more detail in the work of Menken. Like Schuchard, Menken denies that a complete ‘universalism’ is at work in 6:45, arguing that any perceived universalism in John’s Gospel is only relative: “according to John, only those whom the Father gives to Jesus, whom the Father draws, can come to belief in Jesus (6:37, 39, 44, 65; 10:29; 17:2, 6, 9, 24; 18:9).”<sup>109</sup> The πάντες in John 6:45a is qualified by ‘no one’ in John 6:44 which is “restricted by a conditional clause” and which in turn becomes ‘everyone’ in John 6:45b.<sup>110</sup> In short, *all* and *everyone* in the context of John 6:41-49 are conditional, not absolute, referents, according to Menken.<sup>111</sup> ‘All’ can

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<sup>108</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 55, (my emphasis).

<sup>109</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 75.

<sup>110</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 75-76.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Crossan’s discussion of “He-who” and “all who” in John 6, which, as I have argued, specify the ‘place’ of the ideal reader in the Bread of Life discourse.

only mean ‘all who come to Jesus’ in Menken’s reading of the text. The same ‘restricted’ usage of πάντες can be detected in John 1:7; 5:23; 12:32 and 17:21.<sup>112</sup>

But how can John’s use of πάντες in 6:45a have a semantic equivalence to ‘no one’ (6:44) and then again to ‘everyone’ (6:45b)? One must take seriously the fact that πάντες in 6:45a *is* in fact given an absolute character by virtue of John’s omission of ‘your sons’ from the Isaian citation (Isa 54:13 LXX). The word πάντες thus becomes an emphatic, unconditional adjective in the clause of 6:45a-b. However, the surrounding narrative context shows that Jesus’ dialogue partners – here the Jews – are depicted as rejecting his words. This is the reason that Jesus’ statement appears to be conditional: it signifies that *all* people will be capable of learning from God but this capacity cannot be realised if one refuses to hear Jesus who in himself embodies the divine revelation. The rhetorical force of the Isaian citation in the context of Jesus’ dispute with the Jews is such that that the Jews stand in need of God’s teaching, despite previously claiming to ‘know’ God’s designs as they can be discerned from the Scriptures (cf. 5:39; 60:40-42). Ironically, the Scriptures themselves bear witness to the obduracy of the Jews in this regard.

At this point it is worth returning to the work of Obermann who claims that an understanding of the context of the cited OT text is significant for the presentation of the Jews in this passage. Relevant to Obermann’s position is the fact that the Jews are presented as ‘murmuring’ against Jesus’ words (6:40). According to Obermann, the Jews’ murmuring reveals a fundamental problem – namely, the fact that they *do not* know Jesus as the Sent One of the Father and that they do not recognise him as “the giver of the heavenly bread in person;” in short, they do not understand, they have not learned of God and they in no way

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<sup>112</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 76.

cooperate with God nor are they able to do so.<sup>113</sup> The rebellious and unbelieving stance that the Jews displayed following Jesus' explanation of Scripture in 6:31 provides a clue to how the present Scriptural citation should be interpreted. The 'murmuring' of the Jews suggests that here they are indicted as those who *have not* been 'taught by God;' in other words, the Isaian Scripture testifies against them. 'Learning from God' is a cooperative endeavour involving the 'drawing' of the Father and Jesus on the one hand, and the response of the believer on the other. The Jews, however, who are portrayed as focusing exclusively on what they 'know' of Jesus (6:40-42; 52) only demonstrate their refusal to see outside the categories of their own expectations and limited understandings.<sup>114</sup>

However, the Jews are not condemned to this position. Unlike Schuchard and Menken, Obermann finds the πάντες of John 6:45a to be "absolute" and "inclusive," not conditional or exclusive.<sup>115</sup> Thus πάντες potentially refers even to the Jews if they would approach Jesus in belief, as all people in general are meant by the referent πάντες.<sup>116</sup> This reinforces the element of choice in the portrayal of the Jews in the Gospel. In the person of Jesus, *all* people

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<sup>113</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 163: "den Geber des himmlischen Brotes in Person... allerdings ohne das göttliche Mitwirken auch gar nicht vermögen."

<sup>114</sup> This point can be further substantiated by referring to the recent work of Charles David Isbell, "The *limmûdîm* in the Book of Isaiah," *JSOT* 34, no. 1 (2010): 99-109. Isbell argues that the occurrence of the word *limmûdîm* in Isa 54:13 MT should be understood in light of the other three occurrences in Isaiah (cf. 8:16; 50:4a, 4c). The word *limmûdîm* undergoes a progressive semantic shift across Isaiah, first denoting the students of the prophet (Isa 8:16), and ultimately denoting the students of God, i.e. those who are taught directly by God (cf. 50:4a, c, 13). This is relevant to my argument because the context of Isa 50:4 contrasts Israel's sin with the fidelity of the Servant of YHWH (cf. Isa 50:6-9), who is 'taught' (*lmd*) by God. Jesus' citation of Isa 54:13 in John 6:45 thus plays off other critical themes in Isaiah that would seem to suggest that the Jews in John 6 signify a 'rebellious' Israel who do not come to Jesus to learn of God; see further, Andreas J. Köstenberger, "John," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 449.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 158, 160.

<sup>116</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 160.

have the chance to hear and learn of the Father, including Jesus' interlocutors in the Bread of Life discourse.<sup>117</sup> Obermann often claims that the Fourth Evangelist displays a universalist orientation throughout the Gospel, and that 6:45 is indicative of this orientation. So it is reasonable to argue that the Jews are included in the absolute πάντες of 6:45, at least *in potentia*, but that their lack of positive response to Jesus indicts them as those who stand in need of God's life-giving teaching – or in the language of Second Isaiah, of a place in the eschatological 'Jerusalem' (Isa 54:1-17a). John is overlaying the prophetic tradition of διδασκτοὶ θεοῦ with a Christological significance to be sure, but he is also recasting the Isaian prophecy into the mould of his narrative to characterise the Jews as those who do not know God and who need to learn of God. Yet the wider allusions of the Isaiah 54:13 are of hope and salvation; the Scriptures that witness to Jesus (cf. 1:45; 5:39, 46) here witness not only to Jesus but also to the obduracy of the Jews who cannot see the hope and salvation held out to them in the person of Jesus, who is the true bread from heaven.

### iii. The Response and Characterisation of 'the Jews

I am now well placed to consider how the ideal reader is invited to characterise the Jews in the context of this fourth OT citation in the Gospel. Because there is some degree of overlap with the previous citation, I will deal with some distinctive points arising from the close reading of Isa 54:13 in John 6:45. There are two main factors to consider in this regard: firstly, the resituating of the Torah as the locus of the divine presence within the framework of Jesus' self-revelation; and secondly, the context of Isaiah 54:13 as it bears upon the Jews as characters in John 6.

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<sup>117</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 167.

To deal with the first point, I have shown that the text of John 6:45, while not an outright disparagement of the Mosaic Law, does suggest that the Wisdom traditions and the prophetic traditions of διδασκτοὶ θεοῦ are fully realised in Jesus. The issue of adherence to Jesus ('coming to' Jesus) is of vital importance. Yet, for the Jews, who have elsewhere been depicted as those who 'place their hopes in Moses' (5:45), their tight adherence to the words of Scripture *precludes* an understanding of Jesus as the one to whom those Scriptures testify (cf. 5:45-47). John 6:44-45 develops this theme further. This is because in the Johannine perspective, the Scriptures, when correctly understood, witness to Jesus. The divine teaching prophesied as proceeding from the heart of the eschatological Jerusalem (Isa 2:3b; 54:13) is now mediated through Jesus, the bread of life. Just as Jesus embodies the divine presence because he is the new Temple (2:17), here Jesus is presented as the Sent one of the Father, the One through whom all may hear God's words and receive God's teaching.

The citation of Isaiah 54:13 in John 6:45a establishes the revelation that Jesus offers as, on the one hand, the true essence of what the Scriptures pointed to, and on the other hand, as reaching beyond both the content and form of the Scriptures. Jesus' claims go beyond the *content* of the Scriptures in that his unique claims are unprecedented and spark outrage amongst the Jews ('unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you', 6:53). Moreover, Jesus' claims go beyond the *form* of the Scriptures in that no longer is the Torah itself the object of divine instruction – such instruction is accessible in the hearts of all who are receptive to God's 'drawing', and such instruction now centres upon Jesus (6:45). The Torah – which is, for the Jews, the gift of divine teaching – is re-centred in Jesus, who is the 'true' gift to all (6:32).

Boyarin's categories of Logos Asarkos and Logos Ensarkos to describe the Johannine typology of Law/grace (cf. 1:17-18) are relevant here. The same 'Word' of God is at work in the Torah and in the person of Jesus. But Jesus is the 'enfleshed' Word, the Torah is merely the written Word, and so is not as "transparent" as the spoken word. Jesus is the supreme 'teacher' of the divine because – as the enfleshed Word – he speaks the 'words' of God, he "speaks Torah" and so communicates God directly to others.<sup>118</sup> Rather than a strictly supersessionist understanding of Law/grace, Boyarin's model enables one to appreciate the continuity between the revelation of God that came through Moses and the revelation now claimed to be present in Jesus. At the same time, and perhaps paradoxically, this new revelation is present in Jesus in a definitive manner. In the Bread of Life discourse, the Jews continue to adhere strongly to the Logos Asarkos, the written Word that is symbolised by the gift of the heavenly manna, and they cannot see before them the Logos Ensarkos, who claims to be the gift of God and the teacher from God *par excellence* (6:35, 45-46).

This leads into the second consideration raised at the beginning of this section, namely, the significance of Isa 54:13 for the characterisation of the Jews in John 6:44-66. As Obermann has demonstrated, the negative response of the Jews to Jesus' claims – which are both backed up with reference to the Scriptures – is concretised in their 'murmuring' against Jesus (6:40). This murmuring recalls and retells the story of the Israelites rebelling against God and Moses in the wilderness which was a foundational story for all Jews. The Jews' unreceptivity to God's teaching in Jesus is illustrated in their 'murmuring' response to his words, although this response is not limited to the Jews but also characterises the disciples (6:61). In light of

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<sup>118</sup> Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 104. A similar stance is taken by Oskar Skarsaune, *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002) 161. Skarsaune argues that Jesus' interpretation of the Torah indicated that he was now the "authority speaking through it."

the way the context of Isaiah 54:13 is retained in John 6:45a, the ideal reader is invited to characterise the Jews as those who *need* to ‘learn of God’ (cf. 6:45-46). This may be further evidenced in the evangelist’s elimination of ‘your sons’ from the Isaian citation (54:13 LXX) and the consequent focus on ‘all’ people being the recipients of God’s teaching. Once more, this is largely a process of *indirect* character presentation, with the reader inferring character ‘traits’ for the Jews from their response to Jesus.

In the Bread of Life discourse, the Jews demonstrate their very limited understanding of who Jesus is, clinging to what they think they know about his ‘origins’ (6:40). However, the use of πάντες in John 6:45a *does* denote all people in general, and therefore applies even to the Jews, at least potentially. The citation of Isa 54:13 in John 6:45, speaks of themes of hope and post-exilic restoration (cf. Isa 40:3 in John 1:23). The ideal reader is in the process of discovering that despite the universal offer of salvation that God grants in Jesus, there is no universal reception of that salvation (cf. 12:40). The two passages considered in the Bread of Life discourse (6:31, 45) demonstrate the growing stance of hostility and rejection that the Jews exhibit towards Jesus in the Gospel.

#### iv. Conclusion

The ideal reader of the Gospel has seen a pattern at work: each OT citation speaks of Jesus and reveals something of him to his audience. In John 1:23, John (the ‘Baptisers’) citation of Isaiah 40:3 revealed Jesus to be the coming Lord of glory; in 2:17, the narrator’s citation of Psalm 69:9a indicated that Jesus is the true Temple whose risen body would be filled with the glory of God; and in John 6:31 and 6:45 Scripture is used to reveal Jesus as the true Bread from Heaven and as the locus of the eschatological divine teaching. The citation of Exod 16:4

in John 6:31 also carried the allusive motif of the divine glory, revealed in the cloud in the wilderness, as the ancestors of the Jews wandered to the promised Land. The rhetorical purpose of the OT citations in the Gospel's Book of Signs is to lead the implied (and thereby, the ideal) reader of the narrative to faith in Jesus. Mostly, the textual audience of these citations have been the Jews or their representatives (1:27; 6:31, 45), otherwise the Jews have been present in the scene but not addressed by the citation (2:17). Curiously, however, and progressively, the OT citations and their Christological significance only function to alienate the Jews in the text; they become increasingly hostile towards Jesus and close themselves off from him.

As elsewhere in John, so here in the Isaian citation in John 6:45, the Jews are portrayed as unable and unwilling to perceive the δόξα of God in Jesus. According to the Gospel's perspective, God's presence, that is, God's 'glory' is at work in Jesus (cf. 1:14; 2:11), since through him all may encounter and be 'taught' directly by God (6:45a). In the immediate context of this OT citation, Jesus refers to a future moment when believers will be glorified with him, that is, 'raised up' (6:39, 54) on the 'last day'. The inner divine instruction that Jesus mediates to believers not only reveals to them the glory of God but also invariably leads to their own glorification (cf. later, 17:10, 22). The Jews have the opportunity to witness and partake of this glory – as they are included in the referent πάντες, which has an 'absolute' connotation. They do not, however, 'come' to Jesus, and so they stand outside the moment of revelation that he brings. The Scripture thus alienates the Jews, even as it promises them the hope of salvation. Whereas the wider allusions of the Scripture cited in 6:31 were of death and judgment (cf. Psalm 77:24 LXX/Exod 16:4), the wider allusions of Isaiah 54:13 LXX in John 6:45 are of hope and renewal. As the Gospel progresses, the ideal reader will detect another narrative pattern: the broader allusive contexts of each OT citation alternate between



hope/life and judgment/death. In this way one can see that the Jews as characters participate in a re-narration of the larger biblical story where the ‘template’ of promise and loss of promise is already found.<sup>119</sup>

C. John 7:37-39: From His Heart Shall Flow Streams of Living Water (Ps 77:15-16  
LXX/Ezek 47:1-2)

i. Preliminary Considerations

Possibly no two verses in the Gospel of John have been subjected to closer scrutiny or more extensive debate than John 7:37-39. Freed considers the OT citation found in John 7:37-39 to be the “most difficult” citation in the Gospel.<sup>120</sup> This view is echoed in similar language by most other commentators and scholars. There are multiple reasons for the difficulty of the text. One problematic issue is the indeterminable nature of the ‘citation’ in John 7:37-39, as no known textual variant of the MT, LXX or even the Targums verbally corresponds to John 7:38-39 satisfactorily enough to be considered a direct source. A more complex issue is the fact that the text itself is uncertain, and the question of where and how to punctuate the verses has a direct impact upon the meaning of the passage, particularly with regard to the referent of αὐτοῦ – i.e., is the ‘believer’ intended by the referent or is Jesus? This in turn has an effect upon the source text that one finds for the passage. At this point it is imperative to outline and discuss the narrative context of the citation occurring in John 7:37b-39. To this end, I pay

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<sup>119</sup> Cf. Lieu, “Anti-Judaism, the Jews and the Worlds,” 181.

<sup>120</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 23.

particular attention to the ‘shifting’ audience in chapter 7 and how the Jews function within that context.

ii. Outline of the Johannine Text

Following the Bread of Life ‘discourse’ in John 6, Jesus is described as ‘going about in Galilee’ and not wishing to go to Judea because the Jews were ‘looking for a chance to kill him’ (7:1; cf. 5:18). The hostility and murderous intent of the Jews therefore opens this narrative section concerned with Jesus’ presence at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2, 8, 10, 14, 37; 8:12-10:21).<sup>121</sup> This wider narrative section detailing Jesus’ confrontation with the Jews (chapters 7-8) is replete with references to conflict and division (7:14-24, 32-36; 8:31-59; cf. σχίσμα, 7:43; 10:19).<sup>122</sup> As Jesus’ public ministry continues in this section of the narrative, there are increasingly frequent references to division and debate among Jesus’ audience (7:1-2, 10-13, 25, 39). Before the feast begins, a debate arises between Jesus and his brothers (7:1-9), and at the feast in Jerusalem, debate about Jesus takes place between members of the crowd: is Jesus genuinely good, or merely a deceiver? (7:10-13). The attendant Johannine theme of κρίσις also emerges more strongly.<sup>123</sup> The Jews are shocked by Jesus’ words, and the choice they make for or against Jesus reveals the judgment upon them (cf. 7:33-36: ‘unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins’).

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<sup>121</sup> A fuller discussion on the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles for my argument can be found in section 4.3.3.2 below.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 122.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Moloney, *John*, 236.

The reasons for the conflict in chapter 7 are in part also due to the doubt and incredulity of Jesus' interlocutors over Jesus' claims to have learnt from God (7:14-24) and to have come from God (7:25-36), twin themes that also emerge strongly in the Bread of Life discourse (cf. 6:33, 37; cf. 6:45-46). Unlike the previous passages in the Gospel where Scripture was cited (1:23; 2:27; 6:31, 45), the narrative audience of John 7:37-39 is diverse and varied. As Jesus defends his claim to speak God's words and to be God's agent his audience shifts repeatedly. This makes for a dense reading experience, especially since the response of each audience to Jesus differs somewhat, as will shortly be illustrated. For the purpose of this analysis, the Tabernacles narrative in John 7 can be divided into five sections, determined by the way the narrative audience shifts.<sup>124</sup>

The first section (7:1-13) introduces the feast of Tabernacles and has already been mentioned above; it deals mainly with the division in Jesus' family and a later division among members of the public. The second section (7:14-24) deals with conflict arising from the source of Jesus' learning, while the third section (7:25-36) deals with conflict arising from the source of Jesus' being, i.e., his identity and 'origin.' In the former section, 'the crowd' and the Jews are Jesus' primary interlocutors, but in the latter the 'Jerusalemites' come to the fore. The fourth section (7:32-39) deals mainly with the response of the 'Pharisees' and 'chief priests' to Jesus; it is within this context that Scripture is cited (7:37-39). The fifth and final section (7:40-52) deals with the responses of these various groups to Jesus and his words.

In the second section (7:14-24), which is situated in the 'middle' of the feast of Tabernacles (7:14), questions about the source of Jesus' learning arise, and two main groups of

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<sup>124</sup> In John's Gospel the Tabernacles narrative extends from 7:1 to 10:21. I only focus upon the Tabernacles narrative as it occurs in John 7 because the OT citation is situated in this context (7:37-39).

interlocutors emerge: the Jews (who resurface in 7:1, 11, 13, 15, 35; 8:22, 48, 52, 57) and ‘the crowd’ (cf. 7:12, 20, 40-41, 49). The Jews are on the look-out for Jesus (7:11) but it is the crowd who are described as the agents of the ‘murmuring’ that takes place about Jesus (7:12a: καὶ γογγυσμὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ ἦν πολὺς; cf. 6:40-41). Already the people at the festival are divided: some argue that Jesus is a ‘good man’ (7:12a) while others state that he is leading ‘the crowd’ astray (7:12b). When Jesus begins to defend the authoritative source of his learning (namely from the Father, 7:16-18 and the Scriptures 7:19-23), the reaction of the Jews is mentioned as one of ‘marvelling’ (ἐθαύμαζον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, 7:15).<sup>125</sup> Jesus’ next words provide a clue to suggest that the reaction of the Jews is not entirely positive: he accuses this group of seeking their ‘own glory’ and tells them that he seeks the glory that comes from God (cf. 7:17-19). The same contrast between divine and human ‘glory’ has already emerged in 5:44, when Jesus explicitly accused the Jews of seeking human δόξα and therefore being unable to believe in Jesus. Jesus further adds that the Jews seek to kill him and so do not keep the Law (7:19). ‘The crowd’ then judge Jesus to be ‘possessed by a demon’ (7:20). At the conclusion of this section, Jesus accuses both groups for judging according to ‘appearances,’ rather than judging truly, or according to Jesus’ ‘being’ (7:24).

The third section deals with Jesus’ identity, which in characteristically Johannine language is framed in terms of his ‘origin’ and his ‘destiny’ (7:25-36).<sup>126</sup> At this point a third separate group of interlocutors emerge. These are the ‘Jerusalemites’, or ‘some from Jerusalem’ (τινες ἐκ τῶν Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν, 7:25). They occur nowhere else as a specifically designated

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<sup>125</sup> Schnackenburg calls this response a “sceptical unbelieving” (see *The Gospel*, vol 2, 463, n 45).

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 125.

group in the Gospel narrative.<sup>127</sup> They function in this section as curious spectators who claim to ‘know’ about Jesus’ origins but ironically reveal only their ignorance. In this way they resemble the Jews of 6:40-42 who claimed to ‘know’ Jesus because they knew his parentage. The main point to note is that the theme of knowledge pervades this third section: the verb γινώσκω occurs five times in six verses (7:27a, b, 28a, 28b, 29a). The Jerusalemites wonder whether Jesus could be the Christ (7:26b), but they are hesitant to affirm this because they ‘know’ where Jesus ‘comes from’ (7:27a) and tradition tells them that the Christ’s origins will be obscure (7:27b). Jesus responds by crying out (ἐκράξεν) a rhetorical question: ‘you know me and you know where I come from?’ (7:28).<sup>128</sup> He then proceeds to call into question their so-called ‘knowledge’ by claiming that he has been ‘sent’ from God (7:28b); in other words, Jesus has not hailed from a geographical district that might be the determinative factor for his identity as Christ. Again, Jesus’ words provoke a divided response: some (presumably the authoritative ‘Jews’) seek to arrest him, but to no avail (7:30), while ‘many’ (πολλοί) of the previously incredulous crowd are said to believe in him (7:31). This ‘belief’ however, is shown up to be inadequate by Johannine standards, as the ‘many’ begin to question whether the coming Christ will outperform Jesus with respect to signs and wonders (7:31).<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Although it could validly be argued that these are the ‘priests and Levites’ sent from the Jews in Jerusalem (1:19) and who question John about his identity as the Christ. Here in chapter 7 this group also wonders whether Jesus could be the Christ.

<sup>128</sup> NA<sup>27</sup> does not place a question mark, but translates the medial point into a full-stop.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. John 2:23-25, where in the context of Jerusalem and the Temple, a number of Jesus’ followers are said (in a narratorial aside) to believe in Jesus *only* on the basis of ‘signs and wonders’. Yet in Second Temple Judaism there was no general expectation that the Messiah would perform miracles (see Ashton, *Understanding*, 273-278; cf. Moloney, *John*, 248). The ‘many of the crowd’ (ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου) who here hope for signs and wonders of the Christ may be voicing an expectation of the Mosaic Prophet (cf. Deut 18:20; Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 162-164). Boismard has shown how the terms ὁ προφήτης and ὁ χριστός in John 7:40b-41a are to be read in tandem with each other (see Boismard, *Moses or Jesus*, 28-29). Notably, in 7:40b the crowd speak of *the*

The fourth section in the Tabernacles narrative of chapter 7 (7:32-39) sees the emergence of a fourth group, namely, the Pharisees and the chief priests (7:32a-b, 45, 48). They are described as having heard the ‘murmuring’ of the ‘crowd’ and they subsequently send out temple officials to arrest Jesus (7:32). To this rival group of ‘senders’, Jesus cryptically promises that his time with them will be short and that soon he will depart to be with ‘the one who sent’ him (7:33). A great gulf separates Jesus from this group: they will seek Jesus in vain, for when he has returned to the Father they will not be able to access that realm (7:34). The Jews are revealed to have been among Jesus’ audience during this minor discourse: they are depicted as confusedly discussing amongst themselves the meaning Jesus’ words, completely misunderstanding his words, and thinking that he intends to leave Judea and teach the Greeks (7:35).

It is at this point that Jesus cites from ‘the Scripture’ (7:37b-39), and it is here that the plot of the narrative in chapter 7 culminates. It is said to be ‘the last day of the festival, the great day’ when Jesus stands and ‘cries out’ his invitation to the ‘thirsty’ to come and ‘drink,’ citing Scripture to the effect that ‘streams of living water’ will flow ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ (7:37).<sup>130</sup> The rhetorical effect of this narrative climax is not insignificant. Various textual

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‘Prophet’, denoting the Mosaic eschatological Prophet (Deut 18:18), in contrast with the chief priests’ mention of ‘a prophet’ in 7:52.

<sup>130</sup> The complex issue of the referent of αὐτοῦ is discussed further below. The ‘last day’ of the Feast of Tabernacles might be the seventh day, with the water-drawing rituals, or the additional eighth day (cf. Lev23:36) of solemn assembly, but neither day is attested as the ‘great day’ in the extant Jewish literature. For a discussion, see Brown, *John*, 1:327, who argues that the seventh day is meant; cf. Zane C. Hodges, “Rivers of Living Water – John 7:37-39,” *BSac* 136 (1979): 247. Other scholars argue that the eighth day is meant because no ceremonies took place on that day, and in the absence of their liturgical symbolism, Jesus reveals himself as the true source of living water (cf. Barrett, *The Gospel*, 326; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 297-298). I find it more convincing that Jesus would reveal himself as the source of Life-giving water if the ‘last’ day was the

audiences have shifted and changed up to this point, some coming into focus, others retreating into the background, and each audience embodying a particular response to Jesus. In the four sections of the text outline thus far there have been four different groups engaging with or responding to Jesus' words. At this point in the narrative, *all* of these groups are assumed to be present to hear Jesus' citation of Scripture.

The fifth and final section deals with the response of these groups to the OT citation (7:40-52). As in the previous OT citations in the Gospel, Jesus' words spark division. Part of the crowd believes Jesus to be the 'Prophet' (7:40) and others (perhaps the Jerusalemites, cf. 7:26b) believe him to be the Christ (7:41a). Once more there is a dispute about the origins of the Christ: surely the Christ does not come from Galilee? (7:41b). Strikingly, the crowd here have recourse to the Scriptures themselves, arguing that the Christ must be of Davidic lineage (7:42). 'Some' again want to arrest Jesus (probably the Jews, 7:44; cf. 7:11), but no one moves forward to do so. The remaining section of the Tabernacles narrative describes the debates amongst the authoritative figures (chief priests and Pharisees) about Jesus and their definitive conclusion: the Prophet does not arise in Galilee (7:45-52).<sup>131</sup> These responses can be summarised in point form below:

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seventh day, as this day centred upon the water-drawing rituals and would therefore have been immediately relevant.

<sup>131</sup> I argued that in John 6 the crowd and the Jews were indistinguishable; here in John 7 they appear as separate groups. The Jews are authoritative figures who can kill and arrest Jesus (7:1, 11, 44). In this respect they are merged with the Pharisees and the chief Priests (7:45-52). But the crowd, the Jerusalemites and the people are all distinguished, not blurred together, at least in terms of their response to Jesus.

- *The ‘crowd’*: Jesus might be *the* Prophet (7:40); he is a good man (7:7:12a), but he leads the people astray (7:13b) and is possessed (7:20); he may or may not be the Christ (7:41b-42).
- *The ‘many’ (of the crowd)*: believe in Jesus but based on the signs he may be expected to work (7:31).
- *The Jerusalemites*: Jesus might be the Christ (7:26b, 27a), but his earthly origins are known and these obscure his divine origins (7:27a).
- *The Pharisees*: Jesus leads the people astray (7:47).
- *The Chief Priests*: Jesus cannot be a Prophet (7:52); he must be arrested (7:45).
- *The Jews*: seek to arrest Jesus (7:1, 30); they are confused by his words (7:35).

Having outlined and discussed the narrative structure of chapter 7, I now turn to the various issues surrounding the OT citation in John 7:37-39.

### iii. The Contexts of Ps 77:15-16 LXX and Ezek 47:1-2 for an Understanding of John 7:37-39

I have already mentioned the fact that John 7:37b-39 is a notoriously difficult text for three reasons. The first is that the text itself is ambiguous and is variously attested on the issue of punctuation. The second, and related point, is that the punctuation of the verses impacts upon the meaning of the clause, particularly with regard to the referent of αὐτοῦ (7:38b). The third is that an exact OT source-text is difficult – indeed impossible – to find for John 7:37b-39 and this holds whether αὐτοῦ is taken to refer to Jesus or to the believer. In order to proceed with my argument about the allusive context of the OT citation in John 7:37b-39, it is



necessary to briefly discuss these disputed issues and make a judgment about the punctuation of the text and the referent of αὐτοῦ, as well as a possible source for the citation.

a. Punctuation and Referent of αὐτοῦ

It is widely acknowledged that there are two options for punctuating John 7:37b-38. The first, which, following Cortés,<sup>132</sup> I call ‘option A’, places a full-stop after πινέτω and a comma after εἰς ἐμέ, making the verses read thus:

ἐάν τις διψᾷ ἐρχέσθω πρὸς με καὶ πινέτω. ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ, καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή, ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ῥεύσουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος.

(If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. **The one** who believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water shall flow from **his** inside).

In this reading, ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ (‘he who believes in me’) functions as a pendent nominative – that is, a substantive subject at the beginning of the sentence taken up again in the latter part of the sentence, but replaced by the pronoun (αὐτοῦ) as syntactically required. Punctuating the text in this way enables one to interpret αὐτοῦ as referring to the believer, i.e. ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ. Grammatically this entails a shift in case from the nominative to the genitive, but whilst unusual in English, this construction is quite common in Greek and in fact occurs elsewhere in John’s Gospel (cf. 1:12; 6:39; 8:45; 15:2; 17:2). This reading has the

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<sup>132</sup> Juan B. Cortés, “Yet Another Look at John 7,37-38,” *CBQ* 29 (1967): 75. Cortés himself prefers ‘option A’; cf. also his earlier study on the issue, Juan B. Cortés, “Torrentes de agua viva: Una nueva interpretación de Juan 7,37-38?” *EstBib* 16 (1957): 279-306; Cortés’ work is discussed in M. E. Boismard, “De son ventre coulerant des fleuves d’eau (Jo. VII, 38),” *RB* 65 (1958): 536-538.

support of several important early witnesses and is also favoured by the Patristic authors.<sup>133</sup>

Among the modern commentators preferring this punctuation are Barrett, Haenchen, and Lindars.<sup>134</sup> It is often adduced in favour of this interpretation that Jesus had previously promised ‘springs of living water’ to well up from within those who believed in him (cf. 4:14).<sup>135</sup>

The second option for punctuating the text, which again, following Cortés, I call ‘option B’, places a full-stop after πρὸς με and a comma after εἰς ἐμέ, making the verses read thus:

ἐάν τις διψᾷ ἐρχέσθω πρὸς με. καὶ πινέτω ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ, καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή,  
ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ῥεύσουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος.

(If anyone thirst let him come to me/and let drink he who believes in me, as Scripture says, rivers of living water shall flow from his inside).

This option produces what commentators take to be a typically Johannine couplet in parallelism (cf. 6:35b). This reading is supported by Brown, Bultmann, Beasley-Murray, Carson, Dodd, Hoskyns, Moloney and Schnackenburg.<sup>136</sup> In this case the text is still unclear,

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<sup>133</sup> P<sup>66</sup> and P<sup>75</sup> specifically, also followed by NA<sup>27</sup>. For a discussion of the Patristic support for option A and option B, see Boismard, “De son ventre coulerant,” 423-546; Hugo Rahner, “Flumina de ventre Christi: Die patristische Auslegung von Joh 7,37-38,” *Bib* 22 (1941): 269-302; 367-403; Michael A. Daise, “If Anyone Thirsts, Let That One Come to Me and Drink’: The Literary Texture of John 7:37b-38a,” *JBL* 122, no. 4 (2003): 688-689.

<sup>134</sup> Barrett, *The Gospel*, 326-327; Ernst Haenchen, *John* Vol 2. trans. R. W. Funk, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 17; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 301.

<sup>135</sup> See for example, Barrett, *The Gospel*, 327.

<sup>136</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 1:320-325; Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, 303; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 115-116; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 325; Dodd, *The Interpretation*, 349, n. 2; E. C. Hoskyns,

however, whether the referent of αὐτοῦ is Jesus or the believer. The reference to Scripture (καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή) is likewise ambiguous, as it may be taken with what precedes (the couplet itself) or with what follows (the promise of living water). However, because in John's Gospel the 'formulae' introducing Scripture always *precedes* the actual citation (cf. 1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 35) it is best to understand the referent of καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή as the promise of living water, as set out above.

Punctuation option 'B' is more popular among modern commentators and scholars because it facilitates a 'Christological' interpretation of the text. Although the referent of αὐτοῦ may be either the believer or Jesus, scholars accepting this punctuation generally argue that because in the context Jesus is promising to quench the thirst of the believer, the 'living water' can only logically be understood as having its source in Jesus. Menken, Coloe and Cortés, however, find serious problems with this option.<sup>137</sup> All three scholars critique the 'accuracy' of the so-called Johannine parallelism found in the clause on the following grounds: other passages in the Gospel display a pattern of invitation/promise that approximates to poetic parallelism, e.g., 'he who believes in me will never thirst' (6:35b), 'whoever believes in me... a spring of water will well up from within' (4:14). Here 'coming' to Jesus is expressed by the alimentary metaphor of eating and drinking (6:53), and these are equivalent to the act of believing in Jesus. 'Eating' Jesus leads to eternal life (6:50) as does believing in Jesus (6:47-49, 50-57). With this in mind, and turning to John 7:37b-39 one finds a significant incongruity. If the metaphorical word 'thirst' in the first line of the 'parallelism' is to be repeated in plain terms in the second line, it would be rendered, 'believe.' Thus the

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*The Fourth Gospel*, ed. F. N. Davey (London: Faber & Faber, 1947), 320-324; Moloney, *John*, 252-256; and Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 2:154.

<sup>137</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 190; Cortés, "Yet Another Look," 76-77; Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 127-128.

parallelism would read: ‘If anyone *thirst* let him come to me/and let *believe* he who believes in me,’ and in the words of Menken, this is “an evident and meaningless tautology.”<sup>138</sup> Coloe, moreover, rejects ‘option B’ on the further basis that, if the whole of John 7:37-38 is to be understood as the direct speech of Jesus, it would be nonsensical for Jesus to speak about himself in the third person.<sup>139</sup> However, if Jesus is quoting from Scripture, retaining a third-person pronoun with reference to himself would not be entirely anomalous.<sup>140</sup>

Despite the problems with ‘option B’ in terms of punctuation, Menken favours reading the referent of αὐτοῦ as Jesus and *not* the believer on the basis of the wider context and theological orientation of the Gospel as a whole. As Menken states, “[T]he entire episode of John 7-8 is an ongoing discussion about Jesus’ identity as God’s eschatological envoy; this context strongly suggests that Jesus speaks in 7:38c about himself.”<sup>141</sup> To this could be added the fact that the narrator’s proleptic reference to the Spirit and Jesus’ glorification (7:39) points in the direction of a ‘Christological’ reading of 7:37b-38 as the reader comes to know that this is achieved through Jesus’ death on the cross.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, if αὐτοῦ in 7:38 referred to the believer instead of Jesus this would contradict the ‘logic’ of the patterns inscribed by the implied author with respect to the OT citations in the Gospel thus far. The reader of the Gospel comes to expect that when the OT is cited it refers to *Jesus*, specifically, to expound a self-revelatory statement based on the Scripture’s witness. So, as this thesis has shown, Isaiah 40:3 is cited in John 1:23 to reveal Jesus as the coming ‘Lord’ of glory; Psalm 68:9a is cited in 2:17 to reveal Jesus as the new Temple; Psalm 77:24 LXX and Exodus 16:4 are alluded to

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<sup>138</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 191.

<sup>139</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 128.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 188.

<sup>141</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 192.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Moloney, *John*, 253.

in 6:31 to reveal Jesus as the true bread from heaven; and Isaiah 54:14 is cited in 6:45 to reveal Jesus as the definitive locus of the divine instruction. In John 7:37-39, ἡ γραφή is called upon to reveal Jesus as the new source of Living Water for all.

Menken strikes a compromise between the obvious sense of 7:37b-39 with reference to Jesus, and the preferred punctuation expressed in option A above. He argues for the possibility of retaining the pendent nominative construction while still making the clause imply that Jesus is the source of the living waters. To do this, Menken proposes that the pendent nominative is resumed *not* in the genitive pronoun αὐτοῦ but in the accusative pronoun ἐμέ.<sup>143</sup> It could be paraphrased thus: ‘He who believes in **me**, for him, as scripture has said, ‘rivers of living water shall flow from his inside.’<sup>144</sup> Schnackenburg expresses exactly the same idea in his commentary, with similar wording.<sup>145</sup> Thus the clause does not bear the semantic problems of option B, but still accords with the primacy of the Johannine Christology that surfaces so frequently in the Gospel text, particularly on the occasions when Scripture is cited.

Finally, a couple of other scholars do not consider option ‘A’ or option ‘B’ viable when interpreting John 7:37-39.<sup>146</sup> For example, Freed argues that both options have advantages and drawbacks, and does not choose one way or the other.<sup>147</sup> But perhaps the most original alternative comes from Günter Reim, who rejects both traditional punctuation options as

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<sup>143</sup> Cf. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 193.

<sup>144</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 193, (my emphasis).

<sup>145</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 154.

<sup>146</sup> A ‘third option’ is to read John 7:38b as an adverbial modifier of 7:38a, referring to Scripture as a whole. This option is taken up by Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cat. Lect.* 16.11); John Chrysostom, (*Hom. Jo.* 51.1); and Jerome, (*Comm. Zach.* 3.14, 8.9.309-13). These texts are referred to in Daise, “‘If Anyone Thirsts,’” 688-689, footnote 6. Supporting this option is the fact that John refers to ‘Scripture’ in the singular; but cf. 1:23; 6:31 and 12:14-15 when ἡ γραφή is used in the singular but still refers to an identifiable passage in the OT.

<sup>147</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 24.

unsatisfactory. He argues that no OT source can be found for either option (water flowing from one who believes or from an unspecified person) and that any ‘parallelisms’ suggested are “logically, critically and theologically unviable.”<sup>148</sup> Reim’s suggestion is that the *content* of the OT citation in 7:37-39 is actually “Wer an mich glaubt” – ‘who(ever) believes in me’ (7:37), which directly precedes the καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή formula.<sup>149</sup> He bases this suggestion on a comparative schema he detects in Jesus’ self-revelatory statements, which for the sake of brevity can be tabulated as follows:<sup>150</sup>

Schema	E.g. John 8:12	Compare: John 7:38
Revelatory statement	“I am the Light of the World”	—
Pre-condition	“Whoever follows me...”	“Whoever believes in me” (Wer an mich glaubt)
Negative promise	“Will not walk in darkness”	+ <i>Replaced with an insertion,</i> <i>“as the Scripture says”</i>
Positive promise	“But will have the light of life”	“Streams of living water will flow from his insides”

Reim argues for a definite OT source text for the phrase ‘Wer an mich glaubt,’ namely Isaiah 28:16 MT (לִכְנֵן כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה הִנְנִי יֹסֵד בְּצִיּוֹן אֶבֶן אֶבֶן).<sup>151</sup> The verse in John is subject to

<sup>148</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 70.

<sup>149</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 68.

<sup>150</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 68.

<sup>151</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 71.

Christological interpretation, as in 1 Pt 2:4-8 where the Isaian theme of the foundation-stone (cf. Isa 8:14; 28:16) is ‘Christianised’ in the context of themes of faith and life.<sup>152</sup> In John 7:37, according to Reim, Jesus identifies himself with the ‘stone’ of Isaiah 28:16 in a messianic sense – this supposedly explains the people’s reaction to him (‘Is he the Messiah/Prophet?’ 7:42).<sup>153</sup> But in the Johannine tradition, the stone of Isa 28:16 has been conflated with the rock that sprang forth water in the wilderness.<sup>154</sup> Thus streams of living water flow from Jesus’ body, as he is both Rock and Foundation-Stone.

As ingenious as Reim’s argument is, I take the position that the traditional ‘punctuation options’ are in fact ‘viable.’ As already mentioned it is unlikely that the content of the Scriptural citation precedes the ‘formula,’ as Reim would have it. On the matter of punctuation, I consider it best to follow the suggestions of Menken and Schnackenburg and to keep a pendent nominative construction so that the Christological meaning of the passage is foregrounded. As the argument of this thesis has shown so far, the sense of the passage bears upon Jesus and what he reveals about himself in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles. As our analysis of the Gospel thus far has shown, the narrative-rhetorical function of the OT citations is to ‘make sense’ of Jesus in order to bring his interlocutors to faith. So too with 7:37b-38: Jesus reveals himself to be the source of living water for all during the ‘last day’ of the Feast of Tabernacles, which, as tradition has it, centred upon the water-drawing rituals (the seventh day). It remains now to discuss the possible source(s) of the citation in 7:38, having determined the preferable punctuation of the text (option B) and the referent of αὐτοῦ. This will then lead into a discussion of the context of the cited text for what it reveals

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<sup>152</sup> Cf. Reim, *Studien*, 73, 88.

<sup>153</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 82.

<sup>154</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 85. Reim finds support for this argument in Isa 58:11; CD 3:15-17; 6:3; 4 Ezra 14:38-47; 1 Pt 2:4; John 4:14; and *Gos. Thom.* 108 (Reim, *Studien*, 85-88).

about the response of the Jews to Jesus in the wider context of the Tabernacles narrative in John 7.

b. Source and Contexts of the Citation

No consensus has been reached in the scholarship over a definite source text for John's citation in 7:37-39. One reason for this may be that the web of intertextual relations spins in far too complex a manner, particularly when taking into consideration the narrator's immediate commentary on the verses:

‘Now he [Jesus] said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit because Jesus was not yet glorified’ (7:39).

So many Scriptural elements and themes converge at this point (water, Spirit, the quenching of thirst, belief) that a myriad of OT texts could plausibly be considered as sources. So, for example, Freed lists a total of thirty-six OT texts that he thinks are likely “sources” for John 7:37-39.<sup>155</sup> Carson, on the other hand, finds it unnecessary to seek an OT source text describing water “flowing from a belly,” and argues that Scripture may be cited in John 7:37-

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<sup>155</sup> The main ‘contenders’ according to Freed, are: Isa 12:3; 43:19; 44:3; 55:1; 58:11; Zech 14:8; Jer 2:13; 17:13; Prov 18:4 (see Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 21-22). Freed then adds more possible source texts: Deut 8:15; Ps 36:9; 46:5; Joel 3:18; Zech 13:1; Prov 5:15; 18:4 (LXX); Sir 15:3; 24:28-32; Song 4:15; Isa 32:1; 35:5-7; 41:18; 43:19-21; 49:10; Jer 2:13; 17:13; Ezek 36:25-27; 47:1-12; and also considers allusive parallels in the OT Pseudepigrapha: *Jub.* 8:19; *1 En.* 17:4; 22:9; 96:6 (Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 23).



39 “to ground the entire matrix of thought” expressed in the passage.<sup>156</sup> Carson therefore finds Neh 8:5-18 and Neh 9:15, 19-20 more relevant as source-texts, as together they speak of the promise of the Spirit and the messianic, eschatological blessings, as well as conveying other pertinent themes such as manna, water and Tabernacles.<sup>157</sup> Given the almost endless list of possible sources, it is wise to consider that John may here be conflating one or more (perhaps even several) OT texts, weaving them together to suit his Christological agenda.

#### 1) Psalm 77:15-16 LXX

Scholars favouring a ‘Christological’ reading of John 7:37b-39 have proposed a number of possible OT source-texts for the citation. Often what determines the issue is how one understands κοιλία in v. 38b. When used elsewhere in John’s Gospel, κοιλία means ‘womb’ (cf. 3:4), but in Septuagintal Greek it can mean ‘belly’ or the physical ‘insides’ of a person.<sup>158</sup> It is possible that John substituted κοιλία for the Greek καρδία (‘heart’, ‘inner self’), thus using the noun in a metaphorical sense, since the LXX sometimes uses κοιλία as a synonym for καρδία.<sup>159</sup> Either way, according to a ‘Christological’ reading of the text, streams of ‘living water’ are depicted as flowing from the insides of Jesus, whether the ‘streams’ are taken in a literal or metaphorical sense.

Some scholars and commentators have mentioned the possibility that κοιλία in John 7:38b could be a mistaken rendering of the Aramaic ܡܢ which literally means ‘out of him’ and

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<sup>156</sup> Carson, *The Gospel*, 325.

<sup>157</sup> Carson, *The Gospel*, 325.

<sup>158</sup> See LXX Gen 41:21; Jon 2:1; Ezra 3:3; this sense is also very well attested in the secular Greek literature. See Johannes Behm, “κοιλία,” *TDNT* III: 786.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Carson, *The Gospel*, 324.

requires only a change in inflection. If this were the case, then the source of the citation may even lie in a Targumic text, as Schnackenburg proposes. He suggests the Targum of Psalm 77:24 LXX as a likely source, based as it is upon the Israelite's wilderness wanderings and their reception of the water from the rock at the hands of Moses.<sup>160</sup> It reads: "he made *streams of water* come from the rock and caused them to come down like *rivers of flowing water*." As close as this is to John's usage, the likelihood of an Aramaic background to the Gospel in general, and a Targumic passage for this verse in particular, is slight.<sup>161</sup> Moreover, ܢܠ would more likely be rendered into Greek as σῶμα, not κοιλία (which points more in the direction of טבור (centre, navel) or בטן (belly, womb)).<sup>162</sup>

These issues aside, it is nevertheless commonly suggested that John was drawing on the motif of the wilderness wanderings for his citation, although from the biblical rather than Targumic traditions. Schnackenburg, Beasley-Murray, Menken, and Daly-Denton all argue that Ps 78:15-16 (MT; Ps 77:15-16 LXX) is a likely source for John's citation in 7:38b.<sup>163</sup> The LXX version of the text reads: διέρρηξεν πέτραν ἐν ἐρήμῳ, καὶ ἐπότισεν αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐν ἄβυσσῳ πολλῇ. καὶ ἐξήγαγεν ὕδων ἐκ πέτρας, καὶ κατήγαγεν ὡς ποταμοὺς ὕδατα. Unlike Exod 17:1-7 and Num 20:1-13, which both relate the story of the water flowing from the rock in the wilderness, Ps 77:15-16/78:15-16 displays a close verbal correspondence to

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<sup>160</sup> Schnackenburg, *John*, 2:155; cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 116.

<sup>161</sup> So, Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 189.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Barrett, *John*, 328. Burney, *Aramaic Origin*, argues that ܢܠ when used of things means 'out of the midst' (so Zech 14:8, out of the midst of Jerusalem flows water); but when ܢܠ is used of people it means belly or bowels. Burney argues that John may have adapted the meaning of ܢܠ to suggest that Jesus is the new Jerusalem. John may have transferred the source of living water from Jerusalem, the 'navel of the earth', to Jesus, (see the further discussion in Freed, *The Old Testament Quotations*, 26, 30).

<sup>163</sup> Beasley-Murray, *John*, 116; Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 144-163; Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 195-196; Schnackenburg, *John*, 155.

John 7:37b-38. However, the correspondence is not exact, and this has led to suggestions that John has here combined two or more OT texts in his citation. For example, Menken argues that John used Ps 77:16 LXX for the main part of the citation but drew on Zech 14:8 for the epithet “living” (ζῶν) which is absent from the Psalm.<sup>164</sup> Daly-Denton is more inclined to find a “veritable web of other ‘Scriptures’” behind John’s use of ζῶντος, such as Zech 14:8 and Ezek 47:1-2 which describe ‘living waters’ flowing from Jerusalem *and* the Temple respectively.<sup>165</sup> Daly-Denton posits another “strand” woven into the texture of Ps 77:16 and taken up in John 7:37-39, namely Isa 44:3a, b, which reads: ὅτι ἐγὼ δώσω ὕδωρ ἐν δίψει τοῖς πορευομένοις ἐν ἀνύδρῳ, ἐπιθήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου. In this way, John’s merging of the themes of water, thirst, streams and the Spirit can be accounted for.<sup>166</sup>

Rarely does one find a scholar who objects to the possibility that Ps 77:15-16 (or the biblical motif of the water from the rock) could have influenced John at this point in the Gospel. However, one such scholar is Donald Carson, who rejects the hypothesis on the grounds that “rocks do not have bellies.”<sup>167</sup> In other words, how does one explain John’s use of κοιλία if Ps 77 LXX/ 78 MT is considered to be the background for John’s citation? Menken suggests that Ps 77:20 LXX provides a clue. The Psalmist uses the words ἐκ πέτρας to describe the water flowing from the rock, and Menken argues that because John uses the same grammatical construction (i.e. ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ), the noun κοιλία could likely have functioned as a substitute for πέτρας in John’s mind.<sup>168</sup> Whether or not this is entirely

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<sup>164</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 202.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 150-151.

<sup>166</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 152.

<sup>167</sup> Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 328, n. 2.

<sup>168</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 196, 197; followed by Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 151.

convincing, Ps 77 LXX/Ps 78 MT remains the strongest possible source text for John 7:38 for a couple of other reasons that will here be explained.

One reason is that the Feast of Tabernacles (which provides the narrative setting for John 7:37b-39) recalled the miracle of the water from the rock in its liturgical celebration, commemorating the wilderness years.<sup>169</sup> The liturgy of the feast included prayers for rain, the procession to Siloam and the gathering of the ‘living water’ that was carried back to the Temple for lustrations. Of Israel’s three pilgrimage feasts (the other two being Passover and Dedication), Tabernacles focused most on joy and gratitude to God.<sup>170</sup> The Feast of Tabernacles is referred to in the major festival calendars in the Pentateuch (Exod 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Deut 16:1-17; Lev 23:33-36; 39-43). Originally an agricultural feast celebrating the grain harvest and modelled on the ancient Canaanite festivities, Tabernacles centred upon the dwelling of the people in ‘booths’ out in the fields.<sup>171</sup> The feast lasted seven days, with a special eighth day added for Sabbath observance (cf. Lev 23:36). Pilgrims would ‘come up’ to Jerusalem for the feast, dwelling in specially made ‘booths’ (or ‘shelters’, cf. Neh 8:13-18). Over time the theological significance of the feast came to fuller expression when it was

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<sup>169</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 121; Glasson, *Moses*, 48; Balfour, “The Jewishness,” 377. The water-drawing rituals also remembered Moses as a ‘well-giver’ in the wilderness, the well being a symbol for the Torah (cf. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 121). Cf. section I.A.i of this chapter, where the symbolic role of the manna in relation to the Torah was discussed. Joel Marcus favours Isa 12:3 as the source text for John’s citation in 7:37-39 for the same reason, i.e. the Tabernacles background of the narrative. Marcus states that Isa 12:3, “with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” relate clearly to the main celebratory thrust of the feast and that the text may even have had Tabernacles as its *Sitz-im-Leben*. See Joel Marcus, “Rivers of Living Water from Jesus’ Belly (John 7:38),” *JBL* 117, no. 2 (1998): 328.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. Håkan Ulfsgård, *The Story of Sukkot: The Setting, Shape and Sequel of the Biblical Feast of Tabernacles* (BGBE 34; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 86.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. George W. MacRae, “The Meaning and Evolution of the Feast of Tabernacles,” *CBQ* 22 (1960): 251-76. It is not clear whether this practice had the purpose of protecting the harvest or of temporarily housing the farmers (see MacRae, “The Meaning,” 255).

“historicised” to reflect the journeying of the Israelites in the wilderness. This is clear in Lev 23:42-43, where the reason for dwelling in booths is given: YHWH made the Israelites dwell in ‘booths’ during the course of their sojourn through the desert – thus all of Israel must joyfully commemorate God’s loving protection by dwelling in booths during the annual feast.

Another possible reason for favouring a loose citation of Psalm 77:15-16 in John 7:37-39 is that in post-Exilic times the Feast of Tabernacles took on a distinctly eschatological character. The celebration of Tabernacles came to anticipate the end-times when all the nations would gather to worship the God of Israel, with the ‘word of the Lord going forth from Jerusalem’ (cf. Isa 2:2-4; cf. the previous discussion of John 6:45). A signal text for this eschatological motif was Zech 14:16-19, a text that in later times formed part of the synagogue liturgy for the feast.<sup>172</sup> The fact that Tabernacles was otherwise called the ‘feast of ingathering’ (Exod 23:16; 34:22) may also attest this eschatological motif, since at the ‘end time’ the nations would gather to Israel (cf. Isa 40-66) and life-giving waters would flow for Zion (Zech 14:8). In line with the future-oriented aspect of Tabernacles, later rabbinic tradition spoke of the ‘second Redeemer’ – another Moses figure – bringing forth water and manna for the people once more and thereby replicating in the end times the dual gift of God that satiated the Israelites in the wilderness (*Qoh. Rab.* 6:18).<sup>173</sup>

Related to this is the like-minded move made in the early Christian tradition wherein Jesus was typologically identified with the Rock that gave forth water in the wilderness (cf. 1 Cor 10). As such, Jesus fulfilled the messianic expectations associated with Tabernacles. When the narrator’s comment on the imminent gift of the Spirit to the world is considered in this

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<sup>172</sup> Cf. Gail A. Yee, *Jewish Feasts and the Gospel of John* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989), 74.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 156.

light (John 7:39b), it could be argued that John understood and exploited these traditions. The eschatological torrents of water anticipated in the messianic age “now flow from Jesus, the new Temple, the pierced rock” ... Jesus is “the new Moses” who not only gives water but is the *source* of water for all.<sup>174</sup>

A final reason for considering Ps 77:15-16 as John’s source in this instance is that the same Psalm has already been used in the Bread of Life discourse (Ps 77:24 cited in John 6:31). There, the focus was upon Moses’ presumed provision of manna for the Israelites wandering in the desert. The response of the Jews at the level of the Gospel text recalled the ‘murmuring’ of the Israelites against Moses and thus against God (Exod 16:8b). Here, in John 7:37-39 the focus is on Jesus’ provision of water for all who ‘thirst’. This also echoes the wilderness story, specifically when Moses drew water from the rock to satiate the thirst of the Israelites (cf. Ps 77:15-16, 20; cf. Num 20:1-13). In the context of John 7:37-39, the people have also been described as ‘murmuring’ (7:12-32) about Jesus and questioning his identity (7:40-52). The use of Ps 77:15-16 in John 7:37-39 hints that even if the water miracle quenched the thirst of the Israelites it did not quell their rebellious spirit. It is plausible, then, that John has recast the wilderness narrative across chapters 6-7 of the Gospel, meaning to draw attention to the response of Jesus’ interlocutors each time Scripture is cited. Both Passover and Tabernacles have historicised the Exodus traditions, and in John 6:31, and 7:37-38, texts associated with the Exodus are cited. Scripture therefore witnesses to Jesus,

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<sup>174</sup> Bruce H. Grigsby, “If Any Man Thirsts...’ Observations on the Rabbinic Background of John 7:37-39,” *Bib* 67 (1986): 108.

revealing that he is the living Bread from heaven for all who hunger, and gives living water for all who thirst.<sup>175</sup>

## 2) Ezek 47:1-2

There is one final point about the source and wider OT context of the citation in John 7:37b-38 to consider before moving on to a discussion about how the Jews are constructed in this narrative. With the commentators and scholars mentioned above, I take the position that in this instance, John most likely drew on a combination of sources to create this unique passage. John's citation in 7:38 also resonates strongly with Ezekiel 47:1-12 – although the verbal parallels are not immediately apparent – which describes the prophet's vision of the eschatological Temple of God.<sup>176</sup> Out of the Temple flows life-giving water so abundant that the prophet himself is immersed in it (47:5) and trees both medicinal and fruit-bearing –

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<sup>175</sup> It is possible to read allusions to the Wisdom literature again, as noted in the discussion of John 6:31. Catherine Cory has perceptively noted that the Johannine motif of 'seeking and not finding' permeates the Tabernacles narrative and plays a role in the "presentation of Jesus as personified Wisdom" (see Catherine Cory, "Wisdom's Rescue: A New Reading of the Tabernacles Discourse," *JBL* 116, no. 1 (1997): 100-101). The Jews are warned by Jesus that they will seek him but not find him, for it will be too late (7:34; 8:21-24), and seek him only to kill him (7:1, 11). According to Cory, this resonates with the sapiential traditions that utilise the 'seeking and not finding' motif to relate the rejection of divine, personified Wisdom (Prov 1:28 LXX, 'then they call me [Wisdom], but I answer not; the wicked seek me but find me not'). Wisdom is not found by those who previously refused her invitation (see Cory, "Wisdom's Rescue," 101).

<sup>176</sup> Ezek 47:1 LXX reads, 'water was coming out of the threshold of the Temple', and 47:9 reads, 'wherever the river (ὁ ποταμός) goes'. While the LXX text of Ezekiel here is in the singular, John speaks of 'living waters' in the plural (ποταμοί, 7:38). Bodi suggests that the dual form of the Hebrew in Ezek 47:9 (נהלים) possibly influenced John at this point. See, Daniel Bodi, "Der altorientalische Hintergrund des Themas der 'Ströme lebendige Wassers' in Joh 7, 38," in Martin Rose, (ed.), *Johannes-Studien: Interdisziplinäre Zugänge zum Johannes-Evangelium: Freundesgabe für Jean Zumstein* (Zurich: TVZ, 1991), 152.

which line the passages of the Temple – drink from the waters and receive ‘life’ (47:12).<sup>177</sup> Numerous scholars contend that Ezek 47:1-2 has influenced John 7:37b-38.<sup>178</sup> As Coloe states, “the waters of Ezekiel’s Temple are ‘living’ in the sense that they are moving, and also in the sense that they give life (Ezek 47:9).”<sup>179</sup>

Strikingly, Ezekiel’s vision not only presents a picture of a restored Temple where life-giving waters flow, but a restored Israel and a restored Land, and is thus in keeping with other key post-exilic prophetic texts that vividly imagined the end-times when the presence of God would return to the Temple (cf. Isa 44-49; 66:8; Jer 30:18; 31:8). In Ezekiel’s vision, God returns to inhabit the Temple (43:1-5) and renews his covenant with the people (43:6-12). This vision, of course, is to be explicitly positioned in the context of the Temple’s previous defilement due to sin, which was itself the ‘cause’ of the Exile (chs. 8-9; 22:26; 43:7-12; 46:6-14).<sup>180</sup> God’s presence purifies the Temple once more (43:1) and causes living water to flow forth from the ‘threshold’ of the Temple (47:1-2) and provide healing. Thus the allusive contexts behind the possible sources used in John 7:37-39 deal with the wilderness tradition (Ps 77:15-16) *and* post-exilic restoration themes (Ezek 47), two significant themes that have constantly emerged in the analysis of the OT citations presented in this thesis so far (cf. Isa 40:3 in John 1:23; Ps 77:28/Exod 16:4 in John 6:31; Isa 54:13 in John 6:45). These themes

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<sup>177</sup> The waters arising from the bowels of the Temple flow all the way to the Dead Sea in the desert, which is transformed into a fresh-water sea (Ezek 47:8-9). Compare the notion of the ecological restoration of the desert discussed in the citation of Isa 40:3 in John 1:27 (Chapter Three, section II.A.ii).

<sup>178</sup> Moloney, *John*, 252; Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 253; Gary T. Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet: The Use of Ezekiel in the Gospel of John and in the Literature of the Second Temple Period* (JSNTSup 270; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2004).

<sup>179</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 131.

<sup>180</sup> On this connection, with the added notion that the Land was also “polluted” and/or “sinful,” and hence, devastated (Ezek 7:1-4; 9:9; 14:12-20; 22:24), see Brad E. Kelle, “Dealing with the Trauma of Defeat: The Rhetoric of the Devastation and Rejuvenation of Nature in Ezekiel,” *JBL* 128, no. 3 (2009): 469-490.



generally address Israel's rebellion and death (wilderness) or the hope held out to a repatriated Israel (post-exilic and eschatological).<sup>181</sup>

Another important point can be made about John's allusions to Ezekiel 47. The 'threshold' of the Temple is where the water begins to flow in Ezek 47:1-2 (MT: תַּפְתָּח/LXX: αἶθριος). In previous places in Ezekiel, the 'threshold' of the Temple is described as a unique place occupied by the 'glory of YHWH' (Ezek 9:3; 10:4, 18).<sup>182</sup> So far, I have traced the 'glory' motif as it emerges allusively in the contexts of the OT citations used in John 1:23; 2:17; 6:31 and 6:45, arguing that this motif bears some relevance for how the reader constructs a characterisation of the Jews as respondents to the OT citations. The 'glory' motif emerges in Ezekiel in quite a unique fashion, as the 'glory' of YHWH assumes a radiant and anthropomorphic form (cf. Ezek 1:26-28). On the eve of the Temple's destruction, Ezekiel sees the 'glory' (of YHWH) leaving the city (9:3; 10:4, 18-19; 11:22-23), and later returning to the restored Temple (Ezek 43:1). It is not unlikely that John plays upon this motif also, as he presents Jesus as the new Temple (2:21-22) who embodies the divine glory (cf. 1:14). Just as living waters flow from this unique place in the Temple where the glory of YHWH dwells, so too in John 7:37-39, living waters will flow from his κοιλία, once Jesus has been 'glorified' (cf. John 19:25-26).

So a strong reason for considering Ezek 47:1-12 as an intertextual point of reference is that John's Christological schema is elsewhere informed by Temple imagery, specifically in the context of Scriptural citations (cf. 2:17-22; 19:34). "[Jesus] is able to offer drink because he

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<sup>181</sup> The wilderness motif combines with the post-exilic motif of hope in Isa 40:3, and this is taken up by John in 1:23, where one sees the wilderness as a place where the 'Coming One' is announced.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet*, 183.

is the new Temple and the source of living waters.”<sup>183</sup> The “true Temple is Jesus’ body” from which flows water and blood at his death on the cross.<sup>184</sup> The connection between John 7:37-39 and John 19:34 was noticed early on by Hoskyns, disputed by Freed, but accepted latterly by the likes of Moloney and Daly-Denton.<sup>185</sup> Jesus’ death is his ‘glorification’, the point from which the Spirit pours into the world (7:39). Under the cross of Jesus, a new community is born; with the giving of the Spirit, new life is created (19:25-27). Now, in the Jewish tradition, the Temple was perceived to be the locus of God’s dwelling, God’s presence or ‘glory’. Ezekiel’s vision of the eschatological Temple was taken up and interpreted in the later traditions as signifying the creative waters of life itself: “the ‘natural springs’ of water under the altar of the Temple were believed to be the primeval waters that God subdued at creation – the Temple rock emerged from the chaos and was the site where humankind was created.”<sup>186</sup> The ‘glory’ or presence of God ‘flowed’, as it were, from the heart of the Temple and was the deep impulse behind the creation of humankind. In John’s theological vision, Jesus is the new Temple, the source of life and giver of the Spirit (2:21; 7:39; 19:34; 20:22-23). He is the incarnate glory of God and his death is his final ‘glorification,’ the moment from which springs the life-giving impulse of the divine Spirit once more.

It is possible that the matrix of John’s thought in 7:37b-39 lay in a combination of the Ezekiel-Temple tradition and the wilderness-wandering narrative retold in Ps 77. Both of these textual traditions convey themes that have surfaced in the context of previous OT citations in the Gospel, e.g. that Jesus is the new Temple (2:17) and the incarnate glory of

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<sup>183</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 133; although I do not find convincing Coloe’s argument that Temple imagery here applies to believer.

<sup>184</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 151.

<sup>185</sup> Hoskyns, *John*, 323; Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 26; Moloney, *John*, 253.

<sup>186</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 157. Daly-Denton here draws on *Tg. Ps-Jon. Gen. 2:7*.

God (cf. 1:23; 2:17) and the true bread come down from heaven (6:31). It is even possible that the tradition of the wilderness Rock has been conflated with the Temple rock and applied to Jesus in John 7:37b-39.<sup>187</sup> In the words of Menken, “by means of the quotation [John 7:38], Jesus is presented as the new rock in the wilderness which is also the new temple, from which life-giving waters will flow after his death.”<sup>188</sup>

#### iv. The Response and Characterisation of the Jews

I am now in a position to consider how the ideal reader is invited to construct the Jews in the light of this OT citation. The verses immediately following the OT citation in 7:37-39 show the “impact of the Scripture on the people” (7:40-42).<sup>189</sup> As already mentioned, Jesus’ reference to ‘the Scripture’ occasions division amongst his various groups of listeners. Again, questioning is the mode of speech by which the various groups, including the Jews, are indirectly characterised. The question now becomes not only, ‘Is Jesus the Mosaic Prophet?’ but ‘Could Jesus be the Davidic Messiah?’ (7:42). Jesus’ audiences are invited to believe in him based on what he has revealed of himself thus far in the Gospel story. At this point in the narrative, “the people and the Jews must come to a decision: is he the Messiah or not?”<sup>190</sup> Jesus’ repeatedly claims that his origins and his destiny are ultimately mysterious and beyond the reach of the Jews; Jesus has come from God and the place to where he goes is inaccessible to the Jews (7:33-34, 35-36). Still, the various groups present in this scene insist

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<sup>187</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 159. Compare also *t. Sukk* 3:11-12, used in the Tabernacles liturgy, as it compares the waters used for the libation with the water that flowed from the rock in the wilderness. *t. Sukk* 3:13 then links the two images again by introducing Ezekiel’s vision of the Temple river with a Deuteronomic passage on God’s provision for the Israelites in the wilderness (Deut 2:7).

<sup>188</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 203.

<sup>189</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 153.

<sup>190</sup> Moloney, *John*, 253.

upon judging the mystery of Jesus' origins according to what they 'know' from the Scriptures – they attribute to Jesus messianic roles that are part of their received traditions, rather than accepting Jesus' claims to have singularly appropriated those traditions (7:38). So, the dispute continues over Jesus' identity: some argue that Jesus cannot be the Davidic Messiah because "Scripture says that the Christ must come from Bethlehem" (7:42). Spoken by less than 'reliable' narratorial voices, these different 'characterisations' of Jesus serve to reflexively characterise the speakers as ignorant; on the other hand, the ideal reader gains a sense of superior 'knowledge' to these characters based on what he or she has read in the Prologue (1:1-18).

The characterisation of the Jews in chapter 7 is consistent with what has gone before in the Gospel. By the close of the pericope (7:1-52) in which Scripture is cited, the Jews remain firm in their resolve to kill Jesus. The murderous intentions of the Jews frame the wider Tabernacles narrative (7:1; 8:59). This serves to indirectly characterise the Jews by means of what is becoming an *habitual* action. There is a stark contrast between Jesus – who presents himself as being the source of life (7:38) – and the Jews who seek the death of God's agent. The Jews still do not recognise Jesus to be the incarnate δόξα of God; but even more than this, Jesus here accuses them of seeking an opposing 'glory' for themselves – a 'human' glory that stands in the way of genuine receptivity to the glory of God now present in Jesus (cf. 7:18; cf. 5:44). The Jews (and the Pharisees) judge Jesus according to his earthly 'origins' (Galilee) rather than his heavenly origin (7:25, 27, 29, 40-52); Jesus himself warns them to stop judging by mere 'appearances' (κατ' ὄψιν) and to judge by what is 'true' (7:24; cf. 8:15-16). As in 6:42, when the Jews characterised Jesus on the basis of his parental lineage and were thus exposed as ignorant, so in this case, the Jews and Pharisees unwittingly

characterise themselves as ignorant. These mutual judgments and accusations help to *directly* fill out the characters of the Jews and Jesus.

The broader allusive contexts of the OT citations in John 7:37-39 demonstrate that Scripture witnesses to the increasing obduracy of the Jews: they continue to replay the role of their rebellious ancestors, despite the fact that in claiming to ‘know’ the Scriptures they also claim a greater fidelity to God (5:39, 45-47; cf. 6:31). Moreover, as John recasts the story of God’s provision of manna and water for the Israelites onto the tabula of his story about Jesus, one can see a slight development in the narrative function and characterisation of the Jews. In the Bread of Life discourse, they were hostile faces emerging from the midst of the Galilean crowd (6:40-41). In the context of the feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem they have become almost one with the authoritative bodies (Pharisees, Chief Priests and Temple officials) who have made up their minds about Jesus for ill (7:45-52; cf. 7:1, 11, 13, 26, 31). The Jews appear to be in a position to decide the fate of Jesus: they have already been described as wishing to kill Jesus (5:18), and in the context of the Tabernacles narrative, they are depicted as attempting to put this plan into action (7:11, 13). But Jesus’ fate is determined by no one but the Father (7:44, 46). In chapter 6 where the ‘true’ manna was the subject of debate, the rebelliousness of the Jews came into the foreground. In chapter 7, where the true source of ‘life-giving waters’ is revealed, this rebelliousness has turned into a resolve to arrest Jesus (7:30, 32, 55, 45) and even to kill Jesus (7:1, 20, 25). Because the narrator has brought the Jews and the Pharisees together at this point in the Gospel, the response of the Pharisees to Jesus is worth mentioning. Some of the people accuse Jesus of being a public deceiver (πλανᾶω, 7:12), and the Pharisees declare that Jesus is leading the people astray with his

deceptive teaching (πλανῶ here used in the passive, 7:47).<sup>191</sup> This indicates, at least to the Pharisees, that Jesus is a threat and that he must be done away with.

The allusive contexts of Psalm 77 LXX, when incorporated into John 7, carry forward the themes of rebellion that dominated chapter 6 of the Gospel, *but* they also bring in the theme of eschatological hope, because of the connection of the Rock traditions with Tabernacles. As in John 1:23, the themes of the Wilderness and *hope* coalesce, in contrast with John 6:31 where themes of the Wilderness and *death* came together. The context of Ezekiel 47 adds another dimension to John's retelling: namely, the hope that the personified glory of God will return to the Temple after the Exile and herald the end-times. This was linked in with fact that in John 7, Jesus' identity is thematised in terms of 'glory' and of judgment: Jesus, the incarnate glory of God, seeks only God's glory (7:18); the Jews deny him that glory (8:49-50) and seek instead a 'human' glory for themselves (cf. 5:44). So, in 7:39, the reader is informed that Jesus' appropriation of the meaning of the Exodus events to himself anticipates the 'gift of the Spirit' and the 'glorification' of Jesus. The ideal reader's position as a 'superior' reader is thus consolidated, and his or her position to evaluate and judge the responses of Jesus' respondents is further enhanced.

## v. Conclusion

All of the OT citations in the Gospel thus far have had the narrative-rhetorical function of 'explaining' Jesus, of making Jesus clear to his interlocutors, just as Jesus' purpose is to 'exegete' God to others (1:18). The Jews are not named in the immediate context of this

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<sup>191</sup> Cf. Moloney, *John*, 254.

citation but are present at the Tabernacles feast and named in 7:30, 35. Many other diverse groups are named (the crowd, 7:12; the Jerusalemites, 7:26b; the Pharisees, 12:47; the chief priests, 7:45, 52; the ‘many’, 7:31). This complex OT citation holds out a direct invitation to all present to come and drink from Jesus, i.e. to believe in him and to receive life. Ironically, the witness of the OT Scriptures to Jesus progressively alienates the Jews instead of leading them to faith, but at the same time confirms their initial decision (5:18) to kill Jesus and therefore points to their unwillingness to change. This chapter continues to integrate the meta-narrative of the wilderness stories into its own story about Jesus. Whereas in chapter 6, Jesus was depicted as the true bread from heaven, in 7:37-38 Jesus is the true Temple/‘rock’ that provides water for all. The wider allusions behind the OT citations are of life and hope, and carry strong eschatological connotations when read against the background of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Jews, however, become more resolved to pursue the path of death, rather than to be open to the life that Jesus offers (8:21, 24, 28a, 37, 40, 41, 44).

#### D. John 10:34: I Said, ‘You Are Gods’ (Ps 82:6)

##### i. Outline of the Johannine Text

The sixth citation from Scripture in the Gospel occurs within the context of another Jewish feast, this time the Feast of Dedication (10:22-39; with a second conclusion in vv. 40-42).<sup>192</sup> Once more, Jesus cites from the Scriptures (Ps 82:6 in 10:34) and his audience are the Jews (10:24, 31, 33). The progressive hardening of the Jews towards Jesus across the Gospel narrative comes to a climax in this scene, which constitutes the first of two ‘conclusions’ to

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<sup>192</sup> The significance of this festive setting for the characterisation of the Jews in this pericope will be discussed in more detail further below.

Jesus' public engagement with the Jews (cf. 10:40-42, cf. 12:37-43). It is the final time in the Gospel that Scripture is cited in the context of Jesus' direct discussion with the Jews. An *inclusio* of unbelief frames the narrative: the Jews 'gather around' Jesus while he walks in the portico of Solomon in the Temple precincts (10:22-24a). There, they pressure Jesus into declaring 'openly' (παρρησίᾳ) whether he is 'the Christ' (10:24b), not in order that they may henceforth "worship him without restraint," but so that they may obtain an "unambiguous statement" that would provide a warrant for their attack.<sup>193</sup> At the conclusion of the narrative, the Jews confirm their stance of unbelief as they attempt once more to 'stone' (10:31) and 'arrest' (10:39) Jesus for what they take to be his 'blasphemous' statements (cf. 10:33b, 36b).

It is often noted in the literature that this pericope bears strong forensic overtones with Jesus standing 'trial' in the course of his public ministry.<sup>194</sup> According to such a reading, the interrogative nature of the Jews' words positions them as Jesus' 'judges' or 'prosecutors' in the narrative, but with characteristic Johannine irony, by the closure of the narrative, Jesus shows himself to be the true judge, and the Jews stand condemned (10:39). The value of the forensic or 'juridical' reading of this passage lies in the way Scripture is seen to function as a 'witness' to Jesus in his 'defence' before the Jews. Jesus cites Scripture to substantiate his claim to be the 'Son of God' (10:34-36). Jesus also calls upon the 'witness' of his 'works'

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<sup>193</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 392; cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 173.

<sup>194</sup> This approach was pioneered by Theo Preiss, "La justification dans la pensée johannique," in *Hommage et reconnaissance* FS. Karl Barth; Cahiers Théologiques de l'Actualité Protestante, hors-série no. 2 (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1946), 100-118. The notion of the Johannine 'trial' motif was extended, notably, by Harvey, *Truth on Trial*, and Robert Gordon Maccini, *Her Testimony is True: Women as Witnesses according to John* (JSNTSup 125; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). The 'trial' motif in John has recently been challenged by Martin Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts as Juridical Controversy: An Exegetical Study of John 5 and 9:1-10:21* (WUNT 2/132; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), as will shortly be discussed.



and his ‘words’ as evidence that he is the Christ and that he acts in union with the Father (cf. 10:25, 30, 37-39).

Nevertheless, the scene may better be described as a ‘juridical controversy’, following Asiedu-Peprah, as Jesus’ trial does not properly begin until the Johannine Passion Narrative. Asiedu-Peprah differentiates between a “juridical controversy” where two opposing parties (an accuser and a defendant) dispute with one another so that a third-party need not intervene, and a “trial,” where a two-party dispute has failed to be resolved and so is taken to a third-party for judgment and resolution.<sup>195</sup> Asiedu-Peprah claims that in John 5 and 9:1-10:21 a ‘juridical controversy’ is at work between Jesus and his opponents (the Jews/the Pharisees), and that the characteristics of this controversy are based on the Hebrew *rîb* narratives of the OT, where witnesses are called upon to resolve conflict.<sup>196</sup> Because the ‘Sabbath conflicts’ (John 5, 9:1-10:21) between Jesus and his opponents fail to be resolved in the course of the Gospel, the process goes to ‘trial’ proper before Pilate, where Jesus is eventually condemned to death (18:12-19:16).

According to Asiedu-Peprah, John 10:22-39 also fits the pattern of the ‘controversy as juridical procedure,’ with Jesus disputing with the Jews about the Law and bringing in ‘witnesses’ to support his case.<sup>197</sup> As such, John 10:22-39 (40-42) can be divided into two sections, the first centring upon Jesus’ defence of his messianic status (10:25-30) and the second centring upon his claim to be ‘Son of God’ (10:31-39). In both sections Jesus has recourse to ‘witnesses’ to make his point. In the first section, Jesus calls upon the ‘witness’ of

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<sup>195</sup> Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts*, 19-23.

<sup>196</sup> Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts*, 16.

<sup>197</sup> Asiedu-Peprah, *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts*, 240; cf. 24.

his words and works, and in the second section, Scripture is cited to validate Jesus' self-revelatory claim to be Son of God.

a. John 10:25-30

The first section of the narrative focuses upon the question of the Jews as to whether Jesus is the Christ (10:24). The Jews have been kept 'in suspense' by Jesus' hitherto oblique language of riddling discourse and parable (10:24b, lit. ἕως πότε τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν αἶρεις). The urgency that the Jews feel on the question of Jesus' messianic identity follows on from the previous debate about the origin of 'the Prophet' (7:40) and 'the Christ' (7:26, 31, 41-42) and their concern as to whether Jesus fitted the profile ascribed to these figures. But this urgency acquires a new overtone in the context of the celebration of Dedication and Jewish independence from Greek rule. The issue of Jesus' messianic status is raised by the Jews precisely during a feast that would strongly conjure up messianic associations, perhaps of a Davidic figure who would lead the people out of oppression of Roman domination, just as the Maccabees overturned the tyrannical rule of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. Implicit in the question of the Jews about *whether* Jesus is the Christ lies a deeper question about *how* Jesus' possible messianic identity fits with past liberators like the Maccabees.<sup>198</sup>

The answer, in part, appears to lie in Jesus' reconfiguration of the messianic title of 'Christ' away from political revolutionary activity to the model of the shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (10:10). In the OT Shepherds are often used metaphorically to denote kingly rule (cf. Jer 23:1; Zec 11:17; Isa 56:9-12; Ezek 34:3-8), with David the shepherd-boy growing up to represent the ideal King of Judah (cf. 2 Sam 2:1-4). The Shepherd metaphor is

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<sup>198</sup> Cf. Johnson, "Salvation is from the Jews," 96.

even used of God, the divine and just ruler of his people (Ezek 34:11-16; Ps 23:1-3). Johnson argues that in John 10, Jesus usurps the emancipatory triumph of the Maccabees, because Jesus presents himself as the “good shepherd” (10:10) in contrast to “those who came before” (10:8) – according to Johnson, the Maccabees themselves. As the ‘good shepherd,’ Jesus lays down his life for his sheep (10:10), whereas the Maccabees ruled by military force.<sup>199</sup>

Jesus’ reconfiguration of the messianic title of ‘Christ’ is further emphasised in his claim to a unique ‘oneness’ with God (cf. 10:15, 18d, 30, 38d). This is pointedly reinforced in Jesus’ subsequent reference to the ‘sheep that belong to [him]’ (10:26b) which extends the imagery of the Good Shepherd and the ‘sheep of the fold’ expressed in the preceding parabolic discourse (10:1-18). Jesus tells the Jews that their unbelief results from the fact that they are not his sheep (10:26a). Only the sheep that belong to Jesus listen to his voice and follow him (10:27), have ‘eternal life’ and will never be ‘lost’ (10:28). The implied corollary of this statement is that those ‘outside’ the flock will perish.<sup>200</sup> Here, the “obtuseness” of the Jews is “explained in terms of their not being Jesus’ sheep.”<sup>201</sup> But this does not condemn them to “irrevocable reprobation, since they are further urged to believe (10:37ff).”<sup>202</sup> John presents a dialectical interplay of believing and belonging: belief in Jesus is conditioned upon ‘belonging’ to him, and belief in Jesus leads one into a deeper experience of belonging to him. Belief in Jesus presupposes an unreserved openness to God (cf. 5:37-38; 7:28-29; 8:19). Thus, the ‘outsiders’ of the flock will only ‘perish’ due to their “unwillingness to respond” to

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<sup>199</sup> Johnson, “Salvation is from the Jews,” 96.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. Moloney, *John*, 315.

<sup>201</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 2:306.

<sup>202</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 2:306; cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 174.

Jesus “beyond the limitations of their own terms.”<sup>203</sup> Jesus’ sheep, on the other hand, will never come to harm and will never be ‘taken’ from Jesus, just as nothing can be ‘taken from the Father’ (10:28b). Jesus concludes by saying that, as such, he and the Father are one (10:30).

In sum, Jesus’ response to the Jews in the first section of this pericope revolves around the question of his messianic identity (10:24). Jesus simply states that he has not spoken ‘in secret’ (10:25a), but rather, that his works (10:25b) have testified to him as the Christ, and as ‘one’ with God (10:30). Jesus’ explanation of the Jews unwillingness – and perhaps even their inability – to believe that he is the Christ (10:25) is metaphorically expressed in terms of their not ‘belonging’ to his ‘sheepfold’ (10:26-28b). This accords with the tenor of the Gospel as a whole, where belief in Jesus is said to require an inner conformity to him: one must be a ‘child of God’ (1:13), born from above (3:7), ‘of God’ (8:47) – and of his ‘flock’ (10:7-18). In the ideological framework of the story-world, the Jews belong to the ‘devil’ (8:44) and are ‘from below’ (8:23); they seek human δόξα rather than divine δόξα, and ‘cannot’ believe (5:44).

b. John 10:31-39

The second section of the pericope (10:31-39) is carried forward on the impetus of Jesus’ claim to be ‘one’ with the Father (10:30). While the primary meaning of the statement is that the Son’s authority is none other than the Father’s, the implication is that of a more profound

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<sup>203</sup> Moloney, *John*, 315. Schnackenburg thinks that here the Jews represent “Judaism,” those contemporaries of Jesus who rejected Jesus as the Messiah (See his *The Gospel*, 2:305). My thesis claims, rather, that from a narratological perspective the Jews function as players in a Johannine re-narration of the biblical story, which is why they always surface in the context of Jesus’ explicit citations from OT.

union between Jesus and God (cf. 5:26-28).<sup>204</sup> This implication is not missed by the Jews who attempt to stone him on the charge of blasphemy: ‘you are only a man and yet you make yourself God’ (10:31-32).<sup>205</sup> Jesus’ riposte to the charge of blasphemy comes in the form of a rhetorical question and adduces Scripture as a validating witness on his behalf: “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods?’” (10:34).

Here Jesus cites Psalm 82:6a, (‘I said, you are gods’) arguing that if those to whom the ‘word of God came’ could be called ‘gods’ (10:35), how much more should Jesus be called ‘God’, as he is the one ‘consecrated and sent into the world’? (10:36).<sup>206</sup> It is widely recognised that Jesus is here employing an *a fortiori* form of argumentation found in rabbinic literature called *qal wahomer*, whereby one argues from a minor premise to a major one, or from the ‘lesser’ to the ‘greater.’<sup>207</sup> Whether Psalm 82 refers to Israel’s judges as ‘gods,’ to Israel at Sinai, to

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<sup>204</sup> The nature of the ‘oneness’ between Jesus and the Father in 10:30 is interpreted differently by scholars. Neyrey argues that it relates to the power over death that both Jesus and the Father have (cf. 10:28-29; 5:21-29), and which also makes Jesus ‘equal to God’ (cf. 10:34); see Jerome H. Neyrey, “I Said: You Are Gods: Psalm 82:6 and John 10,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 652; 663. For Zimmermann, the ‘oneness’ between Jesus and the Father has to do with the fact that Jesus identifies himself with the divine Shepherd of Ezekiel (Ezek 34:11-16); see Zimmermann, “Jesus im Bild Gottes,” 114.

<sup>205</sup> According to commentators, there is a lack of evidence as to what constituted blasphemy in the Jewish law of this period (Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 1:408). The Jewish law about blasphemy is only formalised in the Mishnah (*m. Sanh.* 7:5), which of course, is late compared to John’s Gospel. There, to blaspheme is to pronounce the Tetragrammaton. Yet, Rabbi Abbahu (c. 300 CE) says in *y. Ta’an.* 2:65b, 59: “If a man says to you, ‘I am God’ he lies; if he says ‘I am the Son of God’ he will regret it in the end” (cf. Barrett, *John*, 383). Brown argues that the problem is not that Jesus is described as divine, but in the assertion of the Jews that Jesus was *making himself* God – this explains Jesus’ response that only the Father ‘made’ him anything: the Father consecrated him and sent him into the world; cf. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 1:408.

<sup>206</sup> Further discussion of the content of the Psalm occurs in the following section.

<sup>207</sup> One of the ‘rules’ (*middoth*) of Scriptural interpretation attributed to Hillel, late 100 BCE. I am aware that in claiming that Jesus here utilises a *qal wahomer* method of exegesis, my own source-critical and etymological discussion of John 10:34 and Ps 82:6 (MT; Ps 81:6 LXX) seems self-contradictory. However, a source-critical discussion is necessary insofar as it presents an overview of what has been said on the subject; my own later

the prophets or to the angels – and these possibilities will be discussed in due course – the force of the argumentation holds: if others in Israel’s history could be called ‘gods’ based on their prerogative in exercising judgement or because of receptivity to God’s Word, then the title ‘Son of God’ is surely appropriate for Jesus, the ‘Logos Ensarkos’ (to return to the language of Boyarin).

There is evidence to suggest, furthermore, that Jesus takes this title upon himself in a wholly unique way, not simply as standard messianic fare. Traditionally, the title ‘son of God’ did not necessarily connote divinity,<sup>208</sup> but was usually reserved for royalty.<sup>209</sup> The Jews in this pericope, however, hear in Jesus’ appropriation of the title a claim to divinity (10:33). The reasons for this may be two-fold. Firstly, Jesus’ identity as ‘Son’ and his relation to God as ‘Father’ reflects the Jewish law of agency, wherein the agent or envoy is ‘like the one who sent him.’<sup>210</sup> As God’s agent, Jesus does his Father’s ‘work’ (10:37) and fully *represents* God on earth (cf. 12:45; 14:9).<sup>211</sup> Jesus is ‘sent’ into the world for this purpose (10:36). Secondly, Jesus is not merely a human agent but, as ‘Son’, is bestowed with divine power to judge and give life (5:22, 27). These powers are also alluded to in 10:22-39: Jesus gives eternal life to his sheep (10:27-28), and although he appears to be ‘judged’ by the Jews, he is in fact the real ‘Judge’ in the scene. The human envoy envisaged in the Jewish law of agency has become in

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contention that the allusive contexts of the Psalm citation are relevant to the Gospel text accord with rabbinic principles of exegesis.

<sup>208</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 317.

<sup>209</sup> Daly-Denton, “The Psalms in John’s Gospel,” 125. But see Hosea 11:1-2, where Israel is collectively called God’s ‘son’.

<sup>210</sup> See *Mek. Exod.* 12:3, cited in Ashton, *Understanding*, 313.

<sup>211</sup> Cf. Ashton, *Understanding*, 314.

John's Gospel a divine envoy, sent from the very heart (κόλπος) of the Father (1:18). Thus, as 'Son,' Jesus is also 'God' (10:36).

Daly-Denton has argued that the complete verse of LXX Psalm 82:6 provides further warrant for understanding that in Jesus' claim to be 'Son of God' he is claiming equality with God. The verse reads:

I said you are **gods**

And all of you **sons** of the Most High

(Ps 82:6a-b)

Reading this text in light of the parallelism characteristic of Hebrew poetry, Daly-Denton suggest that Jesus' use of the psalm deliberately links the concepts of 'son' and 'God' together to show that as Son, Jesus is God, or 'one with God.'<sup>212</sup> Scripture is thus cited by Jesus to reveal to the Jews that he is Son of God; and so in 10:34 Scripture functions rhetorically to explicate Jesus, to reveal his true, divine identity and to provide the 'correct' interpretation of Jesus while he is speaking ἐν παρρησίᾳ.<sup>213</sup> Jesus appeals to Scripture to make his case, and in his own words, the witness of Scripture 'cannot be set aside' (10:35). The Jews, however, are not convinced by Jesus' argumentation. They "stand condemned by their own Scriptures," by "their Law" (cf. 10:34).<sup>214</sup> Even as they are further encouraged to believe in Jesus on the basis of his works (10:37-38), the only response of the Jews is to seek to arrest Jesus' (10:33) and to attempt to stone him (10:39). Jesus response, in turn, is to

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<sup>212</sup> Cf. Daly-Denton, "The Psalms in John's Gospel," 126; cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 175; Brown, *John*, 1:409; Neyrey, "I Said: You Are Gods," 653.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. Moloney, "The Gospel of John as Scripture," 458.

<sup>214</sup> Moloney, *John*, 316.

permanently withdraw from their presence (10:41-42). Having examined in some depth the narrative context of the OT citation in 10:34, I now turn to consider the original context of Psalm 82:6 for what it reveals about the Jews response to Jesus.

ii. The Context of Psalm 82:6 (MT; Ps 81:6 LXX) for an Understanding of John 10:34

There is a strong consensus in the literature that John has Jesus cite Psalm 82:6 (MT; Psalm 81:6 LXX), as the text of John 10:34 corresponds verbatim to Ps 81:6 LXX, which reads: ἐγὼ εἶπα, Θεοὶ ἐστε, καὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου πάντες. What is disputed, however, is the referent of ἐστε in v. 6a: who, precisely, does the divine voice call ‘gods’ in Psalm 82:6, and what significance does this have for Jesus’ riposte to the Jews in John 10:34? There are three options generally admitted in the scholarship. By way of discussing in some more depth the context and background of Psalm 82, I will divide this section into three sub-sections dealing with each of these three options: (a) that the referent of ἐστε are the angels; (b) that the referent of ἐστε is Israel’s Judges; and (c) that the referent of ἐστε is Israel as it received the Word of God at Sinai.

a. The angels

First, the ‘angels’ or other heavenly beings are called ‘gods.’<sup>215</sup> Ashton argues for this option because it satisfactorily explains the reaction of the Jews to Jesus: thus only in claiming to be

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<sup>215</sup> Cf. Ashton, *Understanding*, 147-150; also see J. A. Emerton, “Some New Testament Notes I: The Interpretation of Psalm 82 and John 10,” *JTS* 11 (1960): 329-336, and J. A. Emerton, “Melchizedek and the Gods: Fresh Evidence for the Jewish Background of John X. 34-36,” *JTS* 17 (1966): 399-401. Emerton argues



greater than supernatural beings could the charge of ‘blasphemy’ be properly understood.<sup>216</sup>

However, Schuchard rightly counters this line of reasoning by arguing that the narrative context of John 10:34 suggests nothing of any reference to angels.<sup>217</sup>

#### b. Israel’s Judges

The second way of understanding the referent of ἔσθε is to link it with Israel’s ‘judges,’ who would then be the ‘gods’ of the Psalm. This option is well attested in the secondary literature.<sup>218</sup> It rests on the premise that in exercising the divine prerogative of judgment (cf. Deut 1:17), Israel’s Judges were accorded a quasi-divine status and so were given the title ‘gods.’ Psalm 82 is itself a psalm of judgment, evident in the key theme of the Psalm’s opening verses.<sup>219</sup> Both the MT version of the text and the LXX open with this theme of judgment, but there is a slightly different nuance between the texts about who – if anyone – receives the divine judgment, because the LXX has changed the meaning of the text in translation. The MT version (Psalm 82:1) reads, מזמור לאסף אלהים נצב בעד-אל בקרב אלהים (‘in the midst of the gods he [God] holds judgment’). The LXX, however, mistranslates the MT version of Ps 82:1b to give: ὁ Θεὸς ἔσθη ἐν συναγωγῇ θεῶν, ἐν μέσῳ δὲ θεοῦς

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that Psalm 82 was originally understood to portray the God of Israel passing judgement on the pagan gods of the ‘nations.’ In subsequent Jewish tradition, the nations of the world were thought to be allotted to angels, thus God’s judgment extended to the angels (see Emerton, “Some New Testament Notes,” 330).

<sup>216</sup> Ashton, *Understanding*, 147-150.

<sup>217</sup> So Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 63.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 174; cf. Stephen L. Homcy, “You Are Gods: Spirituality and a Difficult Text,” *JETS* 34, no. 4 (1989): 489.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. Hanson, *Prophetic Gospel*, 147.

δικαρίνει ('God stood in the gathering of gods, in the midst he [God] judges gods,' Psalm 81:6 LXX). What this means is that ἐστὲ in Psalm 81:6 would look back to these opening verses of the Psalm and refer *either* to Israel's Judges who are judged by God (themselves called 'gods' in verse 1 in the LXX) *or* to an unspecified group in the midst of a heavenly tribunal (according to the MT).

To briefly explain the possible referent of 'you' according to the MT version of the Psalm, it is necessary to understand that in v. 6a it is not the divine voice that speaks but the voice of the Psalmist. This is because the word אֲמַרְתִּי opening the clause in v. 6a, followed by אֲכַן opening a secondary clause in v. 6b should be translated along the lines of 'I had thought x, but y...' according to a stylistic feature common to the Hebrew Bible (cf. Psalm 31:23; Isa 49:4; Jer 3:19; Zeph 3:1; Job 32:7).<sup>220</sup> Thus 82:6 would read, 'I had thought, "you are gods," *but* you shall die like mortals.' Added to this is the probability of Psalm 82 being composed in the pre-monarchial period and the fact that, like other Psalms from this period, it pictures God in the midst of an assembly of gods.<sup>221</sup> God's judgment on the pagan gods arises from their neglect of the poor and their defence of the unjust (82:1-4), and it is this injustice on the part of the pagan gods that produces "cosmic disaster" (82:5) and results in the fall of pagan gods into mortality and death (82:6).<sup>222</sup> In the words of Dahood, "the Psalmist had been under the impression that the pagan deities were of some importance, but now realises they are

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<sup>220</sup> Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms 51-100* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), 270.

<sup>221</sup> Dahood, *Psalms 51-100*, 269.

<sup>222</sup> Dahood, *Psalms 51-100*, 268. Contrast this picture of cosmic disaster with the picture of ecological restoration in the Isaian text cited in John 1:23 (Isa 40:3), as discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.

nothing, because they are quite incapable of defending the poor.”<sup>223</sup> Thus according to the MT translation of the Psalm, the referent of ἔσται is most likely the ‘unjust’ pagan gods.

It has been shown that John’s version of the text of Psalm 82:6 in 10:34 corresponds exactly to the LXX version of the text, and not the MT, and so the slightly different nuance involved might indicate a different referent of ἔσται. While it is plausible that according to the LXX version of Psalm 82:6, ἔσται could still refer back to θεοὺς of Psalm 82:1, and that these ‘gods’ could be pagan gods, the secondary literature strongly favours an interpretation where ἔσται in 82:6 and θεοὺς in 82:1 refer to Israel’s Judges, called ‘gods’ because of their divine-like role of judgement. John’s retention of the LXX translation plausibly indicates that God is portrayed as judging Israel’s Judges for what turns out to be their failure to judge fairly. Though they act as ‘gods’ they shall ‘die like mortals’ (82:7a), death being their sentence. This is often supported by the fact that in John 10:35, Jesus further describes the ‘gods’ of the Psalm as ‘those to whom the Word of God came,’ in other words, the Judges of Israel.<sup>224</sup> Yet Israel’s Judges were not the exclusive recipients of the word of God; in fact the phrase ‘the word of God came to [N]’ is an almost formulaic way of referring to the divine commissioning of a prophet, and so this option is not necessarily the most likely referent of ἔσται.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Dahood, *Psalms 51-100*, 270.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. Homcy, “Spirituality and a Difficult Text,” 489.

<sup>225</sup> Cf. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 398; Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 171-172; cf. James S. Ackerman, “The Rabbinic Interpretation of Ps 82 and the Gospel of John: John 10:34,” *HTR* 59 (1966): 188, footnote 9, cites: Jer 1:2, 11; 13:8; Ezek 6:1; Hos 1:1.

c. Israel at Sinai

Third, the referent of ἔστε can also refer to Israel as a whole, particularly to Israel as they received the Word of God at Sinai.<sup>226</sup> In this case John would be contrasting the gift of the Law as ‘Word of God’ and “the coming of Jesus as Word made flesh” (cf. 1:17-18).<sup>227</sup> This reading also accounts for the other allusions to death found in the Psalm: ‘I said, you are gods, and all of you *sons* of the most high/yet *you shall die* like mortals’ (Ps 82:6-7). Leading up to their liberation from slavery in Egypt, Israel was called God’s “son” (Exod 4:21-22, cf. Hosea 11:1). But after receiving the Law at Sinai, they rebelled against God by lapsing into idolatry (Exod 32). This led directly to the death of that entire generation in the wilderness (Exod 32:25-29). Hanson takes this approach further by arguing that the ‘word of God’ that ‘came’ (cf. 10:34) to Israel at Sinai was the pre-existent Word of God (ὁ λόγος). The *a fortiori* argumentation contained in Jesus’ riposte to the Jews in John 10:34 would then rest on the minor premise that Israel were called ‘gods’ for receiving the (pre-existent) Logos; the major premise reached would be that Jesus, as the Logos incarnate has much greater right to call himself ‘Son of God.’<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> This is the ‘majority rabbinic view’, see Str-B, II: 543; and Reim, *Studien*, 24-25; Neyrey, “I Said: You Are Gods,” 654; Barrett, *John*, 384-385; cf. Nils Dahl, “The Johannine Church and History,” in *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), 109-110.

<sup>227</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 169. Daly-Denton supports her reading with reference to (a much later) tannaitic adaptation of Psalm 82 in which the ‘gods’ are those who “do Torah” while those who reject Torah are those who will “die like mortals” (see Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 170, citing *Sifre Deut.* 306).

<sup>228</sup> Cf. Anthony T. Hanson, “John’s Citation of Psalm LXXXII: John X. 33-6,” *NTS* 11 (1964/5): 158-162, see especially page 160; cf. Anthony T. Hanson, “John’s Citation of Psalm LXXXII Reconsidered,” *NTS* 13 (1966/67): 363-367; cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 181. Ackerman cites the rabbinic interpretation of Psalm 82 as evidence for his position that John refers to Israel at Sinai with the pronoun ἔστε:

Similarly, Obermann interprets Psalm 82:6 with reference to the gift of the Law at Sinai.<sup>229</sup> Obermann has uniquely argued, however, that the Jews, who are Jesus' interlocutors in John 10:22-39, are the direct subjects of the pronoun ἔστε in Psalm 82:6.<sup>230</sup> When Jesus cites Psalm 82:6, ('I said, 'you are gods'), he speaks to the Jews (10:34): *they* are the 'gods' of Psalm 82. In support of this reading, Obermann points out that the pronoun ἔστε is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural form, and that, moreover, the Jews had already been addressed in the citation's introductory formula with the possessive pronoun ὑμῶν.<sup>231</sup> More importantly, Obermann draws a direct connection between the Jews (i.e. 'Israel') who received the Law at Sinai and the Johannine 'Jews' who are addressed by Jesus in 10:34.<sup>232</sup> Obermann applies what he calls an 'analogical' reading to the Psalm citation in John 10:34, so that the quasi-divine status conferred upon Israel at Sinai can be extended to the Jews of John's Gospel, as they too possess the Law (cf. 10:34a) and put their hope in it (cf. 5:39).<sup>233</sup> Those to whom the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ came were first of all, the Jews at Sinai, and second, the Jews of John 10:34 who presently hear the Word of God in the Psalm.<sup>234</sup> The same revelation of God given at Sinai is contained in the Scriptures – including the Psalm cited in John 10:34 – that continues to

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*Tanḥ.* mentions the "angel of death" that was created for the nations of the world; God gave this angel no power over Israel because they had the Torah which rendered them 'gods' (Str-B III:18; cf. *'Avod. Zar.* 5a and *Exod. Rab.* 32:7). Both *'Avod. Zar.* 5a and *Lev. Rab.* 4:1 state that the divine status of Israel was lost due to their corruption and idolatry respectively. Ackerman, however, confidently holds the somewhat contentious position that this interpretation of Psalm 82 was known by Jews in first-century Palestine (Ackerman, "The Rabbinic Interpretation of Psalm 82," 186-188). Similarly, see Neyrey, "I Said: You Are Gods," 655-662, who explores the rabbinic notion of Israel's 'death' (Psalm 82:6b) against the Johannine notion of the 'deathlessness' of Jesus' 'sheep'. Neyrey likewise argues that John had the rabbinic 'sources' at his disposal.

<sup>229</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 181, 178.

<sup>230</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 179.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 179.

<sup>232</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 180: "[n]icht nur die jüdischen Gesprächsteilnehmer, sondern für alle Juden schlechthin gilt LXX Ps 81,6a: ἐγὼ εἶπα· θεοί ἐστε."

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 181, 183-184.

<sup>234</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 178.

‘speak’ to the Jews.<sup>235</sup> But in John’s Gospel, the Scriptures have Christological significance because the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ became flesh in Jesus (1:14; 10:35), and so the Scriptures themselves ‘witness’ to Jesus.<sup>236</sup> The Word of God contained in the Scriptures and given at Sinai has found its ‘final and complete concretisation’ (“letztgültige Konkretion”) in Jesus.<sup>237</sup> So as the enfleshed Word of God, Jesus has all the more right to be called ‘Son of God.’<sup>238</sup>

According to Obermann, the recontextualisation of Psalm 82:6 in John 10:34 opens the text up to a Christological interpretation. LXX Ps 81:6b goes on to call the ‘gods’ of the Psalm ‘Sons of the Most high’ (υἱοὶ ὑψίστου). This verse is implicitly picked up by Jesus when he claims to be ‘Son of God’ (υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, 10:36).<sup>239</sup> According to Obermann, the Evangelist’s primary motivation in citing Psalm 82:6 lies in his ‘analogical’ “characterisation of the Jews” and the “Christological relevance” of Ps 82:6b.<sup>240</sup> In short, the fourth evangelist considers θεοί (Psalm 82:6a) to speak directly of the Jews (10:34) and υἱοὶ ὑψίστου (Ps 82:6b) to speak indirectly of Jesus (10:36).<sup>241</sup> According to Obermann’s reading of the pericope, the contrast contained in the *a fortiori* argumentation in John 10:34ff is not between Jesus and the Judges, nor is it between Law and ‘grace’ (cf. 1:17-18), but between Jesus and the Ἰουδαῖοι (the Jews). The Jews have before them the enfleshed Word of God, contained in Scripture and witnessed to by Scripture, but they do not believe (10:33). Their status as ‘gods’ is finally called into question by their confrontation with Jesus who is the Son of God; in the words of Daly-Denton, the Jews are “no longer those to whom the Word of God

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<sup>235</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 178.

<sup>236</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 180.

<sup>237</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 180.

<sup>238</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 181.

<sup>239</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 183-184.

<sup>240</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 183.

<sup>241</sup> Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 184.

came... [t]hey have therefore relinquished their status as ‘gods’” as they “find eternal life in the Law (5:39).”<sup>242</sup>

Reading the referent of ἔσται in the Psalm’s citation in John 10:34 as Israel at Sinai is preferable on the following grounds. Firstly, as already mentioned, it accounts well for the allusions of *death* surrounding the cited verse (Ps 82:6). Although ‘gods’ for possessing the Torah, Israel ‘died like mortals’, losing not only their quasi-divine status but also their lives in the wilderness. This in turn accords with the Gospel’s re-narration of the wilderness story across chapters 6-7, which surfaces at key points in the OT citations found in 6:31 and 7:38 and which focus on the miracles of heavenly bread and water respectively. The wider allusions behind the citation(s) in 6:31 (Exod 16:4/Ps 78:15-16) were of death, while the allusions in 7:38 (Ezek 47:1-2/Ps 78) were of eschatological hope and life. The citation of Ps 82:6 in John 10:34 returns the reader to the theme of death and rebellion. The Psalm speaks of the gift of divine-like identity to the Israelites and the subsequent death-sentence that they receive. The mentioning of ‘darkness’ is also striking: Psalm 82:5a reads, ‘without knowledge and without understanding they wander about in darkness;’ the same group referred to in Ps 82:6 (the ‘gods’) are here portrayed as blinded by darkness and ignorance. When read against the Shepherd discourse in John 10, where sheep outside the fold ‘perish’ – and the prior narrative of the man born blind in chapter 9 (cf. 9:4-5, 39-41; 12:35-36) – the death-allusions in the psalm gain a fresh (and disturbing) salience in 10:22-39.

Secondly, if Obermann is correct in his suggestion that John characterises the Jews in 10:22-39 as representative types of their ancestors at Sinai, this supports the broader argument of this thesis that the OT citations in the Gospel are key junctures at which John’s rhetorical and theological re-telling of the biblical story emerges. This would imply that the referent of the

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<sup>242</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 174.

Jews (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) is intertextual: as characters they function to represent the ancient Israelites at Sinai, although cast in the new mould of the γραφή that is John's Gospel. In John's ideological and cosmological drama, the Jews play the part of Jesus' adversaries, rejecting Jesus and his self-revelatory claims. These claims are elucidated through recourse to Scripture (in the form of direct citation, 1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34) and witnessed to by the Scriptures in general (cf. 1:45; 5:39).

### iii. The Response and Characterisation of the Jews

The response of the Jews to Jesus' self-revelatory claims in 10:22-39; 40-42 is one of unbelief and rejection. They begin by demanding that Jesus tell them 'openly' if he is 'the Christ,' a sure sign that they have not understood the significance of his previous words or 'works.' In fact, the entire narrative of 10:22-39; 40-42 is permeated by the theme of the unbelief of the Jews. The narrator initially refers to their attempt to kill Jesus (10:31) and ends with their failed attempt to arrest him (10:39). Coloe summarises the movement of this pericope succinctly when she states that,

The narrative has shown that during this time with 'his [Jesus'] own', the Jews have refused his offer. In their blindness they refuse to see the glory of God now revealed in their midst in the person of Jesus as witnessed by his words and works.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 155.



The reader is made aware that the Jews' rejection of Jesus at this stage of the narrative is final. The conclusion of the pericope sees Jesus move to the other side of the Jordan where his public ministry began (10:40; cf. 1:19-28). There, 'many' come to him, and on the strength of the Baptist's witness and the 'signs' of Jesus, they 'believe' in him (10:41). These believers are implicitly contrasted with the Jews who, although encouraged to believe in Jesus on the basis of his works (10:25, 38) and the testimony of Scripture (10:34), fail to do so (10:39). As Jesus' public ministry draws to a close and he 'no longer walk[s] about openly among the Jews' (11:54), the obduracy of the Jews becomes an active resolve to kill him (11:45-53, 57).

The conclusion of this narrative (10:40-42) also "function[s] as a conclusion to Jesus' entire ministry among the Jews."<sup>244</sup> This is symbolically represented in Jesus' physical withdrawal from the Temple precincts, "never to return."<sup>245</sup> Jesus' presence in the reconsecrated Temple on the Feast of Dedication is noted explicitly at the beginning of the pericope under analysis (10:22). But as Jesus describes himself as the 'Consecrated one' (10:36) – and thus the new Temple and the locus of God's glory – the Jews harden in their stance towards him (10:39). As their final rejection becomes evident, Jesus "permanently leaves the Temple mount."<sup>246</sup>

Both *direct* and *indirect* means of characterisation are used in this pericope to enable the ideal reader to construct the character of the Jews and of Jesus. The Jews *directly* characterise Jesus as a blasphemer (10:33), but Jesus counters this by directly characterising them as obdurate unbelievers (10:26-27), and by directly characterising *himself* as 'consecrated and

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<sup>244</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 147.

<sup>245</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 145.

<sup>246</sup> Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 154.

sent' (10:36). Jesus also tells the Jews that they do not believe because they are not his 'sheep' (10:26) – in other words Jesus directly defines the Jews as characters who do not 'belong' to him. Possessing the most authoritative 'voice' in the Gospel narrative, Jesus' characterisation of the Jews serves as the most 'reliable,' whereas the Jews' characterisation of Jesus as a blasphemer is manifestly not in accord with the ideological perspective of the Gospel.<sup>247</sup>

*Indirectly*, the Jews are presented as characters who are hostile and murderous towards Jesus, trying to stone (10:31) and arrest (10:39) him. In terms of a possible 'paradigm of traits' established for the Jews in the Gospel so far, particularly when the OT is cited in their presence, this picture is totally consistent. The ideal reader is able to 'properly' assess the reliability of this characterisation of both Jesus and the Jews because of the information granted in the Prologue, which is designed to make the reader prejudiced in favour of Jesus over against a blind, dark and unbelieving world (1:5, 10, 11).

The broader, allusive context of Psalm 82:6 as it is cited in John 10:34 contributes significantly to how the ideal reader might characterise the Jews in this pericope. If Obermann is correct in stating that Jesus refers to the Jews when he cites Psalm 82:6, and that the Jews are therefore 'the gods' to whom the Word came, then the reader interprets the Jews as representative types of their ancestors at Sinai. The Jews are like those 'to whom the Word of God came' (10:35) but who later rebelled and received the divine death sentence. Now, in the person of Jesus, the enfleshed Word of God comes to the Jews, but they do not recognise

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<sup>247</sup> Although a 'resistant' reading of this passage from a Jewish perspective might acknowledge the validity of the Jews' criticism. See Reinhartz, *Befriending*, 89.

him and instead, seek to arrest Jesus in the Temple (10:39). Like the Jews at Sinai, the Jews of the Johannine narrative will ‘die in their sins’ (Psalm 82:6).<sup>248</sup>

The ‘glory’ – or ‘presence’ – of God that in Jewish tradition filled the Temple now ‘fills’ the person of Jesus (cf. 1:14); that same ‘glory’ of God was present in the divine revelation at Sinai when the Word of God ‘came’ to the Jews. The ideal reader of the Gospel understands Jesus to be the incarnate glory of God and encounters the repeated emergence of this motif when Scripture is cited in John 1:19-12:15 (cf. 1:23; 2:17; 6:31; 7:37-39; 10:34). The Jews, on the other hand, continually miss the significance of Jesus’ signs and discourses and do not recognise the divine δόξα now present in Jesus. Once more the themes of the Wilderness and *death* coalesce in the contextual background of John 10:34 (cf. 6:31), and the theme of the revelation of the divine glory – and the rejection of that glory – is implied in this.

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<sup>248</sup> The *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Psalm 82 via John 10:34 in the Patristic (ante-Nicene) tradition appears, in part, to give credence to my hypothesis that an ideal reader is encouraged by the Gospel’s rhetoric to construct a negative characterisation of Jews. Confirmation for this suggestion can be found in Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho*. In a highly original article, Carl Mosser explains how Justin uses Psalm 82:1, 6, 7 to demonstrate to the Jew Trypho that Christians are now the true ‘Israel’ (*Dialogue* 123-124) replacing the “malignant” and “unfaithful” Jews (cf. *Dialogue* 131); see Carl Mosser, “The Earliest Patristic Interpretation of Psalm 82, Jewish Antecedents, and the Origin of Christian Deification,” *JTS* 56 (2005): 30-74. Just as the Jews in John 10:34 are disturbed by Jesus’ saying, ‘I am son of God,’ so Trypho is ‘perturbed because I (Justin) said that we are the children of God’ (*Dialogue* 124.1). Justin cites Psalm 82 in its entirety and then interprets it with reference to the creation: in the beginning, Adam and Eve were ‘godlike’ but lost this status through their disobedience – they died like mortals. Justin reads Psalm 82:6 (‘all of you are sons of the Most High’) in a predictive sense, pointing to Christ’s redemptive work that enables believers to *regain* a godlike or immortal status: Jesus is Son of God par excellence; hence believers are able to become children of God. Mosser understands Justin’s logic to reflect the Johannine language of being ‘begotten’ by God and thus argues that Justin “uses an already *Christianly* interpreted Psalm 82” that ties in with “distinctively Johannine soteriological concept[s]” (page 41, his emphasis). This would indicate that the wider, allusive context of the Psalm 82:6 in John 10:34 and its apparent applicability to the Jews were well understood by Justin.

Finally, it is worth noting the festive context of John 10:22-39 for how the ideal reader of the Gospel is invited to characterise the Jews. The Feast of Dedication celebrated the reconsecration of the Temple as a consequence of the Maccabean revolt (1 Macc 1:54-55). Under the leadership of Mattathias and then Judas, the blasphemous idol erected in the heart of the Temple by King Antiochus Epiphanes IV was destroyed and removed, and the sacrificial worship so central to Jewish self-understanding was restored once more (cf. 1 Macc 4:36-61). This context provides a layer of irony to the already tense situation in which the Jews prove themselves to be outsiders to the mystery of God present in Jesus (10:22-39). Jesus claims to be ‘consecrated and sent’ into the world by the Father (10:35), the true Temple in whom God is definitively and uniquely present (cf. 2:17-22). Yet the Jews accuse Jesus of blasphemy (10:33) and force his removal from the Temple precincts by their desire to arrest him. In this sense, they unwittingly place *Jesus* in the role of Antiochus Epiphanes, as one who is defiling the Temple, and who must be expelled.<sup>249</sup> But Jesus is the ‘consecrated’ One who walks in the reconsecrated Temple, and in attempting to expel Jesus from the Temple they in fact act as Antiochus Epiphanes did,<sup>250</sup> effecting a “desecration” of the Temple.<sup>251</sup> It is also relevant that the Feast of Dedication was to some extent modelled on the Feast of Tabernacles, at least in its celebration. Dedication commemorates the fact that during the revolt the Maccabees lived in the hills in tent-like constructions resembling the

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<sup>249</sup> Cf. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 149.

<sup>250</sup> Cf. Moloney, *John*, 316.

<sup>251</sup> Douglas E. Earl, “Bethany beyond the Jordan: The Significance of a Johannine Motif,” *NTS* 55 (2009): 290. Similarly, see James C. VanderKam, “John 10 and the Feast of the Dedication,” in, *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism and Christian Origins Presented to John Strugnell on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. John J. Collins and Thomas H. Tobin (College Theology Society Resources in Religion 5; Lanham: University Press of America, 1990), 212. VanderKam argues that Jesus legitimately claims for himself a title (Son of God, i.e. as God manifest) what Antiochus Epiphanes illegitimately claimed for himself.

‘booths’ of Tabernacles. Thus the wilderness theme returns to the Johannine story, even if via the contextual background of a very different feast.

#### iv. Conclusion

Both Jesus and the Jews are characterised by direct and indirect means in John 10:22-39. As this close reading has demonstrated, the category of the reliability of narrative voices was vital in assisting the reader to build a ‘correct’ portrait of the Jews and of Jesus, correct because it fits with a compliant reading of the Gospel’s rhetoric. This pericope (10:22-39) also contains some heavy irony: although the Jews wish to kill Jesus, “it is they who will die.”<sup>252</sup> And although they cast Jesus in the role of Antiochus, it is they who ‘blaspheme’ the Temple. This returns the reader to the theme of death that has emerged in almost alternating fashion, as the broader allusive context to the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15. In the wilderness tradition, which Psalm 82 alludes to, Israel lost their divine-like status and their lives by rebelling against God. John retells this narrative in John 10:22-39, focusing on the confrontation of the Jews with Jesus. In rejecting Jesus, the Jews reject God, whose very Word is incarnate in Jesus. Jesus’ final withdrawal from the Jews is noted again in 11:54, and 10:22-39; 40-42 constitutes the last confrontation between Jesus and the Jews before Jesus moves definitively towards his ‘hour.’

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<sup>252</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 174.

## E. Conclusion to Chapter

This chapter has interpreted four OT citations (6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34) against their narrative settings, namely the ‘feast of the Jews’ (cf. 5:1) – Passover, Tabernacles and Dedication, arguing that these feasts were relevant for the characterisation of the Jews by the reader. In John chapter 6, when Passover was ‘near’ (6:2), Jesus declared himself to be the Bread from Heaven, eliciting a ‘murmuring’ response from the Jews, that assisted in characterising them in light of the Exodus traditions. In chapter 7, the possible citation texts were relevant to the Feast of Tabernacles, expressing themes of eschatological hope, as well as recalling the same Exodus traditions of provision in the wilderness. In John 10, the Feast of Dedication served as a backdrop to Jesus’ altercation with the Jews and the Scriptural citation in 10:34, providing an ironic layer to their characterisation.

The ideal reader of the Gospel narrative has seen a pattern at work across these four citations: each OT citation speaks of Jesus and reveals something of him to his audience (that he is ‘Lord’, 1:23; the new Temple, 2:17; the Bread of Life, 6:31, 45; the Living Water, 7:37-39; and Son of God, 10:34). Moreover, each time the OT is cited in the Gospel’s Book of Signs, the Jews emerge as the primary characters to hear and respond to the citations. The rhetorical purpose of the citations is to lead the textual (and thereby, the ideal) audience of the narrative to faith in Jesus. Curiously, however, and progressively, the OT citations and their Christological significance only function to alienate the Jews in the text. The climax of this alienation comes in 10:40-42, when Jesus departs definitively from the Jews. The next chapter will analyse the last OT citation in the Gospel’s Book of Signs that is prefaced by the ἔστιν γεγραμμένον formula, at the close of Jesus’ public ministry.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE OLD TESTAMENT CITATIONS AND THE JEWS – PART III:

#### THE CLOSE OF JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY (12:14-15)

##### I. Introduction

In this third section of the Book of Signs (chapter 12) the 'feasts of the Jews' no longer serves as a major contextual backdrop for the characterisation of the Jews in the text. Jesus has departed from the presence of the Jews, and the narrative turns to his approaching 'hour'. In chapter 12, Jesus speaks mainly to the crowds at the final festival of Passover. The conclusion to Jesus' public ministry was heralded by his raising of Lazarus, which motivated the Jewish leaders to seek the death of Jesus (11:1-12:50). With the arrival of some 'Greeks' to see Jesus at the festival (12:20) another turning point in the narrative is marked: Jesus' imminent departure (his death) will be a moment of the 'ingathering' of the nations, and lead into the 'fulfillment' type of formula that introduces all subsequent OT citations in the narrative.

The argument of this chapter can be schematised as follows:

##### I. The Old Testament Citations and the Jews – Part III: The Close of Jesus' Public Ministry (12:14-15)

###### A. John 12:14: 'Do Not Be Afraid, Daughter of Zion' (Zech 9:9/Zeph 3:9)

###### i. Outline of the Johannine Text

###### ii. The Contexts of Zech 9:9 and Zeph 3:16 for an Understanding of John 12:14

###### iii. The Response and Characterisation of Jesus' Audience

iv. Excursus: A Note on John 12:37-42

vi. Conclusion

A. John 12:14: ‘Do Not Be Afraid, Daughter of Zion’ (Zech 9:9/Zeph 3:9)

i. Outline of the Johannine Text

The final citation of Scripture in the Gospel’s Book of Signs that is introduced by the *καθὼς ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον* formula occurs in John 12:14, forming part of the wider narrative context concerning Jesus’ final entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19). This is Jesus’ last public appearance before his death (12:36). In this pericope (12:12-19), the audiences present do not display the same kind of blatant misunderstanding or outright hostility as in the previous episodes analysed. Contrary to what the ideal reader has been shaped to expect with regard to John’s Scriptural citations, the Jews are not present in this passage as Jesus’ interlocutors (cf. 2:17; 6:31-45; 7:37-39; 10:22-39). In fact, Jesus has withdrawn from the company of the Jews – he no longer ‘went about openly (*ἐν παρρησίᾳ*) among them’ (11:54) due to their resolve to kill him (11:53). When he publically re-emerges in 12:12-19, Jesus encounters a different audience: ‘the great crowd’ (*ὁ ὄχλος πολὺς*, 12:12, 13-36); and as in 2:17-22, so also in 12:14-15, Scripture is cited in the diegetic voice of the narrator for the benefit of the *reader* and so does not impact upon the textual audience in the time-frame of the story world. Moreover both 2:17-22 and 12:15-16 contain a post-resurrection interpretive ‘aside’ that accompanies the cited OT text, and this aside is likewise ‘heard’ only by the reader and not the narrative characters (12:15; cf. 2:17-20). As this thesis has shown, the rhetorical purpose of the Scriptural citations in John 1:19-12:15 is to ‘tutor’ the ideal reader into seeing and understanding Jesus correctly. Following from this, the reader is further persuaded to



construct the textual characters (the Jews, the disciples, ‘the crowds’) according to their varying responses to Jesus. In each of the citation-texts already analysed (1:27; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34), the Jews have functioned as unbelieving characters against whom the ideal reader is supposed to ‘stand’ in terms of faith response. Even though the Jews are not directly present in this current scene (12:12-19) their presence is implied in several ways to be discussed immediately below. Scripture is called upon in this passage to provide a ‘correct’ interpretation of Jesus and his actions, in the face of the mere ‘signs-based’ faith of the otherwise receptive crowds. For these reasons I will give due consideration to this final OT citation (12:15) despite its differences from the other OT citation passages already analysed in this thesis.

Before proceeding to examine the OT text cited in John 12:14-15, I will outline in some detail the different ‘audiences’ addressed by the citation. This will assist in giving a clearer picture of how the OT citation functions rhetorically within the narrative. As in previous Gospel passages where the OT has been cited (cf. 2:17; 6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34), so in 12:15, one of Israel’s religious feasts serves as a dramatic backdrop.<sup>1</sup> The reader has been told that the feast of Passover is imminent (11:55) and that ‘many of the country people’ (ἐκ τῆς χώρας) who had come to Jerusalem to perform advance purification rituals were expecting Jesus (11:56). The reader is also warned of the looming presence of the ‘chief priests and Pharisees’ who are expecting to make an arrest of Jesus at the feast (11:57; cf. 7:11), and who had recently convened to orchestrate his execution (11:47-53). This official decision, it is said, is based on the reports of ‘some of the Jews’ (11:45) – i.e. of the Jews

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<sup>1</sup> Jesus himself is not described as being in Jerusalem when Passover approached (11:55-56), and ‘six days before’ Passover he was in Bethany (12:1), which is approximately three kilometres from Jerusalem. Jesus is present in Jerusalem ‘the next day,’ i.e. five days before Passover (12:12).

with whom Jesus has already conflicted – who had witnessed Jesus’ raising of Lazarus (11:1-44). This most powerful ‘sign’ had led ‘many of the Jews’ to ‘believe in him’ (cf. 11:45).<sup>2</sup> It is this ongoing defection from their ranks that motivates the leaders of the Jews to kill Jesus out of fear that such division will lead to a Roman suppression of the nation (11:48). Even Jesus’ brief sojourn in Bethany en route to Jerusalem attracts ‘a large number of Jews’ (12:17-18) who come to Jesus because they have heard about the Lazarus miracle (12:9).<sup>3</sup> The narrator informs the reader in another aside that the ‘chief priests’ plan even to kill Lazarus himself, as he was the primary cause of the recent large-scale movement of ‘Jews’ towards Jesus (12:11).

Turning to John 12:12-19, then, one sees that the audience welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem is multi-faceted. The primary audience is the ‘great crowd of people’ (12:12) who arrived early for the feast in Jerusalem more than a week before (11:55).<sup>4</sup> These are no doubt Jews themselves who express curiosity about Jesus (11:57), but they are not the hostile ‘Jews’ that have come into conflict with Jesus previously and who constituted the narrative audience of most of the other OT citations in the Gospel (2:17; 6:45; 7:37-39; 10:34). Another ‘crowd’ (ὄχλος) emerge as a secondary audience in this pericope: they are described as the ‘crowd’

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<sup>2</sup> The reader learns only of this ‘second-hand’, as it were; the fact that ‘many of the Jews’ came to believe in Jesus is never *narrated*, and the cursory reference leads the reader to wonder why the Jews are believing in Jesus at all considering their previous hostility towards him. It is another ‘nuance’ to the presentation of the Jews in the Gospel (cf. 8:30-33; 11:33).

<sup>3</sup> The Greek does not retain the definite article here, so perhaps *Jews* come to believe in Jesus (i.e. members of the public who witnessed the miracle), but not the Jews who are *characteristically* so hostile to Jesus in the Gospel.

<sup>4</sup> Kiyoshi Tsuchido makes the suggestion that the ‘crowd’ in 12:12 are not pilgrims but those who witnessed the Lazarus miracle and who have come *back* to Jerusalem; this would make them residents of Jerusalem. See Kiyoshi Tsuchido, “Tradition and Redaction in John 12:1-43,” *NTS* 30 (1984): 611. One wonders if these are therefore the same ‘Jerusalemmites’ of 7:25-27, and who react to Jesus’ words with a particular bemusement and a sure ‘knowledge’ of Jesus’ earthly ‘origins.’

who responded positively to Jesus' raising of Lazarus and who kept testifying about it (12:17; cf. 11:33, 45). The referent of 'the crowd' (ὁ ὄχλος) in 12:12-19 therefore alternates between those crowds of common 'people' (12:12, 17b) who throughout the Gospel have remained curious about Jesus but who have not committed themselves in faith response (cf. 6:1-2, 5, 6, 10, 14, 22-24; 7:25, 43; 8:12) and a specific body of the 'Jews' who have believed in Jesus on the strength of the Lazarus miracle (12:17a, cf. 11:33, 45; perhaps 8:30-33). The 'hostile' 'Jews' who reported this defection (11:46) and who were also present at the scene of the miracle (the sceptical 'some' [τινὲς] of 11:37) are not named in 12:12-19. But the authoritative representatives of the Jews – namely the 'chief priests and the Pharisees' – *are* present (12:19); these, the reader has been told, have sought to arrest and kill Jesus (11:47-53). So it can be said that the Jews are *implicitly* present in this pericope as their previous actions of hostility have contributed to the establishment of this scene. The Jews are also explicitly 'present' through their leadership, the 'chief priests and Pharisees.' There is, therefore, an *inclusio* to the OT citations in the Gospel's Book of Signs: of the seven OT citation texts introduced with some variation on the ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον formula (1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34; 12:15), the first (1:23) and the last (12:14-15) place the Jews in the background, merely hinting at their presence. In 1:23 the Jews delegate the task of investigating the messianic status of John to 'priests and Levites,' later called the 'Pharisees' (1:24), thus making their entry into the world of the text only gradually. By 12:14-15, Jesus has retreated from the Jews and the 'chief priests' and 'Pharisees' continue their work instead.

In the pericope currently under analysis (12:12-19), the term ὄχλος is used to refer to a large, unspecified crowd of 'people' (12:12), *and* to a body of people previously identified as the Jews (12:17b). This recalls the way the narrator had previously conflated 'the crowd' and the

Jews in chapter 6 of the Gospel (6:30-32, 44), but also draws attention to the fact that the term Ἰουδαῖος does not always bear negative connotations in the Gospel, but can – as it does here – be used in a so-called ‘neutral’ way. Thus, it is important to note at this point that 12:12-19 includes in its textual audience those who (a) are openly hostile towards Jesus (12:19); (b) have come to ‘believe’ in Jesus, albeit only on the basis of the Lazarus miracle (12:17a); (c) who appear to be curious about Jesus and who neither reject nor ‘believe’ in him (12:12, 17b); and (d) Jesus’ own disciples (12:16, cf. 20, 21). Thus Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem provokes a mixed response. It is the testimony of Scripture which, the narrator suggests, enables one to respond appropriately to Jesus on this occasion.<sup>5</sup>

Having explained the narrative audience of John 12:12-19, I now proceed to outline its plot. The pericope opens with a description of the ‘crowd’ moving to meet Jesus as he enters the city (12:12). The crowd welcome Jesus, waving branches of palm<sup>6</sup> and shouting the triumphal *Hosanna* of Psalm 118:25: they declare that Jesus comes ‘in the name of the Lord’ (ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου) and is the ‘King of Israel’ (ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ,

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<sup>5</sup> Jerome Neyrey, “John 12 as a Peroratio,” 105, argues that the “extraordinary parade of Johannine characters who make a final appearance here” plays a crucial and conclusive role in the Gospel’s rhetoric, when understood from an ancient Greco-Roman perspective. Neyrey suggests, like I do above, that “ancient and modern readers” of John 12 “assess” and “judge” each character in terms of whether they belong to “the world below or the world of Jesus” (111). According to Neyrey, each character arouses a particular *emotion* in the reader, urging the reader to “hate” or bear “contempt” towards those characters who reject Jesus or who seek his death; in John 12 these are the “Chief Priests” (111), the “Pharisees” (112), and “some of the authorities” (112). Compare the presentation of Adele Reinhartz’s views in Chapter Two of this thesis.

<sup>6</sup> The waving of the *lulab* in John 12:13, compared to the mere ‘laying’ of palm branches seems to suggest that John intends to link this episode with the feast of Tabernacles. Barrett and Schnackenburg both take up this suggestion as an alternative to the ‘messianic’ interpretation traditionally associated with palm branches (cf. Barrett, *The Gospel*, 347; Schnackenburg, *The Gospel*, 2:374; for further discussion see Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 180). That ‘Passover’ is ‘near’ (11:55; 12:1) makes it unlikely that a Tabernacles allusion is immediately apparent. Nonetheless it should be noted that the particular word John uses (τὰ βῆλα) is associated with the Maccabean revolt.

12:13).<sup>7</sup> At this point Jesus mounts a young donkey (12:14) and the narrator immediately interjects in an aside, ‘as it is written, Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion; look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt’ (12:14b-15; cf. Zech 9:9). As this citation of Scripture is in the diegetic voice of the narrator, it is not ‘heard’ by the narrative characters and so is expressly for the benefit of the reader. In response to the crowd’s cry for their ‘king’ Jesus immediately performs a symbolic action (mounting the colt) which aims to make the crowd understand the nature of his kingship. The narrator’s recourse to Scripture aims to make the *reader* understand the significance of Jesus’ symbolic action. In other words, Jesus enacts a Scriptural interpretation (Zech 9:9) of *another* Scriptural association put forward by the crowd (Ps 118:25). These several verses (John 12:12-16) can therefore be read as a series of actions, reactions and Scriptural citations/allusions. This can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

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<sup>7</sup> I do not consider Psalm 118:25 to be a ‘citation’ in the sense of the others examined in this thesis, as it lacks John’s characteristic introductory ‘formula.’ Having said that, it is the only verbatim rendering of a Scriptural text in the Gospel (Ps 118:25 LXX). Placed so close to the Zecharian citation in John 12:15, the crowd’s acclamation *is* meant to be read in tandem with this more ‘formal’ citation, as I explain below.

John 12:12-13: The **action** of the crowd (greeting Jesus) + words of Scripture (Psalm 118:25)



John 12:14-15: The **reaction** of Jesus (mounting ass) + Scriptural interpretation (Zech 9:9)



John 12:16: The **action** of the disciples (remembering) + post-resurrectional aside

As this diagram illustrates, the two references to Scripture are positioned in such a way as to be read together, or in the words of Daly-Denton, “John amplifies the Ps 117 [sic] quotation with the gloss ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ in order to show that ὁ ἐρχόμενος is to be understood as the king described in Zech 9:9.”<sup>8</sup> This indicates yet another *inclusio* between the first and last OT citations in the Gospel’s Book of Signs analysed in this thesis: in 1:23, John’s testimony implied that the ‘Coming One’ would be the ‘Lord of glory’ (cf. Isa 40:3-5); in 12:15, the ‘Coming One,’ Jesus, is the King (cf. Zech 9:9). As Lord and King, Jesus truly is the Messiah.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 178-179.

<sup>9</sup> The titles ‘Lord’ and ‘King’, as well as the quasi-technical ὁ ἐρχόμενος, each bore particular messianic overtones in late Second Temple Judaism. Daly-Denton points out a number of Septuagintal and apocryphal texts that use the Greek term ὁ ἐρχόμενος, noting that the nuances vary from case to case (cf. Dan 7:3; Mal 3:1; Hab 2:3. See Daly-Denton, *David in the Fourth Gospel*, 182, footnote 251. See also John 1:27; 4:25; 6:14; 7:27).

Two understandings of Jesus' 'messianic' kinship are here juxtaposed. On the one hand, the crowd envisages Jesus to be a Messiah-King, "their ... national, political messiah."<sup>10</sup> They perceive Jesus to be the kind of 'king' that will liberate their nation from political oppression and foreign occupation. On the other hand, the prophecy from Scripture (Zech 9:9) indicates that Jesus' kingship is characterised by lowliness and peace rather than by triumphalism and war; unlike the historic kings of Israel, Jesus does not ride on 'chariots' or 'horses' (Zech 9:10; cf. Jer 17:25) but on a humble donkey. Jesus *is* a royal saviour, as Scripture prophesies, but not the kind the crowd expect.<sup>11</sup> Scripture thus functions as a subtle corrective to the crowd's limited understanding of Jesus.<sup>12</sup> As in the other OT citations analysed in this thesis where Scripture is cited to provide a 'correct' interpretation of Jesus in the face of misunderstanding or hostility, Scripture is called upon in 12:15 to 'interpret' the significance of Jesus' kingly identity.<sup>13</sup> But this interpretation is directed to the reader of the text; for the crowds, Jesus' symbolic action ought to have sufficed. The reader is then told in the continuing narrative aside that the disciples of Jesus who were present at the scene 'did not understand' Jesus' symbolic action *at first* (τὸ πρῶτον), but *later* (τότε), when he had been

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<sup>10</sup> Moloney, *John*, 350.

<sup>11</sup> A word of caution ought to be sounded here. Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew*, 131, argues that the often repeated idea that all Jews of the time wanted or expected a political/warrior messiah is a caricature of first-century Judaism, and potentially exacerbates the Gospel's anti-Judaism. According to Levine, it risks an unwitting promotion of the stereotype that Judaism is a "militaristic, war-mongering system missing a concern for shalom, and that Christianity is the system of peace, devoid of any militarism, violence or revenge" (*The Misunderstood Jew*, 131). Bordering on this 'caricatured' portrait of Judaism is Schuchard's reading of John 12:15: "Because Jesus refused to be the kind of King the Jews wanted him to be, they abandoned him" (see Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 80). It must be noted that the Jews are not named in this scene, nor do they 'reject' Jesus for this reason alone.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Lindars, *The Gospel according to John*, 423, 424.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Brown, *John*, "That Jesus sits on a donkey only after the crowd acts with nationalistic misunderstanding" shows that this reaction is a *response*, 1:462. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, (422) actually argues that Jesus' action is a *protest* to the crowd's reception of him.

‘glorified,’ they ‘remembered that these things had been written (ταῦτα ἦν ἐπ’ αὐτῷ γεγραμμένα) of him and had been done (ταῦτα ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ) to him’ (12:16b; cf. 2:17-22). John thereby focuses upon the “exact correspondence” between what the Scriptures *wrote* (of Jesus) and what had been *done* to Jesus in his lifetime.<sup>14</sup> Jesus’ story is thus presented as a continuation of the biblical narrative which his death will bring to its τέλος (19:28-30).<sup>15</sup>

John 12:15-16 therefore constitutes one of the Gospel’s intriguing ‘prolepses’ where a future time is obliquely referred to as enabling the disciples to understand the happenings of the past as narrated in the present story (cf. 2:20-22; 7:39).<sup>16</sup> Three groups are depicted reacting in different ways to Jesus’ actions in 12:14-16. The disciples come to a correct ‘Scripturally-informed’ understanding of Jesus’ symbolic act – but only later in the light of the guidance of the Spirit-Paraclete. The ‘crowd’ testify to Jesus, but only on the basis of the Lazarus miracle and not on what is revealed of Jesus in this instance (12:17-18). The ‘Pharisees’ talk amongst themselves about their powerlessness to stop the influx of believers moving towards Jesus (12:19a). They complain: ‘Look, the whole world has gone after him!’ (12:19b). This points

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Lindars, *The Gospel according to John*, 425.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Moloney, “The Gospel of John as Scripture,” 457-459. This coincides with the argument of this thesis that John’s citation of the OT reflects his concern to re-narrate the biblical story, particularly with regard to the Jews. Note that the characteristic ‘formula’ John employs in the first half of the Gospel, ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον, can be compared with Lindars’ point above about how the Scriptures had been *written* (of Jesus). From John 12:38 the ‘fulfillment formula’ is used consistently to introduce OT citations, which suggests that the Book of Glory is not so much about the re-narration of Scripture vis-à-vis the Jews, but about the completion and τέλος of the Scriptures.

<sup>16</sup> This future time is the period following Jesus’ glorification (12:16) – as the narrative progresses the reader comes to understand the association between Jesus’ glorification and the ‘hour’ of his death. Themes of glory (12:16, 23, 28a, b, 37, 41, 43), departure (12:27-28, 35a, 36b) death (12:31-32, 33) and judgment (12:31, 47-48) begin to coalesce more tightly as the Book of Signs reaches its conclusion (cf. 12:37-50) and the Book of Glory begins (13-20).



forward to the movement of ‘some Greeks’ towards Jesus (12:20): his words have an effect beyond ‘Israel’ whose King now stands before them (12:12). It is now appropriate to assess the context of the Scriptural citation in John 12:15 for what it may further reveal about the narrative-rhetorical impact of the citation vis-à-vis Jesus’ audience.

ii. The Contexts of Zech 9:9 and Zeph 3:16 for an Understanding of John 12:14

The content of the Scriptural citation in John 12:14-15 closely corresponds to Zech 9:9 LXX which reads:

Rejoice greatly, O **daughter of Zion!** Shout aloud, O daughter  
Jerusalem! See, **your king comes** to you; triumphant and victorious is  
he, humble and **riding on** a donkey, on a colt, the **foal of a donkey**.

John’s text represents a compressed version of the above, including only those sections highlighted. If LXX Zech 9:9 constituted the main source for John’s citation in 12:15, the most notable point of difference would be that John changed Zechariah’s injunction from ‘rejoice greatly’ to ‘Fear not’ (μὴ φοβοῦ 12:15a). Also notable is that in John 12:15, Jesus *sits* on the ‘foal of a donkey’ rather than *riding* the foal, as in Zechariah. Thus, John’s text reads: ‘Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion; look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt’ (12:15). It is usually proposed in explanation of these changes that John combined two source texts for this citation. For example, Schuchard suggests that in addition to Zech 9:9, John drew the injunction ‘fear not’ from Isa 44:2, as this text also mentions the ‘king of

Israel.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Reim contends that John only utilised the Deutero-Isaian corpus, drawing on Isa 40:9 and Isa 62:11.<sup>18</sup> Freed argues that John combined Zech 9:9 with an “unknown source.”<sup>19</sup> Finally, Brown and Lindars both advance the claim that John conflated Zech 9:9 with Zeph 3:16, which *does* contain the injunction μὴ φοβοῦ – and this is a suggestion that will be explored in more detail below.<sup>20</sup> Firstly, however, I will consider the contextual background of Zech 9:9 before discussing the possible conflated influence of Zech 9:9 and Zeph 3:16 on John 12:15.

The text of Zech 9:9-10 is situated in the centre of a lengthy oracle to Zion, detailing the prophet’s post-exilic vision of a restored Jerusalem (Zech 9:1-17). The tone of Zech 9:9-10 is clearly messianic and eschatological, arousing a sense of great expectation: a royal King, who is also a Saviour (Zech 9:9b, σωζών LXX), enters the Holy City, and in a manner entirely devoid of militarism, establishes a universal reign of peace (9:10). In this passage a return to (Davidic) monarchic rule is therefore envisaged in the post-exilic situation; the ‘King’ who rides the ‘ass’ is ‘legitimate,’<sup>21</sup> but also humble (עני) before God.<sup>22</sup> The peaceful scene depicted in Zech 9:9-10 sits in contrast with its immediate surrounding context; the opening verses of the oracle (9:1-8) show God promising to destroy oppressive nations, and in the concluding section of the oracle (9:11-17), God is depicted as a warrior (9:13-14) who

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<sup>17</sup> Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 76-77.

<sup>18</sup> Reim, *Studien*, 30.

<sup>19</sup> Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 77.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 1:458; Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, 423-424.

<sup>21</sup> The MT has צדיק, translated in the LXX as δίκαιος, (‘triumphant’ or ‘righteous’). When used of a King, צדיק implies not only that the King is ideal, but also that he is of legitimate dynasty. See the discussion in Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14* (AB 25c; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 125-126.

<sup>22</sup> Meyers and Meyers suggest that the root עני may mean that the King is of low economic status –although for a King this hardly seems an appropriate connotation. The noun may also evoke Num 12:3, which describes Moses as being the ‘most humble (ענו) man on earth.’ See Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah*, 127-128.

intervenes on behalf of Israel to restore the fortunes of the people. Nevertheless, the pervasive thematic focus of the entire oracle is that of hope, expressed in the notion of *restoration* of the Land and the people, even indeed the restoration of the covenant (Zech 9:11; cf. Exod 24:38). It is instructive to compare the Isaian texts cited in John 1:23 (Isa 40:3) and 6:45 (Isa 54:13), as well as Ezek 47:1-2 cited in John 7:37-39, that also develop the theme of post-exilic restoration. As the Johannine theme of ‘ingathering’ emerges in John 12:32 (and cf. 11:47-52), allusions to Israel’s national and geographical restoration re-emerge. The coming of the ‘Greeks’ to see Jesus in 12:20 – symbolic of an ingathering of the nations that was expected in the end-times (cf. Isa 49:5; 56:1-8; 60:3-7, 10-14; 66:18-24; cf. Micah 4) – also definitively signals the arrival of Jesus’ ‘hour’ and effects a shift in the narrative from a depiction of Jesus’ public ministry (1-12) to the Gospel’s Book of Glory (13-20).

It is often noted in the secondary literature that John cites Zech 9:9 in order to draw attention to Jesus as the royal saviour. According to Freed, the “mere sitting” of Jesus upon the colt “fulfills the prophecy of his kingship,” as the evangelist immediately has recourse to Scripture: ‘he sat on it – as it is written...’ (12:14).<sup>23</sup> Menken develops this point by mentioning other texts in the LXX and in Josephus where – as in John 12:15 – καθίσθαι is given as a translation of the Hebrew קָלַל or of the Hebrew שָׁב and refers to the “sitting of the king as a king” whether on a throne or on a mule (cf. 2 Kg 13:29; 16:2; 22:11; Isa 19:1; *J.W.* 1.209; *Ant.* 5.192; 7.353).<sup>24</sup> The import of John 12:15 in citing Zech 9:9 therefore, has to do with the way John wishes to emphasise Jesus’ “royal dignity.”<sup>25</sup> In support of this

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<sup>23</sup> Freed, *The Old Testament Quotations*, 80.

<sup>24</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*; 92, followed by Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 81. The riding of a royal figure on an ass (rather than a horse) reflected a widespread ANE practice of royal procession according to Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah*, 129.

<sup>25</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 93.

argument is the fact that John uses the Greek πῶλος to translate the Hebrew עֵיר (ass). The word πῶλος is not often used in the LXX (cf. only Gen 32:16; 49:11; Judges 10:4; 12:14; Prov 5:19; Zech 9:9), perhaps its most notable usage being Gen 49:11, where Judah rides an ass in anticipation of his royal destiny.<sup>26</sup> However, more than this is implied in the way John has appropriated the Zecharian text with regard to Jesus. In Zechariah 9:9-10, the royal saviour-figure is portrayed as riding an ass *rather than* a horse, thereby presenting an implicit criticism of traditional methods of chariot warfare in the ANE that were central to political and military dominance (Jer 17:25).<sup>27</sup> In the post-exilic age – which in Zechariah is also overlaid with an eschatological focus – monarchic rule will be characterised by its “non-exploitative” nature.<sup>28</sup> John seems to be suggesting that the kingly rule of Jesus that is now heralded by his approaching ‘hour’ (12:23, 27b), will be a rule of universal peace. As ‘King of Israel’ (cf. John 12:13, Psalm 118:25), Jesus does not fit the political or ‘nationalistic’ profile ascribed to him by the acclaiming crowd, but rather than of the humble figure of Zech 9:9.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah*, 130. Incidentally, Adrian Leske has argued that the royal figure of Zech 9:9 is neither messianic nor Davidic but, based on the Genesis allusions, is “the faithful people of Judah, God’s flock.” Leske argues that a “democratization of kingship,” like that at work in the Deutero-Isaian corpus, is also operative in Zech 9:9, when in the post-exilic age, leadership is “returned to the people.” See Adrian Leske, “Context and Meaning in Zechariah 9:9,” *CBQ* 62, no. 4 (2000): 667, 673.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah*, 132.

<sup>28</sup> Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah*, 130.

<sup>29</sup> In a recent examination of the lexical elements of Zech 9:9, Kenneth Way argues that the purpose of Zech 9:9 is to emphasise that the King rides on a *pure* breed of a donkey. An unusual combination of terms for ‘donkey’ are found in Zech 9:9, according to Way, and each term adds something more to the last, such that, “Zion’s king is riding on a donkey (חומר), but not just any donkey. He is riding on a jackass (עֵיר), but not just any jackass. He is riding on a purebred (בן־אֵמָנוּת) jackass.” Way suggests that since hybrid donkeys (i.e. not purebreds) were not appropriate for use in Amorite covenant/treaty rituals (in Mari texts), the ‘mule’ was probably not suitable for Zion’s eschatological king, whose coming restores the covenant (Zech 9:11). See Kenneth C. Way, “Donkey Domain: Zechariah 9:9 and Lexical Semantics,” *JBL* 129, no. 1 (2010): 114.

This is borne out by a closer examination of some pertinent themes in the oracle of Zech 9:1-17. In Zech 9:8, before the oracle shifts from the first-person singular to a removed description of the entry of the King into Jerusalem, the voice of Yahweh speaks, promising to ‘encamp’ at his ‘House’ once more. The word שָׁכַן is used in Zech 9:8, and hints at more than God ‘camping’; it connotes the indwelling or tabernacling presence of God, most particularly, the ‘glory’ of God as it dwelt with the Israelites in the wilderness tent-of-meeting (Exod 33-34). The dual reference to ‘daughter Zion’ and ‘daughter Jerusalem’ in Zech 9:9 carries this theme of God’s tabernacling presence in Jerusalem, indicating that it is in the *Temple* that God will dwell once more when Israel is restored (cf. Zech 9:1; also Zech 2:14; 8:3), with Zion being virtually synonymous with the Temple in the OT literature (Jer 50:28; 51:10; Isa 8:18). These verses together (Zech 9:8 and 9:9) speak of God’s glorious dwelling in the Temple and of God’s royal representative coming to rule in Jerusalem. John seems to be playing on these themes, as Jesus has already been presented to the reader as the ‘locus’ of God’s tabernacling presence (the Greek translation of שָׁכַן is σκηνώω, cf. John 1:14), and in 12:13-15, Jesus enters Jerusalem, the city of the Temple, as God’s ‘kingly’ representative.<sup>30</sup> From the Johannine perspective, the dwelling of God in the Temple has become a permanent, indwelling presence in the person of Jesus.

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<sup>30</sup> This combination of Zecharian post-exilic themes (ingathering of the nations, restoration of Land and Temple, coming of a royal/Davidic figure) are by no means arbitrary: joined together they possibly expressed the aspirations of many Jews of the first century CE, who awaited a saviour-figure who would release them from Roman oppression and herald the Eschaton (cf. Sanders’ chapter entitled “New Temple and Restoration in Jewish Literature,” in his *Jesus and Judaism*, 77-90. John A. Dennis affirms this view by stating that many Jews of the late Second Temple period would have held out hope that the prophetic promises voiced in Zechariah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Isaiah would yet be fulfilled, as a complete post-exilic restoration had not yet occurred. See John A. Dennis, *Jesus’ Death and the Gathering of the True Israel* (WUNT 2/217; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 83. Note that John 12 takes up in its own unique way each one of these themes through John’s citation of Zech 9:9.

Of some relevance here is the proleptic reference to the post-Easter era following the citation of Zech 9:9 in John 12:14-15. The narrator states that Jesus' disciples gained a fuller understanding of the Scriptural significance of Jesus' actions after Jesus had been 'glorified' (12:16), in other words, after his death and resurrection. As I have already shown, much of chapter 12, and particularly 11:47-52, prepares the reader for Jesus' impending departure and death. The Johannine presentation of Jesus as the new Temple embodying the divine 'glory' is something that also became clear to the disciples in the post-Easter period (cf. 2:21-22). According to Dennis, the 'Temple-cleansing scene' (2:13-22) bears intra-textual resonances with John 11:47-52, where the reader is led to view Jesus' death as that which would save 'our holy place' (11:48), i.e. the Temple that the officials fear will be overrun if Jesus is *not* put to death (11:47-48).<sup>31</sup> Ironically, in 70 CE the Temple was destroyed, and it is the loss of the Temple that prompted the Johannine community to reflect upon Jesus as the abiding locus of God's presence in the Spirit.<sup>32</sup> In short, through theological reflection, for the Johannine community, this 'holy place' *is* 'saved,' and YHWH has 'returned' to them in the new Temple of Jesus' body (cf. 2:22). The allusive contexts of the Zecharian citation in John 12:14-15 have thus been absorbed by John in a complex and profound way.

The possibility that John drew on Zeph 3:16 in conjunction with Zech 9:9 is a tenable hypothesis, as Zeph 3:16 contains a number of verbal parallels with John's citation. Zeph 3:16 reads, '*Do not fear, O Zion,*' and continues, 'the Lord, your God, is in your midst' (Zeph 3:17a). The broader context of Zeph 3:16 is a song of joy about God's restoration and salvation of Israel (3:14-20). As in John 12:15, there is an injunction to 'rejoice' (3:14c) and like in Zech 9:9, this is addressed to 'daughter Zion' (3:14a) and 'daughter Jerusalem'

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Dennis, *Jesus' Death*, 136.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 1-3; 213-214.

(3:14d). The song speaks of how the Lord has refrained from judgement and has dealt with the ‘enemies’ of Israel (3:15). Israel has cause for joy in that ‘the king of Israel, the Lord, is in [their] midst’ (3:15, 17a, ἐν μέσῳ σου). The Lord is a warrior who gives Israel victory (3:17b) and who ‘gathers’ Israel home, restoring Israel’s fortunes (3:20). God is depicted as ‘rejoicing’ and ‘exulting’ over Israel and ‘renewing’ Israel out of ‘love’ (3:17). The themes of Zeph 3:14-20 are clearly of hope and eschatological promise, but unlike Zech 9:9 where a kingly figure is the agent of Israel’s restoration, in Zeph 3:16 Yahweh himself is the warrior-saviour. There is the promise of an ‘ingathering’ and a general restoration for ‘Israel’ as well as divine vindication against her enemies.<sup>33</sup>

It is possible to read thematic similarities between this text and chapter 12 of John’s Gospel as a whole, for the intertextual resonances are quite strong. For example, the Johannine theme of ‘ingathering’ focuses upon Jesus’ death as a pivotal moment in which ‘all’ may come to Jesus (12:32) and so to the Father. This is the ‘hour’ of the Son’s ‘glorification’ (12:23, 27b-28), when he is ‘lifted up/exalted,’ 12:32). Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem in John 12:12-19 therefore signals the divine restoration and in-gathering spoken of in Zeph 3:16. Jesus comes as ‘Israel’s’ king and stands in their ‘midst’ (cf. Zeph 3:15, 17a). There are two points to note here. The first is that in John 12:15 Jesus is described as *Israel’s* king (12:13) and the OT citation in 12:15 aims to make clear that Jesus is *Israel’s* royal saviour. This title is to be understood in conjunction with John 1:49 where Jesus is spoken of by Nathaneal as the ‘king of Israel.’ But Nathaneal’s acclamation of Jesus as ‘King of Israel’ falls short of a true

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<sup>33</sup> Berlin observes that Zeph 3:14, 20, which closes out the book of Zephaniah, portrays a reversal of the opening of the book, which is about battle and chaos (Zeph 1:10-16). See Adele Berlin, *Zephaniah* (AB 25a; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 148.

‘Johannine’ understanding of Jesus (contrast 11:27; 20:31).<sup>34</sup> The second point to note is that in Zech 9:9 and Zeph 3:16 the royal saviour *comes in the midst* of ‘Israel’ (Zech 9:9; Zeph 3:15).<sup>35</sup> John has preserved this focus, as the crowd declare blessing upon Jesus as ‘the Coming One’ (ὁ ἐρχόμενος, cf. Ps 118:25; John 12:12). The royal saviour of Zech 9:9 and Zeph 3:16 is a Messiah-King who ‘comes’ to gather Israel. I have already mentioned the *inclusio* between the first and last OT citation texts in John 1:19-12:15 (cf. 1:23 and 12:15); at this point another connection between these two texts can be made. In 1:26-27, John announces Jesus as the ‘one who comes’ (ὁ ... ἐρχόμενος) and states further that the Coming One – the Messiah – stands already ‘in their *midst*’ (μέσος ὑμῶν). This announcement is fully actualised in John 12:12-19. Jesus is the ‘one who comes,’ and he is received as the Messiah-King by the crowd; he comes into Jerusalem as the royal saviour prophesied in Zech 9:9 and Zeph 3:16 and he comes into the *midst* of the people. But Jesus is more than a king: he is the ‘*Lord*’ in their midst (cf. Zeph 3:15, 17a). Jesus’ messianic status is properly understood not only with reference to his ‘kingly identity’ but to his identity as ‘*Lord*.’ John functioned to ‘make straight the way of the Lord’ (1:23, Isa 40:3); now Jesus, as ‘*Lord*’ proceeds right into the heart of Israel.

While the conflation of Zech 9:9 and Zeph 3:16 may help to explain how John came to substitute ‘Rejoice greatly O daughter Zion’ (Zech 9:9) to ‘Fear not O daughter of Zion’ (John 12:15), it does not necessarily tell us why. The only sustained explanation put forward

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Moloney, “The Jews’: Another Perspective,” 28; 31.

<sup>35</sup> In its more ‘positive’ usage, the term ‘Israel’ in the Gospel denotes the recipients of the divine revelation present in Jesus (cf. Nathaneal, who is described as a ‘true Israelite’ in whom there is no deceit, 1:31; and Nicodemus’ referral to Jesus as ‘teacher of Israel’ in 3:10). See Moloney, “The Jews: Another Perspective,” 28. The incorporation of Zech 9:9 and Zeph 3:16 in John 12:15 may signify in part that all those addressed by Jesus in chapter 12 (Jews, Pharisees, Greeks) are ‘Israel’ in this sense – at least potentially.



in the seminal monographs on the topic is by Menken, who argues that John wanted to present Jesus as “a king whom one does not have to fear.”<sup>36</sup> Apparently, the crowd of John 12:12-19 “misunderstand Jesus as a national king who does frightening things; hence the words, ‘do not fear’ in the quotation”.<sup>37</sup> Most frightening of all are Jesus’ miracles, according to Menken, particularly the raising of Lazarus which stands in close proximity to this pericope. As in the Synoptic Gospels, where Jesus’ miracles produce fear in those who “do not fully understand Jesus,” so too in John, his wondrous signs instil fear in the hearts of those who observe him (cf. John 6:21, *μὴ φοβοῦ*).<sup>38</sup> This is a unique explanation, to be sure, but it cannot be substantiated by the evidence of the text itself. Why would the crowd acknowledge Jesus as their royal/national Messiah if they were afraid of him (12:13)? Moreover, Jesus’ Lazarus miracle did not instil *fear* in the hearts of those who witnessed it but *awe* which motivated them to keep ‘testifying about it’ (12:17). In the hearts of ‘some of the Jews’ it instilled apprehension which is why they reported the affair to the authorities (11:46) but apprehension is not quite the same as, nor as strong as, *fear* and, what is more, these ‘Jews’ are not named as such in John 12:12-19. It seems more reasonable to suppose that John’s use of the injunction *μὴ φοβοῦ* parallels the use of the same phrase in the OT where it is often customarily used as a “word of salvation.”<sup>39</sup> In sum, the wider contexts of Zech 9:9 and Zeph 3:16 have revealed that Jesus is the Messiah who stands in the midst of Israel as their king, as the ‘Coming One’ proclaimed by John in 1:26-27. I now turn to examine in more depth the various responses that Jesus’ actions receive in this pericope.

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<sup>36</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 86.

<sup>37</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 86.

<sup>38</sup> Menken, *Old Testament Quotations*, 85.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Obermann, *Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift*, 205. It is also one of three characteristics of “commissioning formulae” in the OT, according to Ashton, *Understanding*, 468.

### iii. The Response and Characterisation of Jesus' Audience

As already mentioned, in John 12:15, Scripture is cited for the benefit of the reader, and functions to teach the reader how to properly respond to Jesus in faith. Unlike the previous texts in the Gospel where the OT is cited, the Jews are not directly addressed by this citation, nor are they explicitly present at the scene. But just as in the scene of the first OT citation in the Gospel's Book of Signs (Isa 40:3 in John 1:23), some representatives of the Jews are present; thus it can be said that the presence of the Jews lingers implicitly, as it were, in the figures of the Pharisees (12:19; cf. the 'chief Priests' in 12:11). Jesus' permanent withdrawal from the Jews in 10:40-42 and subsequent raising of Lazarus led directly to an official resolve by the 'council' (συνέδριον) to kill Jesus (11:45-52). The desire of the Pharisees to take action against Jesus in 12:11 is based upon this official resolve (cf. 12:19). As such, the response of the Pharisees to Jesus, (as well as of the 'crowd' and the disciples), is worth analysing. I will briefly consider the response of each group as they appear in the text of chapter 12.

Jesus' disciples are the first group to be mentioned. The reader is told that they 'did not understand these things (ταῦτα) at first' (τὸ πρῶτον) (12:16), but that later, when Jesus was glorified (ἀλλ' ὅτε ἐδοξάσθη ἰησοῦς), then they remembered that 'these things were written of him' (τότε ἐμνήσθησαν ὅτι ταῦτα ἦν ἐπ' αὐτῷ γεγραμμένα) and that these things had been done to him' (καὶ ταῦτα ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ). What is striking about this sentence is that ταῦτα appears to refer to both the action of Jesus in mounting the colt *and* to the words of the Zecharian citation spoken by the narrator: the disciples did not understand at that moment the Scriptural significance of Jesus' action, but after his glorification they did

recall this very Scripture and associated it with this incident. Yet, in the story-world of the text, the disciples do not ‘hear’ the narratorial aside that voices the Zecharian citation. This proleptic aside is another example of *direct* characterisation of the disciples from the reliable ‘voice’ of the omniscient narrator.

Scripture is thus cited in the interpretive voice of the narrator for the reader to ‘hear’; the reader also continues to ‘hear’ that the disciples later came to perceive this same Scriptural significance as they ‘remembered’ these very words of the OT and applied them to Jesus. The disciples therefore *do* eventually respond appropriately to Jesus, with the kind of faith response that the evangelist considers adequate and true, but only after Jesus’ resurrection and under the guidance of the Paraclete (cf. 14:25-27; 16:12-14). This is the ‘later’ time of which the narrator speaks (cf. 2:22; 7:39). The disciples are presented in John 12:16 as responding appropriately to Jesus’ symbolic action, but only post-hoc, as it were. The narratorial aside in John 12:16 uses the disciples’ *later* ‘recognition’ of Jesus to prompt the ideal reader to recognise Jesus as the Zecharian royal saviour in the timeframe of the story-world.

The second audience whose response is described is the ‘crowd’, that same crowd that came to acclaim Jesus as ‘King of Israel’ (12:13) and who witnessed his raising of Lazarus (12:17). Curiously, the narrative moves on in 12:17 with the connective particle ‘therefore’ (οὖν) which has the effect of almost bracketing out the narrative aside of 12:16a. It is as though the text is supposed to be read thus: ‘Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: ‘Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt’ [...] *therefore* the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and

raised him from the dead continued to testify' (12:14-15, 17).<sup>40</sup> The connective particle οὖν, introducing the second clause, implies a direct relationship between Jesus' action of mounting the colt and the response of the crowd. By the narrator's standards however, this response is woefully inadequate. The crowd witness Jesus' symbolic action of mounting the colt and derive no Scriptural significance from it whatsoever. This response seems in character with their limited understanding of Jesus as 'Israel's king' in 12:13. In the face of Jesus' action of mounting the colt, the crowd still remain fixated on the Lazarus miracle and continue to testify about that instead (12:17). Even if members of this crowd were formerly hostile 'Jews' who had been present in Bethany and had come to believe in Jesus, they have not comprehended the Scriptural significance that informs all of Jesus' words and even, seemingly, his most mundane actions.

The third audience whose response is described are the Pharisees. They turn to one another and lament the fact that they can 'do nothing' as 'the whole world has gone after' Jesus (12:19).<sup>41</sup> The Pharisees are *indirectly* characterised through their speech, and because they speak of themselves, their characterisation can be considered reliable in terms of the ideological agenda of the Gospel narrative. Earlier in the Gospel, some characters were made to speak words that had a hidden significance or a 'double entendre' that the astute reader alone would acknowledge (cf. Caiaphas in 11:49-53). So in 12:19, the Pharisees, speaking metaphorically of a large-scale defection from their own ranks (the 'world' follows Jesus),

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<sup>40</sup> The connective particle οὖν does not seem to 'fit' with the disciples' remembrance in 12:16 – what possible connection has the crowd's testimony to do with a proleptic remembrance of the disciples that only the reader 'hears'?

<sup>41</sup> The Pharisees lament their inability to prevent people from following Jesus despite their official resolve to arrest him at the feast of Passover (11:57). Although they are ostensibly in a position of power and in charge of plotting to kill Jesus, ironically, Jesus alone has complete control over his 'hour' (12:23).

are made to predict a moment of ‘ingathering,’ where a larger part of the inhabited world does indeed make its way to Jesus.

The verses immediately following narrate how some Greeks present in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover wished to ‘see’ Jesus (12:20). This desire to ‘see’ Jesus (cf. 14:9), at least in Johannine terms, can be translated into a desire to know Jesus and to abide in him. An implicit contrast is therefore established between those leaders of the Jewish people who *ought* to ‘see’ Jesus because of the signs he has worked, but who have not – and members of the non-Jewish ἔθνος who willingly come to ‘see’ Jesus without any prior encouragement at all. This striking contrast foregrounds the obtuseness of the Pharisees as characters within the Gospel story. Finally, this movement of Greeks towards Jesus recalls the first ‘ingathering’ of disciples at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry (1:35-51), only here, at the close of his ministry, disciples are gathered in from the ‘world’ outside of Judaism (cf. Zech 9:13). Because of this momentous occasion, Jesus is impelled to announce the arrival of his long-awaited ‘hour’ (12:23).

Of this variegated audience only one group, namely the disciples, come to comprehend the significance of Jesus’ kingship in light of Zechariah’s prophecy, and this, the reader is told, only after Jesus had been ‘glorified’ (12:16). The other faces in the audience are either relatively uncomprehending (the ‘crowd’ of which some are ‘Jews’ who believe in Jesus), or are attracted to Jesus because of the Lazarus miracle (12:9-10; 17), or they are simply removed and critical (the ‘Pharisees,’ 12:19). Again, some unexpectedly approach Jesus and are open to believing in him, even though they are not described as present when Jesus entered Jerusalem on the colt (the Greeks, 12:20-22). Jesus’ self-revelation opens up all these possible responses in his audience; the ideal reader of the Gospel *observes* and assesses the

response of each group of characters, and notices that up to this point in the Gospel *one* group (the Jews and with them the Pharisees) has consistently rejected against the *possibility* of faith in Jesus, particularly when the OT is cited in John 1:19-12:15.<sup>42</sup>

The ideal reader, moreover, has access to the post-Easter interpretation of the evangelist *in the text* in the present. Thus the reader can and should respond with appropriate, Scripture-informed understanding of Jesus. This is part of the rhetorical design of the Gospel narrative into which the OT citations have been woven. The ideal reader of the Gospel will become one of Jesus' 'own' (13:1), one of the 'insiders' as Jesus turns to share his last meal with his disciples en route to his final moment of 'glorification' on the cross.

Finally, the allusive contexts of the Zecharian and Zephanian passages in relation to John 12:14, 15 serve more to characterise *Jesus* than they do his interlocutors. Nevertheless, the rhetorical pattern that began with the citation of Isaiah 40:3 in John 1:23 and continued across the rest of the citations in John 1:19-12:15 here comes to its conclusion. Themes of post-exilic restoration and *hope* re-emerge in these cited texts, forming a neat *inclusio* with John 1:23, and following on from the *death* allusions present in the context of John 10:34. The 'glory' motif, which I have traced across all of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15 also re-emerges in this pericope, as the Zecharian text envisages a return of the presence (glory) of the Lord to the Temple once more. The significance of these contextual, allusive patterns will be discussed in the conclusion of the thesis.

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<sup>42</sup> Therefore the element of choice in the response of the Jews to Jesus is not denied.

Two citations from the Book of Isaiah occur in the concluding section of the Gospel's Book of Signs (Isa 53:1 and Isa 6:10 in John 12:38, 40). It might be expected that these citations be analysed in this thesis for three reasons: (a) they are still in the section commonly known as the narrative of Jesus' Public Ministry, or the Book of Signs (John 1:19-12:50); (b) they carry forth the themes expressed in the other OT citations so far, especially that of Jesus' 'glory' and the death/judgment of unbelievers; and (c) they are voiced by the narrator and pass definitive judgment on the unbelief of the people, an instance of 'direct characterisation' of the unbelievers by the narrator. This same section of the Gospel (12:37-50) gives something of an omniscient summary of the Book of Signs and is often referred to as a 'conclusion' in the literature.

There is a significant reason why an analysis of these citations falls outside the scope of this thesis. The twin citations from the book of Isaiah are not prefaced by the γεγραμμένον ἔστιν formula and do not have the 'witnessing' character of the previous citations vis-à-vis the Jews (where each citation revealed to the Jews something particular about Jesus). This may seem a facile distinction but it is not – the two types of introductory 'formulae' in fact indicate two different modes of Scriptural appropriations in the Gospel as Obermann has convincingly demonstrated. For this reason I contend that it is legitimate to perform an in-depth analysis of only one type of citation 'formula' and the OT texts associated with them, an analysis previously not attempted in the research. In short, in John 1:19-12:15, the biblical story is 'retold' vis-à-vis the Jews when Scripture is explicitly cited in their presence in the narrative; both the content of the Scriptural citations and their introductory formula witness to this.

From John 12:37, the ἵνα πληρώθῃ construction is employed to introduce Scriptural citations, indicating that now Scripture begins to be fulfilled in Jesus' passion and death (his 'glorification'). The Jews are no longer present in the narrative of the Book of Glory (3:1-20:31), only resurfacing in chapters 18-19 to call for the crucifixion of Jesus (18:39). This suggests a finality of sorts: Jesus has 'witnessed' before the Jews about his oneness with the Father, but they did not believe. Now they *cannot* believe (cf. 12:27-42), and Scripture is fulfilled in this – it reached its realisation or its *telos*, and the story of Jesus is now going to perfect and fulfil the biblical story (13:1-20:31).<sup>43</sup> As such, although the Isaian citations in 12:38, 40 tend to look back on the Book of Signs and give a summary and reason for unbelief in Jesus, they also look forward to the Book of Glory, as all the following citations are introduced by this same ἵνα πληρώθῃ formula. The narrative break that determines the limits of my analysis is therefore not located at 12:50, the traditional conclusion to the Book of Signs, but at 12:22-23 when Jesus announces the arrival of his 'hour' due to the arrival of 'some Greeks' to see him.

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<sup>43</sup> See also Francis J. Moloney, "The Gospel of John: The 'End' of Scripture," *Int* 63, no. 4 (2009): 356-366.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### A. Synthesis of Argument and Methodological Approach

- i. Summary of Exegetical Findings
- ii. Significance of Exegetical Findings

#### B. Possibilities for Further Research

#### A. Synthesis of Argument and Methodological Approach

This thesis claimed that the rhetorical design of John's Gospel encourages an 'ideal' reader to construct a particular characterisation of the Jews in light of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15. This claim built upon the work of earlier scholars who noted that the OT citations in 1:19-12:15 were prefaced by a distinct 'formula' (e.g. ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον) which indicated a correlative rhetorical function of those citations – namely, that the content of the citations *witnessed* to Jesus in his public ministry before the Jews. In most of the OT citations found in 1:19-12:15, the Jews constitute the direct narrative audience (1:23; 6:31, 45; 10:34). When the Jews are not the direct interlocutors of Jesus, they are present in the scene, even when the citation is cited for the benefit of the reader only (e.g. 2:17; 7:37-39; 12:15). These OT citations 'witnessed' to Jesus insofar as they revealed something specific about him (that he is Lord, 1:23; the new Temple, 2:17; the Bread from Heaven, 6:31, 45; the source of Living Water, 7:37-39; the Son of God, 10:34; and the King of Israel, 12:15). Thereby, the citations aimed to bring the Jews to faith in Jesus, and also the ideal reader of the narrative. The contention of this thesis was that, ironically, the Jews did not come to faith through the

citations, but rather, from the perspective of the implied author, became increasingly obdurate towards Jesus. The ideal reader – who is always more ‘informed’ than the Jews in the story – succeeds in coming to faith in Jesus through a process of ‘othering’ the Jews by constructing them as negative characters in the context of the OT citations. This accords with what was termed a ‘compliant’ reading of the Gospel narrative.

It was argued that in the task of character construction, the reader relies upon *direct* and *indirect* means of character definition, as articulated in the narratological theory of Ewen/Rimmon-Kenan (outlined in Chapter Two of the thesis). It was shown that while *direct* means of character definition were relatively sparse in the pericopae under analysis, there was much *indirect* character presentation for the reader to construct a portrait of the Jews. This included the *response* of the Jews to the content of the OT citations, indicated by their speech and actions. This response was largely, and increasingly, one of rejection and hostility. However, the Jews were not only characterised by their response, but also by another aspect of what I have categorised as ‘indirect presentation,’ namely, the ways in which the broader, allusive contexts of the OT citations functioned to characterise the Jews ‘intertextually’. This thesis therefore utilised aspects of intertextuality theory to argue that the reader interprets the Jews in view of the Gospel’s ‘retelling’ of the biblical story. This thesis argued that the function of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15 *and* the presentation of the Jews within this context are therefore primarily rhetorical and ideological, without discounting possible Christological or historical motivations.

i. Summary of Exegetical Findings

Chapters Three to Five presented a close reading of the OT citations in the Gospel, and were divided according to three stages of Jesus' public ministry in the narrative. In Chapter Three, I analysed the first two citations in the opening stage of Jesus' public ministry (1:23 and 2:17). Although specifying a particular source text for the OT citations was not germane to the thesis, some discussion was necessarily given to the literature around this topic, in order to be more specific about which Scriptural traditions and layers of meaning would have 'echoed' for the reader in the process of characterising the Jews. It was argued that in John 1:23, Isaiah 40:3 was the most likely text cited, and in John 2:17, Psalm 69:9a was the most likely text cited. In these opening scenes of Jesus' public ministry (1:19-28; 2:13-22), confrontation is depicted between John (the 'Baptiser') and emissaries of the Jews, and Jesus himself and the Jews, respectively. The allusive contexts of the citations in these chapters introduce the theme of the divine 'glory' present in Jesus, as well as initiating a pattern where themes of *hope* (1:23) and *death* (2:17) surface as the broader contexts of the OT traditions cited in John 1:19-12:15.

In Chapter Four, I analysed the four OT citations that take place in the middle of Jesus' public ministry, when Jesus is engaged in conversation and dispute with the Jews at three major Jewish festivals – Passover, Tabernacles and Dedication (6:31, 45; 7:37-39; 10:34). At Passover (chapter 6), the tradition of the 'wilderness wanderings' of the ancient Israelites is alluded to in the citation found in John 6:31 (Exod 16:4/Psalm 77:24 LXX). This functioned to characterise the Jews as representative types of their 'ancestors' who murmured against God, and so warranted death in the wilderness, as the Jews now 'murmur' over Jesus' claim

to be the Bread from Heaven. In John 6:45, Isaiah 54:13 was cited by Jesus to the effect that the divine teaching is now available to ‘all’ who come to him by the ‘Father’s drawing.

In John chapter 7, various textual traditions were drawn upon in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles to show that Jesus is now the Source of Living Water for all who are thirsty (7:37-39). It was argued that, although *a* specific source text is difficult to determine for the ‘citation’ in 7:37-39, it is possible that the wilderness traditions retold in Psalm 77:15 LXX resurfaced, and that this was combined with themes of the water from the Temple mount in Ezekiel 47:1-2, which were largely texts of hope and promise. In John 10:34, in the context of the Feast of Dedication, it was argued that Jesus directly cites Psalm 82:6, which drew on themes about Israel receiving the Torah at Sinai in the wilderness. This served to allusively characterise the Jews as ‘gods’ who ‘will die like mortals’ due to rebellion and idolatry, again playing on themes of death and the wilderness traditions. While the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles (John 6 and 7) functioned to characterise Jesus more than it did the Jews, it was argued that in John 10:34, the Feast of Dedication served to characterise the Jews as representatives of Antiochus IV, as, in their attempts to kill Jesus they effect a ‘desecration’ of the Temple.

In Chapter Five, I analysed the final OT citation in the Book of Signs that was prefaced by the ἔστιν γεγραμμένον ‘formula’ (12:15) and which took place at the close of Jesus’ public ministry among the Jews, just as Jesus’ ‘hour’ approaches. The text cited closely paralleled Zech 9:9, but also played off themes found in Zeph 3:16, and both texts expressed themes of post-exilic restoration and hope. It was argued that although the Jews were not explicitly present in this scene, their presence was implied through the Pharisees, who were characterised as lamenting their hope of arresting Jesus as the whole ‘world’ gathered to meet

Jesus. The post-exilic theme of the ‘ingathering’ of the nations was also recalled through the allusive contexts of the Zecharian text cited in 12:15.

The various patterns detected across the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15, at both the surface level of the narrative and the deep structure of the text (through allusion and connotation), can be tabulated below:

<b>Citation</b>	<b>Overriding Theme</b>	<b>Response of the Jews on the level of text</b>	<b>Wider allusions of OT citations</b>	<b>Explanation of allusions</b>
John 1:23 (Isaiah 40:3)	Voice in the <i>wilderness</i>	Emissaries of the Jews <i>interrogate</i> John	HOPE/ post-exilic restoration of Land/ wilderness	JBap announces the Coming One, the Lord of GLORY
John 2:17 (Psalm 69:9a)	Consuming zeal for Temple	the Jews <i>demand</i> a sign of Jesus	DEATH (of Jesus); the Jews are ‘estranged’ brothers	The Psalmist’s actions put him in invidious situation; Jesus’ actions lead to his death, a death that GLORIFIES God
John 6:31 (Psalm 77 LXX; Exod 16:4)	Manna provided by God	the Jews <i>murmur and rebel</i> against Jesus	DEATH (of the Jews for murmuring and rebellion)/ death of Israelites in the <i>wilderness</i>	Ancestors ate manna in wilderness but died; their murmuring led directly to their death; imperceptive of divine GLORY
John 6:45 (Isaiah 54:13)	Divine teaching available to all through Jesus	the Jews <i>reject and walk away</i>	HOPE/post-exilic restoration	Prophetic announcement of divine immanence for all

John 7:38-39 (Psalm 77:15 LXX; Ezek 47:1-2)	Water from Rock; Water from Temple	‘Jews’ and ‘Pharisees’ <i>plan to arrest Jesus</i>	HOPE/post- exilic restoration themes found in Tabernacles liturgy and in Ezekiel 47; <i>wilderness</i> traditions (Psalm 77:15 LXX)	Tabernacle’s symbolism – water of life flows for all; Water flows from Temple mount the seat of GLORY
John 10:34 (Psalm 82:6)	You are ‘gods’ but you shall die like mortals	the Jews <i>try to arrest and stone Jesus</i>	DEATH (of the Jews for rejection of Jesus); death of Israelites in <i>wilderness</i>	GLORY in Jesus, ‘the Word of God enfleshed’, is rejected
John 12:15 (Zech 9:9; Zeph 3:16)	Rejoice for the King of Israel	the Jews have gone from the story for now; Pharisees try to put plan of arrest into action	HOPE/ post- exilic restoration	Rejoice – the Coming One is here in midst of ‘Israel’

The first column from the left (entitled ‘Citation’) indicates the Gospel chapter and verse in which an explicit OT citation appears and the most likely OT text(s) referred to. The second column from the left (entitled ‘Overriding Theme’) indicates the pervasive theme expressed in the cited text and the new meaning the theme gains when recontextualised in the Gospel. The final three columns in the table trace three distinct patterns across the Gospel narrative and the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15:

1. The ‘Response’ column shows how the Jews are in the ‘vicinity’ in each instance when the OT is cited in John 1:19-12:15. They, or their emissaries, are the primary interlocutors of Jesus when the OT is cited (1:23; 6:31, 45; 7:37-38; 10:34). When the citations are addressed to the reader (2:17; 12:15), the Jews or their representatives are nevertheless in the narrative context. Reading down the column, a pattern can be

detected whereby the Jews are *increasingly* alienated by the message of the OT citations and they become *increasingly* hostile towards Jesus: they move from delegating interrogators (1:23) through to ‘demanding’ signs (2:17), to ‘murmuring’ (6:31) and rejection (6:45), and finally, to ‘death-dealing’ actions (10:34; 12:15).

2. The column about the OT citations’ ‘wider allusions,’ and the final column explaining those allusions, illustrate three main patterns to the deep structure of the Gospel narrative:

a. The first is the way the ‘glory’ motif runs across nearly every citation text, so that Jesus is presented as the coming Lord of Glory by John in 1:23 (cf. Isa 40:5), but his ‘glory’ is misunderstood and rejected by the Jews (2:17; 6:31; cf. Exod 16 where the Israelites see the ‘glory of God’ in a cloud, but anger God by their ‘murmuring’). The ‘glory’ that came to reside once more in the Temple in Ezek 47 characterises Jesus in 7:37-39, who as new Temple (2:17-22), incarnates the glory of God (cf. 1:14). In John 10:34, Jesus is presented as the enfleshed ‘glory of God’ (who, as incarnate Word of God), ‘comes’ to the Jews, paralleling the cited text (Psalm 82:6) when the Word of God came in ‘glory’ to Israel at Sinai. Themes of the divine glory ‘dwelling’ in the Temple after the Exile are also touched upon in the surrounding context of Zech 9:9 (cited in John 12:15), activating for the reader the notion of the divine glory ‘pitching his tent among us’ in Jesus (1:14).

b. The second point to note is the way allusions of ‘hope’ and ‘death’ govern the ‘deep structure’ of the Gospel narrative when the OT is cited in 1:19-12:15. These twin themes are repeated in an alternating pattern of inverse pairs [hope-death (1:23-2:17)/death-hope (6:31-6:45)/hope-death (7:37-39; 10:34)/hope (12:15)]. The biblical narrative – which, in writing ‘new

Scripture' of his own, John is concerned to retell – deals with stories about Israel that speak of promise and blessing ('hope') and the loss of blessing and disaster ('death'). This is, then, something of a 'template' of the biblical narrative that emerges in the OT citations. Against John's tableau, it casts up the Jews as intertextual characters in a re-narration of the biblical story. This alternating pattern of hope/death, therefore, can be read as part of the Gospel's "redemptive myth" or rhetoric of 'binary opposition' discussed in chapters One and Two of the thesis, a pattern that relates specifically to the Jews as characters.

- c. Finally, the 'template' behind the citations in 1:19-12:15 (hope/death) is particularised in John's retelling of two specific Jewish textual traditions. John draws either on the Exodus/wilderness traditions *or* on the post-Exilic restoration themes expressed in the Prophetic corpus. This 'contextual pattern' does not appear to be arbitrary, but accentuates the fact that the Jews as characters fit a specifically rhetorical and ideological – one could even say theological – purpose in the Gospel.

The way these three 'patterns' meet in the seven OT citation texts analysed in the thesis are not always consistent or predictable. The 'hope' allusions are sometimes overlaid with 'restoration' connotations (6:45; 12:15) and the 'death' allusions are sometimes paired with the 'wilderness' tradition (6:31; 10:34). But 'hope' is also paired with the wilderness (7:37-39), and sometimes 'hope' is paired with both the wilderness and with restoration connotations (1:23). Otherwise, 'death' is paired neither with the wilderness traditions nor with restoration themes (2:17):



1:23: hope/wilderness/restoration
2:17: death
6:31: death/wilderness
6:45: hope/restoration
7:37-39: hope/wilderness
10:34: death/wilderness
12:15: hope/restoration

## ii. Significance of Exegetical Findings

Until we understand the way the Jews function in John as intertextual characters, especially vis-à-vis the OT citations in 1:19-12:15, we cannot fully appreciate how complex is the paradox stated at the beginning of this thesis, viz., that the Gospel is at once ‘Jewish’ and anti-Jewish’. For although no one would argue that the OT texts cited in John 1:19-12:15 – in their original context – are ‘anti-Jewish,’ when recontextualised in John’s Gospel they gain a new, and oftentimes disturbing, salience in terms of how they assist the reader in characterising the Jews. In John 2:17, the Jews can be read as the ‘estranged brothers’ of whom the Psalmist speaks (Ps 69:9a), because the evangelist has paired the Psalmist’s voice with that of Jesus. In John 6:31, they can be characterised as ‘murmurers’ like their ‘ancestors’ in the wilderness, with all the ominous connotations of death and rebellion this suggests. In John 6:45 they are indicted as those who need to ‘learn of God’ (cf. Isaiah 54:13), and who claim a false knowledge of Jesus on the basis of his genealogical status (cf. 6:42). In John 10:34, they are characterised with reference to the Sinai event, as those who now receive the Word of God in person (Jesus) but who reject him and so warrant death, ‘like mortals’. Taken together with the way the Jews are presented at the ‘surface’ level of the

narrative (as rejecting Jesus and attempting to kill him) this makes for a strongly negative characterisation of the Jews in the Gospel, such that one could almost call them “victims of the Scriptural intertextuality.”<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the way *hope* themes alternate with *death* themes seems to indicate that ‘hope’ is held out to the Jews in the Gospel narrative – provided they ‘believe in Jesus’ name’ (cf. 20:31) – and so the element of ‘choice’ is not denied. All the same, the Jews do not avail themselves of this hope (cf. 12:39-42), and so ultimately, they remain on the underside of the Gospel’s dualism, despite relative character development and occasional belief (cf. 8:30-32). Moreover, the findings of this thesis suggest that the Jews’ rejection of Jesus must be read as a rejection of the divine glory, which, in the perspective of the implied author, is now definitively present in Jesus. Such a reading no doubt exacerbates the anti-Judaism of the text.

Yet, what makes this research particularly important is the way it contributes to the discussion of the rhetorical function not only of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15 but also of the Jews. Too often the question of the Jews in John’s Gospel is prematurely foreclosed, especially by those scholars seeking to exculpate John from the charges of anti-Judaism or anti-Semitism. In these cases, scholars argue that the referent of the Jews is the religious leaders of late first-century Palestinian Judaism. But to say that the Gospel’s polemical portrait of the Jews rests on a putative historical situation of ‘in-house’ bickering is simply not sufficient – we must explain the way the rhetoric of the narrative works, a rhetoric completely informed by Scripture, and the way it is cited vis-à-vis the Jews. In this way, the Gospel remains paradoxically the ‘most’ and ‘least’ Jewish of the four, and the currents of the Gospel’s anti-Judaism reach right back into the allusive contexts of the Scriptural citations in found in John 1:19-12:15. Or in other words, the Jews are implicated in the Gospel’s

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lieu, “The Jews and the Worlds,” 181.

‘redemptive myth’ specifically with regard to the way the OT is cited; they are woven into the retelling of it, as John’s Gospel “continues the tale” of the OT<sup>2</sup> but also reappropriates it. Finding an apparently ‘historical’ referent for the Jews does not satisfactorily address the way the Gospel has woven the Jews into its rhetorical design, nor does it address the way the reader may reconstruct the Jews as characters within the narrative. The findings of this thesis admit an insight into the complexity of this paradoxical problem (the Gospel as ‘Jewish and anti-Jewish’) in a way that has hitherto not been possible.

I began this thesis with a quote from Meeks to the effect that where the Gospel is ‘most’ Jewish, it is also ‘least’ Jewish. This operated as a cue for exploring the OT citations (the ‘Jewish’ aspect) in terms of the Gospel’s largely negative characterisation of the Jews (the ‘least’ Jewish or ‘anti-Jewish’ aspect). Scholars who attempted to ‘explain’ the text’s vitriolic treatment of the Jews in terms of an historically situated ‘family-feud’ between Jews actually invert Meeks’ paradox to mean that at the points where the Gospel is *least* Jewish, (in its apparent denigration of Jews) it is most ‘Jewish’ (i.e. these ‘family feuds’ were characteristic of first century Jewish society). But in fact Meeks claims that at the points where the Gospel is *most* Jewish (e.g. for this thesis, in its citation of Scripture) it is least Jewish (e.g., for the purposes of this thesis, in its intertextual characterisation of the Jews). The findings of this thesis are therefore properly in accord with Meeks’ classic statement.

It must nevertheless be acknowledged that the Gospel’s negative rhetorical portrayal of the Jews was born out of a particular historical situation, and that this rhetoric had what could be called a ‘positive’ value for the Johannine community – the Scripture’s Christological witness

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<sup>2</sup> Moloney, “The Gospel of John: The ‘End’ of Scripture,” 358.

evidently *confirmed* them in their decision to follow Jesus in the face of possible persecution from some factions of the religious leadership (cf. 9:22; 12:42; 16:2), and affirmed that their belief in Jesus as Messiah set them on the right path (cf. 20:31).<sup>3</sup> An ‘ideal reader’ of the Gospel in the first century would therefore probably not have been perturbed by the anti-Jewish rhetoric of the text; the biblical tale is recast and reappropriated in Jesus *for the sake of* the believing community. The persuasive dynamics of the text work quite differently in a post-modern, post-Shoah setting, where an ‘ideal reader’ of the Gospel brings a very different set of concerns to the reading process: he or she is asked to comply with the Gospel’s re-narration of the biblical story that surfaces in the context of the OT citations in John 1:19-12:15, but at the expense of ‘othering’ the Jews. An ‘ethical’ reading of the Gospel in the twenty-first century admits the possibility of resistant readings of the text in a changed historical situation where the voice of the implied author of the Fourth Gospel appeals no longer to a minority group of Jewish-Christian believers, but to a majority religious culture that – in some times and places – falls sway to fundamentalism.

## B. Possibilities for Further Research

Clearly, this thesis has been selective in its methodology and scope of analysis. While this study has gone some way towards presenting a case for reading the Jews in John partly as intertextual characters, it has not exhausted the topic. There are a number of avenues for further research that this thesis has potentially initiated:

- a. One of the implications for reading the Jews as intertextual characters within the Gospel narrative, (i.e. as appreciating that they can be read as figures of

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<sup>3</sup> See Clark-Soles, *Scripture Cannot be Broken*.

the Jews of the OT Scriptures), is that it is equally possible that they may have been read, in the first and second centuries CE, as coextensive with the Jews – real flesh and blood Jews – who lived among Gentile Christians. This is certainly in keeping with what has been argued about the rhetorical and ideological function of the narrative.<sup>4</sup> It was argued in this thesis that John was writing ‘new Scripture’ of his own, not in the canonical sense, obviously, but in the sense that his writing was authoritative and life-giving (cf. 20:31). As the Gospel gained in ‘canonical’ status from the second to fourth centuries CE, the problem of the Jews in John was probably compounded by the fact that early Christian audiences and preachers associated the Jews of the text with Jews who lived among them, and their ‘authoritative’ Scripture (the Gospel) insisted that Jews were ‘of the devil’ (8:44). Following on from the rhetorical methodology employed in this thesis, further work can be done on the Gospel’s *Wirkungsgeschichte* in the Ante-Nicene Fathers, vis-à-vis Jews of the first few centuries of the Common Era. This would be of great value, as much so-called historical work on the issue of the Jews in John has tended to discount the text’s effected history and concentrate on speculative reconstructions (the *Birkat Ha-Minim*, for example).

- b. Related to the Gospel’s effected history, is further research arising from this thesis that could be done on the so-called ‘parting of the ways’ (a metaphor that is as much a theological construct as an historical one). This would involve asking questions like, ‘What historical or social contingencies motivated the author/Gospel community to ‘other’ the Jews? In the literature

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<sup>4</sup> See also on this possibility, Reinhartz, “‘Jews’ and Jews,” 225.

review covered in this thesis, I analysed the work of a number of scholars who suggested that the role of the Jews in the Gospel narrative reflected an historical split between Jews and Jewish believers in Jesus who had been expelled from the synagogue (cf. 16:2).<sup>5</sup> Such research also tended to focus upon the creation of ‘identity’ boundaries between Jews and Christians in and around 90 CE. However, the avenues for further research that I envisage in this respect parallel that of the Gospel’s *Wirkungsgeschichte*, noted above, and recall Boyarin’s thesis about the interpellation of an ‘Other’ (see page 45, footnote 181). The Gospel’s rhetorical construction of the Jews could thus be read as part of the earliest stages of a discursive trajectory of ‘Othering’ that brings into being the religious ‘Self.’ The Jews in John would therefore not ‘reflect’ the officials of synagogue Judaism in the late first century, as much as their polemical portrayal would function *diachronically* to discursively create a Christian identity over and against an equally ‘emerging’ sense of Jewish identity in the Tannaitic/Patristic period.

- c. Another important insight flowing on from the work of this thesis is that motifs of ‘glory’ are not restricted to the Book of Glory (John 13-20) but emerge in the deeper layers of meaning activated by the OT citations in the Book of Signs (John 1-12). Further study might focus upon the rhetorical function of the citations found in the second half of the Gospel that are prefaced by the ‘fulfillment’ formula. Insightful findings could emerge from such a study, particularly when one considers the absence of the Jews in the

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<sup>5</sup> Some alternative suggestions to this model have already been proposed by Adele Reinhartz, “Judaism in the Gospel of John,” *Int* 63, no. 4 (2009): 391-392.

Farewell Discourse (and the presence of ‘the world’), and the reappearance of the Jews in the Passion Narrative.

- d. Finally, the methodology used in this study has been drawn from the field of classical narratology. Post-structuralist literary theory embraces what is called ‘cognitive narratology’, which performs empirical studies on real readers to determine how they empathetically engage with characters in fiction. Adopting such a perspective, further research could test the claims made in this thesis about how the ‘ideal reader’ constructs a character portrait of the Jews in John 1:19-12:15 and how the reader is influenced by the wider, allusive contexts of the OT citations found therein.

In sum, this thesis has made a distinct contribution to the field by showing that the presentation of the Jews in the Gospel requires an understanding of the rhetorical function of Scripture and the way the citation texts provide a background for their characterisation. John’s purpose, of course, is to encourage the faith of his community; there is tragic irony that in his narrative process he casts as villains Jesus’ own Jewish brothers and sisters.

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