

**THE FOURTH GOSPEL AS REACTION TO  
MILITANT JEWISH EXPECTATION OF  
KINGSHIP, REFLECTED IN CERTAIN DEAD  
SEA SCROLLS**

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*Summary of*  
**The Fourth Gospel As Reaction To Militant Jewish Expectation Of Kingship,  
Reflected In Certain Dead Sea Scrolls**

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has provided an opportunity to reexamine the formation of the Gospel of John. This study will utilize Dead Sea finds coupled with other Second Temple literature to examine how the Gospel of John portrays Jesus as being a king. The approach of this study to use a narrative approach that builds on the Gospel of John as a finished text. The contribution of a source critical approach is not disparaged but the narrative approach will allow the Johannine community to be seen in the context of the immediate post-Second Temple era. The limited literacy of the probable first audience of this text suggests that a narrative approach will best be able to understand the background to the formation of the Gospel of John.

A central contention of this study is that the Gospel of John was composed after the Jewish Revolt and after the Synoptics. Thus it deserves the appellation of the Fourth Gospel and is called such in this study. The Fourth Gospel was composed at a time when Roman interest in anything connected to Judaism was sure to attract special interest. Thus the portrayal of Jesus as the Davidic Messiah needed to be handled carefully. The imagery of the new David found in 4Q504 compared with the imagery of Jesus being the Good Shepherd becomes an important part of the argument of this study on whether this Gospel portrays Jesus as being the Davidic Messiah. Jesus as the Good Shepherd showed Jews that Jesus is the Davidic Messiah without overtly offending Roman sensibilities. Furthermore evidence from Christian and Jewish sources indicates that an interest in a Third Temple was still stirring between the Jewish and Bar-Kochba Revolts. The Fourth Gospel shows Jesus as the Davidic Messiah who replaces the Temple because the Good Shepherd was the perfect sacrifice.

**Key terms** : Messiah; Second Temple Judaism; the Qumran community; the Johannine community; the Fourth Gospel; the term  $\lambda\sigma\tau\upsilon$  (bandit); the new David; shepherd; Flavian dynasty; Josephus.

# Key

## Dead Sea Scrolls

CD, CD-A, and CD-B	<i>Damascus Document</i>
1QS	<i>The Rule of the Community</i>
1QM	<i>War Scroll</i>
1Q34	<i>1QFestival Prayers</i>
2Q4, 4Q554, 4Q555, 5Q15, and 11Q18	<i>New Jerusalem Texts</i>
4QMMT	<i>Halakhic Letter</i>
4Q161	<i>4QIsaiah Pesher a</i>
4Q174	<i>4QFlorilegium</i>
4Q252, 4Q253, 4Q254, and 4Q254 a	<i>Genesis Peshers</i>
4Q285	<i>4QWar Scroll g</i>
4Q385	<i>4QPseudo-Ezekiel</i>
4Q386	<i>4QPseudo-Ezekiel b</i>
4Q400, 4Q401, 4Q402, 4Q403, 4Q404, 4Q405, and 11Q17	<i>Songs of the Sabbath</i>
<i>Sacrifice</i>	
4Q448	<i>4QApocryphal Psalm and</i>
<i>Prayer</i>	
4Q504	<i>4QWords of the Luminaries</i>
4Q508	<i>4QFestival Prayers b</i>
4Q521	<i>4QMessianic Apocalypse</i>
11Q19 and 11Q20	<i>Temple Scroll</i>

## Non-Dead Sea Scroll Sources

<i>2 Bar.</i>	<i>2 Baruch</i>
<i>4 Ezra</i>	
<i>Ann. and His.</i> (Tacitus)	<i>Annals and Histories</i>

<i>Ant. and J.W.</i>	<i>Antiquities and Jewish War</i>
(Josephus)	
<i>Apocr. Ezek.</i>	<i>Apocryphon of Ezekiel</i>
<i>Dom., Nero and Vesp.</i>	Domitian, Nero, and
Vespasian in the <i>Twelve Caesars</i> (Suetonius)	
<i>Ep. Barn.</i>	<i>Epistle of Barnabas</i>
<i>Ep. Tra.</i>	<i>Epistle to Trajan</i> (Pliny)
<i>His.</i>	<i>Histories</i> (Cassius Dio)
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesia</i> (Church
History) (Eusebius)	
<i>Jub.</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
<i>Pss. Sol.</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
<i>Shepherd of Hermas</i>	<i>Shepherd of Hermas</i>
<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Jewish Sibylline Oracles</i>
<i>y. Ta'anit</i>	<i>Palestinian Talmud</i>

### Miscellaneous

ANE	Ancient Near East
LXX	Septuagint
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
MT	Masoretic Text

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## Chapter One: Methodology

### 1.1 The Study of the Gospel of John

The Gospel of John provides both one of the greatest opportunities and conundrums in the study of early Christianity. Its high christology and its focus on the uniqueness of Jesus has made it a favorite text of those who have sought to understand early Christianity as a message of hope to a lost world. Conversely the high christology of the Gospel of John has raised questions whether such a christology is a community creation or a product of the most primitive tradition. Culpepper's statement that this text "is paradoxically both the most and the least historical of the four Gospels"<sup>1</sup> illustrates one of the challenges facing any critical study of the Gospel of John. While there will be disagreement with Culpepper's statement, it does highlight the tension facing any serious study of the Gospel of John.

The whole debate of whether the Gospel of John is a product of Hellenistic or Gnostic influences has raised questions concerning the origins of this text.<sup>2</sup> Indeed the very uniqueness of the Gospel of John in comparison to the Synoptics has raised the issue of what tradition is represented by the Gospel of John. A fundamental question that deserves to be asked about the nature of the Gospel of John is: Why? What purpose does the Gospel of John have that the Synoptics do not answer? At times it seems there are more questions than answers in the study of the Gospel of John but relatively recent events have given scholarship an opportunity to attack these questions from a different point of view.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has provided a means of shedding new light on old questions. Since the emergence of these texts in the years following the Second World War a whole new world has been thrown out to contemporary scholarship. Certainly at least since the publication of *John and Qumran* in 1972<sup>3</sup> the topic of how the Scrolls and the Gospel of John relate has been a significant subject in the field of Johannine studies. The full impact of the Qumran discoveries has yet to be felt because of the long and difficult history of the recovery, translation, and publication of the material

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<sup>1</sup> R. Allan Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 13.

<sup>2</sup> Seán P. Kealy, *John's Gospel and the History of Biblical Interpretation* (2 vols.; Lewiston, New York: Mellen Biblical Press, 2002), 19.

<sup>3</sup> James H. Charlesworth, ed., *John and Qumran* (London: Geoffrey Chapman Publishers, 1972).

found in the desert near Qumran. This study seeks to help in repairing this deficit through the use of Qumran material that could provide definite insight into the nature of the formation of the Gospel of John. Indeed the suggestion by Ashton that this text was written by an Essene<sup>4</sup> has pushed this discussion dramatically forward. Other sources of information both Jewish and Roman that bear on the Second Temple era and its aftermath will not be ignored but the Qumran community provides the starting point for comparisons to the Gospel of John for this study.

This study will focus on an aspect of messianic expectations in the first century CE. Certainly since the publication of *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*<sup>5</sup> the question of how the Scrolls affect the study of the Historical Jesus has gained further momentum. The thesis of this study is designed to build on that momentum. The state of messianic consciousness in late Second Temple Judaism is not a simple matter to decipher and it deserves further examination. What this study will attempt to answer is a specific question. What does the Gospel of John say about Jesus being the Davidic Messiah in comparison to Qumran expectations of a Davidic Messiah in the historical context of the era between the Jewish and Bar-Kochba Revolts?

## **1.2 The Fourth Gospel**

One of the rare instances in New Testament scholarship in which ancient and contemporary opinion is united on a historical-critical issue is the question of the late priority of the Gospel of John. Both the early patristic fathers and a large majority of historical-critical opinion are agreed that the Gospel of John is fourth in priority. While the basis for this agreement is based on different rationales, the significance of this point should be noted.

The evidence from the ancient world comes in two types. Firstly the tradition of the Gospel of John being fourth is summarized by Eusebius (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.24) in his detailed discussion of the backgrounds of all four Gospels. His detailed explanation of the need for another Gospel in addition to the Synoptics suggests that even at a relatively early date questions were being raised about the Gospel of John. Nevertheless the tenacity of Eusebius in his defense of the Gospel of John being fourth in priority

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<sup>4</sup>John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 237.

<sup>5</sup>James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York and London: Doubleday, 1992).

indicates the importance of the tradition to him. Secondly the canonical order of the Gospels in the arrangement of the New Testament is also evidence for an expectation that the Gospel of John was the Fourth Gospel. Luke is separated from Acts by the Gospel of John and this again suggests that the Gospel of John was viewed as coming chronologically after Luke. Luke-Acts as a single work would make sense from a strictly literary standpoint but the insertion of the Gospel of John between these two works indicates that a compelling reason motivated the church to divide them.

From the standpoint of critical scholarship the same conclusion has been reached albeit using a different methodology. It is generally agreed that the Synoptics preceded the Gospel of John in terms of both composition and distribution and that the Gospel of John is the Fourth Gospel. There is rough agreement on the date of the writing of the Gospel of John between c. 90 CE to c. 100 CE. Indeed Robinson in his challenge of the conventional date for the Gospel of John states, “The span 90-100 is agreed by Catholic and Protestant, by conservative and radical, by those who defend apostolic authorship and those who reject it, by those who believe that John used the synoptists and those who do not.”<sup>6</sup> This makes the dating and late priority of the Gospel of John an almost unique phenomenon in New Testament scholarship. Authorities from widely divergent worlds agree on a critical issue.

Even though there are a few dissenters<sup>7</sup> in contemporary academia who argue for the Gospel of John being written before one or more of the Synoptics, majority opinion is strongly in favor of the Gospel of John coming later than the Synoptics. This is an important consideration. Scholars as diverse as Carson and Bultmann would both admit that the Gospel of John was written later than the Synoptics when there is little else they would hold in common. This near unanimous agreement provides an optimal starting point to engage the issues related to the composition of the Gospel of John, the Fourth Gospel.<sup>8</sup> This agreement provides the widest possible basis to conduct a study of the Fourth Gospel with hopefully the greatest respect for the contributions from all eras and methodologies.

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<sup>6</sup> John A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 261.

<sup>7</sup> John A.T. Robinson is perhaps the most famous of the exponents of the pre-70 CE date.

<sup>8</sup> Hereafter the Gospel of John will be described as the Fourth Gospel.

While the dating of the Gospel of John has achieved a near unanimous placement near the end of the first century CE, the dating of the Synoptics is widely scattered. Dating Mark and Q to before the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE would not be controversial though many would date Mark after the Jewish Revolt. Dating Matthew and Luke before the Jewish Revolt would be a minority opinion in the minds of most critical scholars. A date in the decade after the Jewish Revolt for Matthew and Luke would be a popular position. Nevertheless even if all the Synoptics are dated to the decade after the Jewish Revolt, the dating of Q before the Jewish Revolt is a high probability. Thus Matthew and Luke would be written from at least one source that was pre-Revolt. It is even possible to argue that one or more of the Synoptics was published during the Jewish Revolt when the conflict was still to be determined. Thus the Synoptics should be viewed as being written with a focus on the Jewish Revolt as a future or contemporary event regardless of whether they were published before or after the Jewish Revolt.<sup>9</sup>

The impact of the Synoptics on the post-70 CE world comes from their expression of the generation that predates the Jewish Revolt. The treatment of the destruction of the Temple in Mk 13, Mt 24, and Lk 21 is given a future sense but in the Fourth Gospel this apocalyptic discourse is not part of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>10</sup> Thus for the purposes of this study the Synoptics will be viewed as being published before the Gospel of John and as being rooted in the social situation of pre-Revolt Jewish Palestine. The Fourth Gospel relates events in Jesus' life before the Jewish Revolt from the perspective of a post-70 CE composition. The Fourth Gospel belongs to the generation after the Jewish Revolt and needs to be treated as such.

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<sup>9</sup> If Q was a written source, when was it compiled? Was it compiled before the Jewish Revolt or after it? If after it, than why compile a source when the Gospels of Matthew and Luke will be soon written? If one argues that Matthew and Luke should be viewed as reflecting the post-70 CE era, one needs to answer this question. If one abandons the Two Source Theory of Synoptic origins, than one does not have to account for Q. That being said a large majority of critical scholarship is not prepared to go down this route. If Q is viewed as an oral source, its dating becomes even harder to track. This study is not an attempt to date Q but the point made in the body of this text still stands. Assuming a post-70 CE date for Matthew and Luke does not mean Q is a post-70 CE source.

<sup>10</sup> The topic of the destruction of the Second Temple will be treated in more depth later in this study.

### 1.3 John, Sources, the Synoptics, and Origins

In the study of the Fourth Gospel great attention has been paid to the question of perceived sources behind the Fourth Gospel, its relation to the Synoptic Gospels, and the cultural milieu in which it was formed. Indeed the search for the sources and the redaction of sources that are believed to be behind the Fourth Gospel has played a very influential part of the analysis of this text. Certainly there is reason to view the Fourth Gospel as having multiple sources. The use of the plural verb form “we know” (οἱ ἔδαμεν) in Jn 21:24 provides the greatest evidence that there is more than one person responsible for publishing/distributing the Fourth Gospel. This approach gives the strongest interpretive value to the use of the plural.<sup>11</sup> It is also the most natural reading of the text. If it is assumed that the use of the plural is an editorial device that is a self-reference to one individual,<sup>12</sup> the whole question of how grammar should be understood in the Fourth Gospel becomes quite subjective.

The better interpretation is to take the text at face value. The Fourth Gospel of its own volition suggests quite strongly that more than one source was behind it and this admission should be respected. Jn 21:24 clearly gives credit to the Beloved Disciple as being the literary mastermind for the Fourth Gospel and it suggests a modest role for a follower(s) who finished Jn 21. The question emerges next as to what should be done with this knowledge.

Several approaches are notable for their influence on the shape of Fourth Gospel studies in their approaches to sources. Bultmann’s theory of the formation of the Fourth Gospel involved a revelation-discourse source that helped shape portions of the Fourth Gospel like the Prologue<sup>13</sup> and a signs source that was used for the miracles<sup>14</sup> that were used by a redactor to shape the final product. Furthermore according to Bultmann the Passion account in the Fourth Gospel relies on a source that displays unity in both style and language<sup>15</sup> but is distinct from the others.

While Bultmann was interested in exploring the relationship of the Fourth Gospel with Gnosticism others had different concerns. Dodd’s approach rested on a search for a

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<sup>11</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 683.

<sup>12</sup> Carson, *John*, 684.

<sup>13</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 16.

<sup>14</sup> Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 113.

<sup>15</sup> Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 635.

historical tradition that relied on an “original Aramaic tradition”<sup>16</sup> and that condensed material from this larger tradition.<sup>17</sup> Dodd was interested in demonstrating that the primary source behind the Fourth Gospel was independent of the Synoptics. Brown on the other hand was interested in drawing opinions from both the German and British traditions and using it in his own work. Brown allowed for five stages of development<sup>18</sup> of the text that includes more than one editor and may have included oral tradition.<sup>19</sup> Brown’s perspective as a Roman Catholic and an American did not stop him from utilizing Protestant scholarship from Europe to develop his own theory of sources for the Fourth Gospel.

These sketches are not meant to be exhaustive of the positions of these men or of the current debate but they each represent an analysis of the Fourth Gospel that is dependent on understanding the perceived sources that underline it and each has influenced the generation of scholarship that read their work. On this issue two important considerations deserve to be made. Firstly while there are points of agreement between the various solutions, the differences of the solutions offered point to the inherent difficulty of isolating sources for a text like the Fourth Gospel. While evidence for a Book of Signs can be brought forth, reconstructing the hypothetical Book of Signs is an uncertain task. The depth of consensus seen in the dating of the Fourth Gospel and in its late priority is not seen in reconstructing the sources behind the Fourth Gospel.

Secondly the focus on comparing the Fourth Gospel with the Synoptics needs to be done in light of the discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The impact of Gardner-Smith’s book, *St. John and the Synoptic Gospels*, first published in 1938 has proved to be very influential in reshaping the debate concerning whether it was dependent on the Synoptics or not. His work challenged the consensus of scholarship from the ancient world until the modern that the Fourth Gospel was dependent on the Synoptics. He succeeded in turning a considerable body of critical scholarly opinion into concluding that the Fourth Gospel was independent of the Synoptic literary tradition. Yet Gardner-Smith’s triumph was not as conclusive as first thought.

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<sup>16</sup> C.H. Dodd, *The Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 424.

<sup>17</sup> Dodd, *The Historical Tradition*, 429.

<sup>18</sup> Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1966), xlix.

<sup>19</sup> Brown, *John*, xxxv.

#### 1.4 The Fourth Gospel, the Synoptics, and Dependency

If one is looking for a consensus on the question of the Fourth Gospel's relationship with the Synoptics today, prepare to be disappointed. Keener in his recent commentary on the Fourth Gospel outlines several positions that have attracted support. Firstly the Fourth Gospel used Matthew. Secondly the Fourth Gospel used Luke. Thirdly the Fourth Gospel used Mark.<sup>20</sup> Keener rates option 1 (Matthew) as being the least popular. Luke is the next choice in popularity and Mark the most popular option for scholars who see some link with the Fourth Gospel.<sup>21</sup> The important issue to note is that these are positions taken by scholars who see a connection with the Fourth Gospel. Keener also notes the common view that the agreements between Luke and the Fourth Gospel are minor and not the result of direct dependence.<sup>22</sup> Thus the position that the Fourth Gospel is not dependent on a Synoptic tradition is well represented. A trickier question is the issue of indirect dependence. Some scholars see other indirect sources of tradition which may have been available to the Fourth Gospel without direct dependence on the Synoptics.<sup>23</sup> These competing positions outline again the challenge of achieving consensus on the question of sources. A few examples of these positions are worth giving.

Gardner-Smith's consensus has again been challenged with arguments for significant Synoptic influence from scholars like Fortna<sup>24</sup> who see significant influence on the Fourth Gospel from the Synoptics. Brown highlights the difficulty of this problem in his analysis of the parable of the multiplication of the loaves common to all four Gospels in which he lists scholars like Mendner arguing for dependence on the Synoptics and others like Dodd arguing for Johannine independence.<sup>25</sup> Brown's conclusion is that the Johannine account is independent of the Synoptics but he allows for the possibility that the final redactor of the Fourth Gospel supplied details from Mark.<sup>26</sup> For a scholar as

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<sup>20</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 40.

<sup>21</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary*, 40.

<sup>22</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary*, 40.

<sup>23</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary*, 40. Keener provides an admirable catalogue of the various positions in brief, succinct form and then proceeds to provide his opinion of the evidence.

<sup>24</sup> Robert I. Fortna, "Jesus Tradition in the Signs Gospel," in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition* (eds. Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 200.

<sup>25</sup> Brown, *John*, 236.

<sup>26</sup> Brown, *John*, 244.

gifted as Brown to provide such a roundabout conclusion crystallizes the importance of analyzing the Fourth Gospel in terms that are not captive to theories of literary dependence. Weighing the difference between direct and indirect dependence becomes a murky issue and establishing a boundary between the two seems quite difficult. If Q was available to the narrator of the Fourth Gospel, what does that say about Matthew's and Luke's use of Q? What about Mark's relationship with the other Synoptics and/or the Fourth Gospel? Brown's ambivalence on the issue of sources illustrates the challenge of finding agreement on the sources behind the Fourth Gospel.

Even if it is assumed that the Fourth Gospel is independent of the Synoptics, the question of whether it could ignore the Synoptics is another question. Could the circle responsible for the Fourth Gospel live independent of all influences from other branches of Christianity? Gardner-Smith first wrote his work in 1938 and he did not have the benefit of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls to place a broader context on his work. The world of late Second Temple Judaism was one in which communication between the movements responsible for the texts found near Qumran and other groups like the early Jesus movement now seem possible. If Ashton's suggestion is correct that the Fourth Gospel comes from an Essene, the relationship between the Fourth Gospel and Qumran literature potentially becomes much tighter.<sup>27</sup> From the perspective of first century CE Judaism and Christianity a relationship between Jewish Christian texts and Jewish texts may seem plausible. Questions that would seem outlandish from a pre-World War II perspective are in the third millennium much more credible than anyone of an earlier era could imagine.

Viewing the Fourth Gospel as an independent literary source is a viable approach; viewing it as independent of the world of the Synoptics and of late Second Temple Judaism in the light of the discoveries made since 1947 is problematic. Keener's comment that "suggesting that the Fourth Gospel is not directly dependent on the Synoptics need not imply that John did not know of the existence of the Synoptics"<sup>28</sup> is

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<sup>27</sup> This study does not argue for such a link but Ashton's suggestion raises an important consideration. The possible Essene influence on the Fourth Gospel changes the dynamics of understanding the Fourth Gospel. The question of Synoptic influence or absence would need to be balanced with the possible Essene interest.

<sup>28</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary*, 41.

based on his understanding of information sharing in the early Christian church.<sup>29</sup> This is a critical distinction to make. His assessment that the isolation often attributed to different strands of early Christianity shows a shortcoming in understanding how the eastern Roman empire functioned<sup>30</sup> is blunt but valid. The world of the Johannine community existed in a multicultural empire in which trade and travel occurred constantly. Communication did occur in their world.

Thirdly no discussion of critical issues surrounding the Gospel of John would be complete without reference to the impact of Bultmann's theory of gnostic influences and demythologization on the Fourth Gospel. If the Fourth Gospel is influenced by Gnostic or Jewish sources shaped by pagan philosophy, the Fourth Gospel represents a non-Jewish representation of Jesus' life. Further if demythologization is the key to understanding this text, than other approaches need to be discarded. As influential as Bultmann was during the greater part of the twentieth century, his methodology was formed well before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The purpose of this study is not to critique Bultmann but it is to probe in directions that were undreamed of one or two generations previously. The discoveries made in the Dead Sea region are primary evidence that deserve critical attention for the present generation of scholarship.

### **1.5 Postcolonialism**

Understanding the Fourth Gospel does not just require answering questions on sources and the Synoptics. It also requires a willingness to engage with the social forces that shaped the environment of the Fourth Gospel. One of the most significant of these forces is the impact of imperialism and colonialism on the Johannine community.

Postcolonialism<sup>31</sup> has emerged in the last few decades as a concern for many academic disciplines including biblical studies.<sup>32</sup> This is a particularly useful

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<sup>29</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary*, 41.

<sup>30</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary*, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Postcolonialism will be defined as the process in which a society deals with a colonial past and its aftermath. It is a "discourse of resistance" [*Postcolonial Theologies Divinity and Empire* (eds. Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera; St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 8] not only against the past but also against colonial forces in the present. It is aimed against language (8) as well as against more traditional vestiges of imperialism. The purpose of this study is not to address the whole range of postcolonial studies but to highlight their use for understanding the situation the Johannine community faced.

<sup>32</sup> There is a school of thought that views the Fourth Gospel as being an imperialist text because of the way women and Jewish identity are treated in it. These issues will be dealt with in later chapters of this study

development for biblical studies because colonialism and imperialism are intricately tied to the development and relationship of Judaism and Christianity.<sup>33</sup> The themes of empire, conquest, and the enslavement of whole societies is a familiar theme to the reader of the Bible. In the world of early Christianity the colonial impact of the Roman empire was real and powerful. Rome and Christianity had a history that involved both persecution of Christians<sup>34</sup> and Christian tolerance of Roman rule. Rome dominated the Mediterranean world and that domination came both in a political form (the Roman empire) and a cultural form (Greco-Roman Hellenism). The Constantine church was very much in the future and this perspective needs to be reiterated. How the imperial church of the later Roman empire used the Fourth Gospel is a very different question than asking how the Johannine community coped with the Roman empire.

Influences can exist on a culture without showing direct links. The contemporary world is sometimes called the “Coca-Cola” culture because of the influences of American corporations and pop culture. The internet, movies, and international publishing houses all shape culture globally today. This is an observation and not a value judgment on the contemporary world. It is made to illustrate the impact of social forces on today’s global culture. A peasant in China may speak no English but drink American soft drinks and wear clothes that have foreign brand names. What happens in Los Angeles has an impact in the interior of China. The same social sources were evident two thousand years ago. If a Jewish peasant was illiterate and spoke only Aramaic, the works of the great Roman historians in Latin still influenced his life. How? The Roman elite who ruled Jewish Palestine would be familiar with these influences and the Roman elite had a very direct interest in what Jewish peasants did.

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and a vigorous response will be given. A good rejoinder to this view is the comment of Kim. “By automatically regarding the Gospel of John as an imperialist text, postcolonial biblical critics overlook the possibility that the Gospel of John can be read as an anticolonial or nationalist text written under the Roman Empire.” Jean K. Kim, *Woman and Nation An Intercontextual Reading of the Gospel of John from a Postcolonial Feminist Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 34.

<sup>33</sup> Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 1.

<sup>34</sup> Simon Guterman, *Religious Toleration and Persecution in Ancient Rome* (repr.; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971), 15. The nature of that persecution is not easy always to understand. The Roman state and early Christianity had a complex relationship. More coverage of this issue will be given in later chapters of this study.

## 1.6 Postcolonial Perspectives and New Testament Studies

One important factor to consider on the issue of methodology is the very different perspectives on colonialism prevalent in academia and Western society in the pre-World War II and post-World War II eras. In the English speaking world imperialism is often seen through the lens of English speaking countries in general and the United Kingdom in particular. That focus is simply too limited and needs expansion.

The First World War was a struggle between European powers who all exhibited imperial tendencies. France had its colonial empire and Czarist Russia had its drive to warm water ports. Even the United States practiced its own form of colonialism in Cuba and the Philippines in that era. Furthermore the American South had Segregation which needs to be understood as part of colonialism. South Africa was shaped by the Dutch East Indian Company, the Anglo-Boer Wars, and German imperialism in Namibia. Overall this lingers the ghost of apartheid. Imperialism was multidimensional and aspects previously mentioned are not exhaustive of all its faces.

It is only since the end of the Second World War that decolonization has gathered strength. The independence of India (1947) marks the start of a process that still continues until this day. The struggle in Africa and Southeast Asia from the late 1940's to 1970's marked the demise of the European colonial empires but not the total end of colonialism. Indeed it could be argued that the guerrilla war in Chechnya is still one of the last colonial fights that stem from the Czarist era. This study is not an examination of colonialism and the Fourth Gospel but the methodology used in this study is aware of the impact of colonialism on the Fourth Gospel. In that respect the contemporary world and the Johannine community both have something in common.

The impact of colonialism on indigenous peoples or conquered populations simply was not a pressing concern for most scholars before the Second World War.<sup>35</sup> The

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<sup>35</sup> One of the neglected fields of research in biblical studies is the impact of cultural norms on biblical research. Particularly in the case of Protestant German scholarship the impact of the *Kulturkampf* under Bismarck and the growth of Prussian/German imperialism between 1848 and 1918 need more study. The growth of German colonialism in Europe, Africa, and Asia comes at the same time German Protestant academics became the driving force in theological research. For good or ill the names of Baur, Strauss, Schliermacher, Wellhausen, Wrede, and Bultmann stare down from the pages of religious history at the same time the names of von Moltke, Schlieffen, Hindenburg, and Rommel dominate the pages of military history. A good introduction to German colonial history is written by KarlHeinz Graudenz and Hanns-Michael Schindler, *Die Deutschen Kolonien* (Augsburg: Weltbild Verlag, 1994).

irony that the Bible has a great deal to say on the subject of enslavement and social justice has only been rediscovered. Part of that is due to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls are the writings of a group on the margins of society and they struggled with the power center of their time. The same can be said of the Johannine community in its struggle with the Roman empire. It is time to remember that the world of the first century CE was a world in which Jews and Christians dealt with an imperialistic regime called Rome.

One important factor to consider is the impact of colonialism on a conquered populace. The social and psychological impact of colonialism is as real as the economic and military dimension. One example to consider is the story of Domitian inquiring about Jesus' descendants. This story is found in Eusebius and is related through Hegesippus. While this account could be viewed as legend<sup>36</sup> based on the dating of its sources, its power and historical impact still stand even if it is viewed as a legend. Early Christianity lived in a world controlled through the imperial power of Rome. Jewish Christians would have been extremely sensitive to the situation they faced in the post-70 CE environment in the Roman empire. Their perspective was shaped by living in an imperialistic world. Their experience was fundamentally different from those who live in a free, democratic country. Holding that community to the standards of those who have always lived in a free and open society simply does not account for the difficulties they faced.

### **1.7 Literary Unity of the Fourth Gospel**

It is at this point that a return needs to be made to the text of the Fourth Gospel. The early part of this chapter has argued that a search for sources behind the Fourth Gospel has led to an impasse. The question of the Fourth Gospel's relationship with the Synoptics is also a discussion that gives more questions than answers. It has also been argued that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the use of postcolonial studies give new impetus to understanding the Fourth Gospel. To understand the Fourth Gospel

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At the present time Jewish scholars like Emmanuel Tov are front and center in Scrolls research. Their perspectives have proved invaluable in understanding the world in which the Scrolls originated. If the Scrolls had been discovered in 1933 instead of 1947, chances are that they would have been carried to a research institute in Berlin. One wonders what the world would know of the Qumran community today if that had been the case.

<sup>36</sup> More on this account will be discussed in a following chapter.

requires one to step into its world. It is in reading the Fourth Gospel that solutions start to emerge in how to study it.

Certainly a compelling case can be made for the organic unity of the Fourth Gospel based on thematic concerns. The light/darkness motif is seen in chapters 1, 3, 5, 8, 12. The reiteration of truth is a constant theme as well. Chapters 1, 4, 8, 14, 17, and 18 show this theme but with different perspectives. Judas Iscariot's betrayal is foreshadowed in John 6:71; 12:4, and 13:2 before he is revealed as the betrayer in 13:26, 27. Father/Son terminology is used in chapters 1, 5, 8, 14, 16, 17, and 20. Another factor should be considered as well and that is the role of women in the Fourth Gospel.

The Fourth Gospel places stress on Jesus' interaction with women. It is interesting to note that in chapter 2 it is the mother of Jesus who prompts Jesus to do his first miracle. Even though Jesus is a grown man he still heeded his mother. Jn 4 is dominated with discussions with the Samaritan woman. Jesus carefully and deliberately dialogues with her. Mary and Martha the sisters of Lazarus are the key actors of chapter 11. They converse with Jesus and even remonstrate with Jesus. Chapter 12 begins with Mary anointing the feet of Jesus and Jesus defending her actions. Chapter 19 has Jesus speaking to his mother from off the cross and entrusting her to the care of his disciple. Chapter 20 has Mary Magdalene coming to the tomb and Jesus speaking<sup>37</sup> with her. Mary Magdalene's dialogue with Jesus is a central key to the Resurrection account of the Fourth Gospel; in the Synoptic accounts her presence is not afforded the same impact. Chapters 4, 11, and 20 show initial disbelief by the women followed by dramatic embrace of Jesus' authority as the Messiah. The contrast between the women's belief and the hardened intransigence of the Jewish authorities to Jesus' signs is remarkable; it would also seem to be calculated and very deliberate.

From a literary standpoint the balanced affirmations of the women coming in the early, middle, and later portions of the book shows symmetry. The women are revealed in roles that are commendable such as mother and sister. Others such as common-law wife are not as flattering but no woman is ostracized. Only recently in the history of biblical scholarship has serious attention been paid to the feminine viewpoint. Ironically

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<sup>37</sup>Colleen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel* (SBL Dissertation Series 167; Atlanta: SBL, 1999), 203.

it would appear that that writer(s)/redactor(s) of the Fourth Gospel were concerned that women were represented as significant characters in its literary drama. In all fairness if the Fourth Gospel is to be viewed as being composed of several different sources attention should be given to the possibility that a female source preserved several incidents not attested in the Synoptics. The Fourth Gospel has a story to tell and the logic of that story was compelling in the ancient world and the contemporary world should respect it even if it gave more attention to female voices than some men are prepared to accept.

### **1.8 The Question of a Female Source**

The hypothetical female source raised is in keeping with the growth of interest in gender in the Fourth Gospel. Colleen Conway provides an excellent sketch of how the study of female characters in the Fourth Gospel has grown in the last generation of New Testament scholarship.<sup>38</sup> Her observation that “the fourth evangelist is doing something distinct with the presentation of women characters”<sup>39</sup> is an interesting statement. In her article Conway compares how male and female figures respond to different situations but her focus is not on the question of sources.

For other scholars an attempt to provide a female author for the Fourth Gospel has now been made, Mary Magdalene.<sup>40</sup> Before this proposal is dismissed out of hand, it is important to enumerate the reasons why this proposal needs to be considered. Firstly it solves one problem. It explains the motive to use code words (Beloved Disciple) to identify the author. A woman taking direct responsibility for authoring the Fourth Gospel would experience antagonism from many males. Anonymity would protect her. Secondly it would explain the interest in women’s voices in this text. A woman would be interested in what women would have to say. These points are far from conclusive but they deserve consideration. They do not explain how Mary Magdalene would plausibly be the Beloved Disciple if the other disciples of Jesus were male but it is still an attempt to explore the issue. The merits of this option should be the focus of the case and not her gender.

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<sup>38</sup> Conway, “Gender Matters in John,” in *A Feminist Companion to John* (eds. Amy -Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff; 2 vols.; Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2003), 79ff.

<sup>39</sup> Conway, “Gender Matters in John,” 80.

<sup>40</sup> Ramon K. Jusino, “Mary Magdalene: Author of the Fourth Gospel?” Posted July 13, 1998. Online: <http://www.BelovedDisciple.org>.

Arguing for a female author or even the possibility of a female author has implications. If it is assumed for the sake of argument that Mary Magdalene was the author of the Fourth Gospel, it would mean that two centuries of critical work on the Fourth Gospel missed a very important fact. By excluding potential authors because of gender, the scientific nature of the enquiry was compromised because data was excluded from study. Male bias entered the equation in what was supposed to be a case of strict scientific study. This highlights again the dangers of excluding material from consideration without giving careful thought to all the implications.<sup>41</sup>

Sensitivity to postcolonialism is a very helpful tool in reexamining the Fourth Gospel in the third millennium. It reminds the contemporary world of issues like gender bias, poverty, and human rights issues. The imperial (mis)rule of Palestine by Rome and its client rulers created a social environment that was not favorable to dissident communities. The Qumran community were outsiders and antagonistic to Rome. John the Baptist was from the wilderness. Jesus was executed as a messianic pretender. The Johannine community was female friendly in an autocratic world. These considerations are important to understanding the social milieu that helped create the Fourth Gospel.

The concern of this study is not to engage in a gender war<sup>42</sup> on the Fourth Gospel. Nor is the purpose of this study to use the Fourth Gospel to discuss postcolonialism in the developing world. The willingness of the Fourth Gospel to embrace the female perspective and show social inclusion does not prove there was a female source for the

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<sup>41</sup> The case of the adulterous woman in Jn 8:1-11 needs to be noted even if it is not included in this study. The textual history of this story is a minefield and its place in the most primitive edition of the Fourth Gospel is a matter of intense debate. Its absence from  $\mathcal{P}$  and other principal textual witnesses has led many scholars to conclude that it was a late addition. That being said whether this story is part of the original or not, the theme of a woman in trouble resonates with the story of the Samaritan woman. Both of the women were social pariahs but Jesus still talked to them.

<sup>42</sup> This is in contrast to some like Sandra M. Schneiders who embrace feminist ideological criticism as a necessary approach to overcome discrimination from male control of the centers of power. As an example of her approach is her view that historical texts are written by the winning side [Sandra M. Schneiders, "A Case Study: Feminist Interpretation of John 4:1-42," in *The Interpretation of John* (2d ed.; ed. John Ashton, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 238; repr. from the *Revelatory Text* (1991)] and that means they are inherently open to suspicion. Men have historically been winners in her view and women losers. While her sense of awareness to the problems women face in society is to be applauded, the very aggressiveness of her attack raises questions. The Johannine community did not control the Roman empire. How are they history's "winners"? Furthermore if everything men write about women must be challenged (238), does that apply to what women write about men? Schneiders aggressive critique of the shortcomings of New Testament scholarship in dealing with women (242) is something the author of this study supports even if he is male.

Fourth Gospel. What it does prove is that new approaches need to be presented to the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel was ironically more progressive than the nineteenth century. This observation when coupled with the fresh primary source evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls argues for a shift in approach in analyzing the Fourth Gospel.

### **1.9 Letting the Narrative Flow**

As significant as the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has been for biblical scholarship in giving it new resources, so too has the evolution of the hermeneutic enterprise in the post-World War Two era. The advent of structuralism, post-structuralism, and deconstructionism has raised the question of how a text can or should be understood. The expectation by many postmodern literary theorists that diverse (mis)readings of a text are viable creates a dilemma for contemporary biblical scholarship. Previous generations of scholarship have been very concerned to try to discern the assumed correct meaning of a text. Incorrectly understanding a text was the mark of an inadequate scholar and was to be avoided at all costs. Barrett described it very well as “the sin of attempting to make a passage mean something other than the meaning intended by the author and conveyed by the words.”<sup>43</sup>

If Barrett is representative of one point of view, Derrida is representative of another. For a literary thinker like Derrida such a conclusion is an affront to his worldview. Derrida’s concept of *differance* provides perhaps the best explanation of his concept of the deliberate ambiguity of language. The idea that there is “play” in language and that language is not a simple mathematical equation<sup>44</sup> would be one way of describing this ambiguity. Meaning in language is not final; rather there is an expectation of more to come<sup>45</sup> but what that further information signifies remains an unknown. The pessimistic interpretation of Derrida could conclude that all meaning is uncertain and that one can never be sure of truly having communicated. Other interpretations of his work are possible but his influence in questioning the certainty of communication has left its mark. Perhaps the one thing that is certain for him is that language is uncertain.

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<sup>43</sup> C. K. Barrett, “John and Judaism,” in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel* (eds. R. Bieringer, D. Pollefeyt, and F. Vandecasteele-Vanneuville; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 231.

<sup>44</sup> Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1991), 32.

<sup>45</sup> Norris, *Deconstruction*, 32.

The influence of deconstructionism has taken an even stronger turn in parts of the United States. The rise of reader-response criticism has led to a hermeneutic that would view searching for the intention of an author as an unproductive enterprise. Texts are to be explored for their meaning for each individual reader in their own circumstances. Yet the empowerment of the reader while noble is not without risks. The contribution of post-modern literary theory in asking old questions in new ways is to be respected but should not be blindly endorsed. The question of whether every (mis)reading of the biblical text is equally valid raises important issues. The use of the Bible for the defense or condemnation of slavery in nineteenth century America rested very much on one's hermeneutic. Opening a Pandora's Box of interpretations may not be desirable. The contribution of recent literary theory in asking hard questions about how communication takes place and the role of ambiguity in language should not obscure the fact that communication does indeed happen. Iser makes a very valuable point that if communication is to succeed between reader and text, the reader needs in some sense to be controlled by the text.<sup>46</sup>

If wrestling with critical and hermeneutic issues can lead to a form of paralysis in the study of the Fourth Gospel, other avenues offer a means of breaking or at least alleviating the deadlock. Segovia's call for "an open and frank dialogue with the text"<sup>47</sup> in the Fourth Gospel is what is needed. The rediscovery of the Bible as literature started this process.<sup>48</sup> The rise of a narrative approach to understanding the biblical text rose in at least part due to a concern that critical methodologies had led to an impasse in the study of the biblical text. It had become almost impossible to develop a message from the text to give to the contemporary world and that situation needed to change.

In response a methodology was developed that sought to provide a practical means of reading texts without retreating to precritical approaches. Narrative criticism arose to deal with this situation.<sup>49</sup> A focus on the text as a whole without a preoccupation

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<sup>46</sup> Wolfgang Iser, *Prospecting From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 3.

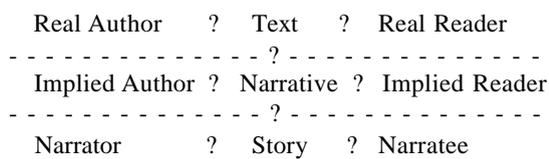
<sup>47</sup> Fernando F. Segovia, "The Gospel at the Close of the Century: Engagement from the Diaspora," in "What is John?" *Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 211.

<sup>48</sup> Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 1.

<sup>49</sup> The following is a slightly modified version of Powell's model of the interactions between the various components in the act of reading using narrative criticism. (Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 27)

with sources and authors of sources became the priority. The implied author of a text becomes the focus of interest<sup>50</sup> and not the hunt for possible authors, sources, or redactors. This focus on the implied author<sup>51</sup> has a corollary in the implied reader. The implied reader of a text<sup>52</sup> becomes the recipient of the text and not the flesh-and-blood readers who physically took it in their hands. This does not mean a narrative approach ignores the historical setting of the text in its original environment. It is aware of its setting but it is also aware that the text as a whole had an impact on its historical setting. Furthermore it offers a measure of flexibility in interpreting texts without crashing into extreme subjectivity. It allows the possibility that texts can have multiple meanings within the limits of the implied reader.<sup>53</sup> The debate about sources is rendered secondary to embracing the text as it is and understanding the text as a message that communicates to its readers.

In using a narrative critical approach several considerations need to be made. From time to time the term “narrator” will be used to describe the personality directing the reader’s attention in this text. For this study the suggestion of Culpepper will be followed in viewing the narrator as the “voice of the implied author” in the Fourth



Powell’ model shows the real author and real reader as being outside the text’s parameters. The three middle components (Implied Author, Narrative, and Implied Reader) become the key figures in constituting the message of the text (19). The goal of reading through the eyes of the implied reader becomes the purpose of narrative criticism (20). This model is helpful for understanding narrative criticism but certain modifications to it for this study will be explained in the body of this study.

The execution of narrative critical models in the work of Mark Stibbe’s *John as Storyteller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and others in studying the Fourth Gospel has demonstrated its worth. This study is not interested in reproving what has already been demonstrated. It is interested in expanding on previous insights to answer the question: If the Johannine community is the implied reader, what are the implications for it as a body of listeners?

<sup>50</sup>Mark Allan Powell, “Narrative Criticism,” in *Hearing the New Testament* (ed. Joel B. Green; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 240.

<sup>51</sup> One of the questions that could come to mind in using this methodology for the Fourth Gospel is the question of the implied author communicating a different message than the physical author. Since this question is linked with questions of sources and author, a more detailed response will come later in this chapter.

<sup>52</sup> Powell, “Narrative Criticism,” 241.

<sup>53</sup> Powell, “Narrative Criticism,” 242.

Gospel.<sup>54</sup> Culpepper would even suggest that in a very broad sense the narrator of the Fourth Gospel gives the viewpoint of the author.<sup>55</sup> This distinction is made to focus on seeing how the narrator accomplished his/her goal. The focus is not on whom he/she is or how he/she might relate to other components of the narrative grid. Furthermore it is important to remember the perspective of the narrator in the Fourth Gospel. The narrator is treated in the Fourth Gospel as being reliable and omniscient.<sup>56</sup> The narrator of the Fourth Gospel is not searching for answers. The narrator is guiding the audience in understanding the text. The ability of the narrator to employ a retrospective view is also significant.<sup>57</sup> The narrator knows the path. The reason the route is sometimes circular becomes apparent at the end of the story but the narrator knows the reason for it being circular.

### **1.10 The Need for Narrative Criticism**

The need for narrative criticism has been noted in the previous paragraphs but further comment on this issue is warranted. Narrative criticism applied to biblical studies can be viewed as a purely literary study of the Bible as literature. It can also be viewed as an attempt to provide an understanding of the biblical text separate from historical questions. That is certainly not the view of prominent practitioners of the discipline. Stibbe's view that the Fourth Gospel is "poetic history"<sup>58</sup> describes a view that views the Fourth Gospel as both a work of great literature and of historical use.

Narrative criticism started in the 1970's in response to the trend among critical scholarship to atomize the biblical text. In the pursuit of the specific historical details that were believed to stand behind a text the integrity of the text as a whole was often ignored. Hans Frei made a significant point in 1974 when he argued that the Gospels need to be seen in their entirety and not as an amalgam of incidents.<sup>59</sup> According to Frei the Gospels had an organic, internal connection that made them a unity.<sup>60</sup> Frei's point is significant

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<sup>54</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *The Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 16.

<sup>55</sup> Culpepper, *The Anatomy*, 30

<sup>56</sup> Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel* (JSNT Sup Series 69; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 31.

<sup>57</sup> Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference*, 40.

<sup>58</sup> Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 2.

<sup>60</sup> Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven and Yale; Yale University Press, 1974), 311.

because it demands the historical-critical method to account for the *history of the completed, finished text*. It is not enough to provide a theory for the sources of the Fourth Gospel; it is also necessary to understand its use as a completed text. Whether the Fourth Gospel had one, two, three, ten or more sources it had a history as a completed text. Once the Fourth Gospel was circulated it had an impact as *literature* on the Johannine community and that circulation had *historical* consequences. The history of the Fourth Gospel did not end with its publication; it entered a new phase that deserves to be appreciated in its own right.

A prime example of why a focus on the role of the narrator and historical environment are helpful is seen in the case of Barabbas. The crucifixion of Jesus is given almost universal acceptance as historical fact but the details of Jesus' death are often disputed. As important as the historical discussion is concerning Barabbas, the purpose of this study is to examine the role of this account in the context of the post-70 CE era in which the Fourth Gospel was written. While not all critical scholars would regard Barabbas as an invention, many would. In previous eras that would be enough to severely limit critical interest in this account. Nevertheless to subtract the story of Barabbas from the telling of the Fourth Gospel because many deem it as non-historical blows the narrative strategy of the Fourth Gospel to pieces. The story of Barabbas fulfills several goals for the narrator of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>61</sup> If Barabbas is excluded, the story of the Fourth Gospel cannot be fully told. Employing a version of the narrative critical approach allows the Fourth Gospel to be discussed without continuous discussion on proving or disproving a particular historical event.

The narrative strategy employed in this study uses the fixed point of historical consensus (the Crucifixion) to move to a controversial subject (Barabbas) to explain the narrator's interest in how the Fourth Gospel was framed. This is done deliberately to allow this study to focus on a theme of the narrator's interest in presenting Jesus' Davidic links. This does not mean that this study will not render an opinion on historical questions such as the trustworthiness of Josephus on certain issues. When an account is considered

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<sup>61</sup> The importance of Barabbas will be discussed in greater detail in a following chapter. Using a narrative approach allows the question of historicity to be discussed without refighting the polemics of earlier academic eras. Instead of scholars with opposing viewpoints on historical questions talking past each other, they can communicate with each other using this method.

controversial, the argument is this study will be to show the importance of the event as either a historical event or as a legend. Those taking diverging viewpoints on the historicity of an event will still be able to appreciate the power of the historical event/legend as it affected the Johannine community.

The methodology used in this study could be described as “big-picture” narrative. The issues of literary style while important have already been noted in previous works like Stibbe’s. What has been missing is an approach that takes those insights, builds on them, and evaluates the impact of the narrative on the wider world. While previous generations of scholars wrestled with important questions like authorship and origins for the Fourth Gospel, issues like writing for an oral culture under Roman imperialism were neglected. This study is a modest attempt to redress that imbalance.

### **1.11 Authorship**

The issue of authorship<sup>62</sup> needs to be discussed further even if a narrative critical method is used because the question of authorship is critical to the history of the study of the Fourth Gospel. Furthermore the question of authorship needs to be considered because the issues of implied author, real author, and narrator are linked together. Finally someone physically wrote down the Fourth Gospel and that physical act allowed the Fourth Gospel to span centuries.

The question of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel has become something of a cottage industry in New Testament scholarship. Attempts to identify the Beloved Disciple with John the son Zebedee, John Mark, John the Elder, or other figures whose first name is not John have repeatedly been made. This is due to the fact that the Fourth Gospel does not directly identify its author/redactor. It does attest for itself the authorship of the Beloved Disciple (Jn 21:24) as noted earlier in this chapter. Traditionally this was attributed to John the son of Zebedee but since the Fourth Gospel does not identify the Beloved Disciple it is a tradition that is in addition to the Fourth Gospel. Indeed if the Beloved Disciple was indeed John the son of Zebedee, his veiled identification of himself has not made it easier to demonstrate this possibility. Nevertheless an even more

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<sup>62</sup> If could be argued that a discussion on authorship should be made before a decision to use narrative methodology is used. The reason authorship is considered after the discussion of sources is because source considerations point to authors. Once the points were made that a search for sources was unsatisfying and that the Fourth Gospel was a literary unity this study adopted a narrative approach. Then it could move to the question of authorship.

fundamental question deserves to be asked. If the authorship of the Beloved Disciple was sufficient authority for the Johannine community, why is there a compelling need for detective work in finding the name of the Beloved Disciple?

The Fourth Gospel does not claim for itself the identity of a historical figure like Paul as its author. Thus the literary integrity of the text does not need to be weighed alongside the claim for authorship. It could be argued that the claims made for the Fourth Gospel are what are critical to understanding the text. Attempting to change the historical context of the Fourth Gospel by proposing different authors is an effective technique to change its meaning but it is a value added to the completed text. No scholar has proved to the satisfaction of all concerned that their identification of the Beloved Disciple is correct.

Another telling point to remember is the Beloved Disciple is dead.<sup>63</sup> The Fourth Gospel is not. The physical act of writing this text allows it to exist today even after its physical author is dust. Thus it is important to remember that a theory on the identity of the Beloved Disciple should not take replace what is known about the Fourth Gospel. It still communicates even after the death of the author. Importing meaning to the text from church tradition or from contemporary scholarship is not letting the text speak for itself. The life of this text is drawn from its own words that transcend a discussion on the identity of its author.

Discussing the role of the author brings the discussion back to the unity of the text. Keener's comment that "the Fourth Gospel functions as a unity"<sup>64</sup> provides a succinct statement of how this text is treated in this study.<sup>65</sup> The interest of the narrator in accomplishing the "big-picture" task is primary to the question of how that text was formed. As a unity<sup>66</sup> it communicates a coherent message. The original compiler of this text produced a cohesive text. If the identity of that compiler is still a mystery, the text

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<sup>63</sup>Jeffrey Lloyd Staley, *The Print's First Kiss: A Rhetorical Investigation of the Implied Reader in the Fourth Gospel* (SBL Dissertation Series 82; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988), 23. He makes the very graphic point that a work outlives its physical author.

<sup>64</sup> Keener, *The Gospel According to John*, 38.

<sup>65</sup> Not all commentators would agree with this assessment. Murphy-O'Connor does not view the Fourth Gospel as a literary unity. [Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Qumran and the New Testament," in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters* (eds. Eldon Jay Epp and George MacRae; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 62.] Obviously this study takes a different view but in the interest of balance the objections to this viewpoint need to be noted.

<sup>66</sup> Staley, *The Print's*, 23.

still exists. The mission of the Fourth Gospel was not to reveal the Beloved Disciple; it was to preach Jesus. Once the text is seen as a whole than it is easier to see how the parts work together.<sup>67</sup> The Beloved Disciple has succeeded in producing a whole that exists in its own right and that deserves to be respected.

Examining the text as a whole allows it to be compared to other texts and provides a mechanism for gaining knowledge by observing any possible linkages between different texts. The pursuit of sources and the question of the literary independence or dependence of the Fourth Gospel can still be pursued. It is done in the framework that the redaction of the Fourth Gospel was done with a purpose and that this purposes deserves to be recognized as being the ultimate goal of the Fourth Gospel. The sources build to the completed text and the purpose of a completed text is to communicate a message. The employment of this technique in the Fourth Gospel shifts the focus onto understanding the Fourth Gospel as a “single utterance.”<sup>68</sup> The unity of the text even if imperfect becomes the message and not the pieces of the message. This study is interested in how the message of the Fourth Gospel communicated on the issue of Jesus being the Davidic Messiah.

### **1.12 The Development of Texts**

The focus on historical reconstruction of sources has often obscured an equally important issue of the development and use of texts once they were completed. The assumption by Bultmann and his followers that the transition from oral tradition to written communication was fundamentally seamless<sup>69</sup> has been challenged as not recognizing the sometime chaotic move from orality to written approaches.<sup>70</sup> Simply finding sources behind a text is not sufficient to understanding a text.

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<sup>67</sup> The question of whether parts of the Fourth Gospel were misplaced (Jesus' Farewell Discourse as one example) and need to be reorganized has given rise to various displacement theories of the Fourth Gospel. It could be argued that the text of the Fourth Gospel can only be understood if it properly reorganized. There are two responses to this assertion. Firstly the need for reorganization exists in the eye of the beholder. What appears to modern critics to be a problem does not appear to be a problem for the ancients. It is the world they faced that is under consideration here. Secondly is the constant problem of different solutions to the perceived problem. The lack of consensus in providing solutions is a warning that reorganizing the Fourth Gospel is a very tricky business.

<sup>68</sup> Francis J. Moloney, *Belief in the Word* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 4.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas E. Boomershine, “Jesus of Nazareth and the Watershed of Ancient Orality and Literacy,” in *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature* (ed. Joanna Dewey; Atlanta: SBL, 1995), 8.

<sup>70</sup> Boomershine, “Jesus of Nazareth,” 9.

The development of the Fourth Gospel was conditioned by the realities of its own world. The way in which the ancient world produced written texts needs to be understood as being different from the contemporary world. The methodological assumptions of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century that retrojected their own world of print culture back into the ancient world need to be recognized.<sup>71</sup> The need for the Johannine community to affirm authorship of this text was achieved by announcing the Beloved Disciple as its author. The fact that this affirmation seems inadequate to the contemporary world is not a reflection on the ancient world being inferior but different.

For the purpose of this study the implied author of the Fourth Gospel will be the Beloved Disciple but more importantly the Johannine community will be treated as the implied reader of this text. The concept of the Johannine community is often used to explain the development of the Fourth Gospel in terms of sources and redaction and that may be a workable hypothesis for the construction of the Fourth Gospel. Nevertheless the creation of a Johannine community as a Johannine school has not moved beyond hypothetical development while the reality that the Fourth Gospel had ancient readers is a given. The Johannine community was the recipient of this text. The target audience of the Fourth Gospel is everyone who needs to hear that Jesus is the Son of God. As Koester notes this “Gospel was written in and for a community of faith.”<sup>72</sup> The Johannine community was interested in sharing its message. This community of faith communicated its testimony orally and by the use of this text.<sup>73</sup> This was a community with a message to spread.<sup>74</sup>

### **1.13 Privilege and Literacy**

Spreading the message was not a simple task. One way it could be done would be by writing the message in book but this created concerns of its own. The observation that writing is technologically based<sup>75</sup> is important to remember in understanding the ancient world. Just as access to computer technology has become a cultural marker in the post-

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<sup>71</sup> Boomershine, “Jesus of Nazareth,” 9 n. 4.

<sup>72</sup> Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (2d. ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 247.

<sup>73</sup> Koester, *Symbolism*, 247.

<sup>74</sup> Kealy, *John’s Gospel and the History of Biblical Interpretation*, 20. The Fourth Gospel has sometimes been viewed as lacking circulation among orthodox Christians in the second century CE. Kealy highlights the academic work done to rebut this view.

<sup>75</sup> Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Routledge, 1982), 82.

modern world so is the technology of writing in the ancient. A parchment or a stylus had a monetary value that did not fit with a peasant's standard of living. Even if one did acquire the necessary tools, the knowledge and technique to use them needed to be acquired. The Johannine community lived in that world and the Fourth Gospel was read and heard in that world. Writing the Fourth Gospel was only part of the story.

While some of the unprivileged were literate, that knowledge needs to be balanced with their social-economic status. The luxury of learning needed to be balanced with the need to survive in the ancient world and survival was often a difficult daily battle. The level of female literacy was generally lower than that of the male population at every level of social status.<sup>76</sup> The ability to read and write conferred power upon the possessor of these skills that the illiterate could not hope to have. Given that a disproportionate balance of the literate in the ancient world were men and persons of status, wealth, and influence an emphasis on the written word would benefit those that were advantaged. Osiek's assertion that female literacy was considerably lower than male literacy in the ancient world<sup>77</sup> should not be controversial. Nor should it be controversial to assert that educated and socially prominent males were more literate than the rest of society.<sup>78</sup> The Fourth Gospel was written for an audience that was disenfranchised from the centers of power. It should be expected that the text was composed with its audience in mind.

#### **1.14 The Burden of Libraries**

Literacy is only part of the equation when it comes to using written communication. Having the ability to own and store written material is another matter as well. The famous library of Alexandria existed under royal patronage<sup>79</sup> and the civic archives of various cities<sup>80</sup> also provided a place for written material to be kept. Libraries were places that existed based on the power of the state in much of the Mediterranean world. This is not to deny the existence of private libraries but the cost of a private library meant a person was wealthy or privileged. Unless it is assumed that the Johannine

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<sup>76</sup> Joanna Dewey, "Textuality in an Oral Culture: A Survey of the Pauline Traditions," in *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature* (ed. Joanna Dewey; Atlanta: SBL, 1995), 43.

<sup>77</sup> Carolyn Osiek, "The Oral World of Early Christianity in Rome," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome* (eds. Karl P. Donfried and Peter Richardson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 159.

<sup>78</sup> Osiek, "The Oral World," 159.

<sup>79</sup> Alan Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 18.

<sup>80</sup> Millard, *Reading and Writing*, 19.

community was rich, the cost of providing a library in something that needs to be considered.

In Jewish Palestine there is evidence that synagogues housed scrolls and parchments<sup>81</sup> and evidence for individual ownership of scrolls.<sup>82</sup> What is important to note is the evidence for private ownership of scrolls comes in part because of the reference in 1 Maccabees (1 Macc 1:56, 57) in which ownership of Torah was cause for execution by Antiochus.<sup>83</sup> This point is extremely significant. Religious texts were potentially lethal to their owners if persecution arose. Literacy was one thing; owning written material could be downright deadly.

Book burning and censorship are nothing new but for the Johannine community they reiterate the need for caution in the handling of a written text. Libraries and written texts attract attention because they are visible signs. When those visible signs are in opposition to the prevailing religious or political authorities, there will be confrontation.

Orality for the Johannine community was a form of self-preservation. Since a master could not read the mind of his slave, the master could not know if the slave was meditating on the parable of the Good Shepherd or counting the hours to sunset. Finding a copy of the Fourth Gospel in a slave's possession was potentially another matter. Oral communication of a written text was safer than providing multiple copies.

### **1.15 Oral Readings**

The earliest audience of the First Gospel was in all probability composed of hearers of public readings of the text.<sup>84</sup> The idea of a mass produced text silently read by individuals in the privacy of their own home reflects a post-printing press view of the world. While the elite of society would have the luxury to read in private, those who were illiterate could only hear a written text if someone read it to them.

Furthermore the focus on reading aloud changes how a text is viewed. In cultural situations that are predominantly oral based the impact of sound and how a word sounds should not be underestimated. The tendency of sound orientated cultures to focus

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<sup>81</sup> Millard, *Reading and Writing*, 161.

<sup>82</sup> Millard, *Reading and Writing*, 161.

<sup>83</sup> Millard, *Reading and Writing*, 161.

<sup>84</sup> J.A. Loubser, "Moving Beyond Colonialist Discourse: Understanding Oral Theory and Cultural Difference in the Context of Media Analysis," in *Orality, Literacy, and Colonialism in Antiquity* (ed. Jonathan A. Draper; Atlanta; Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 80.

on harmonizing rather than analyzing information is significant.<sup>85</sup> “Manuscript cultures remained largely oral-aural even in retrieval of material preserved in texts.”<sup>86</sup> This observation is important to remember in the context of the Johannine community. The linkage of ideas in the Fourth Gospel should take into consideration how the text was heard and how the flow of the narrative throughout the whole of the book influences its message. A significant factor to consider is that material expressed in narrative form is relatively easy to remember.<sup>87</sup> The power of a well told story should never be underestimated. If a text was to have maximum impact on its audience and in particular on a largely illiterate agrarian audience, it needed to be communicated in a manner that would reach that audience.

### **1.16 The Importance of Orality to the Fourth Gospel**

The purpose of this rather extended discussion on the social status of literacy, its political overtones, and the importance of visual messages has a very deliberate purpose in this study. One of the critical messages that needed to be communicated in the Fourth Gospel was the question of Jesus’ identity. It needed to be done in a way that communicated both to persons who were socially marginalized and to persons who served the Roman state. It will be argued in this text that the parable of the Good Shepherd was a critical part of the narrative plan of the Fourth Gospel to do so. The language of the parable of the Good Shepherd would be read in public gatherings and the way it expressed the identity of Jesus needed to be done in a manner that was both vivid and safe. Vivid because most of the listeners would need to remember who Jesus was in verbal imagery because of their limited literacy. It needed to be safe because the post-70 CE political situation meant that Jesus’ death as a messianic pretender meant Christians needed to be careful in dealing with the Roman state. A critical argument of this study is that the Greek used to describe Jesus’ opposition in the parable of the Good Shepherd was done very deliberately. In understanding the impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the Fourth Gospel it is important to remember that the Johannine community had to deal with its own audience and Rome as well.

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<sup>85</sup> Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 73.

<sup>86</sup> Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 119.

<sup>87</sup> Dewey, “Textuality in an Oral Culture,” 57.

### 1.17 Rhetoric, Propaganda, and Orality

One of the considerations in understanding the literary composition of the Fourth Gospel is to appreciate the manner in which texts were used in the ancient world by the elite of society. Literacy was mostly the prerogative of those blessed with the wealth and status<sup>88</sup> to have the leisure to learn while most of the populace toiled manually to survive. This made the acquisition of the skills of reading and writing a means of gaining and holding power in the ancient world. Those who had these skills had a distinct advantage over those who were illiterate. The role of reading and writing in the Roman world for maintaining order was vital.<sup>89</sup> Long distance communication was attainable by the use of letters sent from Rome to the provinces and back again. The ability to coordinate activities over a great geographical distance was only possible because of the employment of the skills of reading and writing.

The use of propaganda devices by governments to shape the psychological state of their subjects is not a modern invention. The use of statutes, epigraphy, and inscriptions on coins were means of communicating a message to the populace in the ancient world. Written communication could be targeted toward a specific audience that could be expected to appreciate the message they were being given. Perhaps the best example of such a use of the written word was Julius Caesar's writing of the *Commentaries* on his campaign in Gaul. Whether they are considered the personal military history of a famous campaign or self-serving aggrandizement, they performed a useful role for Julius Caesar in maintaining his public profile in Rome while fighting in Gaul.

Assuming that I and II Maccabees represent an approved history of the Maccabean Revolt that supported Hasmonean claims to power, the use of written texts to propagate a message supportive of the ruling establishment was part of late Second Temple polity. The manner in which Josephus communicated his message demonstrates strong signs of being conscious of propaganda value. Indeed Josephus as a historian shows significant signs of being aware of his role as an apologist. This study will be written with an awareness of the reality that written communication in the post-70 CE

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<sup>88</sup> Werner H. Kelber, "Roman Imperialism and Early Christian Scribality," in *Orality, Literacy, and Colonialism in Antiquity* (ed. Jonathan A. Draper; Atlanta; Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 135.

<sup>89</sup> Dewey, "Textuality in an Oral Culture," 44.

period that involved Roman and Jewish issues would be done with an understanding of the impact that those discourse could have.

### **1.18 Methodological Approach**

For the purpose of this study the Fourth Gospel's use or nonuse of the Synoptic tradition is secondary to the thesis that the Fourth Gospel was written with a deliberate intent to communicate Jesus' Davidic identity in a different manner.<sup>90</sup> This approach intentionally differs from methodology based on source criticism. The goal of this study is to define how a goal was accomplished (explain Jesus' Davidic identity in the Fourth Gospel) rather than describe the route (sources or authors) to the goal.<sup>91</sup> Thus viewing the Fourth Gospel as a narrative whole is the method employed. Factors such as the recognition of the oral nature of ancient Mediterranean society and the role of imperialism in Roman politics are acknowledged as well. Fundamentally the Fourth Gospel had a story to tell and that story needs to be heard. The narrative approach allows this to happen.

The functional premise of this study is that the Fourth Gospel was completed after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE and this event was critical to its portrayal of Jesus. The publication of the Fourth Gospel served a need in early Christianity and the Johannine community acted on that need. The events of the Jewish Revolt had created a

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<sup>90</sup> For the sake of argument the question could be posed as to what would be the implications for this study if the Fourth Gospel was dependent on the Synoptics. If the Fourth Gospel was dependent on a Synoptic Gospel(s), it is evident that dependency did not equal conformity. The Temple Cleansing comes early in the Fourth Gospel. In all three Synoptics it comes late. This would suggest that a deliberate decision was made to offer a different focus for the Temple Cleansing. The parable of the Good Shepherd and the account of the Samaritan woman are found only in the Fourth Gospel. Obviously this would indicate that the Fourth Gospel had its own independent tradition(s) and incorporated them into its own narrative. The manner in which the Fourth Gospel treats John the Baptist shows important differences with the Synoptic tradition as well. If the Fourth Gospel knew a particular Gospel or tradition related to the Synoptics, it did not stop the narrator of the Fourth Gospel from using individual creativity in developing the Fourth Gospel into its own unique text.

If the Fourth Gospel rested independent of the Synoptics, it would explain why the Fourth Gospel shows such differences from the Synoptics. The common material could reflect a general tradition from which the narrator drew material. The options to explain the similarities and differences between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel would be based on the interpreter's view of the relationship of the Johannine community with other strands of Christianity.

Whether the Fourth Gospel is independent, indirectly dependent, or directly dependent on the Synoptics, this study can proceed because all options allow for the Fourth Gospel to have been written with a different focus than the Synoptics. The conclusion of this study is that Keener's opinion of a Fourth Gospel aware of the Synoptics without being directly dependent on them is the best solution at this time.

<sup>91</sup> Again this observation is not to denigrate the importance of source criticism or the role of an author in writing. It is meant rather to focus on the goal of this study versus previous work that focused on possible sources and potential authors.

sea change in the relationship between Jews, Christians, and the Roman rulers of the empire. The end of the Second Temple era created a vacuum that needed to be filled and the Fourth Gospel responded to that challenge.

That vacuum operated on at least two different levels. For the broader Jewish community the loss of the Temple meant a fundamental tenet of Jewish religious life had disappeared. For the Romans the question of Jewish political aspirations and the political implication of messianic stirrings in the Jewish community were to become a significant issue in the Flavian period. In this task the role of the Qumran community is not forgotten. Indeed material discovered at Qumran provides the opportunity to illuminate and to explain elements of the Fourth Gospel. The world of the Qumran community and the early Jesus movement both existed in the last decades of the Second Temple era. Furthermore a strong case can be made that even after the destruction of the Qumran community the ideas and perhaps even some members of the Qumran community still had an impact on the post-70 CE world. The Fourth Gospel and the Qumran community both had a message to tell and the story of that message includes coming to grips with the question of who the M/messiah<sup>92</sup> was and how he should be proclaimed.

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<sup>92</sup> When the term “M/messiah” is used in this study, it is meant to communicate that early Christianity and the Qumran community had a strong interest in messianic questions but different solutions to the question.

## Chapter Two: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hope for a Future King

### 2.1 Introduction

Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, their importance has changed the dynamics of the study of both late Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction as to how certain of the Scrolls provide important points of comparison with aspects of the Fourth Gospel. Specifically texts that discuss messianic or kingship themes are examined with a view as to how they could have an impact in the post-70 CE era when the Fourth Gospel was composed. A critical contention of this study is that while the settlement at Qumran was destroyed during the Jewish Revolt, the influence of certain texts found hidden near Qumran show evidence of having survived the lifespan of the Qumran settlement. This surviving influence raises the question as to what impact if any it had on the composition of the Fourth Gospel. The problem of why the Scrolls were hidden needs to be revisited because the care and attention given to their concealment indicates that there was a plan behind their hiding.

The title of this chapter reflects the hope found in several of these texts for a renewed kingship for the Jewish people. Sorting through the Scrolls is not simple and the texts selected were picked<sup>93</sup> due to their relevance to the discussion of kingship and royal messianic issues. The importance of David as the model king for the future emerges in this analysis. The texts examined show a general coherence in their support for a new David to lead the Jewish people. That new David was described as a shepherd in 4Q504 (*4QWords of the Luminaries*) and the adoption of the pastoral metaphor is significant for its connections with other Second Temple literature. Whether this general coherence equates to a consistent position for the Davidic dynasty in all circumstances for the Qumran community is a more problematic matter. Certainly the link between king and temple cult is strong in texts like the *Temple Scroll* (11Q19 and 11Q20) even if the role of the king in that text is still controversial. The Davidic covenant that linked the king

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<sup>93</sup> This study is not an exhaustive study of all the Dead Sea Scrolls that might have messianic overtones. The texts selected were done because they show relevance to the topic under consideration. This study does not argue that the hope for a Davidic messiah was the only messianic expectations recovered in the Qumran literature. There is no question that messianic expectations within the Qumran community were complex, diverse, and possibly contradictory. One strand of that expectation, the Davidic messiah, is traced in this chapter because that one strand can be covered competently in a single dissertation.

and the Temple is a critical part of 4Q174 (*4QFlorilegium*) and the linkage between the king and the temple cult is one that will later be a major theme in the Fourth Gospel.

## 2.2 Qumran Community

The debate about what the Qumran community was or even if it existed is still continuing. The conclusions reached in this chapter are focused on providing information that would be relevant to the post-70 CE era and not providing a systematic understanding of how every Qumran text on kingship related to each other. Nevertheless the discoveries of the Scrolls have raised questions as to the identities of the people behind the remarkable finds in the Qumran area. A majority view has evolved concerning the identity of the people behind these texts. Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* identified a group of Essenes as living in the Qumran region in the middle of the first century CE.<sup>94</sup> After the discovery of the Scrolls in 1947 the archaeological research of Roland de Vaux and his team studied the remains at Khirbet Qumran. He raised the strong possibility of the site being the center from which the Scrolls originated and the site itself being the center for a group of ascetic Essenes who wrote the Scrolls.<sup>95</sup> Roland de Vaux's excavation of the ruins near Qumran has provided one foundation for the view that a community of ascetic Essenes produced the literature that was found in the caves near Qumran. The account of Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* provides the other part of this foundation. This community was believed to have been destroyed in 68 CE in the Roman conquest of Jericho. This view of the progenitors behind the finds found near Qumran has experienced its share of criticism.

Norman Golb is perhaps the greatest critic of the standard model and has provided helpful criticisms even if his alternative explanation has flaws. Golb raises the point that Philo asserts that the Essenes were pacifists and by inference could not have stood and fought at Khirbet Qumran.<sup>96</sup> Thus the Roman destruction of the settlement at Khirbet Qumran in 68 CE should not be linked with the manuscript finds in the caves nearby. Golb's identification of the Essenes as being non-violent is contradicted in at least one instance by Golb's own admission that Josephus calls one anti-Roman rebel

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<sup>94</sup> Norman Golb, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?* (New York: Touchstone Books: 1996), 15.

<sup>95</sup> Golb, *Who Wrote*, 6-12.

<sup>96</sup> Golb, *Who Wrote*, 14.

John the Essene.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore Philo wrote one or two generations before the Jewish Revolt and the possibility of the radicalization of at least some Essenes cannot be discounted. Philo also wrote as an outsider to Essene customs and Philo was anxious to promote Judaism as being compatible with Hellenism. Suggesting that the Essenes had any streak of revolutionary ardor would not provide a favorable image.

While the texts recovered near Qumran show differences between the descriptions supplied by Pliny the Elder and Philo, the asceticism described by both sources does resonate with the asceticism found in many texts found near Qumran. If the differences between sources deserve an explanation, so do the similarities between sources. Golb's probing has accomplished at least one purpose in that he has raised the important question of how previous knowledge of ancient sources is to be reconciled with contemporary discoveries.

The pioneer work of de Vaux should be used as a starting point and not as an endpoint to further discussion. The standard model of a Qumran settlement inhabited by a group that had connections with the Essenes and that produced the literature found in the caves near Qumran is accepted for this dissertation with several caveats. The diversity in descriptions concerning the Essenes on pacifism indicates that either some ancient sources are misleading or the Essenes were very diverse in their practices.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore the discovery of the *Damascus Document* (CD-A) in a Cairo genizah indicates that an exclusive focus on Qumran as a geographical area is misleading. The *Damascus Document* (CD) stresses the role of the Teacher of Righteousness in leading a group who probably originated outside of Khirbet Qumran. His followers were greater than a geographical location. On balance the link between Essenism and the finds at Qumran is justifiable based on the research done so far.<sup>99</sup>

For the purpose of this dissertation the use of the phrase Qumran community or Qumran covenanters will refer to those whose understanding of Judaism was shaped by the texts found near Qumran. This designation includes those who lived outside Khirbet Qumran. The term Qumran settlement will refer to Khirbet Qumran and the probable

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<sup>97</sup> Golb, *Who Wrote*, 15.

<sup>98</sup> Geza Vermes and Martin Goodman, *The Essenes According to the Ancient Sources* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 13.

<sup>99</sup> Vermes and Martin, *The Essenes*, 12.

Essene identity of a group that lived there in the middle of the first century CE. The term Qumran literature will refer to texts found near Qumran in caves 1 through 11. The possibility that elements of Qumran literature originated from outside the Qumran settlement is acknowledged but the focus of this study is on the possible impact of Qumran literature on the Fourth Gospel and not on the sources behind Qumran literature. Since the ancient sources provide varied descriptions of Essene thought and practice, it should be no surprise that Qumran literature would show some variety of expression.

### **2.3 The Importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls**

In the history of biblical studies perhaps few events have managed to revolutionize the academic debate of its sources as much as the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the middle of the twentieth century. The discovery of primitive Hebrew Scripture texts from before the Roman conquest of Palestine, the finding of previously unknown Jewish texts, and the mystery of the identity of the authors of these works are all questions that have captured the imagination of the academic community. Perhaps the greatest benefit of the discovery of the Scrolls is their ability to help explain questions that previously puzzled scholars but for which there seemed to be limited answers due to a dearth of primary source material.

With the advent of the Third Quest for the historical Jesus, there has been renewed interest in the person of Jesus and in particular understanding the Jewish context surrounding his life. The discovery or better rediscovery that Jesus was a Jew and lived in Palestine has pointed contemporary scholarship in a new direction. In the enthusiasm for examining Jesus' social and cultural milieu some of the questions from previous eras have still persisted. The nature of the christology of the Fourth Gospel and its relation to the Jewish world is one such issue. The messianic portrayal of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel has decided differences from the Synoptics and the rationale for these differences invite explanation. With the growth of the scholarly consensus that late Second Temple Judaism was the key rather than a mere backdrop to understanding the post-70 CE expressions of Christianity and Judaism, this question deserves fuller attention. The Scrolls offer possible insight into the dynamics that helped form the Fourth Gospel and they certainly provide a source for comparisons that earlier generations of scholarship were not privileged to have.

## 2.4 Two Messiahs

Any study of kingship or messianic consciousness that examines whether there are links between certain of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Fourth Gospel will inevitably be forced to deal with the issue of what the role of a king or kingly messiah should be. Critical differences in approach are found between certain of the Scrolls and the Fourth Gospel. While early Christianity was focused on the person of Jesus as Messiah, the Scrolls suggest that an expectation of two messiahs was present at Qumran.

The two-messiah theory for explaining messianic expectations found at Qumran has become the standard approach to the question. Usually this is described as a priestly messiah and a kingly or royal messiah. While the adoption of the consensus position of scholarship should not be a substitute for critical analysis, the two-messiah approach is deservedly accorded favored status.

1QS (*The Rule of the Community*) contains a critical passage on this issue that deserves consideration. This text is a foundational document for the understanding of the Qumran community and this makes the comments on any potential messianic figure in it of great significance. Perhaps the most persuasive argument for the two-messiah viewpoint is the use of the plural in 1QS 9.11 to describe the “Messiahs of Aaron and Israel”.<sup>100</sup> The use of two separate figures to preside over the messianic feast described as being the chief priest and the Messiah of Israel in 1QSa 2.11-21<sup>101</sup> provide more support for this conclusion. The possibility that the Qumran covenanters had a diversity of views on the messiah or that there was an evolution over time needs to be respected. The passage from 1QS 9.11 may not be contained in the earliest edition of the *Community Rule*.<sup>102</sup> Even with this caveat in mind the development of the two-messiah approach is the best present explanation for understanding the role(s) of the messiah in the Qumran community. Even if the community began with a singular messianic focus, it became dual at a relatively earlier date.

It is important to note that the two-messiah formula allows the continuation of a kingly messiah even if his role is subordinated to the priestly messiah as is often

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<sup>100</sup> Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint, “Introduction,” in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint; Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1997), 6.

<sup>101</sup> Evans and Flint, “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>102</sup> Evans and Flint, “Introduction,” 7.

suggested. He is not eliminated even if the maintenance of a two-messiah approach provides a somewhat awkward solution to the messianic question. In short therefore there are grounds for proceeding with a study that seeks to identify commonalities between certain of the Scrolls and the Fourth Gospel provided the focus is carefully selected and followed. One possible avenue of investigation is an examination of what influences, concerns, and themes are prominent in Qumran literature in describing what the kingly ideal should be.

### **2.5 4QMMT Interpretation and David**

The publication of 4QMMT (*Halakhic Letter*)<sup>103</sup> in 1994 offered scholarship an opportunity to dramatically improve its insight into the nature of the beliefs of the Qumran community. The loss of the introduction to this document has handicapped its interpretation greatly but the contents of the text have been nonetheless analyzed to help identify the theological orientation of the Qumran community. While conclusions from this text need to be drawn carefully, its contents provide a real insight into the Qumran covenanters from probably the second century BCE.

The original recipients of 4QMMT received an instructive summary of regulations and observations about Torah that was focused on issues important to late Second Temple Judaism. Of the extant portions most focus on purity regulations while the latter third of the document turns its attention to Torah and deals with contemporary history. The identification of this text as adopting a Sadducean position<sup>104</sup> on controversial issues has raised the question of what the relationship of the Qumran community was to other groupings in Second Temple Judaism. The tendency of halakic texts found at Qumran to be more stringent than the Pharisaical position<sup>105</sup> and the similarities to Essene groups described by Philo and Josephus<sup>106</sup> suggest an identity for the Qumran community based on the highest possible fidelity to Torah. Clearly halakic issues were of great concern to this movement and arguing for what they considered to be proper interpretation of Torah was an important task. The exact nature of the document is

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<sup>103</sup> E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4.V: Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah* (DJD X; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).

<sup>104</sup> Devorah Dimant, "The Scrolls and the Study of Early Judaism," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Fifty* (eds. Robert A. Kugler and Eileen M. Schuller; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 54.

<sup>105</sup> Dimant, "The Scrolls," 55.

<sup>106</sup> Dimant, "The Scrolls," 55.

still cause for considerable debate and probably will be for some time. This is due in no small measure to the difficulties in describing its historical context.

As alluded to earlier the introduction to this text is missing and with it the probable identities of the sender and designated recipient. Part of the solution to dating this text and determining its historical context is in interpreting the references to David as being a model king and a keeper of Torah (4Q398 14-17.2.1-3).<sup>107</sup><sup>108</sup>

The impression left by reading the conclusion to this text is that the recipient is in a leadership position for the Jewish people and is being exhorted to follow David's example. The challenge then becomes to find the most appropriate historical context for this text to be situated. The paleographic data for 4QMMT eliminates a Herodian dating so consequently the best historical contexts involve Hasmonean figures. Placing it very close chronologically to the Maccabean Revolt offers one solution. The assertion by Stegemann that it was written by the Teacher of Righteousness to Jonathan the leader of the Maccabeans in c. 150 BCE<sup>109</sup> provides date and historical context. Jonathan is to follow David's example as a godly political leader and Jonathan is to vacate the high priesthood.<sup>110</sup> The challenge of proving that the original Teacher of Righteousness was alive at this date is considerable. The debate over whether the term Teacher of Righteousness became a title makes his points interesting but far from conclusive. As for Jonathan being the recipient of 4QMMT, that question is as equally hard to determine.

Schiffman agrees with c. 150 BCE as a probable date<sup>111</sup> but is more careful than Stegemann in his conclusions. Logically it would seem that invoking the name of David either just before, during, or just after the Maccabean Revolt would be an attempt to inspire the leadership of this Revolt to follow David's example. The lack of overt

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<sup>107</sup> ??? ??? "???" ??? ??? "???" ??? "???" ??? ? ???? ' ? ??' ??? "???" ??? ? ? ???? ? ? ? ? "???"

Quotations in Hebrew of Qumran texts are taken from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1997/1998) unless otherwise noted. English translations are based from Martínez's previous work (see ft. 20) with minor changes for readability in English.

<sup>108</sup> 1 "They were forgiven their sins. Remember David, one of the 'pious' and he too 2 was freed from his many afflictions and was forgiven. And also we have written to you 3 some of the works of the Torah which we think are good for you and for your people." (English translation)

<sup>109</sup> Harmut Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 104.

<sup>110</sup> Stegemann, *The Library*, 104.

<sup>111</sup> Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Halakhah and Sectarianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* (ed. Timothy H. Lim; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 137.

criticism of other Jewish groups would also seem to suggest this text was written at a time of relative Jewish unity in contrast to the crises of the first century BCE involving the Hasmoneans. These factors have suggested that a date of c. 150 BCE would probably be the best fit for the data. One of the Hasmoneans leaders could be the recipient of this text and a prominent member(s) of the Qumran community could be the author. The issue of the identities of the specific senders and recipients is too difficult a question to resolve at this time. Yet if comparisons with David are the key to establishing its historical context, the role of David in this text needs to be explored. Appropriating the authority of Israel's most famous king was not something to be lightly undertaken.

## 2.6 4QMMT and Hebrew Bible

Reference is made to the book of Moses, the prophets, and David (4QMMT 95)<sup>112</sup> in this text and this suggests an important theme for it. If the reference to David is a cipher for the Psalter or Wisdom writings, it would indicate his close identification with these texts from the Hebrew Bible.<sup>113</sup> Clearly 4QMMT is written with the expectation that the authority of these sources would support the pronouncements made in it. The nature of this authority has been debated with varying shades of opinion on the make-up of the biblical narrative behind 4QMMT. While that debate is important, the most significant point for the purpose of this study is that this text acknowledges Moses, the prophets, and David as benchmarks on which 4QMMT is based. If Moses, the prophets, and David could be used as supports for 4QMMT, the readers of those authorities could use them to critique 4QMMT as well. Assuming that this text was meant to be read by persons outside the Qumran community, it would be prudent for the author(s) of this text to establish it on the firmest possible basis.

Essential to the claims of authority in 4QMMT is its treatment of David. The portrayal of David in 4QMMT is positive. David is viewed as the embodiment of obedience to Torah in this text. The man who made Jerusalem great is given a great deal

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<sup>112</sup> The references and English language quotes for the Dead Sea Scrolls in this study are from Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated* (trans. G.E. Watson; second ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Leiden: Brill), 1996. When this text is not sufficiently exhaustive his work in the *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* is consulted.

<sup>113</sup> The use of the terms Hebrew Bible or Hebrew Scriptures are not means to provide a judgment on the shape of the canon for the Qumran community or for Judaism in general in late Second Temple Judaism. These terms are used because the Qumran community treated these texts as an authority to quote and these texts definitely became viewed as canonical after the Jewish Revolt.

of respect in 4QMMT. David as king is upheld as an example which the readers of this letter should follow (4QMMT 111). The fact that he strayed from Torah at times is not mentioned; reference is made rather to him being forgiven (4QMMT 112). In brief David is the pinnacle of godly Jewish kingship. Yet he is more than a king. The identification of David as a source to be respected (4QMMT 95) gives him the unique distinction of being honored as both a godly king and a source of Yahweh's word. As Brooke notes in his comments on exegetical use in Qumran, "In some fashion the inspired authors were respected for their compositional activities."<sup>114</sup> David's identification with the Psalter and in particular individual psalms like Psalm 23 highlight his unique status. Admittedly there is ambiguity in what David's identification particularly meant. Brooke is right to caution that contemporary conceptions of authorial intent are not necessarily seen in the Qumran community's use of texts.<sup>115</sup> Yet it seems clear that the exegesis in 4QMMT is done with a purpose and that David's importance is highlighted quite deliberately.

There is a contrast in this text between David and two other kings. Jeroboam and Zedekiah are specifically mentioned by name (4QMMT 105) as blemishes who brought a curse to their times. Jeroboam's role as opponent of Solomon, king of the Northern Kingdom, and originator of the golden calf cult (I Kgs 12:30) marks the initial revolutionary phase of the divided kingdom. The Deuteronomist's critique of Jeroboam for creating his own alternate priesthood (I Kgs 12: 32) and of making anyone who wished to be a priest a priest (I Kgs 12:33) would be themes that would resonate with the Qumran community in their campaign for purity in the priesthood. Zedekiah was the last preexilic king of Judea who was taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar and who suffered the ignominy of losing Jerusalem to Gentile domination. Since the Qumran community dated itself from the exile (CD 1. 5-6), his name would remind them of why the exile took place.

The reference to Jeroboam may also be a contemporary allusion. The decline of national Israel is linked to digression from Torah and the possible implication for the Hasmonean era is that national unity was at stake if the precepts of 4QMMT were not followed. Indeed it is interesting to note the favorable mention of Solomon as bringing

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<sup>114</sup>George Brooke, "The Plain Meaning of Scripture in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Jewish Ways of Reading the Bible* (ed. George Brooke; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 75.

<sup>115</sup> Brooke "Plain Meaning," 75.

blessing. His description as being the son of David (4QMMT 104) comes without any critique of his later slide into idolatry. It is Jeroboam rather than Solomon who is blamed for the failures of Israel. This may reflect an interest of the Qumran community. The potential prominence of the Zadok line is evident with Solomon's choice of high priest. I Kgs 2:35 has Zadok replace Abiathar as high priest and I Kgs 4: 2 has Azariah the son of Zadok becoming Solomon's high priest. If Azariah the son of Zadok is taken as succeeding in his father's stead,<sup>116</sup> the idea of Zadokite succession as high priest under Solomon could be developed from the Hebrew Bible text. A Zadok/Solomon/ Qumran<sup>117</sup> identification would enhance the claims of authority for the Teacher of Righteousness and his followers. The linkage between David, Solomon, and the Temple would be a very attractive line of argument for the dispossessed members of the Qumran community. The fact that the Qumran community viewed themselves as specially appointed to be part of this prophetic chain adds a sense of urgency to their writing even if other of their Jewish contemporaries would have disagreed with them.

## **2.7 Summary of 4QMMT**

4QMMT is a prescriptive document in the sense that it emphasizes that something should be done and provides a plan and rationale why it should happen in a certain way. The details of the halakic positions enunciated and their significance for debates in rabbinical Judaism<sup>118 119</sup> are profound. What is also clear is that the message of 4QMMT perceived a link between obedience to Torah and the success or failure of a particular king. The halakic interpretations offered in the first two-thirds of this text also clearly imply that the authors of 4QMMT believed their interpretation of Torah was the correct one and should be followed. It is also unique in that it was very probably meant for dissemination outside the Qumran community. This is important because it gives a framework to understand the context in which the Qumran community understood the development of kingship in Israel's history and in its own time.

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<sup>116</sup> This is not the only possible way of dealing with these two texts in I Kings but the appeal of an interpretation that would strengthen Zadokite claims to legitimacy for the Qumran community is obvious.

<sup>117</sup> Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament* (repr.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 14.

<sup>118</sup> While this study has concentrated on the role of David in 4QMMT, the use of this text for debating the finer points of Torah is critical as well.

<sup>119</sup> Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Halakhah and Sectarianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 138.

In some respect the focus on David seems out of place. David was king of a united, powerful nation and the Jewish people were struggling at the margins of pagan empires in the second century BCE. The Hasmonean kingdom was by comparison a pale imitation of the Davidic one. There are other leadership figures in the Hebrew Bible who could be used instead of David and who seem to fit the spirit of the times. One possible example to consider is the leadership provided by Ezra the priest for the returning Jewish exiles. Even one of the judges like Gideon or a prophet like Samuel would seem to be more fitting than David. Yet David is the focus as the model king in 4QMMT and the judgments of contemporary scholarship about what is appropriate need to be suspended by what the text actually says.

In considering the options open for establishing 4QMMT's historical context several interesting implications arise. Perhaps 4QMMT was not sent to a Hasmonean ruler but to another figure whose identity has not been preserved for history. This would explain why the references to David and the Hebrew Bible could be so positive and still be consistent with aspirations of Davidic rule. The date for the origin of this text could conceivably predate the Maccabean Revolt or be addressed to non-Hasmonean leaders during or after the Revolt. The reference to David would not be a veiled criticism of the Hasmonean accumulation of power in this interpretation of events. The appeal of this position is that it allows the Qumran community to preserve the consistency of its approach; the problem with this solution is that it relies on the unknown to identify a prominent Jewish leader. The unknown is always possible but very difficult to confirm.

Perhaps the name of David was invoked to underline his connection to the Temple and promote the authority of the Zadokite priesthood of which the Qumran community identified itself. This explanation would suggest that 4QMMT utilized a carrot-and-stick approach with the Hasmoneans. If the Hasmoneans were prepared to acknowledge the correctness of the Qumran approach, they would gain the support of the Qumran covenanters but if they refused to accept it they would identify themselves with the idolatrous kings of Israel. It would also suggest that the identity of the king or ruler was secondary to the imposition of the correct halakic code and that the identity of that king or ruler was negotiable. That would suggest that politics influenced the theology of the Qumran community and given the reality of that era it is very conceivable.

Interpreting the disputes between the Wicked Priest and the Teacher of Righteousness than would not be about purity but about politics.

Either interpretation makes David the center of the Qumran community's expectations for a king and by extension messianic hopes. The motivation for this Davidic focus may be either positive or negative. Even if the original Teacher of Righteousness was seeking rapprochement with the Hasmoneans, he was doing it on the basis of David being the model king and providing support for the Zadokite priesthood. The Davidic theme serves as a starting point to engage the question of what implications this concept had for kingly and messianic debate in the Qumran texts.

### **2.8 King and Cult**

The relationship of the Davidic dynasty to the Temple cult hovers like a mist around any discussion concerning the relationship of the royal messiah and the future eschatology of the Qumran community. The history of the Davidic dynasty was inseparably entwined with the state of its loyalty to Yahweh. David's offer to build the Temple is thematically connected with the promise of the eternal covenant of kingship (1 Sam 7). This should be no surprise. The ancient world was thoroughly concerned with the supernatural and one's religious loyalties were also expressions of political allegiance. Evidence from Assyrian cultic practice indicates that the role of the king often included priestly functions.<sup>120</sup> Ancient Israel was no exception in having royal participation in the cult.<sup>121</sup> The great sacrifice of Solomon (1 Kgs 8) at the dedication of the First Temple combined with his prayer of allegiance to Yahweh demonstrates that Solomon acted on behalf of Yahweh. Joash's instrumental role in the rediscovery of the role of Torah in his nation's life (1 Kgs 22; 2 Chron 34) is also evidence that the king had a prominent role in the cultic affairs of his country. The Davidic dynasty was very involved with the worship of Yahweh and in preserving the Temple cult.

This involvement does leave open certain questions. Before the rise of the Hasmonean dynasty there is no evidence of the union of the offices of high priest and king in Jewish life. There is certainly no approval of the union of the offices of king and

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<sup>120</sup> J. Daniel Hays, "If He Looks Like a Prophet, and Talks Like a Prophet, Then He Must Be..." in *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 67.

<sup>121</sup> M. Hengel, J.H. Charlesworth, D. Mendels, "The Polemical Character of 'On Kingship' in the Temple Scroll: An Attempt at Dating 11QTemple," *JJS* 37 (1986): 37.



nations in the last days suggests a great deal about the role of the future royal messiah. He is a militant figure charged with ensuring the safety of the nation in a time of great stress. All this activity stems from the need to have a pure temple in which there is no pollution and no foreign domination of its sanctuary (4Q174 5). In the eschatological end time both king and temple still had roles to play.

Whether this is a perfect fit with the description of the messianic figure of the *War Scroll* (1QM) or of texts in which a Davidic figure is not explicitly mentioned is open to discussion. Pomykala has argued that the messianic titles are not synonymous and that they come from different eras.<sup>126</sup> Collins in his engagement with Pomykala rightly questions whether Pomykala can be so sure of when texts were first written and how titles were used.<sup>127</sup> Caution is always advised when making connections between different texts and the relationship between the *War Scroll* and other texts in particular needs to be treated carefully. Regardless of its compatibility with other texts the Davidic figure of 4Q174 is important in his own right.

What this text also illustrates quite strongly is the weight of previous Jewish tradition in forming an interpretive grid to build upon for the Qumran community. The breadth of the quotations exhibits connections with both different eras and streams in what is recognized as Hebrew Bible. Indeed Exodus, 2 Samuel, the Psalms, Amos, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel are all quoted and reference is given to Moses. The major divisions of Torah, the prophets, and the writings are all represented here. The fact that both preexilic and postexilic prophets are cited for support in the exegetical conclusions in this text indicates that coherence is seen in the message of the prophets regardless of when they preached. This broad based appeal to as many sources as possible indicates that the author(s) of this text saw coherence in what they read in the aforementioned Hebrew Bible texts and they sought to apply it to their contemporary situation.

A reasonable conclusion to be gleaned from analyzing this text is that the temple and the royal messiah were closely linked concerns at Qumran. Again this is not surprising given that 2 Sam 7 exhibits the same intertwining of the two themes. David's

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<sup>125</sup>10 "And 'Yahweh declares to you that He will build you a house. I will raise up your seed after you and establish the throne of his kingdom 11 forever. I will be a father to him and He will be a son to me.' This refers to the branch of David, who will arise with the Interpreter of the Law." (English translation)

<sup>126</sup>Kenneth E. Pomykala, *The Davidic Tradition in Early Judaism* (Scholars Press; Atlanta, 1995), 264.

<sup>127</sup>Collins, *The Nature of Messianism*, 213.

reward for loyalty to Yahweh is seen both in his son building the First Temple and in the continuation of his dynasty. Whether this text was intended to be read in conjunction with the *War Scroll* or other Qumran texts that expected eschatological renewal for Israel is a significant question which more study should provide answers. What is clear is that the link between the Davidic covenant and temple purity were important to the Qumran community and the use of the Hebrew Bible to establish this point was done with great care.

### 2.10 The Genesis Peshers and 4Q252

The significance of the Genesis peshers (4Q252, 4Q253, 4Q254, and 4Q254 a) in part lies in their interpretation of Gen 49:10. The branch of David and his descendants have been given eternal claim to the covenant of royalty (4Q252 5.4). That is a very powerful statement that is clear and direct in its affirmation of the Davidic line. The reference to “the messiah of justice... the branch of David” (4Q252 5. 3-4) suggests a close relationship between David’s eternal throne (4Q252 5.2) and that of the future eschatological messiah (4Q252 5.1-4a).<sup>128 129</sup> Whoever sits on David’s throne is a possible/probable candidate to be the royal messiah and this facet of the king/messiah relationship cannot be ignored. Dimant would regard this as a sectarian interpretation of the Blessing of Jacob<sup>130</sup> and in fairness to her position not all Jews of the late Second Temple era would agree with this strong endorsement of the Davidic line as interpreted in this text. It is certainly not sectarian if the Davidic expectations of the *Psalms of Solomon* in passages like *Pss. Sol.* 17:21 come from different circles than Qumran. *Pss. Sol.* 17 is clearly imbued with the hope of the coming of a Davidic king and messiah. That suggests that the merging of the Davidic king and the future eschatological messiah was not confined to Qumran.

Brooke has suggested a date for 4Q252 as being early Herodian and coming from the later half of the first century BCE.<sup>131</sup> Most dating of the *Psalms of Solomon*

<sup>128</sup> "???? "?? ???? ???? ???? ???? ?' ?'????? ' ?? ??' ?"?? ???? ? ?' ????  
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<sup>129</sup> 1 “A sovereign shall not be removed from the tribe of Judah. While Israel has the dominion, 2 there will not lack someone who sits on the throne of David. For ‘the staff’ is the covenant of royalty, 3 the thousands of Israel are ‘the feet’. Until the messiah of justice comes, the branch 4 of David.” (English translation)

<sup>130</sup> Dimant, “The Scrolls and the Study of Judaism,” 52.

<sup>131</sup> George Brooke, *Qumran Cave 4* (DJD XXII; Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 190.

would lean toward a date in the mid to later end of the first century BCE. If this Davidic messianic interpretation was a reaction to the rise of Herod the Great or even the direct Roman intervention into Jewish affairs, it represents a complete rejection of foreign intervention into Jewish affairs. It may also suggest a renewed interest in the Davidic dynasty as an alternative. The possibility that both *Psalms of Solomon* and 4Q252 are part of a wider Jewish anti-Roman and anti-Herodian movement is plausible. It is also possible that the sentiments of both these texts originated in Hasmonean times. 4QMMT placed a great deal of emphasis on David as the model king and the impact of that text on succeeding generations should not be overlooked.

One further implication of using a pesher on Genesis to assert the continuation of the Davidic line is that it moves the origin of the Davidic promise to the patriarchal era. The Deuteronomistic history is not the source of the Davidic kingship in this interpretation but a continuation of that promise. It rests in the final words of Jacob to his sons. It also predates Moses and makes it difficult to substantiate any claim to recognizing Moses as a legitimate source of kingship. Given the interest Philo and other Jewish figures had in portraying Moses as a king this is a notable point.

### **2.11 Samuel and a Model King**

One often overlooked text in the Hebrew Bible is 1 Sam 10:25 which describe Samuel writing a guide on the duties of a king, explaining it to the people, and then presenting it to Yahweh. Since no trace of it has been found, it has not factored greatly into the study of kingship in the Hebrew Bible. Its employment as an example should not be ignored. It may have proved an inspiration for those so minded to produce their works on kingship. It is possible this book on the duties of a king inspired certain passages in the *Temple Scroll* (11Q19 and 11Q20).

Any appeal to the Davidic line is in some ways curious given the historic situation facing the Qumran covenanters. The Davidic dynasty had had mixed success in asserting Judean independence. The dynasty had suffered an ignominious humiliation in the debacle of 586/7 BCE and had not been able to reassert itself as the alternative to Hellenistic rule. The likelihood of a Davidic king replacing the Seleucid, Hasmonean, Herodian, or any Roman imperial dynasty was remote. The interests of both Jewish and

non-Jewish figures in maintaining political control demanded a firm commitment to self-protection.

### **2.12 Hellenistic Treatises and the Statutes of the King**

Jews outside of the Qumran community had various viewpoints on what kingship should be. Some of these views were in the form of Jewish Hellenistic treatises that dealt with kingship. They were couched in terms much more collegial to Hellenistic philosophy than that of Qumran. The *Letter of Aristeas* often reads as a combination of apology and appeal to the Gentile world to accept the compatibility of Jewish wisdom on kingship with the Greek one. The famous opening of this letter which seeks to explain the origin of the LXX while scarcely credible does point to the priority at least some Jews in the Hellenistic world placed on foreign royal approval for the Old Greek Bible. Philo's evaluation of Moses stresses his mental and moral qualifications for ruling. Philo's description of Moses as a king shows no shame in placing him at the highest level of Egyptian royalty. Philo couches Moses' upbringing in terms congenial to Greek philosophy (Philo, *Moses* 1.6.26). Moses is described as a man of restraint who sought to live his life in harmony with his words and deeds. His break with the Egyptian court is described in noble terms. For Philo Moses was a philosopher and not a prophet.

Josephus uses his histories as an explanation of how the forces of history were ruled by Divine will to bring Roman rule to Jewish Palestine. Josephus' tying of a Jewish oracle of the rise of a world ruler to Vespasian as Roman emperor (Josephus, *J.W.* 6.5.4) is one example of how the legitimacy of kingship could be found both within and outside of Judaism for Josephus. For Josephus the Jewish populace should accept the present situation of Roman domination. Josephus' interest in kingship is tightly connected to his interest in projecting his view of Jewish history. Josephus is also of interest because his writings on the Second Temple era come after the destruction of the Temple even though he personally lived through many of the events of the Jewish Revolt.<sup>132</sup>

This raises the strong possibility that the authors/redactors of the *Temple Scroll* did interact or know what other Jewish contemporaries did. The possibility that the *Temple Scroll* was written as a response to some outside Jewish challenge is only a

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<sup>132</sup> Following chapters will deal more fully with the issue of Josephus, kingship, and the Fourth Gospel.

hypothesis but it serves as a reminder that Jewish thinking on the subject was a living thing. The strong probability that this text was redacted or copied over several generations and that the earliest elements of this text may come from the second century BCE<sup>133</sup> indicate that this text's formation is not a simple matter. Nor is it a certainty that this text originated from the same Qumran circles that produced texts like 1QM.<sup>134</sup> These challenges demonstrate that the Qumran community was capable of interacting with different viewpoints and evolving over time. This gives the *Temple Scroll* an enhanced importance because it represents both a result of Qumran thinking and a legacy for its future.

### 2.13 Synopsis of the Temple Scroll

The longest continuous narrative describing the nature of kingship for Israel found in the Dead Sea Scroll corpus is in the *Temple Scroll* (11Q19 56.12-60). Kingship is not the predominant topic of this work and its total purpose is still a matter of debate. The fact that this text is at times rambling may reflect the work of redactors or different editions of the same text. It has certainly produced a wide variety of opinions concerning its composition. Dates ranging from the fourth, third, second, and first centuries BCE for its composition have been given.<sup>135</sup> The lack of agreement among scholarship is perhaps the best argument that this text has a long compositional history and may have included elements from different eras and different authors.

While the *Temple Scroll* is not always easy to follow, this does not mean that this text is disorganized. In some sense it is an anthology of halakic commentary on key issues in the Pentateuch with thematic interest in the Temple drawn from Chronicles and Ezekiel. The various elements of this text reflect a unity of interest even if their application is at times difficult to follow. The concept of holiness and the organization of the Temple reflect this concern<sup>136</sup> and act as a central theme to this text. Whether this

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<sup>133</sup>Johann Maier, *The Temple Scroll* (JSOT Sup 34; trans. Richard T. White; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 1-2.

<sup>134</sup>E.P. Sanders, "The Dead Sea Sect and Other Jews: Commonalities, Overlaps, and Differences," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* (ed. Timothy H. Lim; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 40.

<sup>135</sup>Hengel, Charlesworth, Mendels, "The Polemical Character," 29-30.

<sup>136</sup>Maier, *The Temple Scroll*, 5.

text was meant to be a “sacred canonical work”<sup>137</sup> for the Qumran community is more problematic but it was certainly an important text to those who studied it.

The shift from third person to first person in the *Temple Scroll* that makes Yahweh speak directly<sup>138</sup> in the text and not through Moses as in the Masoretic Text (MT) is its most striking feature. The answer to this “divine authorship” conceivably has a historic motivation. I Chron 28:19 had David explain to Solomon that he, David, had received a Divine plan for the building of the Temple. Yet this plan has never been found. Yadin has suggested that this text provides the author of the *Temple Scroll* with a rationale to expand on the biblical text.<sup>139</sup> This would fit with the practice in parabiblical literature in which blank spots in biblical history are given expanded explanations concerning biblical events. It also focuses attention on the roles of David and Solomon in building the First Temple. This union of Temple and king could also explain the particular additions of the *Temple Scroll* to Dt 17.

#### **2.14 The Context of the Statutes of the King**

The statutes of the king in the *Temple Scroll* have as its Biblical base Dt 17: 14-20.<sup>140</sup> Kingship issues appear in the final major section of the text that is based on Dt 16-23. Clearly the statutes of the king in the *Temple Scroll* fit into a wider context of Deuteronomy. The immediate passage preceding the statutes of the king in Deuteronomy itself is Dt 17: 2-13 which stresses the need for absolute loyalty to Yahweh. Worship of foreign gods or astrological signs merits the death penalty (v.6). The law must be carried out completely without any modifications (v. 11) and disobedience of the legitimate priest or judge merits death (v.12). The basic structure of society in Israel is to be sacral with deviance from the state religion mandating capital punishment. 11Q19 55.3-21 picks up on these themes as well perhaps with even more intensity as 11Q19 55.9, 10 demands the total demolition of the city in which idolatry takes places. Dt 17 does not go this far as it makes the punishment individual rather than corporate as in the *Temple Scroll*. Fundamentally both texts imply a view of society in which freedom of religion is

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<sup>137</sup>Yadin, *The Temple Scroll: the Hidden Law of the Dead Sea Sect* (New York: Random House, 1985), 68.

<sup>138</sup>Maier, *The Temple Scroll*, 3.

<sup>139</sup>Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 117.

<sup>140</sup> The question of whether the Dt 17 kingly code is pro or anti-kingship while important is secondary to how the author(s) or redactor(s) of the *Temple Scroll* used it. The historical context of late Second Temple Judaism and how it is applied to this text is what is under consideration here.



have some familiarity with it. The rules that bind him also bind the priests as well. It is important to remember that in Ezekiel's portrayal of the prince in Ezek 40-48 his role in cultic activities is not as prominent as the king in the Deuteronomistic history.<sup>144</sup> The need to protect against the excesses of the preexilic kings seems evident.<sup>145</sup> The *Temple Scroll* may simply be following the lead of Ezekiel in reassessing the role of the king for the conditions of the Second Temple era.

Dt 17:15 requires that the king be chosen by Yahweh and the *Temple Scroll* (11Q19 56.14) is of the same voice. The need for this is clearly to show the correct relationship between the divine and earthly king of Israel. To select a king like the other nations would be an act of rebellion.<sup>146</sup> Kingship is to be framed in terms that leave no doubt that Yahweh is still in charge of his people. Israel is to be a distinct entity and it is warned (Dt 8:20) that it will perish if it adopts the ways of the heathen nations of Canaan.<sup>147</sup> A godly king as interpreted by the *Temple Scroll* is one who understands that his role is granted by Yahweh and that his kingship exists because of Yahweh's pleasure. How the *Temple Scroll* goes about interpreting this message is the crux of both its similarity and divergence from Dt 17.

### **2.15 The Temple Scroll and the Damascus Document**

The *Temple Scroll* is not the only Dead Sea text to provide significant comment on the statutes of the king in Dt. 17. The *Damascus Document* (CD) adds nuances not seen in the *Temple Scroll*. The relationship of the *Damascus Document* to other Qumran literature has proved as elusive as that of the *Temple Scroll* to the broader Qumran corpus. The relationship between CD and 1QS in particular has raised questions of compatibility.<sup>148</sup> Nonetheless the historical evolution of the Qumran community is most readily explained by the differences between it and other texts.<sup>149</sup> Its use as a historical template to explain the origin of the Qumran community gives it a measure of importance. The *Damascus Document* explains the history of the movement to its own and sheds light on Qumran expectations of godly kingship.

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<sup>144</sup>Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48 Word Biblical Commentary* Vol. 29 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 267.

<sup>145</sup>Allen, *Ezekiel*, 267.

<sup>146</sup>G.E. Gerbrandt, *Kingship according to the Deuteronomistic History* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 109.

<sup>147</sup>Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 109.

<sup>148</sup>Sanders, "The Dead Sea Sect and Other Jews," 35.

<sup>149</sup>Sanders, "The Dead Sea Sect and Other Jews," 35.

This text provides its own conclusions on the questions of multiple wives for the king and is illuminating for several reasons. Firstly the term prince (?? ?) is used in describing the king of Dt 17. Given the common occurrence of the term in Ezekiel it establishes “prince” as part of the royal lexicon at Qumran in the *Damascus Document*. Secondly the need to vindicate the legacy of David is also a critical need for the author(s)/editor(s) of this text. No other polygamous king is mentioned; it is as if they do not even matter. David is the focal point of kingly expectation in Dt 17 for the commentator(s) of this text.

The device chosen to protect David from the charge of willfully disobeying Torah by marrying multiple wives is creative to say the least. Access to Torah had been denied him (??"?? ??? ? ??? ? ? ? until Zadok became High Priest (CD 5.2-5). Consequently his polygamous actions were done in ignorance and he is not to be condemned. David needed to be the model king even if his behavior was not always the model to follow. Clearly to their minds for David to flagrantly and willfully disobey a key command of Torah was unacceptable. An explanation no matter how improbable had to be made.

Yet at the same time in the next line David’s most famous sin was publicized. Criticism of his behavior is focused on his arranged death of Uriah (CD 5.5) ( ?? ? ? ???? ???? ? ? ?) and his defiling the Temple (‘ ???? ) by having sexual relations with a menstruous woman (CD 5.6, 7).<sup>150</sup> Why would David be exonerated of polygamy but pilloried for murder and fornication? One explanation is that neither of these actions were a specific violation of the kingly code of Dt 17. Thus it could be argued David kept the kingly code even if his behavior was suspect in other areas.

This leads to a contrast in editorial approaches between the two Dead Sea texts in regards to Dt 17. The *Damascus Document* is prepared to make specific anecdotal comments while the *Temple Scroll* is focused on grammatical changes. The *Damascus Document* is focused on David while the *Temple Scroll* is general in its application. Whether this suggests the *Temple Scroll* is open to a non-Davidic king because it’s assumed focus is on priestly control of the monarchy is another matter. Pomykala’s interpretation of the *Temple Scroll* as allowing a non-Davidic king because the future of

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<sup>150</sup> It is interesting to note that the sin of a king had a cultic connection to the Temple.

the dynasty hinges on a condition of obedience to Yahweh<sup>151</sup> is too slender a reed to trust. Collins has pointed out quite similar language from Psalm 132<sup>152</sup> in assuring the Davidic dynasty of a future only if obedience to Yahweh is given. What unites both Dead Sea texts is the need for Torah to be respected and given the importance of David being viewed as the model king it is hard to see how a non-Davidic king would enhance respect for Torah. Since the Qumran community had an opportunity to change over time, it is possible other non-Davidic interpretations could develop. The problem the non-Davidic interpretations would have is that support from the Hebrew Bible would be difficult to find.

### 2.16 Palace Guard

The issue of the palace guard for the king is one that has been considered from the vantage point of a historical source in the *Temple Scroll*. If the historical context were taken as being Hellenistic and Egyptian as suggested by Weinfeld,<sup>153</sup> it would suggest that the date of the statutes of the king is possibly pre-Hasmonean. If it is written as a critique in early Hasmonian times as maintained by Yadin,<sup>154</sup> it would be a strong critique of Hasmonian foreign wars. If on the other hand it was rewritten after the capture of Jerusalem in 63 BCE by Pompey, it could even be construed as a model on how to rule Israel in defiance of its new overlords.

While historical context is an important question for evaluating the palace guard it first needs to be set in its biblical context. This section represents a large-scale addition to Dt 17. It may have been inspired by the prohibition on maintaining horses or buying them from Egypt. This could be interpreted as a prohibition on a professional cavalry force for the king.<sup>155</sup> If so, the *Temple Scroll* interprets and expands this sense of Dt 17 massively. If not, this issue is one that could be of contemporary concern.

A guard of twelve thousand men as described (11Q19 57.6) is more than necessary to preserve the immediate physical safety of the king. It seems to be inspired by the tribal model of Num 34<sup>156</sup> and not from Deuteronomy. Great stress is laid on the

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<sup>151</sup>Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty*, 236.

<sup>152</sup>Collins, "The Nature of Messianism," 203.

<sup>153</sup>M. Weinfeld, "The Royal Guard According to the Temple Scroll," *RB* 87 (1980): 395.

<sup>154</sup>Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 196.

<sup>155</sup>Weinfeld, "The Royal Guard," 395.

<sup>156</sup>Maier, *The Temple Scroll*, 125.

upstanding character of these native Israelites who are to guard the king body and soul (11Q19 57.8-10). It would in pure military terms form the nucleus of a standing army based on a citizen-militia model. The model in Judges rested heavily on a judge rallying the Israelites as the designated savior sent from Yahweh. Saul's force in I Sam 13 seems also to be based on this model as a small force of 3,000 men is dispersed between Saul and Jonathan. When the Philistines invade the Israelites melt to the hills and Saul has no force to resist them.<sup>157</sup> "Trust in Yahweh...meant that instead of a professional army ancient Israel was to have a militia made up of able-bodied citizens...dependent upon Yahweh's intervention for victory over the enemy."<sup>158</sup>

### 2.17 The Body Guard

If this guard of native Israel in the *Temple Scroll* is being compared to a Hasmonean mercenary force, it has quite a bit of historical context. The concept of a foreign bodyguard is quite well known in the ancient world. In Ptolemaic Egypt by 221 BCE "the mercenaries seem to have been the most important part of the guard."<sup>159</sup> Considering that the loyalty of the Egyptians was deemed suspect in defense of foreign possessions<sup>160</sup> this is not a surprise. The willingness of a native Egyptian to die for a Hellenistic overlord was not in his interest. The fact that Julius Caesar and Augustus both had foreign bodyguards would seem more ambiguous in that Romans ruled Rome and it would be an honor to guard their leader. The personal ambitions and rivalries of Roman history with its litany of plots against its leadership<sup>161</sup> indicate otherwise. Nevertheless the motivation for having foreigners guard one's leader is quite straightforward according to Tacitus: they could be trusted (Tacitus, *Ann.* 11.33).

Loyalty was not automatic. The recruiting of Jewish mercenaries by Seleucid rulers came with a high risk. "Their usefulness depended entirely upon friendly relations being maintained between the two governments."<sup>162</sup> Carthage had to endure a war with

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<sup>157</sup> The probable textual corruption of I Sam 13:1 caution should be exercised in assessing the details of this passage. Still the organizational principle of a small standing force is still clearly seen.

<sup>158</sup> Milliard C. Lind, "Political Implications of Isaiah 6," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah* (Sup VT LXX; 2 vols.; eds. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 331.

<sup>159</sup> Griffith, G.T., *The Mercenaries of the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 127.

<sup>160</sup> Griffith, *Mercenaries*, 134.

<sup>161</sup> The assassinations of Julius Caesar, Caligula, and Nero are just three examples of the insecurity of Roman leaders.

<sup>162</sup> Griffith, *Mercenaries*, 167-168.

its own mercenaries after they revolted after fighting the Romans in the First Punic War. Augustus dismissed his own German bodyguard after the German victory at Teutoberger Wald in 9 CE. These examples are of pagan rulers. This concern for loyalty would not be a problem for the *Temple Scroll* king because his guard would be righteous men who were loyal to him because they were loyal to Yahweh. The obvious corollary that the king would have nothing to fear as long as he adhered to Torah is only too clearly implied. The implication that the Hasmonean priest-king had reason to fear could be seen as well. Those who hired pagans had to deal with the consequences.

The contemporary relevance for the Jewish community of this passage is wide reaching. The selection of a Jewish king in the Hasmonean dynasty clearly did not reflect the theological intent of this passage. The rise of the Hasmonean kingship was a union of the office of high priest and king in one man. Its use of pagan mercenaries<sup>163</sup> was quite possibly a contradiction of the spirit if not the letter of Dt 17. The sovereignty of Yahweh over Israel is not to change because of the adoption of a human king according to the Deuteronomist. It is hard to see how any of the changes in the first century BCE fulfills either the letter or spirit of these conditions. The king is to be guarded by good men because Torah says so and not by pagans.

The implications of this approach for a critique of David's military successes and failures are evident as well. The census conducted by Joab (2 Sam 24; 1 Chron 21) could be interpreted as an attempt to professionalize and rationalize a large standing army for David. The emphatic condemnation by both the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler reveal this to have been a highly unpopular move. The census would be a profound departure from his early days as a guerrilla leader living in the wilderness. Even if the description of the bodyguard in the kingly code is a critique of Hasmonean practice, it had implications beyond the Hasmoneans. It both looked back to preexilic times and it would have implications for the rise of the Herodian dynasty.

### **2.18 Ezekiel and the Temple Scroll**

Any discussion on the role of the king in the *Temple Scroll* is incomplete without addressing the cultic role of the king. There is no shortage of Hebrew Bible texts that deal with this subject. In the postexilic period there was no Davidic king and until the

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<sup>163</sup> Hengel, Charlesworth, Mendels, "The Polemical Character," 32.

Hasmonean dynasty appeared no Jewish king. This does not mean therefore that there was a vacuum concerning the subject. One possible motivating text is Ezek 40-48 because it provides an example of an idealized Temple interspersed with commentary on royal and priestly apostasy from a post-586/7 BCE perspective. The *Temple Scroll* picks up these themes and it is quite possible that the inspiration for a new Temple came from Ezekiel.

Ezek 44:15 stresses the loyalty of the Zadokite priesthood to Yahweh even when the remainder of the Israelite population went astray. CD 4.1 quotes this verse and describes “the sons of Zadok as the chosen of Israel”. 1 QS 5.2 calls the sons of Zadok “the priests who safeguard the covenant”. This would help explain the Qumran interest in Ezekiel and in the ideal of a new Temple expressed within this book. Similarity of theme can also be seen in that the authority of the king in the Temple Scroll is “clearly limited”<sup>164</sup> by the realities of the need for proper worship. Both Ezekiel and the *Temple Scroll* show an interest in a loyal priesthood with a royal figure being more restricted in the temple cult than in the Deuteronomistic texts. Thematically Ezek 40-48 provides a basis for a reinvigorated understanding of both Temple and king.

The quadratic Temple layout of Ezek 40-48 corresponds to that of the *Temple Scroll*.<sup>165</sup> Admittedly Ezek 40-48 is not the only Hebrew Bible passage that was a source for this text. Exod 25-40 seems to be the primary biblical pattern for the specifics of the idealized Temple with Ezek 40-48 providing secondary reflections.<sup>166</sup> Ezek 40-48 is used for the creation of the *Temple Scroll* but these chapters from Ezekiel are not used in the same way as portions of the Torah are used for the *Temple Scroll*. The literary links between the *Temple Scroll* and Ezek 40-48 are more thematic than specific.<sup>167</sup> The greatest impact of these chapters in Ezekiel is in their ability to shape the focus of the new Temple. There is reason to believe that Ezek 40-48 also had other connections in Qumran thinking.

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<sup>164</sup> John J. Collins, “He Shall Not Judge by What His Eyes See,” *DSD* 2 (1995): 153.

<sup>165</sup> Johann Maier, *The Temple Scroll*, 60.

<sup>166</sup> George Brooke, “Ezekiel in Some Qumran and New Testament Texts,” in *The Madrid Qumran Congress* (2 vols.; eds. Julio Trebolle Barrbara and Luis Vegas Montaner; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 329-330.

<sup>167</sup> Brooke, “Ezekiel,” 330.

The use of Ezekiel in regards to the Temple is not limited to the *Temple Scroll*. The use of 4Q385 (*4QPseudo-Ezekiel*) in elaborating on I Chron 28:9<sup>168</sup> and the importance of the David/Solomon connection with the Temple needs to be highlighted. What is of particular interest is the basis and usage of the text. It is with the Temple and Solomon's role that definite textual connections can be shown. 4Q385 4.2 shows similarities with I Chron 28:9 in which David tells Solomon to serve Yahweh with all his heart and mind and then precedes to tell Solomon the plan of the Temple.<sup>169</sup> The covenantal nature of David's commission to Solomon in I Chron 28 seems readily apparent and the significant point is that Ezekiel is used to help express these ideas in the late Second Temple era. Yet the context for this reference to David and Solomon comes in a very interesting setting. 4Q385 and its related text 4Q386 (*4QPseudo-Ezekiel b*) use quotations from Ezekiel to present an apocalyptic vision of conflict and renewal. Ezek 1 and the vision of the wheel (4Q385 4.5-14) and Ezek 38 and the vision of the dry bones (4Q385 2.5-8 and 4Q386 1.4-9) are used to tell a story. Unfortunately the fragmentary nature of these texts makes it hard to grasp what historical allusions are represented or even predicted in these two texts. The reference to the evil man from Memphis (4Q386 2.6) is tantalizingly vague and the possibility for it to refer to any number of historical events is apparent. What is important for this study is that the Temple plan of David is part of the apocalyptic awareness of a text that relies heavily on Ezekiel to develop its message. This suggests that the twin themes of Temple renewal and national renewal are intertwined for the creators of this text. An obvious implication is that a revival of the Davidic dynasty would fit this picture of renewal.

Given the lack of consensus in establishing a historical setting for 4Q385 and 4Q386<sup>170</sup> it is best to affirm what can be known concerning this text. The date for 4Q385 is either late Hasmonean or early Herodian.<sup>171</sup> The suggestion that this text originally referred to events from the Hellenistic era<sup>172</sup> would mean that this text was copied over centuries. This suggests a possible historical background of Roman intervention in Jewish

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<sup>168</sup> Brooke, "Ezekiel," 324.

<sup>169</sup> Brooke, "Ezekiel," 324.

<sup>170</sup> Ben Zion Wacholder, "Historiography of Qumran: The Sons of Zion and Their Enemies," in *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments* (JSOT Sup 290; eds. Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas L Thompson: Sheffield; Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 371.

<sup>171</sup> Brooke, "Ezekiel," 322.

<sup>172</sup> Wacholder, "Historiography at Qumran," 371.

affairs, the Parthian invasion, and the rise of Herod the Great for this text to be reused. If the text is meant to be futuristic,<sup>173</sup> the stress of events in the second half of the first century BCE was making the Qumran community more militant. It would be fair to suggest that on the question of Temple and king there is solid evidence from several different Qumran texts to indicate that the events of Ezekiel had an impact on the Qumran covenanters thinking.

### **2.19 Summary of the Temple Scroll**

The king described in the *Temple Scroll* is not a Hellenistic monarch or a complete reduplication of the Deuteronomic king; he is rather offered as being one who is more carefully guarded by a loyal priesthood in keeping with the spirit of Ezekiel. This is not to say that the law of the king in Dt 17 is being subverted. It is rather being developed in the same way that the Temple of Solomon was developed by Ezekiel's vision in Ezek 40-48. The *Temple Scroll's* view of kingship was not meant to be incompatible with Deuteronomy; it was a development of it. Whether that development reflected a widespread consensus in Second Temple Judaism is another question. What is clear is that the authors/redactors of this document amended the text from Dt 17 in ways that strengthened the priestly presence and the need for a king loyal to Torah.

### **2.20 The War Scroll**

The messianic consciousness of the *War Scroll*<sup>174</sup> and its relationship with other texts is not an easy matter to decipher. In part this is to be attributed to the peculiar nature of this text. It could be read as a military treatise, an account of a war, or even as apocalyptic fantasy on the part of some late Second Temple dreamers. In evaluating the *War Scroll* it is perhaps necessary to indicate that this text should not be treated as a Qumran equivalent of Revelation. The deliberate placement of Revelation at the end of the New Testament in the canonical tradition of the church has provided an effective finale to the Christian Bible. There is no evidence of such an organization for the *War Scroll*. For the purposes of this study the aspect that is most important to consider is the light it sheds on kingly and messianic expectations.

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<sup>173</sup>Wacholder, "Historiography at Qumran," 371.

<sup>174</sup>1QM, 4Q491, 4Q492, 4Q493, 4Q494, 4Q495, and 4Q496 are copies of the *War Scroll*.

What is critical to a balanced appraisal of the royal messiah ideal at Qumran is an evaluation of what the *War Scroll* meant to its first audience or audiences. Yadin's appraisal of the text as being rooted in realistic military detail is both credible and significant.<sup>175</sup> The debate over whether it was written in reaction to Seleucid or Roman occupation and the search for its historical roots should not obscure the critical themes of this text. The separation of political and military leadership in the Western world that roughly corresponds with the beginning of the Enlightenment was not normative for the ancient world. In the ancient world perhaps the first role of a monarch was that of warrior. The realism of the military descriptions does not undermine the eschatological focus of this text. On the contrary it highlights the seriousness with which this text was composed and redacted. The war envisioned in this text is aggressive and expansionist<sup>176</sup> and indicates a great deal of effort went into creating this text.

The focus of much interest in this text is the reference in 1QM 5.1 concerning the role of the Prince of the Congregation. His role as the leader or a key leader of the military contingent is clear. Whether this inherently makes him a messianic figure is a more difficult problem. In Stegemann's view the prince was not originally the Davidic messiah in early versions of the *War Scroll* but evolved into this role as the *War Scroll* evolved.<sup>177</sup> Collins' assertion that the context of this text demands the royal messiah to be identified with the prince<sup>178</sup> is more aggressive. Given the historical context for any likely period for the composition of the *War Scroll* the view that the royal messiah is the prince is highly probable. Indeed Collins' observation that the identification of the compositional history of the *War Scroll* is an unfinished task<sup>179</sup> suggests that further efforts to understand this text are needed. It is also important to remember that the state of the text is a factor in asserting that the royal messiah is absent from it. The full text in its original form could quite possibly have included a clear reference to the royal messiah.<sup>180</sup> Even without a clear reference there are strong indications that a royal

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<sup>175</sup>Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1962), 35.

<sup>176</sup>Yadin, *War*, 35.

<sup>177</sup>Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran*, 103.

<sup>178</sup>Collins, "The Nature of Messianism," 212.

<sup>179</sup>Collins, "The Nature of Messianism," 213.

<sup>180</sup>Craig A. Evans, "The Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 97.



## 2.21 Isaiah Peshers and 4Q285

4Q161 (*4QIsaiah Peshet a*) provides evidence that enhances the probability that the *War Scroll* in at least its later redactions envisioned a Davidic Prince of the Congregation. 4Q161 2.15 describes a Prince of the Congregation without providing much detail due to the deteriorated nature of the text. Clearly though the context envisions the Prince as being a leading figure in the drama of conflict in the Isaiah peshers. 4Q161 is part of a group of texts (3Q4, 4Q161, 4Q162, 4Q163, 4Q164, and 4Q165) that probably represented a full commentary on the use of Isaiah for the Qumran community. In 4Q161 the focus is principally on the conflict with the Kittim (2:22; 3:3, 5, 7, and 8) and their defeat at the hand of Yahweh. Interestingly the war against the Kittim (4Q161 3.7) is nestled in the clearly messianic language of Isa 10:33 -11:5. There is no denying the clearly Davidic references from Isaiah that are quoted in 4Q161 2.11-25. The reference to the root of Jesse (Isa 11:1) in 4Q 161 3.11 unmistakably indicate that the messiah is to be from David's descendants and that all the prerogatives of royalty are to be given to him. 4Q161 3.18 places the coming of the shoot of David in the last days and the role of David's descendant is to judge the nations (4Q161 3.22). Unless the role of the Prince of the Congregation is viewed as being subordinate to the Davidic Messiah, it would appear both titles describe one person. The enemies of the godly in both the *War Scroll* and 4Q161 are the Kittim. If 4Q285 (*4QWar Scroll g*) fragment 5 is read in conjunction with 4Q161, there should be no doubt of the link between the branch of David and the Prince of the Congregation.<sup>185</sup> The branch of David's role is to kill and the context would suggest that his enemy is the leader of the Kittim. This militant role would also seem suitable for the figure described in 4Q161 given the hostile attitude toward the Kittim in that text. Given that both 4Q161 and 4Q285 are peshers on Isaiah<sup>186</sup> this link would appear quite solid and a militant, martial role for the branch of David as Prince of the Congregation seems very probable.

4Q161 3.25 describes the messianic figure as going out with a priest. The context does not seem to indicate that this is the Priestly Messiah but it is worth noting that the connection between messiah and priest is evident even in the Isaiah peshers. This

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<sup>185</sup> Richard Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34 in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 2 Baruch and the Preaching of John the Baptist", *DDS* 2.2 (1995): 205.

<sup>186</sup> Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa 10:34," 204.

further suggests that the roles of the king and priest outlined in the *Temple Scroll* are compatible even in an eschatological context and that there is a generally consistent expectation that the king or king-messiah should have a strong relationship with the priesthood in the texts found near Qumran. This should not be a surprise given the probable influence of Ezek 40-48 in the understanding of the Qumran community. In the postexilic environment the need for royalty to be loyal to Yahweh was a primary concern and Ezekiel provided a very viable template.

The reference to the root of David ruling over the nations also includes a reference to Magog (4Q161 3.21) and this suggests that the eschatological war described in Ezek 38 and 39 could be viewed as part of the war against the Kittim or as a prerequisite to it. Magog's identification as a son of Japheth (Gen 10:2) and Abram's identification as a son of Shem (Gen 11:26) suggest an apposition between those loyal to the God of Abraham and those opposed to His rightful reign. The impact of Ezek 38 on the eschatological and apocalyptic imagination of Second Temple Judaism should not be underestimated. Its appearance in a text primarily based on Isaiah shows that the Isaiah peshers were not confined to just Isaiah.

## **2.22 War Scroll and Temple Scroll**

The question of the compatibility of the king of the *Temple Scroll* and the Prince of the Congregation of the *War Scroll* (1QM) needs to be noted. The strict ratios designated in the *Temple Scroll* for limiting the number of men the king can dispatch to fight foreign invaders is based on a set formula (11Q19 58.5-16). The eschatological war described in the *War Scroll* has a set chronology that specifies action against designated enemies during a particular year (1QM 2.6-13). The character of warfare described for the king in the *Temple Scroll* is fundamentally defensive but in the *War Scroll* the sheer aggressiveness of the sons of light is breathtaking. The differences are significant in both focuses and themes.

There are similar themes in both texts. The importance of the priesthood in providing leadership for the warriors is emphasized in both. Neither text offers much room for the king or the Prince of the Congregation to innovate. The *War Scroll's* detail in describing how every action will take place suggests the prince's role was like the lead actor in a scripted drama and the king is bound by his instructions and obedience to

Torah. The role of both while prominent is not independent of the overriding need to maintain a careful faithfulness to proper piety. The sovereignty of Yahweh also clearly imbues both texts and demands that all leaders remember Yahweh is ultimately in control.

The differences and difficulties between the two texts could suggest that related but different circles composed them. Even if they are both products of the Qumran community they demonstrate that defining messianic or kingly expectations for the Qumran community is not a simple task. The possibility that both texts experienced extensive redaction during the first century BCE makes this task even more challenging. If they are from the same circle, at what point did the offices of the king in the *Temple Scroll* merge with that of the royal messiah? If they are from different but related circles, do they suggest different eschatological expectations? The even thornier question of whether the differences reflect theological evolution within the Qumran community also arises. Regardless of their source these texts were found near Qumran and whoever placed them there had a high probability of interacting with the Qumran settlement. Definitive answers to these questions may arise but at this point a more rewarding focus would be on examining the aspects that can be affirmed.

### **2.23 Implications of a Royal Messiah**

Assessing the role of the royal messiah for the Qumran community is inherently difficult due to the knotty problem of understanding which texts speak of a messiah and which have a different figure in mind. The matter is simplified somewhat if a focus on the Davidic identity of the messiah is kept in the forefront. Block's provocative view that the Hebrew Bible only portrays the messiah as a Davidic king figure and not in priestly or prophetic terms<sup>187</sup> has been vigorously challenged but he has touched on a significant point. Even those who disagree with him affirm that the principal conception of the messiah in the Hebrew Bible is Davidic and royal.<sup>188</sup> The fact that the Qumran community should focus on a royal and Davidic figure should be no surprise.

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<sup>187</sup>Daniel I. Block, "My Servant David: Ancient Israel's Vision of the Messiah," in *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 56.

<sup>188</sup>J. Daniel Hays, "If He Looks Like a Prophet," 69.

Whether the royal messiah was necessarily subordinate to the priestly messiah has been questioned by Evans.<sup>189</sup> His view that each messiah was charged with executing their own responsibilities and did not dominant over the other<sup>190</sup> raises the importance of the royal messiah. He is not a placeholder taking his cues from the priestly messiah but a distinct leader in his own right charged with being faithful to the cause given him by Yahweh. While the scope of his leadership was tightly focused, the priest was no freer to innovate than he was. This would be in keeping with the portrayal of the role of the messiah within the Hebrew Bible.

Various aspects of his role can be defined. The royal messiah is not an independent authority in his own right. He is part of a broader eschatological expectation. As part of that eschatological framework he with the priestly messiah forms a messianic team. His role in the temple cult is meaningful but definitely less than that of the Deuteronomistic kings. The possibility his role was understood as a military leader is a real option to consider. From an intertextual standpoint it is worth noting that interpretations of the role of the royal messiah could easily have expanded given the development of both the history of the Qumran community and of the Jewish nation in first century BCE. The rise and fall of the Hasmonean dynasty and the growth of Roman influence in Palestine could easily have produced an impact on the expectations of the Qumran covenanters.

#### **2.24 Athronges the Shepherd Pretender**

During the troubles that befell Palestine after the death of Herod the Great the attempt by Athronges to make himself king is noteworthy for his vocation: shepherd. To the cosmopolitan and predominantly urban world of the third millennia the occupation of shepherd does not seem very glamorous. Nor does it seem to be suitable preparation for aspiring kings. Yet Josephus included it in his record (Josephus, *Ant.* 17.10. 7) and he had good reason to do so. Second Temple Judaism lived in a world that was agricultural and shepherd imagery was very compatible with it. Its mores, values, and cultural expressions were rooted in its history and the use of shepherd imagery had a very long pedigree. The image of a shepherd as leader is very strong in the ancient world. The fact that David

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<sup>189</sup> Evans, "The Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 100.

<sup>190</sup> Evans, "The Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 100.

began as a shepherd boy anointed by Samuel could have provided inspiration to Athronges's followers. If David was trained to lead Israel by tending sheep, why could not Athronges?

### **2.25 Shepherd Imagery and Qumran**

Shepherd imagery for deity has a long pedigree in the ancient world. In Mesopotamia the god Shamash was described as a shepherd.<sup>191</sup> This imagery also occurred in the Hebrew Bible. The image of Yahweh acting like a Shepherd to the flock of Israel was a reoccurring theme in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 49: 24; Ps 23:1; 80:1). It also used for human figures as well and in particular with persons in authority like a king. Again Israel was no exception. David is clearly represented as the “divinely appointed shepherd charged to govern Israel, Yahweh’s flock.”<sup>192</sup> Texts like Ezek 37:24 link his name with the shepherd metaphor. The shepherd metaphor in the Ancient Near East (ANE) and in Israel always seems to have resonated with a picture of authority. The two most common expressions of that authority are seen in the divine and the royal use of the shepherd metaphor.

From an intertextual standpoint the importance of shepherd imagery in establishing the role of the royal messiah is very significant. The motif was well understood in the ancient world and the reader could be expected to grasp the significance of the use of the imagery. The use of shepherd imagery to describe Cyrus (Isa 44:28; 45:1) in conjunction with the language of anointing indicates that the use of these metaphors served as significant signals of messianic authority. Furthermore any discussion of Jesus’ messianic portrayal in the Fourth Gospel needs to pay attention to evidence in Second Temple Judaism concerning the application of shepherd imagery to messianic figures.

### **2.26 Words of the Luminaries**

4Q504, 4Q505, and 4Q506 provide the basis for the reconstruction of the *Words of the Luminaries*. Their primary importance appears to be as prayers for the worship service celebrated by the community. Unfortunately the fragments that remain of 4Q505 and 4Q506 are very limited. 4Q504 has proved more fortunate and provides much more

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<sup>191</sup> Daniel I. Block, *The Gods of the Nations: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern National Theology* (ETSMS 2; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1988), 56.

<sup>192</sup> Block, “My Servant David,” 51.



between 4Q504 and the pseudepigraphal text. It would fair to suggest that the reason for these thematic similarities existed because of similar interpretations of key Hebrew Bible texts.

### **2.27 1Q34 Festival Prayer**

Shepherd imagery is also seen in at least one other Qumran text, 1Q34 (*1Q Festival Prayers*). The use of this text as a liturgy is strongly suggested by the reference to the Day of Atonement in line 6 of the second fragment (????? ????). This being the most important date on the cultic calendar it suggests that this was a significant text for worship at Qumran. The sense of cultic thanksgiving for the greatness of Yahweh permeates this text. Its fragmentary nature makes it very difficult to extrapolate too much information from it. It does show strong links with 4Q508 (*4Q Festival Prayers b*) which reinforces the notion that this text was important for the Qumran liturgy.

The reference to the loyal shepherd (???? ???? ) (1Q34 3.2.8) comes almost at the end of the fragment with no substantive information coming after it. The context that precedes it emphasizes the distinctiveness of the chosen and the renewal of covenant (1Q34 3.2.6). The possibility that it refers to a king or royal figure is viable based on references in the Hebrew Bible. The renewal of the covenant based on Joash's actions (2 Kgs 23; 2 Chron 34) indicates a possible parallel. It is also possible that the reference to the loyal shepherd is a reference to a priestly figure given that this liturgy was for the Day of Atonement. The maddening incompleteness of this text should not obscure the positive contribution it does make. The importance of covenant is linked with the shepherd motif and it does so in a manner that could indicate a link with the Davidic covenant.

This text also demonstrates that 4Q504's use of the shepherd metaphor was not a unique occurrence in Qumran literature. How widespread the shepherd metaphor was is difficult to ascertain. It is undeniable that the deteriorated condition of many scrolls and the strong possibility that many others simply perished means a definitive answer is not attainable. In the recovered scrolls the shepherd metaphor is not overly common. In that respect it mirrors the Hebrew Bible which used the metaphor through different eras sparingly but frequently enough to warrant consideration as a reoccurring royal motif. In evaluating the concept of the royal messiah the shepherd metaphor is not the most important descriptor of his identity but it is a significant one. It is part of the package that

describes the Davidic identity of the royal messiah and anything that enhances the Davidic mystique is important to understanding the meaning of the new David for the Qumran community.

### **2.28 Shepherd, Zechariah, and CD**

The use of shepherd imagery is also seen in an edition of the *Damascus Document* that quotes from the latter part of Zechariah. The “B” manuscript includes a midrash on Zechariah-Ezekiel<sup>193</sup> in column 19. The fact that not all manuscripts have this reading could suggest a degree of evolution in thinking in Qumran or even represent a case of scribal error.<sup>194</sup> The complexity of this question is beyond the scope of this study but what is apparent in this manuscript is the use of references to Zechariah and Ezekiel to develop a theme of suffering and loyalty. This midrash takes the reference to the smitten shepherd, the near man, and scattered flock of Zech 13:7 and applies it to a future time when the Messiah of Israel and Aaron will come (CD-B 19.7-9).<sup>195</sup> It also alludes to Zech 11:11 in promising hope for the poor of the flock (CD-B 19.9).<sup>196</sup> The imagery of a faithful flock seemed to have appeal to the composer of this text.

The significant issue for this study is that it indicates that the shepherd imagery of Zechariah was part of the exegetical tradition at Qumran even if that tradition’s history is ambiguous and that a probable messianic interpretation was attributed to it. Brown’s comments are worth quoting. “In CD 19:8-9 (ms. B) it is evident that the Qumran group read a future reference into Zech 13:7, but a negative one whereby it threatened punishment: yet they also had a notion of the remnant preserved (CD 19:10).”<sup>197</sup> What can be distilled from this particular edition of CD is that the shepherd is connected to the future. Punishment is coming but a promise of a preserved remnant balances the negative with the positive. This dualism is consistent with the combination of judgment and hope seen in Zech 13:7-9. From the Qumran perspective this was a message of hope for the future applied to their community.

One further point should be added. 4Q163 as part of the peshers on Isaiah includes a reference to Zech 11:11 in fragment 21 and on line 7. Unfortunately the

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<sup>193</sup> Philip Davies, *The Damascus Covenant* (JSOT Sup 25; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 146.

<sup>194</sup> Davies, *The Damascus Covenant*, 146.

<sup>195</sup> Davies, *The Damascus Covenant*, 151.

<sup>196</sup> Davies, *The Damascus Covenant*, 151.

<sup>197</sup> Raymond Brown, *The Death of the Messiah* (2 vols.; Doubleday: New York, 1994), 129.

context of this quotation is difficult to establish due to the poor condition of this fragment. The possibility that Zech 11:11 with its reference to the poor of the flock in both CD-B and 4Q163 became a form of self-identification for the Qumran community should not be overlooked. While the poor state of fragment 21 for 4Q163 prohibits a definitive judgment, the use of this type of imagery would be consistent with observations from other Qumran texts.

At least three texts (4Q504, 1Q34, and CD-B) connected to the Qumran community use the shepherd metaphor. Two of the three, 4Q504 and CD-B, use it in a context that is clearly messianic. The Davidic connection is very clear in 4Q504 and the use of a proof text from Zechariah 13 in CD-B could also be viewed as an allusion to the Davidic line given the prominence of the Davidic hope in chapters 9-14 of Zechariah. What these references demonstrate is that a tradition existed within the Qumran community that used the shepherd metaphor and that further used it in a messianic and Davidic sense. It further establishes the use of Ezekiel as an important Hebrew Bible source for not only expectations of a new Temple but of a new king. The theme of the importance of the Hebrew Bible is stressed in this study because the Qumran community used the postexilic prophets for support in their argumentation repeatedly.

### **2.29 Implications for the Qumran Community on Davidic Kingship**

This need for a Davidic king-messiah raises interesting questions about the history of the community. If the reconstructions of the community's history that posit tension between the Hasmoneans and the Qumran community are correct, Davidic kingship would be an obvious source of tension for that era once the Maccabeans determined to make themselves a dynasty. It would not diminish with Herod the Great's rise to power or direct Roman rule of Judea. On the contrary it could be expected to be a source of persistent animosity between the pro-Roman faction in Judea and Galilee and adherents to Davidic kingship. Oegema's conclusion that the messianic portrayals seen in Qumran texts in the Herodian era are militaristic and royal<sup>198</sup> would seem logical.

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<sup>198</sup> Gerbern S. Oegema, *The Anointed and his People, Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kochba* (JSPSS 27; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 190.

Oegema's conclusions about the Herodian era lead him to suggest that thinkers at Qumran conceptualized a future that was a contrast to the Herodian/Roman world<sup>199</sup> they opposed. This seems to be a fair and logical evaluation of that time period but his suggestion invites more questions than it answers. How far did they go with their thoughts and who did they influence? The *War Scroll* is a very aggressive text and embracing the Davidic royal covenant as being eternal reads very much as a direct challenge to Roman occupation of Palestine. The contrasting theories of Hengel and Horsley on Jewish resistance in the first century CE in Judea may not agree on much but they both see that world as being a very challenging place. Adding a Qumran think-tank specializing in militant eschatology to that mix makes it even more volatile.

### **2.30 Qumran's Royal Messiah**

Is a non-Davidic royal messiah compatible with the theology or even theologies of the Qumran community? The best answer would be a nuanced no. Central to the theology of the texts previously examined is a strong respect for previous Israelite and Jewish tradition. The texts previously mentioned indicate that Davidic kingship was a hope for the future. Ezekiel's role in establishing the role of the future prince in the future Temple indicated a Davidic figure. The pesher texts are unequivocal in their support for the Davidic line. There is definitively one text that does not fit with a Davidic expectation. 4Q448 (*4QApocryphal Psalm and Prayer*) expresses support for a king Jonathan. Who this king Jonathan is and who wrote it to praise him are not easy questions to solve but 4Q448 does not fit with any realistic theory of Davidic expectation. Stegemann is quick to connect this king Jonathan to Alexander Jannaeus<sup>200</sup> but that leaves the question of how 4Q448 relates to texts like 4QMMT very, very open. Integrating this text with the remainder of the Qumran texts that do have a Davidic expectation still remains a puzzle. Suggesting a chronological development that moved from a non-Davidic to Davidic messiah as Pomykala has done provides one solution but it experiences other tensions in explaining why this shift took place. The chronological development he sees is not apparent to others.

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<sup>199</sup> Oegema, *The Anointed*, 190.

<sup>200</sup> Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran*, 134.



worship.<sup>205</sup> Newsom states that the author of the *Songs* has brought together Yahweh's return to the model temple in Ezek 43 with that of the Sabbath worship of Ezek 46.<sup>206</sup> Ezek 44: 15-19 speaks of the privileged status of the sons of Zadok with their consecrated garments and Newsom raises the possibility that laws concerning the angelic priests' vestments are analogous to 4Q405 23.2.13.<sup>207</sup> Since she raises the point that the line is badly broken, it is best to be cautious in making connections<sup>208</sup> but such a connection certainly fits the pattern seen so far. Ezek 40-48 provided the basic outline for the *Songs* with Ezek 43:1-5 providing a model for the entrance of Yahweh's glory.<sup>209</sup>

The occurrences of ??? (king) and its cognates in this text show evidence of being used in liturgical worship. It shows no reference to human kings of either Jewish or non-Jewish origin. In this respect it is markedly different from most references in Qumran literature. Schwemer views this text as primarily a liturgical instrument for the living priests of Qumran to praise Yahweh's kingdom.<sup>210</sup> The *Songs* have the Qumran community acting the same role as the righteous sons of Zadok in Ezek 43. This is not surprising given the foundation of the *Songs* being Ezek 40-48. Yahweh is portrayed as being on his throne and receiving the praises of the human/angelic host. In a manner comparable to Ps 2 Yahweh is seated above the nations and being praised he reigns over the universe. He is exalted on his chariot-throne as Monarch of the Universe.<sup>211</sup> The old Temple theology seen in royal psalms like Ps 89 is refurbished with a new formulation<sup>212</sup> that is designed to celebrate His kingship. This is not surprising given the Qumran interest in making theological history relevant for its own time. The Qumran community as a living temple committed to praising God acts as a link to the eschatological Temple.<sup>213</sup> Those who are totally loyal to Yahweh and not just ritually correct are the faithful ones serving in Temple worship.

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<sup>205</sup> Newsom, *Songs*, 56.

<sup>206</sup> Newsom, *Songs*, 57.

<sup>207</sup> Newsom, *Songs*, 58.

<sup>208</sup> Newsom, *Songs*, 58.

<sup>209</sup> Newsom, *Songs*, 55.

<sup>210</sup> A.M Schwemer, "Gott als König und seine Königsherrschaft in dem Sabbatliedern aus Qumran," in *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult* (eds. M. Hengel and A.M. Schwemer; WUNT I/55: Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), 70.

<sup>211</sup> Newsom has suggested a possible connection with 1 Chron 28:18 here as well.

<sup>212</sup> Schwemer, "Gott als König," 76.

<sup>213</sup> Schwemer, "Gott als König," 75.

The identification of the *Damascus Document* (CD 3:21; 4:1) with the sons of Zadok in Ezek 44:15 gives a strong hint as to how the Qumran community saw itself or how its founders saw themselves. The Qumran covenanters were to their own minds the keeper of the tradition of unwavering loyalty to Yahweh. The new Temple described in Ezekiel and reinterpreted in the *Songs* indicates an almost narcissistic identification with cultic loyalty to Yahweh. This loyalty could be expected to prompt action and indeed it would seem it did so. The link between the Divine King, pure worship, and the new Temple of Ezekiel seems self-evident. Any new Temple that included a new David would need to be a pure place of worship.

### **2.32 Divine Warrior**

The Divine Warrior ideal in the Hebrew Bible provides an important understanding of Yahweh as being King. The Song of the Sea in Exod 15 provides the initial basis for the Divine Warrior ideal and it is seen through out the Hebrew Bible. Israel's security was not like other nations because Yahweh was the Ultimate Warrior. This theme is prevalent throughout the Hebrew Bible and is central to its meaning.<sup>214</sup> The essential key to security for the people of Israel was the intervention of Yahweh and that was tied to faithful obedience to him. There was no need for foreign alliances or treaties because Yahweh was sufficient for the people of Israel. Yahweh was the King because of His victories over Israel's enemies.<sup>215</sup>

Foreign entanglements with unbelieving pagan nations were regarded as an object of offense to a sincere faith in Yahweh. For Israel to be distinct and not like the other nations is a dominant motif in the Hebrew Bible and in Qumran. The *War Scroll's* detailed disparagement of the nations to be conquered serves as an introduction to the sacral, eschatological war to liberate the earth. The exclusiveness of the nation of Israel is recast in Qumran in terms that reflect their understanding of the battle for Torah and righteousness.

Divine war also could be found outside of earth. 4Q402 4.7-12 alludes to war in heaven. Unfortunately the context for this pericope is somewhat fragmented by the deteriorated nature of the fragment which has required restoration to make sense of some

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<sup>214</sup>Peter Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 35.

<sup>215</sup>Patrick Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Ancient Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 83.

of the words. Clearly supernatural combat is implied in either a metaphorical or physical sense. The *Songs* show similarity in theme to 1QM 11.16, 17 (*War Scroll*) that refers to war waged against Gog from the heavens. A possible basis for these extraterrestrial struggles could be Dan 10:12-14 that describes the battle between the prince of Persia and Michael. All three texts emphasize supernatural warfare and this is both part of the motif of Yahweh being the Divine Warrior and the King.

The *Songs*, *War Scroll*, and Daniel connection is further strengthened by a probable reference to the “King of kings”. The only occurrence in the *Songs* of the expression “King of kings” (???? ???) is in the middle stanza of the seventh song (4Q405 4-5.2). While this phrase is based on a reconstruction, it does fit the sense of this text. 1QM 14.16 also shows this phrase<sup>216</sup> as well. In Dan 2:47 Nebuchadnezzar declares Yahweh to be God of gods and the Lord of kings. This could be seen as an echo of Dt 10:17 which declares Yahweh to be God of gods and Lord of lords. The Divine Warrior was King over all other potentates and this needed to be demonstrated in the writing of pious Jews.

In spite of the captivity of the Jewish people Yahweh was in control and those who were loyal to him would be protected. He was still seated on his eternal throne and He was still the Divine Warrior. Human kings could be bypassed if the purposes of Yahweh called for a special demonstration of power. The exile of the godly in a foreign land was a means to bring about the will of Yahweh in the past and perhaps it was meant to do so for the future.

### **2.33 Textual Synopsis of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice**

If the message of the *Songs* was triumphant, what was its audience? That question can be answered in more detail than many other Qumran texts. The historical context of the *Songs* quite possibly spans three to four distinct eras with numerous sub-eras within them. The earliest date for both 4Q400 and 4Q407 is c. 75-50 BCE.<sup>217</sup> Unless these fragments are taken as being autographs of the original text and dated toward the latter end of the range, the likely date for its original setting is before Pompey’s capture

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<sup>216</sup> The phrase “King of kings” is a reconstruction as well. While it is best to be cautious in placing too great an emphasis on reconstructions, they do provide positive evidence for the case being made. In this case the stress on the sovereignty of Yahweh is in order.

<sup>217</sup> James H. Charlesworth et al.; eds., *Angelic Liturgy: Song of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (PTSDSSP 4B; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 2.

of Jerusalem in 63 BCE. This would argue for a strongly Jewish setting for the original document and the first use of this text would have taken place under the backdrop of Jewish independence and Hasmonean rule.

If a pre-63 BCE date is taken, these two texts were copied in the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BCE), during the reign of his widow Queen Salome (76-67 BCE), or the last independent years of Hasmonean rule with either John Hyrcanus II (67 BCE) or Judah Aristobulus II (67-63 BCE). Since these reigns fall within the paleographic range given, it is impossible to attribute the texts to an individual monarch. What is possible to assert is that this time period was one of great tumult. The growth of the Pharisees during the time of Queen Salome and the outbreak of civil strife between John Hyrcanus II and Judah Aristobulus II occurred in this time frame.

If this text was copied after 63 BCE, it would have been during the second reign of John Hyrcanus II (63-40 BCE) in which he had regained power under Roman auspices as ethnarch but no longer was king. 4Q405 quite possibly comes from this era as well given its date is c. 50 BCE.<sup>218</sup> Jewish independence was dead and those who despised Roman control would have been tempted to regard John Hyrcanus II as a puppet of foreign, pagan powers.

The question of the dating of the *War Scroll* could come into play if Yadin's hypothesis of a Roman date for it is correct. It would be possible to argue that interest in the *Songs* was heightened at a time of militant eschatological expectation at Qumran. The thematic similarities between the two texts in using the number seven, the prominence of the priesthood, and the intervention of angels are solid links between the two texts. The nature of this association is more problematic as the date and authorship for the *War Scroll* are still contentious issues. Great caution should be exercised in pushing too much weight on too slender a hypothesis but this possibility raises at a minimum the option that the *Songs* and the *War Scroll* may have had similar historical influences in their development as texts.

The majority of the fragments date from the early Herodian era. 4Q401, 4Q402, and 4Q404 have been dated to c. 25 BCE<sup>219</sup> that definitely places them after the Roman

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<sup>218</sup> Charlesworth, *Angelic Liturgy*, 2.

<sup>219</sup> Charlesworth, *Angelic Liturgy*, 2.

conquest and probably during the reign of Herod the Great. 4Q403 has been dated to c. 25-1 BCE and this would very probably suggest it being copied during the reign of Herod the Great or shortly after his death. In either event the impact of his reign would have been known to the copyist of 4Q403. 11Q17 is the only *Songs* fragment to come from a cave other than Cave 4 and it is also the only Qumran fragment to have its date placed in the first century CE (c. 20-50 CE).<sup>220</sup> This would indicate that the *Songs* were being copied at approximately the same time as John the Baptist was in the wilderness and the Palestinian Jesus Movement was in its infancy. This by no means indicates any link between the Qumran community, John the Baptist, and Jesus but it does show that the *Songs* were still being used in the first century CE.

Studying concurrent religious activity in the first century CE in Palestine is important when chronologies can be confirmed. Pilate's attempt to march pagan Roman military standards through Jerusalem (26 CE) and his use of pagan symbols on coins he minted may also be events concurrent with the copying of 11Q 17. If the *Songs* were copied around 50 CE, the Egyptian prophet marching on Jerusalem, Theudas at the Jordan River (45 CE), and the Samaritans going up to Mt. Gerizim (37 CE) were events that were rough contemporaries of 11Q17. Unless the Qumran community was oblivious to events around them, there is a very real possibility that the scribe who copied this text knew of some of these events. While it is extremely difficult to connect specific occasions<sup>221</sup> to the date of the probable writing of 11Q17, it is possible to note the general tenor of the times. 11Q17 was copied in an era of religious/political ferment and someone thought the *Songs* were worth copying while all this transpired.

Perhaps the most interesting fragment of all is that for Mas1K. It has been dated to c. 50 CE<sup>222</sup> on paleographic grounds and was found by the Yadin expedition of the early 1960's at the excavation of Masada.<sup>223</sup> Since it is a find independent of Qumran and

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<sup>220</sup> Charlesworth, *Angelic Liturgy*, 2.

<sup>221</sup> This progression from the era of the Hasmoneans to Roman provincial administration indicates that the *Songs* should be treated with care if attempts are made to find specific historical or cultic allusions within them. Attempts to find the Qumran attitude to the union of the office of High Priest and King under the Hasmoneans, the reaction to Herod the Great building the Temple, and the use of Roman military symbols as objects of worship are examples of problems that the *Songs* may help solve. Strong methodological controls need to be used when evaluating the text history behind the *Songs*.

<sup>222</sup> Charlesworth, *Angelic Liturgy*, 2.

<sup>223</sup> Y. Yadin, "The Excavation at Masada: 1963-1964. Preliminary Report," *IEJ* 15 (1965): 105.

since Masada fell in 73 CE in the Jewish Revolt, it is a fragment that has raised a number of historical questions. Purely on the question of date it is significant because it shows that the *Songs* were still being used until at least 73 CE. Given the high probability that the Qumran community was destroyed in 68 CE in the Roman reconquest of Judea, it demonstrates that the *Songs* could be used in a setting apart from Qumran.<sup>224</sup> It is even possible to suggest that since the *Songs* were at Masada they could have equally been found in other centers of Jewish resistance like Jerusalem and the Temple. It even raises the possibility that some refugee from Qumran could have been using this text after the Jewish Revolt if he had escaped Roman capture or execution. This is admittedly conjectural but certainly is a possible inference given that Masada was the last center of Jewish resistance to fall. If someone had escaped from Masada with a copy of the *Songs*, its life as a text would have continued.

These questions are at this point hypothetical but they all rest on the knowledge that the *Songs* was not an exclusively a Qumran document.<sup>225</sup> The lack of evidence concerning this text outside of Masada and Qumran warns against advancing complicated theories without sufficient evidence but the present evidence does strongly suggest that the *Songs* should be viewed in as wide a context as appreciable. The possibility that the *Songs* had a use in the post-70 CE era that influenced the Bar-Kochba Revolt would be perhaps too speculative. Common geography, common appeal to Jewish religious ideals, and a common aversion to Roman rule are quite possible in the two Revolts without the *Songs* being the ideological link between the two events.

Albeit the remote possibility that the *Songs* and by extension the Qumran community could be connected to the Bar-Kochba Revolt does challenge the notion that the Qumran settlement must be considered a hermetically sealed location. Its emphasis on eschatology and divine intervention may have fallen on other sympathetic ears outside its own community. That is why this study makes a distinction between the Qumran

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<sup>224</sup> The relationship of Qumran with the defenders of Masada, the rationale of why it is there and why the *War Scroll* is not there, and the geographical distribution of the *Songs* are just some of the questions that are worth considering but are beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>225</sup> I am not addressing whether it is a sectarian or non-sectarian document. The distinct separation of geographical locale between Masada and Qumran is important because it demonstrates the motive powers of this text. Whether that motive power is sectarian or non-sectarian is secondary to the fact that someone defending Masada had a text previously only known at Qumran.

settlement and Qumran community. People outside the Qumran settlement were arguably influenced by the texts found near Qumran. Even if the *Songs* ceased to be used as a religious text at the fall of Masada, the real possibility that its ideology continued in the hearts and minds of some of the Jewish populace is very real and needs to be addressed.

The possibilities raised previously range from the probable to the purely hypothetical at this point and are raised to stimulate the process of thinking about the *Songs* outside the immediate context of the Qumran community. The distribution of dates for the copying of the text indicates that this text was being studied through three and possibly four very different historical contexts. The Hasmonean era represented at a minimum a strong degree of Jewish political domination over the historic land of Israel, unfettered Jewish control of the Temple, and the growth of Jewish military/political power in the region. The Herodian era saw a re-establishment of the Jewish kingship but under Roman tutelage, the role of the Judean client kingdom as being a means to support the Roman imperial system, and a Jewish high priesthood captive to political maneuvering. The Roman provincial era saw the elimination of Jewish kingship,<sup>226</sup> the birth of early Christianity, and growing political instability that finally led to the Jewish Revolt. The fourth era is provisional but if the *Songs* had a use in this era it would be in a world in which the Temple was destroyed, Roman control of the geographical land of Israel was absolute, and Judaism no longer enjoyed any political advantage in Roman eyes over Christianity. Yet under these conditions this text was still considered relevant enough to be copied and brought to Masada and possibly used even after Masada.

This strongly suggests that either the message of the *Songs* was one independent of historical circumstances or that it could be reinterpreted to fit changing historical conditions. Whatever the *Songs* meant to its readers in the first century CE, it was not a meaningless text. It was important enough for someone to carry it to Masada and perhaps die defending it.

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<sup>226</sup> The interregnum of Herod Antipas II from 41 to 44 CE breaks the Roman provincial administration into two stages but the historical impact of his reign was limited.

### **2.34 Summary to the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice**

The *Songs* did not exist in a textual vacuum. While comparison could be made to many other Qumran texts, one in particular seems pregnant with importance for this study. 4Q174 3 quotes Exod 15:18 in which Yahweh's reign is described as eternal and the establishment of the temple is ordained. The thematic similarity between that text and the *Songs* is significant. Yahweh is the eternal King and the Temple is the center of worship in both texts. This linkage between the concepts is very pronounced. Yet it should be no surprise that the Qumran community adopted this viewpoint. The Deuteronomistic history indicated that the human king was the agent of Yahweh both in terms of cultic practice and responsibility. The new Temple in Ezekiel reinforced these same ideas while adding to the safeguards for the future piety of the king. In this regard the Qumran community was only standing within the tradition of Second Temple Judaism.

The sovereignty of Yahweh is not diminished by the Davidic covenant in either text. Rather it is reinforced because the Davidic line owes its continuation to Yahweh. This connection is important to remember when the transmission of the *Songs* is evaluated in the context of the Jewish Revolt and the siege at Masada. The sovereignty of Yahweh and the Davidic covenant were important not just as political expressions of Jewish identity but in cultic terms they were important as well. The possibility of a Davidic interest influenced by texts originating or popularized at Qumran shaping segments of Jewish public opinion in the post-70 CE environment needs to be recognized.

### **2.35 Common Qumran Themes**

The occasions and dates for the writing and use of various texts discussed are in all probability quite diverse. 4Q504 reads very much as a liturgical prayer while 4QMMT was probably commissioned as an appeal for a specific event. 4Q174 and 4Q161 both stress the Davidic identity of the messiah while in 1QM it is implied. The harsh tone against the non-Jewish world in 4Q174 is not seen in 4Q504. The *Temple Scroll* has as its focus Torah and a renewed earthly Temple while the *Songs* is focused on the heavenly realm and Yahweh's eternal reign. Some of these differences may be more apparent than

real but they do demonstrate that every text or fragment of a text found in the caves around Qumran needs to be evaluated on its own merits.

From an intertextual standpoint the more significant issue is that these texts show significant thematic links. They all indicate a role for a Davidic king and they assume or state that Yahweh is the ultimate sovereign over Israel. What does unite these texts is an unswerving commitment to the continuation of the Davidic dynasty. The challenges of the contemporary history of the Jewish nation had not quenched the fire of expectation for a future Davidic king.

### **2.36 Exegesis at Qumran and in the New Testament**

Biblical exegesis techniques at Qumran varied from critical Western practice but this debate at times obscures an overriding reality. The historical foundation behind the Qumran texts is one that assumes that there is a guiding intervention from Yahweh. The manner of that expression while important is secondary to the primary historical expectation that Yahweh intervenes in history. Qumran exegesis sought to provide a message for the faithful. This is not surprising given the strong concern for Jewish history and tradition in the Qumran community. Philo's concern for presenting Jewish culture as being compatible with Hellenism is antithetical to Qumran thinking. Brooke makes a significant point in asserting that "Moses and the prophets were in some fashion viewed as directed by God in their writings; the scriptures are to be considered *divinely inspired*."<sup>227</sup> Studying Moses for the Qumran community was a means of understanding the inbreaking of Yahweh into the temporal world both in the past and in the present. Brooke further observes that "the ancients knew that words are polyvalent, that authoritative texts demand to be made intelligible for those they influence and often control...and that respect for the text is part and parcel of making sense of experience."<sup>228</sup> The Hebrew Bible was a living entity and there should be no surprise that parabiblical literature and peshers thrived in the Qumran community. If the *Temple Scroll* is viewed as the "authoritative guide"<sup>229</sup> to Dt 17, it would strongly suggest that the Qumran covenanters had great confidence in their ability to understand the Hebrew Bible and

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<sup>227</sup> George Brooke, "The Plain Meaning of Scripture in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 74.

<sup>228</sup> Brooke, "Plain Meaning," 89-90.

<sup>229</sup> Brooke, "Plain Meaning," 77.

provide a message for their times. To understand who should be king in Israel the Qumran covenanters looked to the past to provide a model for the future.

It has been observed that both the Qumran community and the authors of the New Testament shared similar attitudes toward the prophets.<sup>230</sup> The prophets were living, relevant communicators that spoke to Second Temple Jews in a direct, immediate manner. The Qumran community was not shy about applying prophetic messages to their own situation even if their application was not convincing to outsiders.<sup>231</sup> At the same time it should be also noted that New Testament exegesis is not synonymous with Second Temple exegesis.<sup>232</sup> Neither Philo's allegories nor the rabbinical use of Torah capture early Christianity's imagination.<sup>233</sup> Indeed the Christian emphasis on the person of Jesus as the Christ as the center of exegesis<sup>234</sup> suggests a very exclusive approach. Yet the New Testament writers project an image that early Christianity and especially its first generation were very eager to dialogue with non-Christian Jews. Not only are they eager to dialogue, they are given a hearing. Luke's narrative of the risen Jesus expounding Moses and the prophets to the men on the road to Emmaus in Lk 24, Peter's citation of Joel in Acts 2 to the crowd at Pentecost, and Paul's citation of the Hebrew Bible in Rom 9-11 all stand as evidence that Jewish-Christian dialogue was very important to the early church. Indeed it could be argued that it was fundamental to its identity as it was necessary for early Jewish Christians to demonstrate that proclaiming Jesus as the Christ was compatible with Jewish tradition.

Hengel's observation that even accounting for differences the closest parallel to the New Testament in terms of exegesis is the "prophetic *peshar* interpretation"<sup>235</sup> of the Qumran covenanters is pregnant with implications. In all of Second Temple Judaism's diversity the approaches to the Hebrew Bible of both the Qumran covenanters and the Palestinian Jesus movement were recognizable to each other. The possibility members of

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<sup>230</sup> Douglas J. Moo, "The Problem of *Sensus Plenior*," in *Hermeneutics, Canon, and Authority* (eds. Douglas J. Moo, D.A. Carson, and John D. Woodridge; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 192.

<sup>231</sup> Moo, "Problem," 194.

<sup>232</sup> Moo, "Problem," 193.

<sup>233</sup> Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture* (trans. Mark E. Biddle; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002), 111.

<sup>234</sup> Hengel, *The Septuagint*, 110.

<sup>235</sup> Hengel, *The Septuagint*, 110.

each community could dialogue and debate with each other rather than talk past each other is thus greatly enhanced.

The Synoptic tradition and the *Psalms of Solomon* placed great emphasis on royal and Davidic expectations for the messiah. That is not surprising given the seriousness with which postexilic Jewish thought grappled with the kingship conundrum. While the Qumran texts examined share differences with both traditions, they share a similar regard for a royal Davidic messiah with the exception of 4Q448. Indeed unless the *Psalms of Solomon* are dated very early, 4QMMT predates it by decades and this raises the interesting question of whether any Qumran text influenced other succeeding non-Qumran texts. At the very least this suggests that a common Second Temple expectation of a Davidic Messiah was a widespread phenomenon. If ideas expressed by the Qumran community were still being propagated after the Jewish Revolt as seems likely, the question of the Davidic Messiah was far from mute when the Fourth Gospel was being produced. The case could be made that the quest to define who should be king in Israel had entered a new and even more challenging era. The Fourth Gospel did not originate in a vacuum when it arrived on the scene.

### **2.37 Conclusion: The Qumran Impact on the Fourth Gospel**

Limiting the study of the Fourth Gospel to categories that predate the Second World War can no longer be argued as being the best possible approach to its study. An intelligent comparison of relevant material from different sources within Second Temple Judaism offers an improved means of understanding the origin of the Fourth Gospel. The discovery of the Scrolls has constituted a revolution not only in understanding the world that predates the New Testament but the world of the New Testament itself. It is time to apply those discoveries to the Fourth Gospel because what certain texts found near Qumran have to say about a future royal messiah is important to understanding how the Fourth Gospel would be received by Jews influenced by those same texts.

4QMMT provides an excellent starting point for analyzing the importance of David as the model king. 4QMMT has received attention because of detailed discussion of halakic issues but it is equally as significant for the importance it places on David. David is the model king who is contrasted with other kings who flagged in their devotion to a pure faith. 4QMMT in at least its recovered form gives more attention to David than

the Teacher of Righteousness. Thus when 4Q174 stresses the importance of the Davidic covenant in linking the Davidic king with the Temple there should be no surprise. The importance of David as king is a theme that starts in 4QMMT and continues in 4Q252, the *War Scroll*, and 4Q161 as the need for a royal messiah of Davidic heritage is stressed. Certainly a text like 4Q448 indicates that not every text found near Qumran was Davidic. That does not change the fact that the preponderance of evidence previously mentioned indicates that the Davidic hope was very real. The expectation of a Davidic Messiah who would fight the enemies of Israel is a very real part of a text like 4Q161. This emphasis should not be forgotten or marginalized by the fact that Second Temple Judaism was very diverse. The Davidic hope previously mentioned is very specific in its program for a Davidic Messiah.

It is in this context that the statutes of the king in the *Temple Scroll* provide insight into what a godly king should be for the people. Whether this king has an eschatological function or not, it provides an ideal of how the Jewish people should be ruled and the role the king should have in worship. The contrast between a king who observed Torah and worked to establish a purified temple cult and the Herodian dynasty is marked. Herod the Great used his position for political advancement within the Roman empire and his commitment to Judaism was syncretistic and motivated by domestic political concerns. The king of the *Temple Scroll* was to be focused on Yahweh for protection and his commitment to pure worship was to be blameless.

This concern for pure worship is seen as well in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*. Yahweh as the ultimate Sovereign rules and is worshipped by a living temple that praises Him. The discovery of a portion of this text on Masada indicates that this concern for pure worship of the King of Kings was a motivating factor for some who fought the Romans at Masada. The importance of the human king of the people being loyal to the Divine King is clearly implied by this text. The use of Ezek 40-48 to provide a framework for this pure worship of the Divine King indicate that the hope for a New Temple seen in Ezekiel resonated with the community that used the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*. The link between a pure temple and the Divine King also clearly implies that any human king who did not have the standards that the Qumran covenanters demanded

would be viewed by them as suspect. A pure temple with substandard kings is not a viable concept for the Qumran covenanters.

Ezekiel also provides an important inspiration for another text that speaks of a new David. The shepherd imagery of 4Q504 and its links with the new David of Ezekiel are significant markers of how the future messiah is described. The shepherd imagery of this text uses the symbolism of the shepherd metaphor found in other Hebrew Bible texts to speak of the new David. The symbolic linkage between David as shepherd and David as king is something readily understandable to those who were familiar with Jewish tradition. If the Fourth Gospel was to appropriate imagery that was linked with David as king, it would be a symbol that would be readily understood by those familiar with 4Q504. The importance of symbolism and imagery in communicating messages in the ancient world should not be underestimated. Speaking of the new David as a shepherd was an effective way of communicating the new David's royal personage.

The texts previously mentioned from Qumran combined with the *Psalms of Solomon* and the New Testament attest to a living, breathing hope in late Second Temple Judaism for a Davidic Messiah. While it cannot be asserted that every text found near Qumran attests to a Davidic Messiah, the weight of evidence indicates that the expectation of a Davidic Messiah was widespread in the recovered Qumran texts. The issue of a Davidic Messiah was one that went beyond Christianity. It was one that included a significant element of Judaism that was not predisposed to Christianity.

This raises an important question for the Fourth Gospel. How is Jesus to be portrayed in the light of the circumstance of the Jewish Revolt? The discovery of a portion from the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* at Masada indicates that this text had a life beyond the Qumran settlement. The real possibility exists that there were survivors of the Jewish Revolt who were Davidic in their hope for a royal messiah. If the Fourth Gospel embraced Jesus as Davidic, it would be finding itself sharing company with people who were committed enemies of Rome.

## **Chapter Three: The Complexity of Messianic Politics and the Fourth Gospel**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In the contemporary appreciation for the diversity of late Second Temple Judaism, the fact that this diversity was woven together from very different threads should not be forgotten. A text like 4QMMT is very exclusive in its interpretation of halakah and the role of David as model king. There is no room for compromise in this text and this serves as an example of the situation facing late Second Temple Judaism. The person or persons responsible for 4QMMT were not believers in pluralism. Early Jewish Christians existed in a milieu in which differing interpretations of Judaism existed alongside different messianic interpretations and these differences produced sharp reactions. The focus of this chapter is to highlight how this demand for exclusivity in the midst of diversity would affect the composition of the Fourth Gospel.

In particular the twin problems of John the Baptist's connection to Jesus and Jesus' relationship with the Davidic dynasty deserve attention. Scholarly attention has been drawn to the role of John the Baptist within early Christianity because John the Baptist existed as a historical personage outside the New Testament. Attention has also been drawn to the curious treatment of David in the Fourth Gospel especially in comparison with the Synoptic Gospels which are categorical in their assertion of Jesus as being of Davidic descent. The point at which the issues of exclusivity, John the Baptist's relationship with Jesus, and Jesus' connection with David converge is in the political situation after the Jewish Revolt. If John the Baptist was viewed as a militant prophet preaching revolution against Rome in the wilderness, any link between Jesus and David would only add fuel to a combustible mix. The challenge facing the composers of the Fourth Gospel was how to deal with these competing pressures and tell their story of Jesus.

### **3.2 Exclusiveness and Late Second Temple Judaism**

One characteristic of both the Johannine community and the Qumran covenanters were their claims to exclusivity.<sup>236</sup> That statement should not be controversial in that there is a great deal of evidence that both communities were very

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<sup>236</sup>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* (eds. R. Bieringer, D. Pollefeyt, and F. Vandecasteele-Vanneuville; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 267.

serious about the importance of the truth claims they made. A case in point for the Qumran community is 4QMMT that argues very strenuously for its interpretation of halakah and for its understanding of the role of David as the model king. For the Johannine community the evangelistic purpose of the Fourth Gospel is very prominent in asserting that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, (Jn 21:31) and that Jesus is the only way to the Father (Jn 14:6). Neither community was shy about presenting the importance of its beliefs but both communities operated in environments that were often hostile to their claims. Yet both communities were aware of other forces within Judaism and acknowledged their existence. Both communities again shared certain elements in common and that should be no surprise given the development of postexilic Judaism.

The roots of the exclusivity in both the Johannine community and the Qumran community can be traced in large part to the monotheism that postexilic works stress. What is evident is that texts like Ezekiel demonstrate that the elimination of polytheism from Jewish life was of prime importance to those concerned with the purity of their faith after the capture of Jerusalem in 586/7 BCE. The sense of betrayal in a text like Ezekiel over the erosion of commitment to Yahweh is palatable.<sup>237</sup> The fact these same texts acknowledge that polytheism was widespread within Israel only showcases the tension between monotheism focused on Yahweh and the polytheism seen in the ANE. The rise of Hellenism and its influence on Jewish expressions of worship again only highlight the struggle between a monotheistic approach and others that emphasized the multitude of gods in the ancient world. Whether Hellenism made significant inroads into late Second Temple Judaism or not, the struggle between those who viewed Judaism as being mutually antithetical with Hellenism and those who sought to eliminate its influence was real. A monotheistic faith was by definition exclusive in that it allowed for no sharing of divinity. For any form of Judaism embracing monotheism Yahweh was alone God.

### **3.3 Moses and the Fourth Gospel**

One way in which uniformity could be stressed and polytheism repelled in that era would be to stress the importance of Torah and Moses' authority as being permanent and unchanging. If the norm for correct behavior was fixed in times past at Mt. Sinai

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<sup>237</sup> Ezek 8 is perhaps the best example in Ezekiel of the impact of polytheism on the city of Jerusalem in the last days of the Divided Monarchy.

when Moses received Torah, than the answer to present challenges would be to stick firmly to the received knowledge and tradition of the past. The problem with this approach is that Torah did not cover every conceivable situation and that Moses was not available to provide his interpretation of passages that proved controversial. Furthermore the purpose of Moses' role as the giver of Torah is not simple to define. Dt 18:18 speaks of a particular Prophet who would come. The prospect of the future Prophet indicates that Moses could be eclipsed by the future Prophet. It is into this mix that both the Qumran and Johannine communities provide their contributions.

For the Fourth Gospel the figure of Moses is dealt with early in the text. The contrast between the Law under Moses and the advent of grace and truth under Jesus the Messiah (Jn 1:17) in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel is stark and raises questions. This opposition between Moses and Jesus could be interpreted as a theological demarcation between a religion of works under the Torah and a message of hope and grace from Jesus.<sup>238</sup> Indeed this interpretation has proved influential in the history of Protestant theology but it must be remembered that the Reformation was still in the distant future when this text was written. The Fourth Gospel is a product of the ancient world and that is the focus of this study.

The Fourth Gospel displays a great deal of respect for Jewish tradition. Jesus himself refers to Moses (Jn 3:14) for support. The relationship between Moses, Torah, Jesus and his message is more complex than a simple dichotomy of works versus grace. There is reason to believe that Jesus showed a great deal of respect for the role of Torah. In the Synoptics the witness of Matthew and Luke (Mt 5:18; Lk 16:17) is very clear on Jesus' attitude toward Torah. It is to be fulfilled in every aspect to the very last stroke. If this dominical saying is attributed to Q, it would reflect a pre-70 CE expression of Jesus'

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<sup>238</sup>Luther's focus on the distinction between Law and Grace was pivotal in his understanding of the doctrine of justification. Law was Luther's enemy and since the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament was immersed in this subject it created a contrast with Luther's exposition of Paul's epistles. Luther's suspicion of the Hebrew Bible and for that matter James has created a historical framework for New Testament study that still influences New Testament studies to this day.

As much as contemporary scholarship battles to see late Second Temple Judaism through the lens of primary sources and scientifically produced methodologies, the temptation to regress is still there. As brilliant a theologian as Luther was, the Roman Catholic Church did not exist in the first century CE and should not be read back into the Fourth Gospel.

The Fourth Gospel needs to be appreciated as much as possible the way its first listeners heard it. The battle between Luther and the Pope was not the original context of Jn 1:17. The figure of Moses in the Fourth Gospel represents a contemporary debate of late Second Temple Judaism and needs to be seen as such.

approach to Torah.<sup>239</sup> In the post-70 CE environment Moses and Torah were very central to Jewish expression and there is no conceivable reason the Johannine community would view Moses as representing an embarrassment to their faith. A better explanation would be to examine the subtleties of Jewish expression during the first century CE.

If Moses is not an outcast in the broader framework of the Fourth Gospel, than what is his role in the discourse of the Fourth Gospel? At least part of the answer is to be found in the way the debate within Judaism evolved in the last years of Second Temple Judaism. The suggestion by DeBoer that Jesus' opponents in the Fourth Gospel gave themselves the self-designation of being Moses' followers is worthy of consideration.<sup>240</sup> The plausibility of this suggestion is linked to the advantages it would provide to any group within Judaism that debated other Jewish opponents. Identifying oneself with the most respected figure in Jewish history provides leverage in debate with one's opponents. Those who challenged the "Moses group" could be viewed as challenging not just their contemporary opposition but Moses as well. Whether or not this was a fair tactic, invoking Moses was a shrewd way of managing inter-Jewish dialogue. Given the competitive nature of late Second Temple debate it was a logical tactic to employ by those who wanted to advance their point of view.

The use of the Moses designation needs to be seen in the wider context of the whole book. The debate between Jesus and his critics particularly in chapters 5 through 10 in the Fourth Gospel often involves questions that revolve around interpretation of Torah and the Moses-Torah link would strengthen those who challenged Jesus. The infirm man of Jn 5 is healed on the Sabbath and this becomes a flashpoint because Jesus heals on the day of rest. The legitimacy of Jesus' healing is not critiqued as being fraudulent but as being anti-Torah (Jn 5:16). To counter Jesus' actions his opponents need to criticize his Jewish credentials. Certainly the use of Moses' name and authority could prove useful when contentious situations like a healing arose. In the reply to the blind man restored to sight Jesus' opponents describe themselves as being Moses' disciples and Jesus as being an unknown entity (Jn 9:28, 29). It is as if the mere mention

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<sup>239</sup> Conversely if either Matthew or Luke is dated before the Jewish Revolt the same analogy stands.

<sup>240</sup> Martinius C. De Boer, "The Depiction of "the Jews" in John's Gospel: Matters of Behavior and Identity," in *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel* (eds. R. Bieringer, D. Pollefeyt, and F. Vandecasteele-Vanneuville ; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 151.

of Moses was meant to provide the definitive answer to the actions of Jesus. For the Fourth Gospel the invocation of the name of Moses by Jesus' opposition becomes a shield against any teaching Jesus makes. This suggests that the Johannine community had a communication barrier with certain elements of the wider Jewish community that needed to be breached before the message of Jesus being the Messiah could be proclaimed.

Even if it is argued that this dispute is a community creation to attack the Johannine community's opponents, it still provides an indication that the Johannine community felt they needed to establish their allegiance to Moses. They had a need to establish a narrative that provided support to their claim that they were loyal to Moses. Even after the destruction of the Temple, Moses was still an important source of authority to the Johannine community and any other Jewish group they encountered.

Thus DeBoer's insight into the narrative strategy of the Fourth Gospel is significant. The debate between Jesus and his opposition revolved around differing theological interpretations of the role of Torah in Judaism in which Moses' role is a critical part. Jesus is not repudiating Jewish history when he challenges his listeners with the pronouncement that none is capable of keeping the entire law of Moses (Jn 7:18). He is rather underlying the need to have a debate concerning the meaning of Torah. The wider community of Second Temple Judaism including the Qumran community grappled with the meaning of Torah in different ways and post-70 CE constructs of Judaism may have reduced the number of alternate expressions of that debate.

### **3.4 The Authority of Hebrew Scripture in the Fourth Gospel**

The use of quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures is very prominent in both the Passion Narrative in the Fourth Gospel and the events leading to the crucifixion. In particular the expectation of fulfillment (Jn 18:9; 19:24, 28, 36, 37; 20:9) of prophetic passages from the Hebrew Scriptures is emphasized throughout the description of Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, and burial. While attention is often given in scholastic circles to the specific quotation and the possible/probable proof text it rested on, more focus needs to be paid to the cumulative impact of these quotations in the rhetorical scheme of the Fourth Gospel's portrayal of Jesus as Messiah. The repeated appeal to the authority of sacred Jewish tradition clearly indicates a strategic interest in the composition of this text

in framing Jesus' death as being rooted in the messianic hopes of the Jewish people. There is an expectation within this text that a favorable reaction will be engendered by placing the events of Jesus' crucifixion in the context of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The strong possibility that a significant proportion of that same Jewish populace will challenge the messianic claims of Jesus makes the Fourth Gospel's use of the Hebrew Scriptures even more significant. Given that Second Temple Judaism was not monolithic, the literary approach used in the Fourth Gospel could be expected to come under careful scrutiny. It is worth considering that 4QMMT also relied heavily on claims of authority from the Hebrew Scriptures to establish its case. 4QMMT certainly represents a different genre than the Passion Narrative but there are significant similarities in purpose between the two. Both accounts have a persuasive intent. For the Fourth Gospel it is to convince the reader that Jesus is the Messiah (Jn 20:31). For 4QMMT one of its purposes was to argue for a particular viewpoint on contentious halakah. Appealing to the Hebrew Scriptures was a means of creating that support.

The Fourth Gospel's interpretation of the messianic passages it quotes would be a persuasive tactic with Jewish readers who were predisposed to view the Hebrew Scriptures as authoritative. The Qumran community certainly showed such a strong interest in embracing the interpretive potential of the Hebrew Scriptures. Other approaches such as Philo's that were willing to syncretize Jewish tradition with Hellenism would be less persuaded by this approach. This is not to say that the Johannine community was exclusively Jewish in ethnic background or that its message ignored Gentile concerns. Rather it is meant to highlight the probable impact of any literary strategy highlighting the authority of the Jewish Scriptures. To make an effective appeal to any group requires the framing of that appeal to be in terms that they will be predisposed to accept.

### **3.5 The Focus on the Messiah within the Fourth Gospel**

Second Temple Judaism was not monolithic and it is not surprising that different views of messianic consciousness reflect that diversity. It is into this mix that the Fourth Gospel provides its contribution. The christology of this text gives a distinct interpretation of who Jesus is but it does not do so in isolation from the broader Christian community or even the Jewish tradition of the M/messiah. For the purpose of this study

the focus of interest is in the way in which certain distinct features of the Fourth Gospel's christology emerge given the situation facing the Johannine community in the aftermath of the Jewish Revolt.

It is significant to note that the Fourth Gospel's portrayal of the messianic question is one that assumes there was a great deal of interest in the Jewish population in this question. The first chapter of the Fourth Gospel is dominated by this issue. The Prologue describes Jesus as both Word and Light and establishes John the Baptist as the herald for Jesus as Messiah. It is worth noting that the narrator to the Fourth Gospel has figures outside of Jesus' immediate circle that highlight this issue. It is priests and Levites in Jn 1:19-25 who ask John the Baptist if he is the Messiah. It is Nicodemus in Jn 3 who engages Jesus in discussion on the nature of being born again and the kingdom of God. The Samaritan woman in Jn 4:25 gives her opinion on the coming of the Messiah. Some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in Jn 7:25-27 debate whether Jesus can be the Messiah because they know his identity. Jn 7:41 raises the issue of whether Jesus can be the Messiah because he is identified as coming from Galilee. Jn 10:24 has unnamed Jews ask Jesus if he really is the Christ. Perhaps even Pilate can be included as identifying Jesus as Messiah with his insistence on granting Jesus the execution *titulus* of "King of the Jews" (Jn 19:19-22).

Insiders also were capable of proclaiming Jesus to be the Messiah. Jn 1:41-51 has Simon Peter and Nathaniel both identify Jesus as Messiah. Jn 6:69 again showcases Simon Peter as acknowledging the messianic claims of Jesus. The climactic proclamation of Jn 20:31 asserting that Jesus is the Son of God is the ultimate claim of Messiahship by Jesus' followers. It is from this premise that the question then turns to how and why the Fourth Gospel reaches this conclusion.

### **3.6 One Man to Die for the Nation**

In the reaction to Jesus' involvement with Lazarus Caiaphas utters the famous maxim that one man should die for the people and not the people for the man (Jn 11:40). Jesus' perceived popularity and ability to shape the religious debate in Jewish Palestine in c. 30 CE had created a situation that was challenging the power centers of Jerusalem. Jewish Palestine was accustomed to various figures arising who would challenge the religious-political status quo and this naturally would prompt the attention of the Roman

government. This fear is articulated by Caiaphas' coterie as a concern that Jesus' actions will garner the attention of the Romans and force a change of the leadership of Jewish Palestine (Jn 11:48). Obviously those who enjoyed the perks of power at the behest of Rome would be interested in maintaining their station. Yet what were they to do with Jesus and his message of change?

The initial context given to Caiaphas' maxim is one that is primarily theological. It is interpreted in this text as a reference to Jesus' substitutionary death for his own people (Jn 11:51). The irony of Caiaphas' statement accomplishing the purposes Jesus himself set out to do is rich with meaning. Even Jesus' opponents accomplish his purposes by hastening his death. Primarily Caiaphas' maxim articulates in another form the message that Jesus is the Coming One. He is the fulfillment of Scripture and nothing can change it. Having Caiaphas reiterate this point though while helpful does not materially add to the theology of the Fourth Gospel. The Prologue has already stated Jesus will be rejected by his own people (Jn 1:11) and the imagery of substitution is seen throughout this text. Jesus as the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29) provides the perfect image of the substitutionary sacrifice. Having Caiaphas articulate this point does help to link together different facets of the story of Jesus' career. Caiaphas becomes a focal point for the knitting together of a range of issues in the Fourth Gospel.

The foreshadowing of Jesus' death is one but not the only element being identified in this passage. A judgment on the political administration of Jewish Palestine is implicit in the context of this message and it indicates that the composition of the Fourth Gospel was formed in awareness of the political significance of these words. Jesus died for the nation but how that event transpired deserves further comment. The statement attributed to Caiaphas emphasizes the importance of stability over justice and expressions of the popular will. While this trade-off clashes with contemporary notions of democracy and the rights of the will of the people, it expresses the reality of that era. The often messy business of listening to the conflicting ideas of the populace could be simplified by having order imposed from the top. It also encapsulates an arrangement that was common to conquered portions of the Roman empire. The Roman authorities were often willing to allow the prevalent aristocracy to administer their own region or city provided they were prepared to maintain effective control of their people for Rome.

This bargain provided limited autonomy for various parts of the empire and it gave the Roman state flexibility in the manner in which it ran its empire.

This type of arrangement explains in part the Roman empire's ability to endure for centuries even when external and internal crises arose. If the locals revolted and the revolt failed, those who had been the intermediaries between Rome and their own people would have lost everything. This provided a powerful motivation to maintain the favor of Rome or to be absolutely sure of gaining power in a successful revolt. Since most people in the ancient world and the contemporary are not inclined to gamble on those stakes, this tactic worked effectively for Rome. Effective though is not a synonym for perfect and therein lays a dilemma.

Jewish Palestine was one portion of the empire in which it was more challenging than others to govern. The usual approach of carrots-and-sticks would not work with those who believed they were commissioned by the God of Israel to do His bidding. For Caiaphas explaining this motivation to Roman authorities would have been difficult and this explains at least in part his dilemma with Jesus. For one man to die for the nation was the logical solution but what if the death of the one man inflamed the whole nation? It is at this point where the theology of the Fourth Gospel and the political realities of Roman-Jewish relations both before and after the Jewish Revolt intersect and create challenges for all concerned.

### **3.7 The Titulus and Written Communication in the Fourth Gospel**

The portrayal of Pilate in the Fourth Gospel is a subject that has often engendered controversy in the study of the events that led to Jesus' death. Whether Pilate is the willing executioner, the spineless dupe, or the tragic pawn of events outside his control are all interpretations that could be applied to his role in the death of Jesus. Pilate is the anti-hero of the Passion Narrative in the Fourth Gospel and this interpretation of his actions has often elicited spirited polemics for those who want to exonerate or to condemn a particular group or person. Clearly Pilate is worldly wise in his interrogation of Jesus but his interest in any reality beyond his immediate political situation seems limited. Pilate views Jesus through the lens of his own reality and that reality begins at Rome and then comes to Jewish Palestine.

There is no real dispute concerning one significant point in Pilate's relations with Jesus. He executed Jesus as a messianic pretender and he places a *titulus* marked "King of the Jews" in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin above his head (Jn 19:19-22). While his recognition of Jesus as "King of the Jews" comes not from conviction but from expediency and the results of a trial, it is the one event in the study of the historical Jesus that is most widely agreed upon by those who would otherwise agree on virtually nothing. In the study of the Historical Jesus this makes the *titulus* an almost unique event that produces near universal affirmation from scholarship of different eras and persuasions.

The title of the "King of the Jews" did not occur in a vacuum. As a title it had a history even predating Herod the Great. Brown points out that Josephus (Josephus, *Ant.* 14.13.1) quotes Strabo describing a golden vine with an inscription stating that the object is from Alexander who is King of the Jews.<sup>241</sup> Certainly in more recent times the Romans were familiar with this title because it had been given to Herod the Great as recognition for services rendered to the Roman state. Pilate would have been aware of the history of the title and may have even exploited it for his own ends. Brown again succinctly notes that "the charge that Jesus was claiming that title might well be understood by the Romans as an attempt to reestablish the kingship over Judea and Jerusalem exercised by the Hasmoneans (like Alexander Jannaeus) and Herod the Great."<sup>242</sup> Jesus is therefore being described as a failure in achieving political liberation for the Jewish people.

This title may have had implications beyond even Jewish-Roman politics. "King of the Jews" was a title that could be expected to raise the concerns of the Qumran covenanters. Its use as a Hasmonean and Herodian title is in contrast with the Davidic nomenclature of the preexilic world. It was a title used by men who had a profoundly different view of Jewish kingship than that seen in the Scrolls. The purity sought for in the royal messiah contrasted markedly with the dilatoriness of the Hasmoneans and the syncretism of the Herodian dynasty. Identifying Jesus as "King of the Jews" when he had been revealed as the King of Israel earlier in the book (Jn 1:49) indicates that those

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<sup>241</sup> Raymond Brown, *The Death of the Messiah* (2 vols.; Doubleday: New York, 1994), 731

<sup>242</sup> Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 731.

responsible for the Fourth Gospel were prepared to let Pilate have his say even if that may have been prejudicial to their cause.

Furthermore the occasion of Pilate writing the *titulus* above Jesus (Jn 19:19-22) highlights the linguistic diversity and privilege of first century CE in Jewish Palestine even as it demonstrates Pilate's use of written propaganda. Pilate's writing of a *titulus* served as both a legal and political statement of the reason why Jesus was executed. The portrayal of the Jewish leadership reading it and challenging Pilate's choice of words (Jn 19:21) reinforces the message that Pilate is in control of not only Jesus but of Jewish Palestine and the privileges of the Jewish leadership. The use of Aramaic, Greek, and Latin demonstrates a linguistic environment that was polyglot. This should be no surprise given the history of Jewish Palestine. The use of three different languages shows an interest in communicating a message to anyone who could read it. The number of residents in Jewish Palestine who would be able to read all three languages would not be large. The audience for the *titulus* was therefore aimed at both Jew and non-Jews who were influential but not necessarily numerous. The inclusion of Latin could be expected to produce a negative response from Jewish readers because it was the language of the conquerors but Pilate wanted to make sure his countrymen understood what was happening.

Jesus was executed as a messianic pretender. This point should be strongly underscored. There is no redaction of the *titulus*; it is a part of all four Gospel accounts. It stands consistent with the wording used to describe Herod the Great and Alexander Jannaeus. The non-Davidic kings of the Second Temple era used this title. Pilate used a political charge to humiliate Jesus and there is little historical doubt of this fact. Whether it was fair was again another question but in the post-70 CE world of the Roman empire life was not fair for anyone identified as being Jewish. The critical question then becomes: How does the Fourth Gospel explain the christology of Jesus given the realities of the world it inhabited to both Jewish and non-Jewish listeners?

### **3.8 Literacy and Social Marginalization for the Fourth Gospel**

Integral to the portrayal of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is the demonstration of Jesus teaching those who would hear and even some who would not care to listen. The motif of Jesus as teacher is present throughout all sections of this text but starting in Jn 3

through Jn 17 the didactic content of Jesus' message predominates. It is in the midst of this stretch of chapters that a very intriguing statement is recorded that touches the authority of Jesus' doctrine. In Jn 7:15 surprise is expressed at Jesus' knowledge because he had never been formally trained. The implication of such a statement would suggest that those who had not received formal education could not be expected to have intelligent ideas on religious questions. Several issues grow from this statement and deserve consideration. If literacy is viewed as the foundational basis for education, then the question of how or if Jesus was schooled is an issue that sheds light on the message Jesus communicated.

The first question worth considering is whether this statement is factually sound from the standpoint of the composers of the Fourth Gospel. Assessing the level of education for male Jewish boys in Galilee in the early first century CE is not a simple task. The Baptist's priestly heritage could suggest that Jesus had a better chance at becoming literate from a priestly teacher. It is possible that Jesus did have formal training and this statement is a form of irony in which the speakers betray their lack of knowledge of events. That would be in keeping with other events in this text in which observers state opinions that contain statements that need qualifying. It is again as equally possible that Jesus did not receive any form of professional schooling. If that is the case than the irony of this situation is that Jesus was wiser than those who had been professionally trained.

Secondly the statement of Jn 7:15 identifies Jesus with those who did not receive formal education. This statement in and of itself is important for what it reveals of the state of education and literacy in Jewish Palestine in the early first century CE. Osiek has highlighted that the written nature of Judaism and Christianity led to a scribal clustering that gained elite status.<sup>243</sup> Jesus is identified with those who were not privileged. Since the early Jesus movement was not an elite movement, this suggests oral communication was the key to their communication strategy. To reach the average inhabitant of Jewish Palestine with an oral presentation of Jesus' message was easier than using the written word. Nevertheless the publication of the Gospels indicates that a high degree of literacy existed among those who composed these works. Even if it is a form of irony, it is a

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<sup>243</sup> Osiek, "*The Oral World*," 159.

written statement in the Fourth Gospel that tells the reader that Jesus was not formally educated. Does that mean the Fourth Gospel was evolving into an elite movement away from its roots?

Osiek poses an excellent question when she asks what “were the levels of literacy in the ancient Mediterranean population, and how can we assess how these social dynamics may have been at work?”<sup>244</sup> The literacy required to scribble one’s name to a document one may not understand is different than the ability to produce an epic history.<sup>245</sup> The Johannine community could be expected to have a range of literary skills and so to could the Jesus movement. The generally low social status of the majority of the early Christians did not preclude persons of literary skill in their midst. That is not to say that all the potential readers/listeners of this text were marginally educated at best. The presence of literate and privileged individuals in the Fourth Gospel’s portrayal of early Christianity i.e. Nicodemus in Jn 3 demonstrates that there was a mix of different educational levels within it. The skill set existed within the circle of the Johannine community to carefully write texts that would be understandable to the poorly educated.

Any study of ancient literacy is handicapped in that written material can survive centuries; oral memory dies when the memory is forgotten in a population. Oral tradition depends on living people reciting that tradition. The written word relies on someone being able to read. Jesus was part of a society in which levels of literacy varied and oral memory predominated. This dichotomy helps to put into perspective the tensions that developed between the Pharisees and those who did not have professional scribal education. Those who had the benefit of a professional education would have been able to expound Torah to those who were illiterate. Illiterate persons in a society need to be able to trust what the literate read to them. The temptation to use and abuse that power against those who cannot defend themselves with written words is manifest. If that trust is broken in any way, the tensions and suspicions that result are not easy to heal. Since Jesus came preaching as an outsider to the people, those who were a Jewish scribal elite could easily feel challenged.

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<sup>244</sup> Osiek, “*The Oral World*,” 159.

<sup>245</sup> Osiek, “*The Oral World*,” 160.

Thirdly it provides an important context for understanding the common appeals to scriptural authority in the Fourth Gospel. Appeals to consult written Jewish tradition were being made by those familiar with the daily struggle for survival faced by the vast majority of the populace. Literacy was not a form of elite power for early Christianity and the Johannine community recognized this fact. This is a critical distinction to make. For the message of the Fourth Gospel to be credible to the marginalized it needed to be able to communicate to them.

The Fourth Gospel places a great deal of emphasis on dealing with marginalized figures and that is no surprise given the strong possibility that most early followers of Jesus were from poor backgrounds. Assuming a coherent literary strategy for this text, it would suggest it was meant to be understood in terms that would lend itself to an oral reading and hearing of this text. The appeal of the Fourth Gospel in relating to the plight of women and ethnic minorities would be lost if those same groups could not connect with its message. Yet even before Jesus preached to the masses he had been preceded by John the Baptist who preached to the common people in words they could understand. To understand how Pilate came to use Jesus as a propaganda tool it is necessary to work back in the Fourth Gospel to understand John the Baptist's role in the Fourth Gospel.

### **3.9 John the Baptist and an Independent Tradition**

The role of John the Baptist in the perspective of the Gospels is one of both clarity and ambiguity. John the Baptist is represented as being a herald to Jesus who courageously points to Jesus as the One Who is to come (Jn 3:30). He is a hero who does his work well in difficult circumstances. He fulfills a role as a prophetic figure that serves as a bridge from the world of the prophets to the coming of the kingdom of God. Conversely there is another perspective of him in the Gospels. John the Baptist is also portrayed as being uncertain of Jesus' role (Mt 11:3) and wondering if Jesus was indeed the Messiah. The sense that the rigors of prison shook some of his confidence emerges in a reading of the Synoptics. When John the Baptist is seen in the full perspective of the Gospel narratives, he emerges as someone who is less than a superman. This should be no surprise because the view of John the Baptist that emerges outside of the Gospels also shows a mixture of influences in shaping the framing of his memory.

The amount of attention given to John the Baptist by Josephus is substantially

more than that given to Jesus in the original, uncorrupted text in *Antiquities*. This would seem curious as by the time of the writing of both *Antiquities* and the *Jewish Wars* Christianity had become a factor in the life of the empire but John the Baptist was long since dead. Perhaps part of the answer lies in the impact of John the Baptist's life and death. Josephus' description of him (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.5.2) bears no mention of any connection with Jesus but Josephus gives special attention to Herod Antipas' fear of him. The political implications of John the Baptist's message were far-reaching. According to Josephus, John the Baptist's popularity among the people sprung from his preaching a baptism of repentance. Herod Antipas could be viewed as being a particular target of this preaching. Since Josephus was no friend of the Herodians, it is important to remember that his evidence could be biased. It is possible Josephus wrote with an agenda to implicate Herod Antipas because of Herod Antipas' unpopularity. Even if this is the case, Josephus' words still provide a context for understanding the appeal of John the Baptist after his death.

This suggests that there was a Jewish but non-Christian tradition of John the Baptist independent of the Gospels. Corroboration of this view comes from the book of Acts that contains two allusions to John the Baptist independent of the Jesus movement. Both occur in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-19:3) and both narratives are structured by the writer of Acts to demonstrate that John the Baptist's baptism was incomplete without that of Jesus'. In the first instance two members of the synagogue convert Apollos of Alexandria and in the second Paul of Tarsus convert several unnamed disciples by asking them about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The inference that John the Baptist was possibly more famous than Jesus in the Diaspora suggests one possible motivation for Paul's missionary journeys. The John the Baptist/Jesus connections so common to the Gospels were not necessarily well-known outside of Palestine.

The question of whether or not John the Baptist recognized Jesus as the coming Messiah would be a non-issue for Gentiles but potentially of vital significance to Jews. Assuming Josephus' description of John the Baptist's popularity after his death was true, it would be useful for the early Christians to have him recognize the Messiahship of Jesus. Claiming his memory for early Christianity would add credibility to their cause particularly if John the Baptist did indeed affirm that Jesus was the Christ. That John the

Baptist was viewed as being a willing and effective herald to Jesus is clear from Jesus' affirmation of the role of John the Baptist (Jn 5:33-36). Whether all of his disciples in Palestine accepted his avowal of Jesus as the Messiah is another question.

The obvious implication is that after the death of both John the Baptist and Jesus both movements had separate followings in at least parts of the Diaspora. Diaspora Jews receptive to John's message are viewed as incomplete followers of the Scriptures who share a common heritage with those of the Jesus movement but not a common Savior. This created a missiological opportunity for the early Jesus movement to build on John the Baptist's message. It also demonstrates that the two movements cannot be viewed as being inherently synonymous.

### **3.10 The Death of John the Baptist**

While the life of John the Baptist provided Jewish Palestine with a preacher of an ascetic faith that called for radical change, it is his death that provides compelling evidence that he was viewed as being a threat to Herod Antipas. Lk 3:10-14 describes an encounter of certain soldiers with John the Baptist in which they inquire of him what their responsibilities should be. Before this incident is dismissed as an invention designed to showcase John the Baptist's appeal certain considerations are merited.

The practice of espionage was common in the ancient world and it should be no surprise if Herod Antipas was interested in the actions of John the Baptist. Sending trusted members of his military staff to observe the preaching of John the Baptist would be simply prudent. Having them inquire of John the Baptist like other interested Jews would help them blend into the crowd and help alleviate suspicion. Whether some were influenced by him is not recorded but the goal of such contact would be to observe his actions.

From the standpoint of Herod Antipas what John the Baptist, the Qumran community, and other groups taught as theology was important because of its political ramifications. If Herod Antipas wanted to maintain his position as a client ruler, he must demonstrate his worth to the emperor. A client ruler who was incapable of maintaining control of his territory became a target not for promotion but for annexation. Herod Antipas had good reason to be interested in John the Baptist because he had a following. If the militancy of texts like the *War Scroll* had influenced Qumran behavior, the Qumran

community would be targets for Herod Antipas to observe as well.

Furthermore the passages in Mt 11:2-6 and Lk 7:18-23 that place John the Baptist in prison correspond with both Mk 6 and Josephus' description of his imprisonment. The emphasis of the Synoptic accounts is focused on John the Baptist denouncing Herod Antipas' marriage of Herodias who was his brother Philip's ex-wife. As challenging as that shift of relationships would be, it is not the only factor to consider. As part of the arrangement of Herod Antipas marrying Herodias he had divorced the daughter of Aretas IV the Nabatean king (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.5.1). The Synoptics do not dwell on the politics of this case but focus instead on John the Baptist's critique of Herod Antipas' morality. Yet both politics and moral outrage become part of the story of John the Baptist and Herod Antipas.

Herod Antipas' relationship with Herodias operated on several different levels. At one level it was a political relationship. The conjugal relationships of a ruler were a matter of state in the ancient world. In part this stemmed from the view that marriage was an alliance of families. The breaking of a marriage was not just the dissolution of a relationship between two spouses but the rupture of a unity between two regal houses. In a world in which the state revolved in the person of a monarch this was a very serious state of affairs. Herod Antipas' boorish conduct to his former wife, the daughter of the Nabatean king, catapulted him into a difficult situation with her father. Divorcing the daughter of Aretas IV was inevitably going to produce strained relations with her father the king but it went beyond strained relations and precipitated a border war between the two rulers. For Aretas IV to choose to exploit long standing territorial grievances as a means of revenge is understandable. He had been insulted by his ex-son-in-law and war was one means of redressing that insult. That Herod Antipas lost this border war and that it was viewed as divine judgment on his personal life (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.5.2) speaks volumes concerning the influence John the Baptist had as a preacher of righteousness at least according to Josephus. The Nabatean king could be viewed by pious Jews as an instrument of divine punishment by those who had been influenced by John the Baptist's preaching. The preaching of repentance had a political impact throughout the region.

The grounds for barring the union between Herod Antipas and Herodias would be Lev 18:16 in which marriage to a brother's wife is forbidden. Notwithstanding this

prohibition such marriages were permitted by Dt 25:5 if one brother died and left no child. This was clearly not the case with Herod Antipas and Herodias. The argument made by John the Baptist is against divorce for the sake of convenience. Clearly according to the Synoptics his criticism struck a nerve which made him a target of Herod Antipas. His change of spouses also reflected on his personal morality and on his commitment to Jewish religious customs. His actions made him a target and John the Baptist challenged him.

John the Baptist described his relationship as amoral and this should be no surprise. A central theme of John the Baptist's critique of the new marriage was a concern for purity.<sup>246</sup> This is no surprise given his message of repentance seen in the Gospels. John the Baptist's response also highlights parallels with the *Temple Scroll*. The principle that the king is answerable to Torah is implicit in John the Baptist's critique of Herod Antipas. Whether his thinking was directly shaped by the *Temple Scroll's* discussion on the duties of the king is hard to say. It is nevertheless consistent with the theology of that text. The subordination of rulers to a higher law than that of the Roman emperor was a powerful statement that had serious political and religious implications. John the Baptist's message was both religious and political.

### **3.11 Machaerus**

None of the Gospel writers indicate where John the Baptist was executed. While it may be inferred it was in Galilee that inference needs to be evaluated on the evidence from the sources. Josephus asserts it was in Machaerus and there is strong reason to accept this as fact. Josephus seems more focused on portraying John the Baptist as a political threat than as prophet to the needy. Herod Antipas is described as being worried that the crowds who came to see John the Baptist would do anything he said and executed him at Machaerus (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.5.2). It was customary for Roman governors to make progresses throughout their provinces. The maintenance of discipline among subordinates was essential and this was one means of doing so. For a client ruler like Herod Antipas to do the same would be only prudent. Machaerus was a logical place to stay for a large official party intent on reviewing the southern frontier. Machaerus was on the east side of the Dead Sea and represented the most effective barrier to Nabatean

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<sup>246</sup> Joan Taylor, *The Immerser* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 244.

incursions from the south-east desert. It would only be natural for Herod Antipas to be interested in the status of Machaerus given the frosty state of relations with Nabatea after his divorce.

Another consideration for Herod Antipas to consider was the activities of religious/political individuals or groups in the Petra wilderness. David had launched his career from the wilderness and it had served as a refuge for dissent until the present. The location of the Qumran settlement is not coincidentally near to the Dead Sea. The probability that other groups could have been in the wilderness needs to be acknowledged as well. The ability of his soldiers to effectively control the countryside would have been a major challenge. Dissidents would have been relatively free to live their own lives provided they could survive in the wilderness and avoid conflict with the authorities.

Apart from strategic considerations the fortress chain could also serve as palaces and prisons. The excavations at Masada reveal a sumptuously furnished retreat with amenities for those traveling from Jerusalem. The opportunity to entertain on a scale similar to that of the capital in Tiberius is clear. The non-military courtiers would need to be occupied while the inspection process continued. For John the Baptist to be executed in Machaerus would be a logical fit for both the Gospel accounts and Josephus. It would provide another reason for Herod Antipas to be interested in the activities of religious dissidents in the wilderness. The narrator of Jn 3:23, 24 records that the Fourth Gospel was aware of his imprisonment and that John the Baptist was busy performing baptisms before his arrest. This evidence is compatible with imprisonment at Machaerus. John the Baptist's death was both a religious and political statement and should be seen as such.

### **3.12 John the Baptist and Possible Qumran Connections**

John the Baptist came of priestly descent according to the first chapter of Luke but there is no record of him ever taking part in the cultic rites of the Temple in either the Gospels or Josephus. Instead all the witnesses portray him as being a prophet who came out of the wilderness preaching repentance. The possibility of a commonality of interest between John the Baptist and the Qumran community is real. The nature of that possible commonality is much more difficult to grasp. There is no clear evidence from any Qumran text that would locate the Baptist within its midst. Neither is there any indication in the Gospels that would suggest John the Baptist was a member of this

community. There is one important factor that does link the Qumran settlement with John the Baptist. As a dissident he shared the common geography of the wilderness. This is a sufficient basis to examine possible points of connect.

One important point of both contrast and similarity is the use of Isa 40:3. Both John the Baptist and the Qumran community use this text but the manner in which they do so is quite different. In IQS 8.14-16 this text is quoted but reference is made to the study of Torah by way of Moses. The importance of the law of Moses is reinforced in IQS 8.22 in which the breaking of the law of Moses is grounds for serious discipline within the community. The prophetic expectation is interpreted as being a reinforcement of Torah. For John the Baptist its use in the Fourth Gospel is one of personal identity for the Baptist. His mission is a fulfillment of prophetic mission to point to an individual. This is in marked contrast to the Qumran interpretation which focused on a text and not a person. For John the Baptist the prophetic word is not a refocusing of interest on Torah. It is a development of the prophecy to a contemporary application.

Another point of contact between the Fourth Gospel and the Qumran community is in the importance of the light motif. The introduction of John the Baptist in Jn 1:5-9 is clothed in such language focusing on the symbolism of light. The parallel with the light motif in the Qumran literature deserves comparison. The repeated usage of the phrase “sons of light” becomes a technical term within the Qumran literature for the self-identification of the community. The first line of the *War Scroll* describes the coming eschatological war as a struggle between the “sons of light” and “sons of darkness”. The identification of the Qumran community as the “sons of light” is striking when compared to the Fourth Gospel’s use of the light motif. John the Baptist is described as bearing witness to the Light who is to come into the world (Jn 1:7). The Word is described as the light that is opposed by the darkness (Jn 1:5). This provides telling evidence that while the theology of the Qumran community and that of the Fourth Gospel was different they both used similar vocabulary.

### **3.13 The Felling**

The messianic use of Isa 10:34 in 4Q161 and 4Q285 rests on a portrayal of an active Davidic messiah who is prepared to fight the Kittim. In a previous chapter of this study attention was paid to the implications of the peshers of Isaiah on expectations of a

royal messiah for the Qumran community. Implications also may exist for the broader Jewish community. If in 4Q161 and 4Q285 the Kittim are a codeword for the Romans, then the messiah is destined to fight Rome. Conceivably an expectation of an anti-Roman fighter as being a potential revolutionary may have been current in certain aspects of Second Temple Judaism. 4Q161 and 4Q285 both reflect a quite militant worldview. If this viewpoint was exported, it would provide evidence that the Qumran community had an influence that could have helped start the Jewish Revolt and stoke the fires of resistance even after 70 CE.

That influence may be evidenced in the text known as *2 Baruch*. Bauckham argues persuasively that the vision of *2 Bar.* 35-40 has interpreted Isa 10:34 in a manner similar to the Qumran peshers on Isaiah. The use of the imagery of Lebanon, the mountains, the forest, and the tall tree in *2 Bar.* 36 and 39 resonate with the descriptions of 4Q161 and 4Q285.<sup>247</sup> This does not mean *2 Baruch* was dependent on 4Q161 or 4Q285 but at a minimum it indicates that both the Qumran community and *2 Baruch* drew the same conclusions from an analysis of Isa 10:34. The commonality of imagery seen in both texts and the similar way they were employed suggest a code of imagery that was understood in at least certain circles of late Second Temple Judaism. Certainly the use of similar vocabulary was employed as well. The bringing low of the high forest in *2 Bar.* 36:5 is demonstrably an echo of Isa 10:33 in which the high and mighty are brought down.<sup>248</sup> Both 4Q161 and 4Q285 begin their texts with a quotation of Isa 10:34. Furthermore the conclusions reached in both *2 Bar.*35-40 and 4Q161 and 4Q285 are similar. The fourth kingdom of Baruch's vision (*2 Bar.* 39:5) is vanquished and replaced by the rule of the messiah.<sup>249</sup> In the peshers on Isaiah the Kittim are defeated by one who is specially commissioned for this task. Bauckham's suggestion of a link between *2 Baruch* and both 4Q161 and 4Q285 seems quite solid.

The real possibility of an exegetical link between the Qumran community, *2 Baruch*, and the Gospels raises some interesting questions. The dating of *2 Baruch* to the post-70 CE era reflects a general consensus in scholarship although a few have argued for

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<sup>247</sup> Richard Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34 in the Dead Sea Scrolls, *2 Baruch* and the Preaching of John the Baptist," *DSS* 2.2 (1995): 207.

<sup>248</sup> Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34," 208.

<sup>249</sup> Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34," 207.

Pompey's desecration of the Temple in 63 BCE as being the historical event that triggered the writing of *2 Baruch*.<sup>250</sup> It bears strong signs of being a composite work and containing material that may predate the Jewish Revolt. The clear reference to the demise of the Temple in *2 Bar.* 32:4 makes much more sense if it is seen in light of the Jewish Revolt and this reference is the strongest argument for a post-70 CE date<sup>251</sup> for this text's final composition. There also exists a scholarly consensus that the Bar-Kochba Revolt (132-135 CE) represents the latest possible date for this text.<sup>252</sup> Evidence from references in this text has pointed to dates ranging from 82 CE<sup>253</sup> to 116 CE<sup>254</sup> for various scholars. The lack of unanimity in agreeing on a specific date indicates that this text should be treated with care in interpreting possible historical allusions. At the same time the consensus on *2 Baruch* being formed in its final form within a generation of the destruction of the Second Temple is solid. The case for this text being a response to the destruction of the Second Temple is also compelling. *4 Ezra* is often viewed as being a contemporary text to *2 Baruch* and it is usually dated as being composed in c. 100 CE.<sup>255</sup> Therefore the most probable date for *2 Baruch* being completed as a finished text is around 100 CE. Assigning it a finished date to around 100 CE would place it roughly midway between the Jewish Revolt and the Bar-Kochba Revolt. The possibility that *2 Baruch* continues an exegetical tradition dating to at least the Qumran settlement era is significant. Messianic exegetical traditions that originated or were supported by the Qumran community continued after the demise of the Second Temple in a clearly Jewish context.

Assuming both the Isaiah peshers and *2 Baruch* maintain that the messiah is to defeat the leader of the Kittim, interesting questions arise about the possible use of these texts. In the history of Roman-Jewish conflict the two events in which the Roman emperor led Roman forces against Jewish rebellion in Palestine are the Jewish Revolt (66-70 CE) and the Bar-Kochba Revolt (132-135 CE). The possibility of a link in terms

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<sup>250</sup>Gwendolyn B. Sayler, *Have the Promises Failed?: A Literary Analysis of 2 Baruch* SBL Dissertation Series 72 (Chico, Ca.: Scholars Press, 1984), n. 1, 104.

<sup>251</sup>Sayler, *Have the Promises Failed?*, 104.

<sup>252</sup>Sayler, *Have the Promises Failed?*, 108.

<sup>253</sup>Sayler, *Have the Promises Failed?*, 107.

<sup>254</sup>Sayler, *Have the Promises Failed?*, 108.

<sup>255</sup>A.F.J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1985), 1:617.

of the ideological basis for both revolts exists and needs to be considered. The use of messianic pretenders as rallying points for both conflicts can be supported by Josephus' references to certain figures in the Jewish Revolt and to Bar-Kochba in the revolt that bears his name. While it is difficult to argue for a clear linear dependence from the Isaiah pesher texts to *2 Baruch* and from the Jewish Revolt to the Bar-Kochba Revolt, the similarities in terms of the use of messianic pretenders need to be considered. These factors help to explain the situation and attitude of the Johannine community as the Fourth Gospel was completed. The Fourth Gospel needed to be mindful of what other contemporary Jewish currents were producing on the subject of the messiah. The concept of a peaceful messiah is not the message of *2 Baruch*.

### **3.14 The Fourth Gospel and 2 Baruch**

The case for Isa 10:34 being used as a text by John the Baptist appears to be strong. Critically the most explicit possible connection between Isa 10:34 and John the Baptist appears outside of the Fourth Gospel. In Mt 3:10 and Lk 3:9 John the Baptist uses the imagery of an ax cutting down trees and the burning of dead wood to give a message of judgment. The imagery and vocabulary provides a strong fit to the description of Isa 10:34 and *2 Bar.* 36-40.<sup>256</sup> The obvious question that emerges is whether John the Baptist is preaching the overthrow of the Roman government. Bauckham is careful to indicate that the message of judgment is against Israel and not against Rome<sup>257</sup> but that does not settle the issue of whether the renewal of Israel in the theology of John the Baptist was a precursor to the expulsion of Rome. For the Qumran community the punishment of the Wicked Priest and the Kittim were both important issues. Could it be the same for John the Baptist and did Herod Antipas view the matter in this light?

Bauckham also makes a further observation that would link Jesus to the act of felling the forest. Isa 10:34 has a Mighty One fell the forest and Bauckham suggests the use of ἰμπεροσθον μου in Jn 1:15, 30 is ultimately derived from this text.<sup>258</sup> He bases his reasoning on comparing the different variations of John the Baptist's famous statement that one greater than him would come after him and by positing a theory of how the vocabulary of Jn 1:15, 30 was selected. Candidly Bauckham's assumption of

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<sup>256</sup> Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34," 210.

<sup>257</sup> Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34," 211.

<sup>258</sup> Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34," 211.

John the Baptist's Aramaic being redacted by the Fourth Gospel to stress the theme of Jesus' eminence over John the Baptist<sup>259</sup> is too tenuous to be trusted completely. If Bauckham is correct, John the Baptist interpreted Isa 10:33-34 as a divine judgment by the Davidic Messiah just as 4Q161 and 2 *Baruch* did.<sup>260</sup> This raises the question of whether John the Baptist could be viewed as presenting Jesus as a Davidic Messiah in the manner seen in the Isaiah peshers and 2 *Baruch*.

If Bauckham's conclusion as to the significance of Jn 1:15, 30 is accepted, it becomes necessary to explain why John the Baptist did not directly refer to Jesus as the Messiah. He concludes that no clear reference is made to him as a Davidic Messiah because "such terms were so predominantly associated with the messianic role of defeating the Gentiles."<sup>261</sup> The focus was rather on judging an Israel that had lost touch with its spiritual roots and had become arrogant and distant about its spiritual need.<sup>262</sup> What Bauckham does not raise is the possibility that the rationale for the Fourth Gospel's treatment of John the Baptist's words differs significantly from the Synoptics. The Fourth Gospel does not share the imagery of the Synoptics in hewing down a forest and that needs to be noted. Furthermore the addition of ὁ τὶ πρὸ τῆς ἡμέρας μου ἔρχομαι in Jn 1:15, 30 gives a temporal sense to this saying that deserves consideration in regards to the I AM statements in the Fourth Gospel. Torah as well as Isaiah may prove important for understanding John the Baptist's explanation of his relationship with Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.

The dating of 2 *Baruch* makes it roughly contemporary with the formation of the Fourth Gospel and even the Synoptics. The importance of these intertextual connections should not be underestimated. The use of 2 *Baruch* as an explanation for the demise of the Temple indicates that the generation immediately following the Jewish Revolt was engaged in a debate concerning the future of Judaism. The use of similar language and imagery in 4Q161, 4Q285, 2 *Bar.* 35-40, and Mt 3:10/Lk 3:9 calling for judgment is evident. The question of a connection to the Fourth Gospel is less clear but it may exist. Clearly John the Baptist used language and imagery employed by those who advocated

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<sup>259</sup> Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34," 211.

<sup>260</sup> Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34," 211.

<sup>261</sup> Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34," 211.

<sup>262</sup> Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isa. 10:34," 211.

an overthrow of the Romans. Arguably John the Baptist used this language differently than anti-Roman rebels but would Herod Antipas understand differences that were real or even perceived?

### **3.15 John the Baptist and Revolution**

The perception of John the Baptist being a militant could be gleaned from a hostile reading of the Gospels and from Josephus. The Gospel accounts and even Josephus treat John the Baptist as a being a good man who preached repentance but those suspicious of him could view this as mere cover for incendiary rabble rousing. His message of the felling shows connections with currents alive in the Qumran community and with those who could have advocated a violent overthrow of the Roman state. Certainly this message would cause concern with Roman figures like Pilate. Herod Antipas executed John the Baptist and there is no doubt John the Baptist's potential for dissent played a critical part in his demise. Whether this is a fair reading of the sources to allege that John the Baptist was a covert revolutionary is not the issue. The possibility of the perception of Baptist militancy becoming a motif of the Jewish resistance to Rome is real. Particularly after the Jewish Revolt the power of his memory as a rallying point for further resistance against Rome existed.

The association of John the Baptist with the Jesus movement is undeniable and this association needs to be understood from several different vantage points. The nature of that association as indicated in the New Testament account is nuanced but the world of Jewish-Roman relations after 70 CE was not built on subtlety. The expectation that Roman political authorities would understand the intricate web of relations in the religious debates of late Second Temple Judaism is not very great. The expectation that the Roman authorities would be able to grasp certain basic facts about Judaism and remember individual personalities is much greater. If John the Baptist was viewed as anti-Roman, the difficulties this could create for Jewish Christians were obvious. The need to establish the peaceful nature of John the Baptist's ministry was a high priority.

The question of John the Baptist serves as a case in point of a much larger issue facing both the Johannine community and the broader Christian community. Dealing with Roman suspicion after the Jewish Revolt was a significant issue. It is not whether John the Baptist was a good man or whether Christians cared for the destitute. The question is

whether the Johannine community would risk unwanted attention from Roman officials hostile to any Jewish figure who challenged the Roman state or its client rulers. The situation facing the Johannine community was one that demanded an awareness of the situation that they faced and an appreciation of the means at their disposal to preach their message.

### **3.16 Irony: Is Jesus from David and Bethlehem?**

When the events of John the Baptist's life are considered from this perspective, they provide a different point of view to consider other aspects of the Fourth Gospel's portrayal of Jesus. Jn 7:41, 42 relates the description of some Jews as being skeptical of Jesus' claims to be the Messiah because they thought he was a Galilean. Their conclusion was that the Christ needed to be born in Bethlehem and be of Davidic descent. They viewed him as not meeting the criteria of the Messiah and as noted previously in this chapter the issue of Jesus fulfilling the Scriptures was a critical issue in the way the Fourth Gospel was constructed. The lack of an editorial comment explaining the ignorance of the mistaken Jews is both significant and ambiguous. The willingness of the narrator in the Fourth Gospel to explain curious statements (Jn 2:21; 7:39; 21:23) stands in stark contrast to his silence here. The motivation for this silence is open to various conjectures but the importance of this silence cannot be ignored. Several questions develop from this statement and it is worth developing these points in full.

The allusion to Jesus as being non-Davidic has been viewed as a form of irony.<sup>263</sup> Obviously if the readers of the Fourth Gospel were familiar with other Christian writings they would know Jesus was born in Bethlehem and was indeed Davidic. The lack of perception of the true nature of Jesus rather reveals the ignorance of what is truly important. The subtlety of expression used here rather aids in the development of the Fourth Gospel's message. Jesus is the Messiah and is a descendant of David but the unskillful misunderstand his origin. Other commentators are not so sure and the issue of whether the Fourth Gospel supports a Davidic heritage for Jesus is a topic of interest. Brown would even note that the dissociation of David from Jesus is "the prevailing

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<sup>263</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 329.

view.”<sup>264</sup> While that view may be the prevailing one, it deserves a critical reconsideration.

The possibility that the christology of the Fourth Gospel is non-Davidic would raise questions about the influence of Hellenistic sources on its theology. The gnostic myth of Bultmann would appear to have received some substantiation. By downplaying the role of David the Davidic covenant could be substituted for another motif. Yet to replace David would not be a simple task even if it was desired. For the Fourth Gospel to represent Jesus as being a non-Davidic messiah would place the Johannine community in opposition to at least three different streams of Jewish tradition in the late Second Temple era. The Qumran interest in a Davidic messiah, the tradition behind the *Psalms of Solomon*, and the Synoptic tradition all point to an interest in a Davidic messiah. For the Fourth Gospel to suggest or even equivocate on the Davidic identity of Jesus would suggest a schism within early Christianity. Such a schism while possible needs also to be balanced with other considerations. The Fourth Gospel was written after the Synoptics and during a profound change for Jews and Christians.

One response that deserves consideration is that the Fourth Gospel was aware of all these elements but in the context of the post-70 CE era constructed the argument for Jesus’ Davidic descent very, very carefully. The Fourth Gospel is careful to distance itself from untoward displays of regal grandeur. The omission of David from the kingly description of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel merits consideration. As Carson notes “the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven, so much a part of the preaching of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and the central theme of his narrative parables, is scarcely mentioned as such.”<sup>265</sup> The place of David in the Fourth Gospel is markedly different than in the Synoptics. In the triumphal entry into Jerusalem Jesus is described as the King of Israel in the Fourth Gospel but not as the son of David. Both Matthew and Mark in their versions of the triumphal entry explicitly mention the crowd connecting Jesus with David. The angel tells Mary in Lk 1:32 that Jesus will be given the throne of David his father. Luke’s language could easily be understood as advocating the return of the Davidic kingdom to replace the Roman emperor. Clearly this type of language could be

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<sup>264</sup>Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (ed. Francis J. Moloney: New York: Doubleday, 2003), 135.

<sup>265</sup>Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 22.

viewed as dangerous and the narrator of the Fourth Gospel would have known this if he paid attention to the currents in Roman politics.<sup>266</sup> Jesus needed to be described very carefully in the Fourth Gospel.

### **3.17 Rome and David**

The question of why Davidic descent should be an important issue for Roman policing of its Jewish population after the Jewish Revolt deserves further reflection. Before the discovery of the Scrolls the evidence for a Davidic focus for the M/messiah in Second Temple Judaism was predominately seen in early Christianity. The reality that a Davidic messiah was a significant hope of at least certain members of the Qumran community indicates that the breadth of interest in Second Temple Judaism in a Davidic figure was much wider than previously assumed. This suggests a context for Josephus' report of an oracle of a world-wide ruler (Josephus, *J. W.* 6.5.4) that could be interpreted as a return to the Davidic kingdom. Clearly certain of the Qumran texts could be interpreted as endorsing a world-wide Davidic kingdom. 4Q174, 4Q161, and possibly the *War Scroll* indicate that an eschatological Davidic messiah was expected to rule the nations. The strong possibility emerges that the Roman authorities became conscious of the Davidic messianic interest because it represented a security threat to their control of both the Diaspora and the Jewish populated areas of Palestine.

The possibility that the Fourth Gospel was redacted to prevent Roman and even Christian readers from drawing the wrong impression needs to be carefully considered. Eusebius quotes Hegesippus as stating that Vespasian attempted a purge of all descendants of David (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.12) after the capture of Jerusalem in 70 CE. His son Domitian attempted to complete this task once he became emperor (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.19) and according to Eusebius' quotation of Hegesippus the emperor Domitian interrogated the descendants of Jude the brother of Jesus because they were suspected of being from David's royal seed (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.20). Eusebius again

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<sup>266</sup> It is also worth considering that the position that the M/messiah must be Davidic is represented as coming from persons outside the Palestinian Jesus movement. Historically this is tenable based on information gained from Qumran texts and the *Psalms of Solomon* that movements outside early Christianity expected a Davidic messiah. The audience for this statement would be from a much different time than Jesus' era. Assuming a post-70 CE date for the composition of the Fourth Gospel, this is a provocative statement to place on the lips of any Jew from Palestine. Perhaps that provides an additional reason why it is handled without editorial comment and is given by someone who is not a disciple.

quotes Hegesippus in describing the martyrdom of Symeon in the reign of Trajan. Symeon was not only accused of being a Christian but also of being a descendant of David (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.32). Whether Eusebius' statements are legend<sup>267</sup> or historical data<sup>268</sup> to be studied, the fact cannot be disputed that he is witness to a tradition that equated Davidic descent with suspected treason in the post-70 CE world.

Using the language of the Synoptics in describing Jesus would be courting trouble if the Fourth Gospel was completed during the reign of a Flavian or even Trajan. Using language that focused on a spiritual rather than temporal kingship for Jesus would be much less inflammatory to the Roman authorities. Indeed Eusebius describes Jude's grandsons using this sort of language in describing Jesus to placate Domitian (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.20). Clearly the Davidic descent of Jesus was a highly charged issue in the generation after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. The fact that Jesus was executed by Pilate as a messianic pretender was a historical fact that could prove to be both embarrassing and dangerous to the Johannine community. It needed to be handled in a careful and yet theologically persuasive way.

So how was this question handled? The irony of the question of Jn 7:41, 42 in which certain Jews ask whether Jesus was from Galilee is doubly ironic for the Johannine community. The person of David was a flashpoint to Domitian but the Davidic Messiah was a hope for many Jews outside of Jewish Christianity. The authority of Scripture could not be compromised but giving blunt answers in dangerous times was an invitation

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<sup>267</sup> The credibility of Eusebius as a historian has been attacked from different vantage points. He is sometimes viewed as being superstitious, prejudiced, or simply flat wrong in his assessment of historical events. Doubtless he is an imperfect source. Ancient historians wrote with their own standards and categories and that needs to be remembered. That does not mean that this account can be summarily dismissed. The importance of his statements on the Roman interest in Davidic descendants is part of the cultural fabric of ancient Christianity. Even if Hegesippus invented this story and Eusebius slavishly copied it, it was part of the early Christians self-understanding. They believed Domitian was determined to kill them and they needed to explain why they had to be careful. Thus the power of a legend could have the same impact on the Johannine community as the most solid historical fact. The narrative approach used in this study seeks to understand why events occurred even if the historical accuracy of various incidents like this account of Domitian is controversial. If this story is a legend, an explanation needs to be found why Hegesippus fabricated it. Regardless of its veracity the early Christian fear of Domitian is evident and this fear would have had an impact on the Johannine community and how they presented Jesus.

<sup>268</sup> The strange thing would be if a Roman emperor was not interested in rival kings. Domitian's alleged cruelty may have been exaggerated but his interest in potential rebels is only political common sense. His father had fought the Jewish Revolt. It would be very strange indeed for Domitian to ignore any potential threat. It could be argued that Domitian was only being prudent in examining the pedigree of the Jewish Christians he interviewed.

for disaster. It is in the portrayal of Jesus in his actions in the Fourth Gospel that the special challenges of the post-70 CE world are met while still communicating in a manner that reached the largest number of listeners.

### **3.18 Domitian as Lord and Master**

3.18 Suetonius' description of Domitian has Domitian appropriate to himself the title "Lord and God" (Suetonius, *Dom.* 12. 13). This awarding of presumptuous titles should come as no surprise. The prevalence of the imperial cult in the reign of Domitian certainly fits the description of one who styled himself "Lord and Master." His temerity in giving himself this title does suggest comparisons with Caligula and the swelling of the imperial ego to a large size.<sup>269</sup> Domitian was also a politician living in an age of diminishing certainty after the deaths of his father and brother and it is his personal fears that may help explain his response to the growth of Christianity.

Suetonius describes Domitian as being paranoid for his personal security and given that he was ultimately assassinated it could be argued he had a valid concern for his safety. He was alert to any possible rival or threat and the use of his spies in gathering information for him would be critical in nixing any plot at the earliest possible moment. Two particular executions are most relevant for this study. He is described as executing the nephew of the former emperor Otho for the crime of celebrating his uncle's birthday. This indicates even a personal interest in a dead emperor was a cause for concern. Moreover he is also described as executing a certain Mettius Pompusianus who became a target because his birth had apparently happened under the auspices of signs of imperial greatness. This individual further made a habit of carrying a map of the known world and of giving the impression of being unduly interested in the history of generals and kings (Suetonius, *Dom.* 12.10). Thus any man who could be linked or showed interest in royalty was a possible target.

The testimony of Suetonius provides an important perspective for Eusebius' account of Domitian searching for the descendants of David. Whether Domitian was paranoid, cruel, or simply realistic about his chances for survival, the evidence from both a Roman aristocrat and a church historian indicate that Domitian was interested in any

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<sup>269</sup> Suetonius may be prejudiced against Domitian but he was also influential. The Johannine community had to exist in a Roman ruled empire in which the history of an emperor was politically charged.

potential competitor.<sup>270</sup> He was furthermore prepared to go to extreme lengths to achieve his ends in preserving his personal security. Of particular interest for this study are certain parallels between Suetonius' and Eusebius' accounts. According to Suetonius Domitian showed an interest in eliminating an eccentric Roman noble who had illusions of grandeur and who apparently carried a map of the world. The claims of one Jesus of Nazareth, a descendant of Israel's most powerful king David, who proclaimed a message of the coming of the kingdom of heaven, could be expected to excite attention from Domitian. Any male relatives of David and particularly those who proclaimed Jesus to be Savior of the world could be expected to attract Domitian's attention. Indeed as noted earlier the strange thing would be if Domitian was not interested in the actions of the followers of the Davidic Jesus.

It is in the context of these events that the title "Lord and Master" needs to be understood. It is found in the Fourth Gospel but the title itself deserves comparison with other references from Torah, the New Testament, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. In Jn 20:28 Thomas calls Jesus  $\text{hO } \kappa\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \nu\ \mu\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \tilde{\nu}\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\ \nu\ \mu\omicron\upsilon$  after Jesus is reported risen. The affirmation of Jesus' sovereign power by a skeptical disciple is all the more poignant given Pilate's mocking of Jesus with the title "King of the Jews". The title of "Lord and Master" also brings to mind comparisons with Dt 10:17 in which Yahweh is described as God of gods and Lord of lords and Rev 19:16 in which Jesus is described as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. For the Jewish Christian the uniqueness of Jesus as the divine fulfillment of the Godhead is clearly portrayed in these lines. Further 4Q403 1.34 makes mention of Yahweh being both God of gods and King of Kings and the contrast between Domitian's title and this text is striking. For even non-Christian Jews Domitian's title challenges the very core of their belief in the sovereignty of Yahweh.

The story of Thomas addressing Jesus is unique to the Fourth Gospel. The possibility that the narrative of Thomas' encounter with Jesus deliberately uses language that would invite comparison with that used by Domitian is readily apparent. He had come of age at the time his father was fighting the Jewish Revolt and he would have a

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<sup>270</sup> Even if it is argued that Suetonius exaggerates or invents anti-Domitian stories, it is worth noting that Suetonius' portrayal of Domitian is consistent with a Christian source. Suetonius was not Jewish or Christian and yet his portrayal of Domitian fits with the Christian view. That is very strong evidence to support Eusebius' portrayal of Domitian.

strong personal interest in understanding the currents of Jewish politics. If Revelation is written against the background of his persecutions against the church, it would demonstrate a high level of hostility between him and the church.

Even if Domitian is the victim of unfair coverage from Suetonius and Eusebius, the fear of Domitian expressed in these two sources indicates a motive for the Johannine community to be careful in discussing Jesus' Davidic heritage. Why should the Fourth Gospel identify Jesus as being Davidic if they feared it would court special attention from Domitian? Note this fear was apparent in Eusebius even if the historical basis of this fear is open to debate. Fears can be logical or illogical but fear is still real. Since the Johannine community in all probability was composed of socially marginalized persons, the narrator of the Fourth Gospel was dealing with an underprivileged audience. Those who have suffered indignities from the powerful learn to be careful in their future relations with the elite of society. It is in the hinge of this dilemma that the Davidic question in the Fourth Gospel is addressed.

### **3.19 Conclusion: The Need for Carefulness in the Fourth Gospel**

The figure of Moses towers over late Second Temple Judaism. The precritical world of late Second Temple Judaism viewed Moses as the author of the Torah. It is that world this study examines. The authority of Moses was extremely significant for not just Jewish Christians but for the Qumran community as well. His authority stood behind Torah and for the Johannine community to proclaim Jesus as Messiah necessitated an engagement with his authority and with Torah. This engagement was not an option. The Johannine community needed to demonstrate the credibility of its message but how it did so tells a great deal about its conception of how Jesus fulfilled Torah.

The messengers who communicate Jesus' compatibility with Jewish tradition are predominantly outsiders or opponents of Jesus. When John the Baptist affirms Jesus is the Lamb of God, Jesus is being endorsed by someone who is on the margins of respectable society. When Pilate writes his *titulus*, his irony affirms Jesus' kingship even as he executes Jesus. Jesus is shown to fulfill the requirements of the true Messiah but the witnesses are not conventional ones. This accomplishes two objectives for the Fourth Gospel. Jesus is affirmed as being a faithful Jew and his message is given in terms that are understandable to the marginalized of society. The message of how Jesus was the

Messiah needed to be communicated in language that would be understandable to those who read and listened to this text. This was not easy as the message needed to penetrate a social world in which literacy was limited. Having the Samaritan woman affirm Jesus when Nicodemus is revealed as being uncertain of his identity provides affirmation for the wisdom of the weak against the knowledge of the great.

Embracing the marginalized came at a price. The activities of John the Baptist and Jesus would come under a careful scrutiny given the events of the Jewish Revolt. John the Baptist preached a message of repentance and his preaching cost him his head. Linking Jesus with John the Baptist would not endear the Johannine community with the powerful in Roman society after the Jewish Revolt. John the Baptist and Jesus were both executed on political charges. Jesus being the friend of social outcasts sounds heroic in the contemporary world; for Roman ears such concern could sound dangerous.

The Jesus movement after the Jewish Revolt could be viewed by Jewish rebels as a failure in dealing with Rome because he was executed while the Romans could conclude Jesus was just another Jewish bandit. Thus the risk of dealing with two alienated cultures was real. At the same time the failure of the Jewish Revolt would be an opportunity to reach frustrated Jews while at the same time demonstrating to Rome that Jesus represented a kingdom of another world. It is this dual challenge that becomes the focus of how Jesus as Messiah is presented in the Fourth Gospel. The social outcasts who embraced Jesus would need to be careful in how they described Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.

## **Chapter Four: The Roman Interest in Jewish Palestine**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a historical context for understanding how the identification of Jesus as Messiah could make early Christianity in general and the Johannine community in particular targets for political persecution. The title of this chapter reflects the possible negative reaction of the Roman government to any Jewish movement that sought to nominate its own king. The development of the argument in this chapter traces the evolution of the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties as they became the dominant political powers in Jewish Palestine and as Rome becomes a factor in the political life of Jewish Palestine. Both the Johannine community and the Qumran community had to write, to speak, and to teach in the context of Roman rule in Jewish Palestine. For the Johannine community it was a fact of life from its very inception. For the Qumran community which claims a pre-history that reaches into the last decades of Seleucid rule in Judea, Roman rule comes roughly at the midpoint of its existence. For the Johannine community the need to deal with Jewish and non-Jewish members in the decades after the Jewish Revolt necessitated dealing with the history of Roman-Jewish relations.

Any presentation of Jesus as king would be interpreted by Rome on the basis of what had happened in the recent past with these dynasties. Since the Fourth Gospel was written after the Jewish Revolt, the problem of dealing with the fallout of this event would be very pressing due to heightened Roman sensitivities on this issue. The Jewish Revolt combined with Nero's persecution of the Christians in Rome suggests Jews and Christians were objects of political interest to Rome. The more contemporary academic problem of how to explain Jesus being a king without being an anti-Roman rebel grows from this dilemma. Questions concerning the Galilean identification of elements of the Jesus movement and the possibility that one of Jesus' disciples was an ex-rebel would be issues in the post-70 CE environment. Even for the Roman historians Jewish and Christian figures and events play a part in the narrative of their times. The issue of royal messianism in Qumran and Johannine thinking needs to be set in the social context of those who would be interested in what a Qumran or Johannine royal messiah would do: the Roman emperor and his most senior officials.

## **4.2 Kingship and the Scrolls**

Even before the Roman empire came to the eastern Mediterranean and Jesus was born, the Qumran community was struggling with living in a Jewish environment in which issues of kingship were front and center. The demise of the Hasmonean dynasty, the rise of Herod the Great, the career of Jesus, and the eruption of violence in Judea before the Jewish Revolt are all intimately tied to the question of kingship and royal messianism. The perception of royal messianism in Jewish Palestine would be influenced by these events and would in turn help shape further reflection on what the future of Jewish Palestine should be. While a study of Qumran literature in and of itself cannot provide a definitive answer to assessing what was the Jewish understanding of kingship between 167 BCE and 70 CE, it can provide a critical element in answering that bigger question. The second chapter of this study provided evidence for what Qumran literature contributes on the subject of royal messianism. The importance of the Qumran viewpoint or even viewpoints on royal messianic thought lies in that it could influence opinion within the wider Jewish community and provide a course of action in opposition to Roman rule. Since the early history of the Qumran community goes back to at least the Maccabean era, the importance of the Hasmonean dynasty needs to be considered. The third chapter of this study shows the possible implications of John the Baptist being linked to the more militant ideas expressed in the Isaiah peshers and *2 Baruch*. This highlights the importance of understanding the Herodian rise to power. The Romans did not come into a political vacuum and the topic of a royal messiah provides part of the context in which they operated in Jewish Palestine. To understand how the Fourth Gospel needed to deal with the question of Jesus being Davidic it is necessary to understand the historical evolution of Jewish Palestine.

### **4.3 1 Maccabees, the Hasmoneans, Torah, and Qumran**

To understand the world that followed the fall of Jerusalem to Pompey in 63 BCE it is necessary to understand the world that predated it. The most important event of the second century BCE for Jewish history was the Maccabean Revolt which occurred during the middle of that century. This revolt is recorded in 1 Maccabees which serves as the primary history most available to scholarship today. This text proclaims the defense of Torah and Jewish religious distinctiveness as the rationale for the revolt against pagan

overlords (1 Macc 2:27). While its placement outside the Jewish canon has given it a chequered history of interpretation, its role as a primary source document for the Maccabean Revolt is very significant. As a historical witness this explanation of Maccabean actions needs to be evaluated critically. As a popular record of events this defense of Hasmonean origins would be useful in dealing with latter internal Jewish challenges. Those who would criticize the legitimacy of the Hasmoneans would need to criticize the legitimacy of the Maccabean Revolt. Thus even if this text dramatically reinterpreted historical events to suit Hasmonean interests, it still serves as an important factor in shaping the collective Jewish memory of the Maccabean Revolt.

Throughout the book there are narrative segments that contain speeches of principal characters in the story. To summarize them all would be beyond the scope of this study but one key figure stands out as the source for legitimacy for Maccabean actions. Perhaps the most pivotal figure is Mattathias the priest who launches the revolt and whose five sons become the protagonists against foreign rule. He is the instigator of the revolt and his famous sons are recorded as following in his footsteps. The speech immediately before he launches the revolt is thus particularly significant as a defense of his actions. His statement to Seleucid authority that “I and my sons and my brothers will continue to live by the covenant of our ancestors” (1 Macc 2:21 NRSV) puts the issue of historical loyalty to a Jewish identity front and center in the defense of his actions. He makes this a communal action by including his network of family associates. Further to this he states that “Far be it from us to desert the law and the ordinances” (1 Macc 2:22 NRSV) which clearly reads as a call to maintain Torah in an undiluted form. His loyalty to his priesthood was more than a ritualistic commitment as narrated in this passage. His motivation to disobey Antiochus the current Seleucid ruler was not politics, money, or simply justice. It was his commitment to his understanding of Judaism that compelled him to resist the pagan king (1 Macc 2:22).

The record of his final words (1 Macc 2: 49-65) is equally significant as it gives a final call to action in some ways reminiscent of Jacob’s (Gen 49) and Joshua’s (Josh 24). He calls to mind eleven historical heroes<sup>271</sup> and comments on their significance. The only

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<sup>271</sup> Abraham, Joseph, Phineas, Joshua, Caleb, David, Elijah, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, and Daniel are the names given. The omission of Moses, Aaron, Jacob, and Isaac with the inclusion of the three

king mentioned is David and David is judged as receiving an eternal throne because of his mercy. He is placed between Caleb (1 Macc 2: 56) and Elijah (1 Macc 2:58). Caleb received his inheritance from the Promised Land and Elijah ascends to heaven because of his ardor for maintaining the law. These two themes of land and law fit well with the message of 1 Maccabees and praising the memory of a merciful David would be useful in the early days of the Hasmonean kingship. Whether this statement should be viewed as deriving from the Davidic covenant of 2 Sam 7 or not, the explicit acknowledgment of David's eternal throne is an admission of both the importance of David and the Davidic dynasty to Jewish history. Regardless Mattathias is recorded as endorsing David's eternal throne as a touchstone in the present struggle. Even in a history of the Maccabean Revolt David is still an important historical figure and his memory resonated.

What role the early form of the Qumran community would have had in the Maccabean Revolt is difficult to ascertain. Equating the Qumran community with a faction of the Maccabean Revolt or even describing it as a breakaway movement from it is possible but not certain. What is safer to assert is that a rejection of pagan contamination of the temple cult would meet with its approval. Any movement that approved of David as king would fit with the sentiments expressed in 4QMMT concerning David as model king. In this regard there are certain affinities between 1 Maccabees and 4QMMT which deserve to be recognized.

The fight does not end with Mattathias and this continuing fight will have implications for the Qumran community. He calls for those who can to "observe, from generation to generation, that none of those who put their trust in him lack strength" (1 Macc 2: 61 NRSV). This is significant because it is a clarion call for keeping the revolution alive. His death was a beginning and not an end. His sons Simeon (1 Macc 2:65) and Judas Maccabeus (1 Macc 2: 66) are both recommended as being champions of continuing the fight. That his movement did not die is clear according to 1 Macc 3:2. Those who had helped Mattathias now fight for Judas Maccabeus. Generational transference has now taken place in the struggle against foreign paganism and so has the transference of legitimacy to lead the revolution at least as recorded by 1 Maccabees.

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friends of Daniel raises the question of whether there was an editorial purpose in the historical collage given here. One possible theme for the eleven personages mentioned is their ability to triumph over foreign kings and pagan religious influence.

After the writing of 1 Maccabees the emergence of the Hasmonean dynasty took place and its concern for Torah was not consistent with the standard expressed by Mattathias the priest. The union of the offices of high priest and king by Alexander Jannaeus is clearly in contravention of the law of the king in Dt 17 and its interpretation in the *Temple Scroll*. The irony that a careful reading of Torah would challenge the correctness of various Hasmonean practices is a matter of record. The offices of high priest and king were separate when Samuel anointed Saul king and perhaps it was his intrusion into the sacrificial role that led to Saul's condemnation. 2 Chron 26:18 records the condemnation of king Uzziah for offering incense on the altar and the resistance to this act by the high priest. Admittedly the role of the king in cultic worship throughout the Deuteronomistic history is prominent but nowhere is a union of the offices of king and high priest sanctioned. It can be expected that the Qumran community would be motivated to act based on the strong interest in 4QMMT for both proper halakah and emulation of the good king David. If they wanted further motivation they could turn to 1 Macc 2:54 in which Mattathias the priest celebrates his ancestor Phineas for receiving the eternal priesthood because of his zeal. The Hasmonean merger of king and high priest was a flashpoint for any group that wanted to see the model of separate king and high priest maintained.

#### **4.4 Herod the Great and Legitimacy**

The Qumran community's beginning was probably closely tied to the Maccabean era but the rise of the Herodians represented a different challenge to Jews in Palestine. The rise of the Herodian line is tied to the region of Idumea and the suspicion or even the outright challenge to that line that it was not really Jewish (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.9.1) is evident in Josephus' description of their collective history. That the Herodian dynasty had a chequered place in Jewish lore outside Josephus is evident as well. The Matthean infancy narrative shows Herod the Great as being perturbed at Magi searching for a Davidic king.<sup>272</sup> The implication of a threat to him from a genuinely Jewish king is evident. Herod the Great was viewed quite probably viewed as a foreign king by the most

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<sup>272</sup> The question of the historicity of this event has often been debated by contemporary scholarship. Regardless of the historicity of the Magi's visit, the literary focus of Herod the Great being troubled by a possible king from the Davidic line in a first century CE document is worth noting as a theme because it reveals what his historical Jewish enemies thought were his weaknesses.

patriotic Jews of his era and he would have felt the need to protect his position.

In the interest of fairness it is important to note that more recent examinations of Herod the Great have painted a more nuanced picture of his reign. Kokkinos in his careful and wide ranging study of the Herodian dynasty has argued that Josephus and other sources portrayal ethnic groups in a manner that needs to be reconsidered.<sup>273</sup> Kokkinos in his study views Herod the Great as having a complex set of identities in which his culture was Hellenism but his religion of record was Judaism.<sup>274</sup> Herod the Great may have been viewed as not being truly Jewish by Josephus but Kokkinos notes that Herod the Great may have been viewed as being representative of a Jewish perspective to those outside Jewish Palestine.<sup>275</sup> Kokkinos sees this view as lacking in sophistication but the impression of Herod the Great being viewed as too Jewish by some and not Jewish enough by others is very possible.

By embracing a middle-of-the-road approach Herod the Great would not satisfy those who wanted complete consistency in his practice of Judaism. Since the Qumran community embraced purity of practice with a passion, there is no reason to believe they would accept Herod the Great's temporizing. Hence even if Herod the Great was not the completely sinister figure popular lore has made him, the perception of him being suspect in matters of faith would have been a problem with those who wanted no contact with Hellenism. Richardson would describe Herod the Great as having a faith that was uninterested in messianic speculation but open to cooperation with Rome.<sup>276</sup> Given that the Qumran community was interested in messianic issues and the elimination of the Kittim, it is hard to see this community having a favorable view of Herod the Great.

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<sup>273</sup>Nikos Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty Origins, Role in Society and Eclipse* (JSPSS 30; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 361.

<sup>274</sup> Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty*, 351.

<sup>275</sup> Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty*, 348.

<sup>276</sup>Peter Richardson, *King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 295.

It is with Herod the Great that the issue of foreign bodyguards becomes quite open. At his funeral his guard led the procession (Josephus, *Ant.* 17.8.3). Given that a prime motivation for foreign bodyguards was their assumed loyalty, it would seem axiomatic that Herod the Great trusted foreigners more than the Jewish populace. Given that the guard would have been of pagan background, Herod the Great's use of them is in direct contradiction to the model expressed in the *Temple Scroll*. Herod the Great's model of spies, guards, and a security network (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.8.8) was based on fear and not on solidarity with Torah. The linkage of a theology based on providential care for the Jewish nation as seen in 1 Maccabees and in Qumran literature is set on its head by Herod the Great. The fact that he relied on a foreign born army to keep himself in power would not help his standing with Jewish patriots. It was an instrument of Herod the Great's foreign policy within the Roman empire and he showed a strong willingness for it to be used as an interdependent part of the Roman imperial system.<sup>277</sup> It was an expeditionary force for Mark Anthony in his struggles with Octavian and not focused on the defense of Israel. Herod the Great's actions indicated that personal survival within the Roman system was his primary goal.

An alternative view to consider is that he had no choice in his actions. The role of Herod the Great in appealing to the sensitivities of Jews and non-Jews in his client kingdom could be viewed as a pragmatic response to dealing with a culturally diverse population. He trusted foreigners because they trusted him. Herod the Great did provide a measure of stability during his reign and in the ancient world stability was a precious commodity. The fact that his death provoked unrest and violence suggests that the stability he brought lived and died with his own personal power.

It is not only his personal protection that identifies Herod the Great as an alien to Jewish tradition but his actions in rebuilding the Second Temple point in this direction as well. David was not permitted to build the First Temple. When David was told by Nathan the prophet to desist from building the Temple the rationale given was that his son would build it as a sign of the continuation of David's dynasty (2 Sam 7:13; I Chron 17:12). Herod the Great as the founder of his own Roman sanctioned dynasty authorizes the

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<sup>277</sup> It was only when he used it to defend his border with his Nabatean neighbors in the latter part of his reign (12 BCE) without Roman permission that Augustus felt the need to admonish him. Herod the Great's army was his by Roman permission.

rebuilding of the Temple without prophetic directive. Ezek 40-48 and its use in the *Temple Scroll* strongly indicate that total obedience to Yahweh is required for a godly king of Israel. The concerns for holiness and separateness that marks the future temple building of the *Temple Scroll* were not hallmarks of Herod the Great. His careful political policy of only supporting pagan temples and the imperial cult outside of Judea and of exclusively supporting Judaism within Judea does not fulfill the expectations of the *Temple Scroll*. His interest in building a temple at Samaria (Josephus, *Ant.* 15.8.8) demonstrates that he was prepared to provide an alternative to the Temple at Jerusalem.

This creates a strong contrast between the historical interpretations of David and Herod the Great. David who led Israel to its greatest glory as an independent kingdom submits to Yahweh's directive but Herod the Great as a foreign client king is independent of Yahweh. David's dynasty is sanctioned and sealed by his son becoming king and building the Temple at Yahweh's behest but Herod the Great does it all by himself. There is a fundamental incongruity here. If Yahweh is "King of Kings" and His earthly king is His servant, how can a legitimate king of Israel acknowledge foreign domination by a Roman emperor who is worshipped as a god? The claims of Augustus and his assistant Herod are mutually incompatible with Yahweh's.

#### **4.5 Second Temple Overview**

The larger issue of what constituted a worthy king still existed in Jewish discourse. Jewish discussions of kingship occurring outside of Qumran literature in the Second Temple Period demonstrate that this topic was not unique to any particular sect or movement within Judaism. Some of these were framed in Hellenistic terms as treatises or dialogues on kingship with a Jewish perspective leavening the analysis. The *Letter of Aristeas*, Philo's discussion of Moses as king, and even Josephus' statements on kings and kingship<sup>278</sup> are three examples of this interest in analyzing kingship from a mixed Jewish and non-Jewish perspective. Others such as the *Psalms of Solomon* were more interested in eschatological fulfillment than detailed analysis of the ideal king. Consequently they show less influence from Hellenism than that seen in Philo's works on

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<sup>278</sup> Josephus of course writes after 70 CE about events in the Second Temple Period and this colors his perspective but this should not eliminate his record. He lived through the last decades of the Second Temple Period and is the only major eyewitness for that era that survives to the present. Use of his material with critical care to his *Tendenz* is the best approach.

kingship. This suggests different shades of opinion were flowing in late Second Temple Judaism in which issues of kingship, eschatology, and piety were discussed. Hence no view should be dismissed as narrowly sectarian since they all contribute to a widespread debate within Judaism.

From disparate sources ranging from the *Letter of Aristeas* to the book of Mark kingship was an important subject in Second Temple Judaism. That was the only unifying point on the matter as the solutions advanced for dealing with the issue varied greatly. The Jewish Hellenistic viewpoints generally placed a premium on the need for wise thinking by the king and recognition of the new historical reality of foreign domination. The theologically concerned material like the *Psalms of Solomon* took its inspiration from the history of the Jewish people. When Qumran literature speaks on kingship it gives its own perspective within Second Temple Judaism on what should be done in a debate that was as diverse as Second Temple Judaism was. Yet they are all important witnesses to the ideas circulating in late Second Temple Judaism on what is appropriate in a king and by extension what is appropriate in a royal messiah. When the Jesus movement of Jewish Palestine begins to engage these issues it is doing so in the context of continuing an earlier dialogue.

In evaluating the way the text of the Fourth Gospel was composed it is helpful to examine whether there is evidence that early Christianity was alert to the political circumstances of the first century CE. Traditionally scholarship from the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries has often been engaged in a debate as to whether the statements made by various authors/redactors are historically accurate. Less attention has been paid to the fact that they form an important theme within the narrative. The interest in David seen in 1 Maccabees and 4QMMT combined with the debates within late Second Temple Judaism on kingship indicate that the convergence of Roman power with Jewish expectations occurred as the message of Jesus being the Christ was moving forward in Christian circles. The composition of the Fourth Gospel was done in a world in which the Davidic kingship was becoming an issue not just for Jewish interest but also for Roman interest as well.

#### 4.6 Implications of the Dating of the Fourth Gospel

If the date of the Fourth Gospel in its final form is taken as being c. 95 CE as has been argued in a previous chapter, this date has implications beyond establishing its relationship with the Synoptics and the destruction of the Second Temple. The later the date for a final edition for the Fourth Gospel the greater the possibility that community concerns played a significant role in shaping its final form. Traditionally a later date has been viewed as increasing the possibility that gnostic tendencies would have had an opportunity to influence this text. Yet focusing on possible gnostic influences on this text should not be done to the exclusion of other concerns.

Generously 100 CE is probably the very latest realistic date for living witnesses to Jesus' ministry to still have been alive. If the Fourth Gospel was composed during the reign of Domitian, this text would have been composed during the twilight of the survivors of the original Jesus movement and in full knowledge of the results of the Jewish Revolt. Pushing its final composition beyond that date removes it by a generation or more from the end of the Jewish Revolt and by two or more generations from the Crucifixion. The most probable date for the Fourth Gospel is then at a crucial juncture in both the history of early Christianity and in the evolution of the Roman empire. The generational change in both worlds necessitated a change in communication strategy.

One often overlooked factor in evaluating the dating of the Fourth Gospel is any possible relation to the works of Josephus. If the *Jewish Wars* was written in c.75 CE and *Antiquities* in c. 95 CE, it is quite probable that Josephus' works at least in part predate the Fourth Gospel. Josephus' interpretation of both early and recent Jewish history may have been a challenge to early Christianity. Josephus' description of Jesus as being the Christ in *Ant.* 18.3.3 has been almost universally viewed as an interpolation but his reference to Jesus as being a teacher is quite probable. Josephus' endorsement of Roman sovereignty was incompatible with the claims that early Christians made for the authority of Jesus. Jesus was much, much more than a teacher to them and they were not shy about stating their claims. This could create tension with Josephus' work. The Fourth Gospel would have predated or followed *Antiquities* by only a few years. Given the high probability that the *Jewish Wars* preceded the Fourth Gospel by twenty to thirty years, the composition of the Fourth Gospel may have been influenced by the historical currents

Josephus influenced. While Josephus' work was written with his Roman patrons in mind, inevitably it would reach a wider Jewish and by extension Christian audience.

The points that have been raised do not establish that the Fourth Gospel was written with Josephus' works in mind or that the narrator of the Fourth Gospel read Josephus. Rather they are made to demonstrate that the milieu in which the Fourth Gospel was formed was different than that of the Synoptics and that Jewish expressions of identity still existed after the fall of Jerusalem. Josephus was an important part of that milieu and that should not be ignored. Further it was still important for Josephus to present a view of Jewish nationhood even though he acknowledged the supremacy of the emperor. The situation of the Jewish world had changed dramatically with the demise of the Temple but the need to define Jewish expectations still continued.

#### **4.7 The Rise of the Flavian Dynasty**

The Jewish Revolt coincided or perhaps even helps shape a significant turning point in Roman imperial history. Nero was emperor when the revolt began in 66 CE but Vespasian the commander of the force sent to pacify Palestine was emperor when major combat ended in 70 CE. This succession was not planned as Nero committed suicide in 68 CE as significant field commanders fought to make themselves emperor. The infamous year of the four emperors, 69 CE, demonstrated that the imperium depended ultimately on the support of the legions and he that won the last battle was emperor.

Vespasian's ability to manage the unfolding political and military situation to his advantage meant that by 69 CE he had become the inheritor of the Roman empire. It is ironic that Augustus and Tiberius sought to maintain at least the illusion of respect for the republic but their successors fought each other to impose their own personal military dictatorship on the empire. For political power in the Roman empire had by Vespasian's time become personalized to an extent that more closely resembled the despotism of the oriental and Hellenistic kingdoms of the east than the democracy of the old Republic.

The question of how much influence the Jewish Revolt had on the internal machinations of Rome state politics is hard to judge. Clearly the stresses of the Jewish Revolt and the early failures of Roman arms did nothing to enhance the stability of Nero's administration. Nero's growing unpopularity with the Roman aristocracy and his slide into decadence existed independently of events in Palestine and it is probable that if

the Jewish Revolt had never occurred he still would have been deposed. It is important to remember that Nero chose Christians to be his scapegoat for the great fire that consumed Rome.<sup>279</sup> Given that early Christianity was closely identified with Judaism before the Jewish Revolt it would appear that Judaism had emerged as a political target to blame in the event of crisis and crisis certainly described the atmosphere of the Jewish Revolt.

In particular the Flavian dynasty would be cognizant of events in the Jewish world. Vespasian used his position as commander in Palestine to vault himself into the imperium but perhaps more importantly his first significant actions as emperor were to capture Jerusalem and to defeat the Jewish opposition in Palestine. The same wave of political and military instability that brought him to power could just as easily destroy him through the force of circumstances. Vespasian was not just fighting rebel Jews in Palestine; he was also fighting to preserve his own position.

Josephus' role as historian and apologist for the Flavians needs to be appreciated. The Flavians were his patrons and his historical works were written as a consequence of actions taken during the Jewish Revolt. Josephus may have lived and died in obscurity if the Flavians had not taken an interest in him. Josephus most certainly had his own agenda in interpreting Jewish history and his role as confidant of the Flavians needs to be recognized in this regard. Josephus was fully prepared to challenge his fellow chroniclers in his own work when he felt they distorted historical accuracy. His critique of Nicolaus of Damascus for exonerating Herod the Great for his crimes (Josephus, *Ant.* 16.7.1) shows that he was aware of the value of court history for political propaganda. If Josephus ultimately did the same for his masters, it would not be the first or the last case of hypocrisy.<sup>280</sup> Perhaps it was Nicolaus of Damascus who had the more accurate account. The role of the written word as propaganda for the elite in the Roman empire and the need to counteract that propaganda by the marginalized of society start to emerge as important themes. It is important to remember that the Fourth Gospel existed in a world in which the future of Christian dominance in the empire was centuries away and the present struggle to survive was always at hand.

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<sup>279</sup> More on this issue will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>280</sup> Even with these observations in mind, it is important to remember the contribution Josephus' work provides to our knowledge of Jewish history in the late Second Temple era. Even when Josephus' discussion of events is suspect, it is Josephus' account that often provides a basis for historical investigation. It can be frustrating to use him; it would be even more frustrating not to have him.

#### **4.8 If the Rebels Had Won<sup>1/4</sup>**

The face of Jewish Palestine would have been markedly different if the Jewish Revolt had succeeded. That is obvious from different sources of evidence one investigates whether it be Jewish, Christian, or Roman from that era. What is less obvious is what that change would have been. How independent and how stable a state would have emerged is much harder to say. Understanding who constituted the dominant faction would have required great skill. The plots and counter-plots between factions during the Jewish Revolt, would have given sway to an even greater game of high drama for political control of the new state. If the history of the Hasmonean nation-state is any guide, it would have been an amalgam of different political and religious agendas vying for center stage. In short chaotic but independent would be the best expectation that could result from the expulsion of Rome from Jewish Palestine.

The hypothetical defeat of Rome in the Jewish Revolt would not likely have meant the end of Roman interest in the land bridge between Asia and Africa known as Palestine. The strategic importance of that region of the world had conspired to make it the avenue of choice for many ancient invading armies and for this reason alone Rome would have still cared what happened there. Roman prestige would have also been challenged and this affront could not be ignored. Roman history suggests a strengthening of interest when the Roman cause flagged and sometimes even a hardening of resolve when misfortune arose.

Indeed in some ways it seems the way to guarantee Roman interest in an adversary was for the opponent to show himself an accomplished strategist. In the Second Punic War the massive Roman reverses inflicted on Rome by Hannibal at Cannae were avenged even if the cost in Roman lives was staggering. Later on the Parthian successes in the east against Crassus received a response even if it was sometimes slow in coming. In the days of Augustus the debacle of Teutoburger Wald prompted a punitive expedition to avenge this defeat. Other examples could be cited but these suffice to illustrate the point in question. The quality and skill of these responses is secondary to the fact that they occurred. If these examples of Roman reverses in the republic and early empire are any guide, Roman failure necessitated a response. A hypothetical rebel victory in the Jewish Revolt would almost certainly have demanded action. Whether it was a

diplomatic or military response, Rome responded to disaster and sought to recoup its losses. The Jewish Revolt and its aftermath were part of a chain of Roman military and diplomatic history that was bigger than one individual campaign.

It needs to be reiterated in the strongest terms that the initial stages of the Jewish Revolt were actually successful and this should not be forgotten in the light of its ultimate failure. The incompetence of the Roman response in abandoning the first siege of Jerusalem (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.19.7) shattered any myth of Roman invincibility and did untold wonders for Jewish rebel morale. Compounding the situation for the Roman interest in Jewish Palestine was the balance of power in Rome itself. The internal divisions of the Roman empire manifested in the year of the four emperors meant Rome could not give its total attention to the problem at hand. Hence the message of Josephus affirming the new pro-Flavian direction of Yahweh served a purpose. It was useful for preventing the reoccurrence of a strategically difficult problem for the Romans in general and the Flavians in particular.

#### **4.9 Roman History and Politics as Propaganda**

It is helpful to understand the context that faced the Qumran and Johannine communities by remember the perspective of the Roman interpretation of the last decades of Second Temple Judaism even apart from Josephus. In the very first part of his narration (Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.1) the Roman historian Tacitus provides a very brief synopsis of Roman history from its beginnings through to the time of Nero. There is nothing special in this account of historical events but what is significant is the role he gives himself as recorder of recent history from the time of Augustus to Nero. He promises the reader that he will be impartial and unlike other histories that were falsified by political pressure or by a motive for revenge he will stick to the facts (Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.1). Whether any historian can be truly impartial is an issue that is beyond this study and Tacitus certainly was not shy in stating his version of the facts. What is most useful for any analysis of royal messianic themes in Qumran and New Testament literature is the linkage of the role of writing, elite power, and the political events of the Roman empire. Tacitus is writing his history to counteract other versions of events that have previously been given. Tacitus even while proclaiming his integrity is admitting to be a partisan of some cause. His weapon of choice is the written word and the subjects of his analysis are

the legacies of the emperors Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. Critically these men have an influence on early Christianity and the last days of the Qumran community even if they never set foot in Jewish Palestine. Understanding how they were portrayed by Roman historians will greatly aid in comprehending how the Fourth Gospel interacted with certain themes on royal messianism found in the Qumran literature. From Josephus to Tacitus the importance of Roman history and by extension the Jewish-Roman relationship has been established and the interests of the Roman elite can thus be summarized. The maintenance of stability in the empire was the first priority. If there was to be any change, it was to come from their social world and be ratified by that same world.

#### **4.10 Rome and Sources**

Understanding Roman sources as they relate to Christianity can be a complex process. It is not easy to know how educated Romans in the late first century CE viewed the differences between Judaism and Christianity. Hostility to Judaism could equally be viewed as hostility to Christianity or not based on the degree of sophistication of the Roman critic. Evaluating that sophistication is not simple. Frend notes in his work that the Christian relationship with Rome near the turn of the first century CE was complicated.<sup>281</sup> Frend also makes an important note that in his opinion the early part of Domitian's reign was probably uneventful for Christians.<sup>282</sup> This is not surprising because while the threat of persecution was real actual persecution could be quite sporadic. The development of Roman legislation against Christians is a difficult issue<sup>283</sup> because different emperors and different bureaucrats had different levels of enthusiasm for it.<sup>284</sup> The Roman-Christians relationship was complex indeed.

Frend makes a significant point when he notes the hostility of major Latin authors like Martial and Quintilian toward Judaism in the years between 70 and 130 CE.<sup>285</sup> The hostility of sources does not mean they were accurate but their hostility was real. The hostility seen toward Judaism is mirrored in elite Roman opinion being opposed to

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<sup>281</sup>W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (repr.; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 210.

<sup>282</sup>Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church*, 211.

<sup>283</sup>G.W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 25.

<sup>284</sup>Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 25.

<sup>285</sup>Frend, *Martyrdom*, 210.

Christianity. Tacitus and Suetonius wrote with their own agendas and whether they were accurate or not in representing historical reality, they were influential. There is little doubt Tacitus and Suetonius deserve to be critiqued as having a bias. For the Johannine community that was little comfort. The imperial reality that faced this community was that they had to exist with the Roman centers of power. Using the insights of narrative criticism and postcolonialism it is apparent that the Johannine community had to survive in a challenging world. The historic mythology expressed by Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius was powerful and needed to be respected. That respect did not derive from necessarily being truthful. If postcolonial studies have taught us anything, it is that a colonial power creates its own historic myth. Those who live with the myth find ways of coping with it.

#### **4.11 Galilean Identification**

Dealing with the imagery of Roman greatness did matter to the Johannine community because they lived in that empire. The great power interests of Rome find ways of connecting back to the Fourth Gospel. Chief among these interests would be maintaining stability in Jewish Palestine. This creates a challenge for the narrator of the Fourth Gospel. Stability certainly is not in vogue in the Fourth Gospel when awkward questions are raised about Jesus' primary residence. Jn 7:41 has certain of the crowd asking in a negative manner the rhetorical question of whether the M/messiah could come from Galilee.<sup>286</sup> Jn 7:52 has the Pharisees make the same point in assessing Jesus' messianic locale as being from Galilee. Jesus is portrayed by the non-believers as coming from Galilee and not Judea.

What is also evident is that rightly or wrongly Jesus' opponents have identified him as coming from a region known to be antagonistic to Roman rule and the Fourth Gospel records it. Galilee had a history of anti-Roman activity. Judas the Galilean's leadership against Herodian and Roman rule in the early part of the first century made him famous. His appellation made no mistake of his origin. Lk 13 records an incident otherwise unknown in which Pilate is recorded as having killed a group of Galileans with their sacrifices. Speculation as to whether these Galileans were Zealots or another anti-Roman faction has not produced a link between these Galileans and the Zealots. What it

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<sup>286</sup> This issue is also addressed elsewhere in this study.

does show is that Pilate could execute religious pilgrims and the title “Galileans” was sufficient to describe them. The role of Galilee in the Jewish Revolt was no less significant. Josephus himself had fought the Romans in Galilee before he was captured and changed sides. For a text composed after the Jewish Revolt raising questions concerning Jesus’ provenance certainly is not a simple matter.

There is no question that Galilee had an important part in Jesus’ ministry. The Synoptics commonly place Jesus in Galilee and the Fourth Gospel does the same. Jn 1:35-51 record how the first group of disciples is called and they all share the common characteristic of coming from Galilee. Jn 4:45 describes how Jesus went to Galilee and the fact that he received a positive reception from the Galileans. Jn 7:1 records how Jesus felt threatened in Judea and kept his ministry focused in Galilee. Jn 21:1 describes Jesus as meeting a group of disciples at the sea of Tiberias. The narrator of the Fourth Gospel is not shy about identifying Jesus with Galilee even after the Crucifixion.

Even if Galilee had a reputation for opposition to Roman rule, Jesus’ ministry to that region was not denied. This provides a different focus to the question of whether the Gospels provide a theological geography to their accounts. For the Fourth Gospel intimating Jesus was from Galilee also carried the risk of raising Jesus’ profile in a manner that would elicit negative comparisons with the Jewish Revolt. Yet any description of Jesus’ ministry would do so because he traveled extensively. In comparing the geography of Jesus’ focus on Galilee it is worth noting the similarities and the differences with the Qumran community. Both movements were removed from Jerusalem even though both were focused on restoring Jerusalem to its former glory. The wilderness environment of the Qumran settlement was ideal territory for bandits and those who wanted to leave the populated areas of Judea behind. Those who hid the Scrolls knew the Qumran region well and anyone familiar with the wilderness in the Dead Sea region and with Jewish history was a potential danger to Rome.

#### **4.12 A Possible Militant Disciple in the Gospels**

As has been noted earlier in this study, the issue of the relationship of the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics is not simple. Furthermore the interest of the narrator of the Fourth Gospel rests on one’s understanding of the situation the Johannine community faced. The narrator writes with the knowledge that the social and political environment

the Fourth Gospel faces is complex. To reach audiences as diverse as Jewish religious leaders, slaves, freedmen, and the occasional interested Roman official required a sense of narrative balance. It has been argued in this thesis that the Fourth Gospel was composed in an environment in which the Fourth Gospel would need to deal with the messages of the Synoptics and non-Christian literature. In the post-70 CE era one of the questions the Johannine community could face is quite simple. Did Jesus support anti-Roman activities?

The answer to this question may lie in part in the descriptions of the disciples by the Synoptics. The identity of Simon the Canaanite (Mt 10:4; Mk 3:18) or Simon the Zealot (Lk 6:15; Acts 1:13) is an interesting question from the standpoint of Gospel comparisons. Both Matthew and Mark identify him as the Canaanite while Luke opts for the more sensational term. There is also no question of this being another name for Simon Peter according to the Synoptic record. The two men are identified separately and this suggests the second Simon was given his particular nickname to distinguish him from the more famous Simon Peter.

Why Luke would have any redactional motivation to designate one of Jesus' disciples as a Zealot is not readily apparent. Particularly if Luke is dated to the decade after the Jewish Revolt his mention of a disciple having links with a militant dissident movement seems strange. Josephus' portrayal of the Zealots in the Jewish Revolt is not flattering. Even allowing for bias on Josephus' part, the fact remains that the term Zealot was clearly identified with the Jewish Revolt in the immediate aftermath of the destruction of the Temple. Luke does write from a Gentile perspective and this may in part explain his difference with Matthew and Mark. Whatever his motives Luke's suggestion of a Zealot disciple is not repeated by the Fourth Gospel.

The possibility that Jesus attracted followers with chequered political and even terrorist histories should not be a surprise. The willingness of Jesus to embrace the marginalized of society including those who took the law into their own hands would be very consistent with the message that he preached. The possibility that one of his disciples had participated in anti-Roman activities should not be ignored. Admittedly having a disciple identified with a group proposing armed opposition to Rome would not enhance the credibility of the Jesus movement in the eyes of the Roman authorities.

Assuming that Luke was finished after both Mark and Matthew it would suggest that the Fourth Gospel could have been in a position to provide either confirmation or an alternative to Luke's identification of the militant Simon. It chose to do neither directly. If indeed one of the two anonymous disciples of Jn 21:2 is Simon the Canaanite or Zealot, it would make sense why his identity was concealed.

It is ironic to note that it is the Fourth Gospel which sheds the anonymity of the disciple who attacks the high priest's servant by identifying him as Simon Peter (Jn 18:10) yet it conceals the identity of other disciples. Perhaps it is irony with a distinct purpose. By identifying Simon Peter as the disciple who cut off the ear of the high priest's servant the Fourth Gospel eliminated the possibility that Simon the Canaanite/Zealot could be identified as the militant in the band of disciples.<sup>287</sup> Whether this was the express purpose of this identification is too difficult a conclusion to make. Nevertheless it does serve the purpose of eliminating Simon the Canaanite/Zealot from being an armed partisan against Rome and for Jesus. In the world of the post-70 CE empire this was a useful thing in emphasizing the differences between Jesus and the Zealots.

#### **4.13 A King by Force or Not**

The account of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand in the Fourth Gospel (Jn 6:1-15) is one of the few events in this text in which common material with all three Synoptics is found. This miracle story occurs in Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6: 30-44; and Lk 9:10-17 so there is no question of this being an independent creation of the Johannine community. The commonality of this account to all four Gospels lends support to the opinion that the Fourth Gospel was aware of the other three. Whether it rests on an independent tradition from that found in the Synoptics is another question but there is no doubt that this story was common to different parts of early Christianity. What is most significant for the purposes of this study is the explicit note of Jesus rejecting a popular kingship by the masses in response to the provision of bread (Jn 6:15). The construction of this account leaves no doubt how the Johannine community wanted Jesus to be

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<sup>287</sup> This explanation is tentative but it does explain differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics in a way that is sensitive to the post-70 CE era. Tradition has Peter dying before the Jewish Revolt and this tradition would have circulated in the post-70 CE era. Simon Peter sounds less sinister than Simon the Zealot.

portrayed. The onus for this action is based on the crowd and Jesus responds by leaving them. The suggestion that Jesus was That Prophet (Jn 6:14) seems to have played a significant part in the motivation of the crowd to make Jesus king. The link between eschatological fulfillment and popular kingship in the mind of at least a portion of the Jewish masses is evidenced in this story. If Jesus was a draft candidate for this role, it is more than possible that others had been considered for it.

The quick and sharp repudiation of this kingship also leaves no doubt to any reader that Jesus was not interested in the type of kingship that could be viewed as being rebellious to Roman rule. For those who supported the cohesion of the Roman empire this would establish Jesus' credentials as a man of peace. Conversely for those who wished to see an armed uprising of Jews against Rome Jesus appears to be someone who missed a golden opportunity to raise the standard of revolt. In the portrayal of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel the emphasis on highlighting the peaceful aspects of Jesus' ministry consistently disappoint those who want a militant David.

In all three Synoptic accounts the story of the feeding of the five thousand is presaged by Herod Antipas' misgivings about the ministry of Jesus. None of the Synoptic accounts relate that the crowd tried to make Jesus king. The Fourth Gospel does not treat with Herod Antipas and this may reflect a desire to shift the focus from an aggressive rejection of Herod Antipas to a refocusing of Jesus' ministry on meeting the needs of the people. The Fourth Gospel does not reject the Synoptic approach but it reformulates it in a manner that is more benign from a post-70 CE perspective. It is also worth considering the care given the geographical context of the events of Jn 6:1-21. This is all done while Jesus is located near the sea of Tiberias (Jn 6:1) in Galilee. The Galilean context of this account is undeniable and that suggests again that this account contained elements that needed to be handled carefully.

#### **4.14 Paul and the Royal Messiah**

The issue of the royal heritage of Jesus and the significance of his death may have been a compelling issue in the Diaspora as Jewish Christian missionaries shared their faith. In Paul's second missionary journey he focused attention on the synagogue in Thessalonica and his defense of the messianic claims of Jesus is clearly stated (Acts 17:3). It is worth considering the lines of argument revealed in this section. Paul is

recorded as feeling compelled to defend the necessity of Jesus' death as being essential to his fulfillment of the messianic office. There is no suggestion in this passage that Paul had to first convince his listeners of the necessity of a Messiah. Furthermore the appeal to the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures is made again (Acts 17:2). His Jewish opposition is recorded as accusing Jesus of having been an alternative king to the emperor (Acts 17:7). The implication is evident that Jesus' death was not a prophesied messianic sacrifice but rather punishment for being a royal pretender.

Several key points are worth isolating in this narrative. First of all Paul is portrayed as being part of an incident that involved Jesus being accused of having been a traitor to Rome. His awareness of the sensitivity of Jesus' royal status is highlighted. Secondly it suggests that early Christianity was well aware of the challenge of dealing with Jesus' death in a manner that would bring credit and not disrepute to the movement. Thirdly as an avenue of attack against this movement the charge of Jesus being an impostor king was used at a relatively early date. The events of this incident are identified as occurring well before the Jewish Revolt. Whether Luke-Acts was composed before or after the Jewish Revolt, this narrative was written for an early Christian audience indicating that in Paul's time anti-Christian attacks against Jesus as an impostor king were used.

Nor does the issue of Jesus being the royal messiah remain in Luke-Acts for Paul. The identification by Paul of Jesus' descent as being Davidic in Rom 1:3 demonstrate that Paul was totally prepared to embrace the Davidic heritage of Jesus even when contacting the church in Rome. Whether the church in Rome was predominately Jewish or Gentile, the importance of Israel in Rom 9-11 indicates that Paul was totally committed to maintain a link with Christianity's Jewish heritage. The link between Jesus and David is not diminished by Paul. The personality of Paul and the sheer force of his intellect in Romans as he systematically articulates the theology of Jesus Christ as the Son of God demand an answer. Part of the answer he demands is what is to be done with Jesus as Son of David.

Even if it assumed the Fourth Gospel is completely distinct and uninfluenced from the Synoptics, is it unaware of the writings of Paul? The assumption that the Johannine community was so insulated from the whole of early Christianity that it knew

nothing of Romans seems extraordinary. The book of Romans was written at least a generation before the Fourth Gospel and to argue that this book was unknown at the time of the publication of the Fourth Gospel to the Johannine community stretches credulity. The much more probable conclusion is that the Fourth Gospel was written in full awareness of Romans.<sup>288</sup> There is one significant difference in perspective between the Fourth Gospel and Romans. Romans clearly predate the Jewish Revolt and the Fourth Gospel most probably does not. Furthermore Paul's engagement with the Roman church occurs in all probability before the great fire in Rome in the earlier part of Nero's reign.

#### **4.15 Nero, Christianity and the Fire at Rome**

In any analysis of the Christian understanding of Roman politics the question of Nero and his blaming of the Christians for the great fire at Rome need to be evaluated. It is not from any New Testament source that this fact is learned but from the Roman historian Tacitus who records this event in his *Annals* (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44). This presents an interesting question for the study of Roman-Christian relations in the pre-70 CE period. Nero could have blamed any number of groups as being responsible for this fire but he singled out the Christians. Why he did so will probably be never fully explained but some points almost certainly provide a partial answer to his actions. If Nero was operating on the basis of political expediency, his rationale for selecting Christianity reveals something of the times in which he lived.

Nero in all probability had direct contact with prominent Jewish Christians in the latter years of his reign in his role as ultimate arbitrator of Roman justice. The tradition of Paul's imprisonment in Rome would suggest that Nero could have had contact with the leadership of the Roman church. Certainly Christians merited a response from the Roman historians. Suetonius records that Christians became a target for punishment due to their religious persuasion (Suetonius, *Nero* 6.16). Tacitus describes their faith in unflattering terms with a pointed reference to Jesus' death under Pilate (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44) and it would be a fair judgment that elite Roman opinion was unfavorably disposed toward Christians.

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<sup>288</sup> Awareness does not equate literary dependence but it does shape the narrator's understanding of the potential audience facing the reception of a text.

Nero's actions suggest he believed public opinion in Rome could be incited against the Christians and Tacitus provides mixed support for this conclusion. Tacitus is hostile to Christians but even in his hostility he admits that the cruel manner of their deaths left the Roman populace angrier at Nero than the Christians (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44). This suggests a predisposition of opinion in Rome that was prepared to believe the worst concerning an identifiable group based on little more than rumor. Nero as an embattled politician sought to exploit this situation but overplayed his hand and his own unpopularity influenced public opinion. This is an ominous observation and leads to the conclusion that Roman justice was not blind but rather mindful of values such as status and influence. If a popular emperor had made the same accusations, the implicit corollary is that the Christians would have received no sympathy regardless of their guilt or innocence.

Several lessons from the standpoint of Christian and Roman relations derive from Nero's attempt to blame the Christians for the great fire at Rome. First the rise of Christianity in approximately thirty years had made it a figure albeit a minor one in the Roman political landscape. Nero could be expected to have some idea of their numbers given the attention the Roman church would have paid to the imprisoned apostles. To be a target of Nero required<sup>289</sup> a presence large enough that he could expect the Roman elite and Roman public opinion to recognize who he was accusing. Secondly the actions of the early church were open to scrutiny from Roman authorities with political agendas of their own. Everything the Christians did could be viewed as having a political implication even if their motives were simply humanitarian. Thirdly in post-Nero Rome, Nero was the villain of the great fire. While Tacitus leaves Nero's guilt in doubt, he is straightforward in his assessment that suspicion swirled around Nero (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.38). Suetonius squarely places the blame on Nero and his attendants (Suetonius, *Nero* 6.38). The testimony of the Roman sources would indicate Nero himself was viewed as the cause of the fire. He diverted suspicion from himself by blaming the Christians. After the death of Nero many Romans and Christians could agree on at least one issue. Nero was their enemy.

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<sup>289</sup> Even if one was to argue Nero is receiving unfair treatment from Tacitus and Suetonius, their portrayal of events still makes the same point. Christians had become useful scapegoats.

The last implication to be drawn from Nero's escapade is the issue of chronology. If 66 CE is accepted as the date of the great Roman fire, it is roughly concurrent with the start of the Jewish Revolt. The larger Christian community would have been sensitized to becoming political targets through these two events. The pincers of two highly charged historical events would act as a warning to early Christians that they had become involved with imperial politics. Arguably the story of Acts indicates that they were aware of political events immediately after the crucifixion. What the reign of Nero and the Jewish Revolt demonstrate is that attention was directed from the Roman establishment toward Christians. Roman political winds were not constant and the rise and fall of emperors and the ebb and flow of war could have enormous implications for all concerned including the Christian church. It would only be prudent to pay attention to what was happening. Certainly the recipients of Paul's letter to the Romans would be advised to pay attention to what both Nero and Jesus Christ demanded of them. Certainly those who valued their lives and read the Fourth Gospel should do the same. It would only be prudent to do so.

#### **4.16 Rome, Victory, and Temples after the Jewish Revolt**

One of the striking aspects of the Roman response to defeating the insurgency in the Jewish Revolt was how that victory was celebrated and indeed even how it was turned into religious propaganda against the Jewish people. In spite of Josephus' efforts to explicate the Flavians from the charge of being anti-Jewish there is considerable evidence that there was a concerted interest among the Romans and particularly the Flavians to punish Jewish religious sensibilities. There are several pieces of evidence to examine but they all indicate in some manner that the religious component of the Jewish Revolt elicited a strong and hostile response to the Jewish religion.

The use of coinage to celebrate the triumph of Roman arms was a use of propaganda that the Romans made great use of throughout the history of the empire and the Flavians were certainly no exception. The Roman victory in the Jewish Revolt resulted in at least several different coins being struck to celebrate the Flavian and Roman victory. The common inscription to these coins was *IVDAEA CAPTA* or a variation of the same that appear from the beginning of Flavian's reign until 73 CE.<sup>290</sup> The

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<sup>290</sup>H.J. Hart, "Judea and Rome: The Official Commentary," and plates I-VI *JTS* 3 (1952): 183.

inscription makes a comeback for the year 77-78 CE and Hart suggests this may have been a ten year commemoration of the beginning of the Jewish Revolt.<sup>291</sup> These anti-Jewish propaganda coins did not end with Vespasian. Titus, Vespasian's son and successor, uses this theme for coinage early in his reign.<sup>292</sup> It would seem that the military legitimacy of the Flavian dynasty was founded on Vespasian's success in Judea and not on his ability to outmaneuver his Roman opposition. While his defeat of Roman opposition made him emperor, his defeat of the Jewish resistance was the public face of victory. He wanted his subjects to see and to remember every time they used his coinage that he had won the Jewish Revolt.

To move from coinage to taxation is a logical transition that emphasizes again the victory of Rome in the Jewish Revolt. The punishment of ethnic Jews by the imposition of a special tax, the *fiscus Judaicus*, to pay for the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus<sup>293</sup> was a striking demonstration of rubbing salt into a wound. Whether the real motive was paying for a pagan temple or whether this was a pretext to increase the taxation burden against a defeated people, the irony of Jews paying for a pagan temple is sharp. In a sense this tax is a challenge to the credibility of Yahweh for it is the vanquished Jews paying for a pagan temple. Vespasian not only conquers the Jewish holy city of Jerusalem but the superiority of Roman gods in the struggle for Jerusalem is implied if not stated outright. The political interest of the Flavians in forcing Jews to acknowledge Roman authority is clear; rebellion could not be tolerated. The fact that it had a religious component strongly suggests that the Flavians were concerned about the religious aspect of the Jewish Revolt and were keen to monitor it.

#### **4.17 Messianic Expectations between 70 and 130 CE**

Josephus, the Roman historians, and the New Testament writers are not the only source for studying messianic consciousness after the Jewish Revolt. Texts categorized as pseudepigrapha and rabbinical works provide a valuable resource for studying Jewish messianic thought.<sup>294</sup> Admittedly the dating of these texts and the history of their formation is only approximate but they still provide the best contemporary comparison

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<sup>291</sup> Hart, "Judea and Rome," 183.

<sup>292</sup> Hart, "Judea and Rome," 183.

<sup>293</sup> Martin Goodman, "Diaspora Reactions to the Destruction of the Temple," in *Jews and Christians The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135* (ed. James D.G. Dunn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 31.

<sup>294</sup> A later chapter in this study will address these sources in much more detail.

for the Fourth Gospel in evaluating Jewish thinking after the Jewish Revolt. In Oegema's study of messianic expectations he evaluates *4 Ezra*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and *2 Baruch* among other texts and describes them as having "an eschatological view of history."<sup>295</sup> He also concludes that "the combination of a heavenly judge and a king --or warrior-messiah-- is found in almost all apocalypses of the time from Titus to Bar Kosiba."<sup>296</sup> If his analysis is correct, it would indicate that the challenge of the failure of the Jewish Revolt motivated Jewish thinkers of that era to redouble their efforts to end Roman rule. Messianic consciousness was part and parcel of that approach. That assessment would be supported by observing that the Diaspora Revolt (115-117 CE) while failing in its objectives nevertheless shows a spirit of aggressiveness in the Jewish world. Hope for the future was still strong in at least some quarters of the Jewish world.

The implications of these connections or coincidences of history should not be forgotten when appreciating the historical context of the Johannine community. The end of the Jewish Revolt did not mean the death of nationalistic impulses in Jewish society. The Diaspora revolt of 115-117 CE and the Bar Kochba Revolt of 132-135 CE demonstrate that concern for Roman control of its Jewish subjects was based on real animosity towards Rome. The situation the Johannine community found itself at the end of the first century CE was challenging and stressful due to the attitudes of both Roman and Jewish opponents of Christianity.

#### **4.18 Conclusion: Fourth Gospel and Roman Politics**

This chapter has been very straightforward in arguing that the burden of history weighed deeply on the Fourth Gospel. The Maccabean Revolt, the rise of Herod the Great, and the Jewish Revolt were all factors in how the question of kingship was viewed in Jewish Palestine. The political tides of Roman history and the interaction between the Jewish question and the Roman government was a pressing issue because of the Jewish Revolt. The relevance of Roman political interest in the Fourth Gospel is a theme that needs to be reiterated. The Jewish Revolt was an epic event not only in the history of Judaism and Christianity but also in the Roman empire. Particularly after the Jewish

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<sup>295</sup>Gerbern S. Oegema, *The Anointed and his People, Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kochba* (JSPSS 27; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 197.

<sup>296</sup>Oegema, *The Anointed*, 228.

Revolt the concerns Rome would have for a religion that made Jesus the Messiah would come into play in a way that went beyond the politics of the pre-70 CE period.

Even before the Jewish Revolt there are signs of interest in what Jewish Christians did and said. Paul's time in Rome and his affirmation of Jesus as Davidic demonstrate that he was unafraid of linking Jesus with Israel's most powerful king. It should be no surprise that Jewish Christianity raised the attention of the imperial court because it was associated with Jesus who had been executed as a messianic pretender. Nero and the fire at Rome demonstrate that even before the Jewish Revolt Christianity had become a target for Roman political interest. Nero needed to blame someone for the fire so he blamed Christians. The marginalization of Christianity before the Jewish Revolt indicates how difficult a situation faced the Johannine community.

For the Johannine community to be ignorant of these concerns would require them to be sealed in a hermetic jar that had no contact with the outside world. The issue of Jesus' Galilean connections and the nature of popular kingship in Jewish Palestine invite more questions than answers at this point. Nonetheless they are questions that deserve answers. The propaganda war waged by the Roman elite to defend Roman dominance would have no room for a messianic movement that preached an alternative kingdom. The Fourth Gospel raises issues that do not fit into this imperial worldview and that would create tension. In the next chapters some of the answers to these questions will emerge as the role of the Fourth Gospel in arbitrating competing views of royal messianism in the post-70 CE period become more clear.

## **Chapter Five: The Good Shepherd and the Temple**

### **5.1 Introduction**

No discussion of the messianic focus of the Fourth Gospel would be complete without serious treatment of the importance of the Temple to Jewish life in the late Second Temple Era. The link between king and Temple in the Davidic covenant is pointed and has implications for how the Fourth Gospel portrays Jesus as Messiah. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the king/Temple link is made in the Fourth Gospel in light of the Roman victory in the Jewish Revolt. Very early in the Fourth Gospel the Temple Cleansing takes place. The differences between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel on the use of the Greek word  $\lambda\alpha\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon$  provide points of comparison that lead to the parable of the Good Samaritan and Barabbas. Linking Jesus as a king with the Temple after the Second Temple was destroyed was a precarious situation and the narrative strategy of the Fourth Gospel shows how this difficulty was managed.

The difficulty of this problem should not be underestimated. Proclaiming Jesus as the new David and linking him with the Temple was an excellent way of attracting negative attention. Militant Jews who still longed for a Davidic conqueror to lead a renewed temple cult could interpret Jesus' Temple Cleansing as an attempt to accomplish that objective. Romans could be suspicious of Jesus being a militant who agitated in the Temple courtyard and plotted revolution. The title of this chapter indicates that the metaphor of Jesus as the Good Shepherd provides a link between the kingship motif and the temple by appropriating imagery from the Hebrew Bible. The use of the shepherd metaphor in Ezekiel provides a critical focal point for understanding how the Fourth Gospel dealt with this problem.

### **5.2 The Emotional Connection of the Temple to Jewish Life**

The role of the Temple in the Fourth Gospel is somewhat enigmatic in that this text was in all probability composed after the Second Temple was destroyed.<sup>297</sup> This obviously presents a different perspective from other texts that predate the demise of the Second Temple. This different chronological viewpoint did not mean the Temple was ignored. The role of the Temple is highlighted early in the Fourth Gospel in Jn 2 in which Jesus challenges his opponents to destroy the Temple after Jesus cleanses the Temple.

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<sup>297</sup> This discussion will be continued in chapter seven.

The narrative strategy of the Fourth Gospel takes the opposite tack of the Synoptics and has the Temple Cleansing early in its text.<sup>298</sup> The Temple Cleansing and temple discussion of Jn 2 indicate the Fourth Gospel was well aware of the significance of the Temple to Jewish life.

The role of the Temple as the national symbol of Jewish aspirations during Roman rule of Palestine needs to be recognized. To quote Sanders, “It is almost impossible to make too much of the Temple in first-century Jewish Palestine.”<sup>299</sup> As the center of cultic activity it was the focus of Second Temple Judaism and for the Jewish world of that era the sacrificial system was the dominant feature of their religious expression.<sup>300</sup> Its importance transcended religious or cultural aspirations. With foreign overlordship a fact of life from the middle of the first century BCE onward, the Temple became the de facto center of Jewish history and its collective memory of greatness.

Thus what Jesus has to say about the Temple is important. In Jn 2:19 Jesus states that the Temple can be destroyed and raised in three days. The editorial comment that comes next provides a fascinating insight into the minds of the Johannine community. The Temple is equated with Jesus’ body (Jn 2:21) and the three days are equated with the number of days Jesus was dead before the Resurrection (Jn 2:22). By the second chapter of the Fourth Gospel the conclusion was been given away. Neatly and succinctly the message of Jesus has now been revealed. Jesus is the replacement for the Temple and it is his death and resurrection that are the important issues of faith. If the Fourth Gospel was a mystery novel, one would have to read only two chapters to glean the conclusion. This raises the question as to why it was so important for the ending to be given away near the beginning of this book.

The question of interest in the Fourth Gospel is not who the Messiah is. It is clearly Jesus. The question of interest is why and how this fact is laid bare and the disclosure of Jesus’ resurrection in Jn 2 in connection with the Temple deserves further examination.

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<sup>298</sup> Whether the Temple cleansing came at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, near the end of Jesus’ ministry, or even if there were indeed two Temple cleansings is an issue that has occupied New Testament scholarship. That question is not the issue under discussion. For the purpose of this study it is significant that Jesus continues to frequent the Temple even after he had issued the challenge in Jn 2:19 to destroy the Temple.

<sup>299</sup>E.P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1993), 262.

<sup>300</sup> Sanders, *The Historical Figure*, 262.

### 5.3 The Sanctuary at Mt. Zion

To understand the manner in which the Fourth Gospel handled the issue of the Temple it is necessary to examine how the wider community in late Second Temple Judaism viewed critical issues regarding the Temple. The relationship of the book of *Jubilees* with the Qumran community presents one of the points of contact between the broader Jewish community and the Qumran community. There is no question of the book of *Jubilees* being a “sectarian” text. The history of the book of *Jubilees* apart from the discoveries in the Dead Sea area is long and varied. Its translation into several different languages in the ancient world demonstrated the interest this text elicited. It was one that had wide usage in late Second Temple Judaism and that survived in the post-70 CE world. The book of *Jubilees* does not contain any particular idea or doctrine that is innately unique to Qumran. While no extant copy of the full book was found in any of the Qumran caves to provide a total comparison to other editions, its prominence is still demonstrable by the number of discoveries of this text.

Its widespread use at Qumran is attested by the fact that fragments were found in Caves 1,2,3,4, and 11. This could indicate that the use of multiple hiding places was designed to protect this text by using redundancy. If one or more caves were lost to the Romans, the others would still have this important text. It also could mean that this text was so common that it was inevitable that it would find its way to various caves.

It also suggests quite strongly that at least at an early stage of the community’s development it was not marginalized but rather part of a much broader movement of Jewish thought and action. As part of the broader Jewish community it wrestled with questions that included the role of the Temple in the life of the Jewish community and what that future should be. Certain statements from *Jub.* 1:27, 28, and 29 concerning the permanence of the sanctuary and of the kingship of Yahweh are clear. Jerusalem and Zion are to be considered holy sites ruled by Yahweh as king (v.28). The sanctuary is linked to the time of Moses in perpetuity (vv. 28, 29). The quadrilateral of Moses, the sanctuary (Tabernacle/Temple), the kingship of Yahweh, and the special sanctity of Jerusalem are all joined. What is interesting is what is omitted. The interest in the Temple in this text is not linked to a new David. The text shows no discernible interest in questions concerning a renewed Davidic king. This Moses-centric focus places a great

deal of emphasis on Torah and the expectation of a future temple. This is in contrast to postexilic books like Ezekiel and Zechariah which have a great deal to say about both a renewed Davidic king and a reconstituted Temple.<sup>301</sup> Moses and Jerusalem provide the focus of *Jubilees* for understanding where the center of proper worship is and who is its guardian.

This text represents an understanding of the Temple as being both a national and religious symbol of the very highest order. There is no other acceptable Temple site than Jerusalem and there is no other teacher who can compare with Moses. Not now and not in any future envisioned by the creators of this text could there be room for innovation. Those who would think differently would than be challenging the kingship of Yahweh. Why would any pious Jew do that? The book of *Jubilees* projects a view of the world that does not allow the question of the correct location of the Temple to be negotiated or reconsidered.

#### **5.4 The Samaritan Woman**

One of the most fascinating incidents in the Fourth Gospel is Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman in Jn 4. He asks her for a drink of water (Jn 4:7) and from that point a wide ranging discussion ranging from the role of Jacob (Jn 4:12) to her personal life (Jn 4:18) is engaged. The issues raised in this chapter are worthy of a study of their own but for this study two critical sets of issues emerge. Firstly the issue of the Jewish/ Samaritan divide and its implication for Jewish Christian theology is given serious attention. The question of the Jewish/Samaritan divide is not unique to the Fourth Gospel as Luke demonstrates in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37) but the attention in this chapter to the theological divide of the two communities is unique to the

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<sup>301</sup> One possible answer for this omission is dating the origin of at least this portion of the text to the Maccabean Revolt. If *Jubilees* was written during the Maccabean Revolt, it would indicate that the impact of the aforementioned books had in some manner been eclipsed. This could be in reaction to the actions of the Seleucid dynasty that sought to control cultic practice for its own political purposes. The criticism of human kingship seen in a passage like I Sam 8:7 would be applied in the middle of the second century BCE due to parallels in the historical situation. Certainly texts like 4QMMT and 4Q174 have no trouble discussing both the future of the temple cult and the importance of David as king in the same text.

Another alternative is that this was a deliberate omission designed to slight the importance of the Davidic line. Thus the focus on Yahweh as king was an attempt to nip in the bud any movement to restore the Davidic line or establish any form of human kingship. This would make *Jubilees* anti-Davidic in opposition to other texts that were pro-Davidic. The fact the Qumran community kept them all either indicates an evolution of their ideas toward a Davidic line or indicates an ability to preserve contradictory assumptions.

New Testament. The role of the Temple and the Messiah emerge as points of both contrast and comparison that deserve further analysis. Secondly the social and cultural treatment of the Samaritan woman by Jesus is worthy of serious comment. The treatment of this woman in the context of the post-70 CE era is striking and important. Both of these issues have implications that go well beyond the incident at the well in Jn 4.

Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman needs to be understood in the context outlined in the previous paragraphs. The question of the Samaritans' relationship with the Jewish populace is one that touches on issues of sexuality, identity, and the temple cult in ways that are at times awkward but nevertheless real. For Jesus to discuss the issue of the proper place of worship with a Samaritan woman to modern or post-modern readers seems perfectly understandable given that the Jesus they know has been described in terms that stress his compassion. The cultural situation of the ancient world did not generally have the same perspective and this deserves recognition. The Samaritan woman is identified as having had five husbands and living with a man without having married him (Jn 4:18). This comment would not make for a positive assessment of her in late Second Temple Judaism.

This provides a contrast with other attitudes that can be traced to late Second Temple Judaism. A passage from *Jub.* 30:7-17 that provides a prohibition of marriage between Gentiles and descendants of Jacob is unequivocal. Death is decreed for both the male who gives his daughter or sister in marriage and the woman who marries a Gentile (v. 7). It is significant to note that judgment is equally severe for both sexes. Judgment is also announced against those who commit adultery because Israel is to be holy throughout its history (*Jub.* 30:8). It would seem that foreign marriage is equated as being a sin equal with adultery and is condemned in a rigorous manner.

The context of this passage is the story of Dinah and Shechem. It is clear from the incidents related with Reuben having sexual relations with a concubine of his father (*Jub.* 33:1-17) and Judah having intercourse with his daughter-in-law, Tamar, (*Jub.* 41:1-26) that these incidents caused a great deal of embarrassment. Reuben's actions were explained as coming before the revelation of Torah (*Jub.* 33:16) but since Torah was now been revealed the penalty is death for those guilty of this crime (*Jub.* 33:17). On Judah's actions the judgment of this text is interesting as well. Judah's actions are acknowledged

as wrong but he is forgiven because of his repentance (*Jub.* 41:25). No one else is promised this same opportunity to repent and live. Death for both offending parties is the judgment demanded (*Jub.* 41:26).

In contrast the Fourth Gospel shows no embarrassment with dealing with the Samaritan woman. Questions involving the woman's ethnic background, sexual history, and the place of proper worship are addressed without her personal worth being demeaned. The portrayal of Jesus in Jn 4 focuses not on either her past or the history of Jewish-Samaritan relations but on the future. The center of that future is not the sexual history of the Samaritan woman, the history of the Samaritans, or on the role of Torah. Thus when the pivotal question of the proper place of worship is introduced by the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:20) who she is and where she comes from do not become obstacles to dialogue. For those influenced by *Jubilees* on the question of the proper place of worship (*Jub.* 1:27-29) or on the correct way to deal with foreign women of uncertain reputations (*Jub.* 30) what Jesus has to say becomes a challenging viewpoint. It was sure to generate controversy.

### **5.5 Samaritan History**

To fully appreciate Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman in Jn 4 also requires an appreciation of Samaritan history. The question of Samaritan origins is not a simple one and indeed determining the appropriate use of the term requires special attention. Meier has suggested the term "Samaritan" could be applied to those who lived in the region of Samaria, those who were ethnically Samaritan, or those who followed Samaritan religious beliefs<sup>302</sup> and all these considerations are important. For the purpose of this study the most important element to understanding the Samaritan woman's encounter with Jesus is the religious belief system of the Samaritans. For Jewish readers/listeners the obvious place to start would be the Hebrew Scriptures and how it expressed the differences between the two groups.

The introduction of a non-Jewish population after the fall of Samaria into the former Northern Kingdom was treated as a problem by the Deuteronomist. In 2 Kgs 17: 24-41 the history of foreign groups settling in the land and adopting a syncretistic form

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<sup>302</sup>John P. Meier, "The Historical Jesus and the Historical Samaritans: What Can Be Said?" *Bib* 81.2 (2000): 204-05.

of religion that combined elements of their old religion and the worship of Yahweh together are described. The origin of the Samaritan community as described by the Deuteronomist while not sympathetic is not hostile given the historical circumstances involved. While disagreement with this account has been noted by modern scholarship as not being historically accurate,<sup>303</sup> this criticism misses the most important cultural divide between Jews and Samaritans. Samaritan religion is succinctly described as being a combination of serving both Yahweh and graven images in 2 Kgs 17:41. From the standpoint of those who professed support for a total adherence to Yahwistic monotheism the Samaritans represented a form of syncretism. It is this syncretism that becomes the focus of both comparison and contrast between Jewish and Samaritan practice.

The Jewish/Samaritan gap had tangible religious symbols. None was as obvious as the building of an alternative center of worship at Mt. Gerizim. A Samaritan Temple structure dating to either the late Persian or early Hellenistic era<sup>304</sup> has been suggested even though the archaeological search for this site has proved challenging. It is even possible that cultic activity on Mt. Gerizim dating to the eighth century BCE can be suggested based on the account of 2 Kings. What can be known with some degree of certainty is that a Samaritan Temple predates the formation of the Qumran community, the Maccabean Revolt, and probably the formation of the LXX. A Samaritan Temple as an alternative to the Jerusalem Temple was a fact of life for Jews well before Jesus was born and this reality could be expected to influence Jewish expressions of faith. When Jesus met the woman at the well the contrast between the temples was literally ancient history for both communities.

Another point of contrast was the Samaritan acceptance of only the Pentateuch and specifically their version of the Pentateuch as being Scripture. The Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) provides a version of Torah which has been described as expansionist<sup>305</sup> due to the material found in it which seems unique to the Samaritan Pentateuch. Whether this makes the SP purely sectarian and motivated by strict ideological redaction

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<sup>303</sup> Meier, "Jesus and the Historical Samaritans," 209.

<sup>304</sup> Meier, "Jesus and the Historical Samaritans," 212.

<sup>305</sup> Ingrid Hjelm, *The Samaritans and Early Judaism A Literary Analysis* (JSOTS 30; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 93.

is a subject open to debate.<sup>306</sup> What is more significant for this study is that it does represent a divergent textual tradition from the MT and that it was part of the cultural heritage of any Samaritan Jesus would meet. Whether it was inferior or superior to Jewish traditions, it was the text of the Samaritans and their point of reference for dealing with sacred texts. It was important to Samaritans because it supported Mt. Gerizim as being the proper center of worship. The sacrificial system, the festival calendar, and the roles of the priesthood are elicited in the SP. Since the Pentateuch does not include the Davidic covenant with Solomon, it was not a claim that would be recognized by Samaritans. The Pentateuch does include the expectation of the Prophet Like Moses in Dt 18. It is at this point that Jewish and Samaritan expectation of the M/messiah both converge and diverge.

The Samaritan expectation of a M/messiah was described as the Taheb. The central figure in Samaritan theology was Moses because he was the only trustworthy prophet<sup>307</sup> so the focus on the Taheb imitating Moses should be no surprise. This figure was not in the mold of a Davidic king or royal messiah but was envisioned as being a prophetic teacher similar to Moses.<sup>308</sup> The importance of Moses should not be underestimated in Samaritan theology. The stress of the Samaritans in the tenth commandment of the SP on the significance of Mt Gerizim and the coming of the Taheb rests on their interpretation of Dt 18:15 and 18.<sup>309</sup> The person of Moses is what gives this passage of Deuteronomy its power. This creates an interesting amalgam of messianic expectations in late Second Temple Judaism. Martyn's opinion that the Prophet like Moses is distinct from the two Messiahs at Qumran is based on his reading of IQS 9.10.<sup>310</sup> If this view is accurate, the Qumran community saw three distinct figures while the Samaritans were more focused on the Prophet like Moses. This focus on Moses would be ironically one point in common with Jesus' Jewish opponents who were described as Moses' disciples. Therefore when the Fourth Gospel was produced the potential different audiences for the Fourth Gospel with their different interpretations of

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<sup>306</sup>Hjelm, "The Samaritans," 93.

<sup>307</sup>Hjelm, "The Samaritans," 254.

<sup>308</sup>Meier, "Jesus and the Historical Samaritans," 230.

<sup>309</sup>Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (3rd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press: 2003), 106.

<sup>310</sup> Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 105.

Scripture could be very diverse. When Jesus talks to the Samaritan woman at the well, he is talking not only to a Samaritan but also to Jews who share interests in common with the Samaritans.

Thus when the Samaritan woman and Jesus talk about the Temple and messianic expectations their points of reference are both divergent and similar. In his response to the Samaritan woman Jesus is identified by her as being a prophet first (Jn 4:19) and later as the Christ (Jn 4:29). The progression is quite logical from the standpoint of one versed in the SP and Jesus does not contradict her. Jesus is not portrayed as a king to the Samaritan woman but as a teacher who is the Prophet like Moses. This is significant because the question of the proper place of worship is important because of the implications for the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7. In 4Q174 the Davidic identity and the Temple are tied together. In Jn 4 Jesus feels no need to defend the Davidic tie to the Jerusalem Temple because his claims as being the replacement for the Temple have been already been introduced in Jn 2. He is the union of Temple and Messiah and is the fulfillment of the expectations of the prophets.

Jesus' respect for the Samaritan tradition should not be interpreted as a disowning of Jewish tradition. In Jesus' discussion with the Samaritan woman Jesus affirmed that salvation comes from the Jewish nation (Jn 4:22). There is no willingness to forfeit the privileged position of the Jewish people in the Fourth Gospel. Jesus is seen as embracing Jewish tradition but doing so in a manner that was sensitive to Samaritan tradition without prejudicing the Jewish experience. There is no endorsement of specific Samaritan practices nor is there a blanket rejection of the Samaritan populace.

This is in contrast to other streams of thought from Second Temple Judaism. Texts like 4QMMT leave no doubt that any divergence from cultic practice as defined by Qumran covenanters was unacceptable in their eyes. Clearly the differences between them and the Samaritans would not be bridgeable. The centrality of Jerusalem in Qumran thought leaves no place for Mt. Gerizim. Indeed the sin of Jeroboam was in creating an alternative center of worship to the Temple in Jerusalem. The book of *Jubilees* is quite clear in making Jerusalem the center of cultic life. Yet Jesus is not perturbed by these difficulties. Jesus reveals himself as Messiah in terms that do not place Jews above

Samaritans. The locale of the Temple is not Mt. Gerizim or Jerusalem but with Yahweh (Jn 4:20-4) and Jesus as the Messiah.

Her respect for Moses was a starting point for Jesus to talk with her. The Samaritan woman's knowledge of the Pentateuch was sufficient for her to acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah. If Samaritans were accepted as having the same claim on Yahweh as Jews, the theological implications were obvious. Jesus and not the Temple cult or tradition was the answer to the theological crisis facing Judaism after 70 CE.<sup>311</sup> Thus what Jesus and the Samaritan woman discuss in Jn 4 concerning the role of the proper temple is really an extension of the Temple debate of Jn 2. Jesus is the solution for the situation facing the broader Jewish community. The Samaritans were not to be ostracized; they were to be engaged on terms they understood. The Fourth Gospel was written to communicate to a broad audience that included Jews, Samaritans, and even Romans.

### **5.6 Josephus and the Samaritans**

There is no question that Josephus' attitude toward Samaritans was one of contention and even hostility. Josephus' attack on Samaritans as being apostates and fair weather friends of the Jews (Josephus, *Ant.* 11.8.6) smacks of a type of racial stereotyping that seems crude and mean spirited. They are denigrated as being inferior to the ideal of Judaism that Josephus presents. Further his description of the Samaritans as receiving Jews who violated Torah (Josephus, *Ant.* 11.8.7) more than implies that the Samaritan understanding of Torah was deficient and worthy only of those who violated Torah. The implication that the use of Mt. Gerizim as a place of worship is inferior or illegitimate seems obvious.

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<sup>311</sup> The story of the Samaritan woman could be questioned as having little or no connection to the thesis of this study because it deals with themes that are not directly connected to the role of the new David as the M/messiah. While the story of the Samaritan woman is not a direct link to the issue of the new David, it is linked to at least two very important sub-themes in this study. Firstly the whole question of the role of the Temple is discussed in this chapter. In Ezek 34-48 the question of king and Temple are linked. The Qumran community's interest in the subject of King and Temple in a text like the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* shows this to be a major theme of the community. The narrator of the Fourth Gospel uses Jn 4 to present another view of the role of the Temple with Jesus being its replacement. Secondly it reinforces the point that the Fourth Gospel was written to reach the largest audience possible. Any Samaritan who read this text would be pleased to see Samaritans being treated like equals. Thus the motivation to show Jesus as being a peaceful Messiah would be paramount. Any Samaritan impressed by reading/hearing Jesus' treatment of the Samaritan woman would not be impressed by aggressive talk of an exclusively Jewish kingdom.

One point of caution should be made about Josephus' descriptions of Samaritans. His portrayal of Samaritans should not be viewed as representing a definitive Jewish opinion on the subject. Indeed the diversity evident in late Second Temple Judaism makes it dangerous to assert there was a definitive Jewish viewpoint on any issue. Josephus was writing from the perspective of a client of the Flavians and this vantagepoint does not make him representative of every Jew of his era. His disdain for the Samaritans is compatible with other views of the Samaritans that view them as being an inferior group of people. Undeniably there was a segment of influential opinion makers in late Second Temple Judaism that sought to marginalize the role of the Samaritans and Josephus was one of them.

Josephus did not challenge the historical reality of the temple at Mt. Gerizim but attacked rather its legitimacy. Josephus' motive in relating the story of Alexander the Great's visit to Jerusalem serves to underscore the theme that the Temple in Jerusalem is superior to any other temple.<sup>312</sup> That is an interesting proposition to maintain in the light of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE and Vespasian' interest in the restoration of pagan temples. Having Alexander the Great making these statements from a space of approximately four hundred years from the grave was safer than having a living Roman make them. It also serves as a counterargument to any suggestion that the Second Temple was destroyed because it was illegitimate. It was destroyed because it was part of a divine plan that fit the parameters of previous actions. Just as the First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonian invasion as part of divine judgment so was the Flavian conquest of Jerusalem part of a greater plan. This should be again no surprise given that Josephus is quite consistent in his strategy of presenting Jewish history as being ultimately for the good. The implications of this message have resonance for that era is also quite probable.<sup>313</sup>

This contrasts with the portrayal of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel welcoming the Samaritans. Given that Josephus' works and the Fourth Gospel were written at roughly the same time this distinction shows a stark contrast in viewpoints. This contrast needs to be emphasized because the social milieu of early Christianity was not that of the Roman

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<sup>312</sup> Hjelm, *Samaritans*, 206. This issue will be discussed further in a subsequent chapter.

<sup>313</sup> Hjelm, *Samaritans*, 206.

court. Nevertheless early Christianity had to deal with the decisions made at that same imperial court. Adopting an attitude of tolerance toward Samaritans would potentially alienate those who viewed Samaritans as being inferior people. Josephus and the Fourth Gospel both discuss the legitimacy of worship at Mt. Gerizim but they do it in profoundly different ways.

If Samaritans were welcome to Jesus, what does this say about the Johannine community's attitude toward non-Jews? The willingness of Jesus to embrace a Samaritan woman as being an equal in talking with her in the portrayal of the Fourth Gospel is a powerful signal that the Johannine community was not trapped by ethnic or gender stereotyping. The Jesus tradition shows that a person's origin or social ostracism from a group was not a bar to Jesus associating with that person. Indeed this willingness to engage those stigmatized by society would attract the attention of those with a vested interest in maintaining the balance of power within it. In Jesus' day the leadership of the temple cult maintained their position at the pleasure of the Roman authorities and groups like the Samaritans were to be marginalized. In the post-70 CE world the attention of the Roman state could also expect to garner the attention of those who believed every person had inherent worth. The divide that emerges in an analysis of the Fourth Gospel is not a divide between Jew and Samaritan or even Jew and Jew. The divide is between those who are prepared to accept Jesus' claims as described by the Fourth Gospel and those who reject the call for a salvation that went beyond ethnic borders. The ethnic identity of early Christianity was not the prisoner of militant Jewish nationalism.

### **5.7 Josephus as a Man**

The narrative strategies of Josephus and the Fourth Gospel differ greatly as well in how the Samaritan Temple is described. Josephus describes the Samaritan Temple and Samaritan religion by the use of authoritative male figures. Alexander the Great, the unnamed Jewish high priest, and Josephus acting as narrator provide the defining opinions concerning Samaritan beliefs. The social status of these figures leaves the Samaritans at a great disadvantage. The greatest conqueror of the ancient world, the high priest of the Temple at Jerusalem, and the chronicler of Vespasian's triumph all rebut the importance of the Samaritan Temple. There is no opportunity given for a Samaritan

figure to plead the case for Samaritan traditions. The implied message that Samaritans are an inferior group without a credible spokesman is seen in Josephus' portrayal.

In contrast Jn 4 has a Samaritan woman explain Samaritan religious history for the benefit of Jesus. As noted in an earlier chapter the attention given to female voices in the Fourth Gospel is a significant interest of that text. At a minimum the Fourth Gospel was composed without feeling the need to emphasize male superiority in matters of faith and religion. Jesus talks to the Samaritan woman about the proper place of worship and the identity of the Messiah without becoming a prisoner of any misogynist prejudice. For a reader or listener of the Fourth Gospel the message of Jesus was one that welcomed those who were perceived as having an inferior social status. Even as sensitive issues concerning Temple and Messiah were discussed the Fourth Gospel does not neglect those who were not influential like the Samaritan woman.

The initial audience for Josephus' work would be the elite of Roman and Jewish society who would be overwhelmingly male. The initial audience for the Fourth Gospel included references to a Samaritan woman and that suggests a significant female audience for this text. This distinction indicates why it is important to examine the narrative whole of the Fourth Gospel. The narrative strategy of the Fourth Gospel is not concerned with appealing to the elite of society but communicating its message to the broadest possible audience. This does not make the Fourth Gospel anti-male but it demonstrates that the audience of the Fourth Gospel was composed of people that the male Roman political establishment would regard as being socially inferior to them.

### **5.8 The Temple Cleansing and the Good Shepherd**

Since Jesus identified with the social outcasts like the Samaritan woman and Josephus spoke for the establishment of his time, the point could be made that Jesus was an anti-Temple radical. Jesus had no use for the Temple because he had no use for any center of authority. There is a sharp tone to the Temple cleansing and debate in Jn 2. When Jesus speaks of the destruction of the Temple, the quick editorial comment of Jn 2:21 could be viewed as a later defense to disguise his revolutionary agenda. Whether Jesus was a revolutionary or not, the perception of him being a revolutionary in the post-70 CE environment was an important issue in and of itself. Indeed the suddenness of the Temple Cleansing in the Fourth Gospel in comparison to the Synoptics suggests that the

Temple Cleansing was an episode that needed to be addressed. As noted earlier in this chapter, why was this account part forth so early in the Fourth Gospel?

Part of the answer to that question can be found in considering the language of the Temple Cleansing in Jn 2. In evaluating this incident in the Fourth Gospel several issues immediately come to mind. The placement of the Temple Cleansing in the Fourth Gospel, the royal overtones of Jesus showing authority over the Temple,<sup>314</sup> and the precise target of Jesus' wrath are all significant issues. One issue that is perhaps overlooked is the difference between the portrayal of the event in the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. This goes beyond simple issues of chronology. Kerr highlights a critical difference in terminology between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel in describing the action in the Temple courtyard. In the Synoptics the actions of the moneychangers are described as being a den of thieves (σπ | λαιον λστ, ν) but in the Fourth Gospel this term is not used.<sup>315</sup> Rather Jesus describes the actions of the merchants as creating an οδκον +μπορ ου (house of commerce). Kerr suggests the difference in terminology is done to echo Zech 14:21 and give an eschatological focus to this event.<sup>316</sup> While Kerr's solution will not be greeted with unanimous concurrence, he has identified an issue that is important to the language of the Fourth Gospel.

Certainly the manner in which the Fourth Gospel describes the cleansing of the Temple lends itself to eschatological interpretation. The linkage of this event with Jesus' description of his body being the replacement for the physical Temple supports this contention. The foreshadowing of the resurrection account and the transformation of Jesus' body is being prepared in this description of Jesus and the Temple. Thus Kerr's view is certainly supported by the overall thematic approach of the Fourth Gospel. Yet

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<sup>314</sup> Jesus refers to the Temple as his Father's house (Jn 2:16) and this begs the question as to what is his authority for claiming the right to protect his Father's interest. 2 Sam 7 provides the details of the divine commission to David to have his son build the First Temple. The language of "father" and "son" (2 Sam 7:14) refers back to the establishment of the Temple and Davidic dynasty in 2 Sam 7:13. For Jesus to claim that he was protecting his Father's interest makes sense if he is viewed as claiming his authority from the Davidic covenant. The fact that he does not expressly make this claim is not surprising given the argument of this study that the Fourth Gospel was written with great care in expressing Jesus' Davidic links. When Nathaniel proclaims Jesus King of Israel in Jn 1:49, the reader/listener is alerted to Jesus' messianic/royal potential. Jesus claims by his actions the right to protect the Temple and supports his claim to being Davidic by his deeds. If Jesus is not royalty, how can he justly claim that the Temple is the house of his Father?

<sup>315</sup> Alan R. Kerr, *Temple of Jesus' Body* (JSNTSS 220; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 81.

<sup>316</sup> Kerr, *Temple of Jesus' Body*, 81.

the issue of the difference in terminology goes beyond eschatological nuances. In the Synoptic accounts an eschatological significance could be argued for as well. The placing of the Temple Cleansing in the latter stages of the Synoptic texts provides a context for the redemption Jesus offers in his death and resurrection. The choice of vocabulary could also be indicative of other considerations.

The use of the noun  $\lambda\sigma\tau|v$  in singular and plural forms occurs fifteen times in New Testament texts with fourteen of them occurring in the Gospels.<sup>317</sup> In the Fourth Gospel  $\lambda\sigma\tau|v$  is used in the Good Shepherd discourse of John 10 in both singular and plural forms and in the singular in the description of Barabbas in John 18. Notably it is absent in describing the Temple Cleansing and in identifying the two other prisoners executed with Jesus in the Passion narrative. This presents a contrast with the Synoptic usage. This same distinction is not made in Matthew as Matthew uses this term to describe those who died on either side of Jesus as being  $\lambda\sigma\tau\alpha\epsilon$  (Mt 27:38). For the Fourth Gospel there is no such sharing of terminology between Jesus and those crucified on his right or left side.

Part of the answer for this distinction may lie in Josephus' use of  $\lambda\sigma\tau|v$ . For Josephus this term was applied to those who rebelled against Rome.<sup>318</sup> The negative connotations of this term would certainly create an issue for its use in the Fourth Gospel. That raises the question of why this term is used in the Good Shepherd discourse. For the Good Shepherd discourse is not found in the Synoptics and represents a parable with some interesting features. Its imagery does show points of comparison with multiple texts in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the earliest writings of the Christian church. The language and imagery of the Good Shepherd discourse rests on a careful use of well-known material that would be familiar to those who lived in first century Jewish Palestine. Its usage of language that was linked to Barabbas but not to the Temple Cleansing indicates that if the Johannine community wanted to create an oral/aural link in the ears of its listeners it had chosen provocative language that was capable of attracting

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<sup>317</sup> The other occurrence of this word in the New Testament is in 2 Cor 11:26 in which Paul recites the dangers he has encountered for ministry including the peril of  $\lambda\sigma\tau|v$ . Whether this is a reference to bandits he encountered in traveling or to revolutionaries in Jewish Palestine is an open question. J.H. Thayer, *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* (1889; repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1981), 377.

<sup>318</sup> This issue will be addressed later in this chapter.

attention. The Temple compound was not a place for a  $\lambda\sigma\tau | \nu$  in the Fourth Gospel but the sheepfold and Barabbas were.

### 5.9 Ezekiel and the New David

To understand the shepherd imagery of Jn 10 it is necessary to grapple with the use of shepherd imagery in the book of Ezekiel. The position of the imagery in Ezekiel is important to note. Its use in the later part of the book comes after chronicling the failures of national Israel in idolatry and the incompetence of its leaders in government. Ezekiel is receiving his vision in Babylon because of the failures of the past. While the past has been troubled, it is the future that brings hope. The shepherd imagery in the critical chapters of 34-38 is significant because those chapters describe a theocentric view of Israel's future in which Yahweh's kingship provides the impetus for Israel to be reborn.<sup>319</sup> The early and middle parts of Ezekiel explain in detail why this needed to happen. How it was to happen become the theme of the latter chapters of the book.

The language in which this kingship is described deserves comment. Ezekiel's employment of the shepherd metaphor includes both divine and anthropological uses. This would seem curious given the stress on the sovereignty of Yahweh in these chapters but there is no denying the dual use of the metaphor. Ezek 34:12 demonstrates how as a shepherd Yahweh will care for His people.<sup>320</sup> The same imagery seen in the opening lines of Ps 23 is used and used eloquently and with emotion to describe Yahweh caring for His people after the failure of their national leadership. Yet this is presaged by Ezek 34:8 in which Yahweh describes the leadership of Israel as being shepherds in spite of the dishonor they had brought Him.<sup>321</sup> The picture of Yahweh sharing the title of shepherd is striking in that failed men are described with the same word as the sovereign Lord. This irony does not stop its use again. The sharing of imagery continues with expressions of hope for the future. Ezek 34:23 further demonstrates the future unity of Israel as one shepherd is to be appointed by Yahweh to lead them.<sup>322</sup> Significantly this shepherd is not Yahweh but a new David. Even more significant is the role assigned to this new David. "V.24 underlines the under-shepherd role of the future ruler of Israel as a servant of

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<sup>319</sup>Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 60.

<sup>320</sup> Renz, *The Rhetorical Function*, 107.

<sup>321</sup> Renz, *The Rhetorical Function*, 215.

<sup>322</sup> Renz, *The Rhetorical Function*, 107.

Yahweh.’<sup>323</sup> Yahweh not only shares the shepherd metaphor with rulers of the past; He shares them with the new David. This is a significant point and needs to be considered in the light of how the Fourth Gospel develops the shepherd metaphor.<sup>324</sup>

### **5.10 Jeremiah, Faulty Shepherds, and the Good Shepherd**

Ezekiel is not the only postexilic prophetic text that uses shepherd imagery for the David figure or as a symbol of leadership. The story of Jeremiah as the heroic, mistreated prophet warning of danger in the last days of Judea as an independent kingdom also contains important imagery for the shepherd/David connection. Jer 23:1-8 occupies a section of Jeremiah that acts both as a critique of the failures of the waning Jewish aristocracy and a promise of future hope. Jer 23:1 begins with a clear denunciation of the pastors that had failed Yahweh’s people, the sheep of his pasture. The message of Jer 23:3-4 is that Yahweh will gather the scattered flock together and put responsible shepherds in charge of the sheep. What is particularly of interest politically in Jer 23:5 is that the promised one is described as a Davidic descendant and a king. The hope of a Davidic king even in the misery of national failure makes this an important expression of hope for postexilic readers/listeners. This is a term that could focus the attention of the Roman authorities on any potential “David” and “king”. For the new David of Jer 23 was a figure who was expected to shepherd his people. The expectation of a future David was clearly part of the message of Jeremiah.

### **5.11 The Role of Zechariah**

No study of the shepherd metaphor and its impact on the Fourth Gospel would be complete without some attention being paid to Zechariah. In the second half of the book passages like 10:1-12; 11:4-17; and 13:7-9 use the shepherd metaphor

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<sup>323</sup> Renz, *The Rhetorical Function* , 107.

<sup>324</sup> Another point to consider is that the shepherd metaphor in Ezek 34-38 builds into the description of the purified Temple in Ezek 40-48. In his commentary Keener (Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary*, 2003, 726) notes that “the use of Ezekiel’s new temple image is probably more significant for the Fourth Gospel than has been hitherto realized.” The confluence of shepherd and Temple in Ezekiel is met in the Fourth Gospel with a confluence of Temple and Shepherd in the Fourth Gospel. The order is reversed in the Fourth Gospel and this suggests that solving the Temple question was considered central to explaining the Shepherd. This argues for a link in studying the themes of Temple and Shepherd together in the Fourth Gospel.

extensively<sup>325</sup> to describe the failures of national leadership in serving Yahweh. These uses of the shepherd metaphor need to be linked to other important themes in the book. Its contemporary relationship with Haggai indicates that the rebuilding of the Temple was part of its historical context. The crowning of Joshua and the prophecy of the Branch (Zech 6:9-15) are important both for an understanding of messianic and temple consciousness in the Second Temple era. The use of Zech 9:9 as a messianic proof text in Jn 12:15 is a subject worthy of its own study. In this regard the themes in this book show distinct similarities with Ezekiel and even Jeremiah. The convergence of interest in the temple cult, the person of the royal messiah, and the shepherd metaphor are prominent.<sup>326</sup>

Perhaps the most famous reference in Zechariah with reference to the New Testament is the quotation of Zech 13:7 in the Passion Narratives of both Mark and Matthew (Mk 14:27; Mt 26:31). In both Mark and Matthew Jesus quotes from Zechariah 13:7 explicitly and use the “it is written” (γ, γροατται) formula to highlight the quotation while using the shepherd metaphor. The shepherd will be struck and the sheep will be dispersed. In the Fourth Gospel on the other hand Jesus cites Zech 13:7 but without using the “it is written” formula and without making explicit use of the shepherd metaphor. There is widespread agreement that Jesus in Jn 16:32 cites Zech 13:7 and even uses the same verb for “scattered” (διασκορπισθ | σονται) as found in Mk 14:27.<sup>327</sup> This juxtaposition raises a question that deserves consideration.

The scattering of the sheep in Zech 13:7 comes after two references to the house of David in Zech 12:10 and 13:1. The use of the fountain imagery in Zech 13:1 shows a strong connection with the temple imagery of Ezek 47 if the “motif of flowing water is considered.”<sup>328</sup> When combined with the use of Zech 13:1 and Zech 12:10 to establish

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<sup>325</sup> While most contemporary commentators would view chapters 9-14 as a distinct addition to the book, the world of late Second Temple Judaism obviously viewed it as integral to the whole book. It is the world of late Second Temple Judaism that is under consideration in this study.

<sup>326</sup> Again the linkage in Zechariah 9-14 between Temple and the shepherd metaphor is made. Anyone in late Second Temple Judaism who read Ezekiel, Jeremiah, or Zechariah would be familiar with both the issue of the Temple and the shepherd metaphor. For the Fourth Gospel to bring these links together is not surprising.

<sup>327</sup> Brown, *John*, 727.

<sup>328</sup> David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 123.

the symbolic background of Jn 19:34<sup>329</sup> the employment of imagery that is clearly Davidic and based on Zechariah in the Fourth Gospel is evident. The linkage of temple themes from Ezekiel with shepherd imagery in Zechariah is employed in the Fourth Gospel as part of its defense of Jesus being the true Messiah. The mention of the House of David in Zech 12:10 and 13:1 provide a reference point to the Davidic dynasty that would not otherwise be obvious. The importance of this indirect allusion to the Davidic line suggests rather a careful and measured indication of the relationship of Jesus with his Davidic heritage in the portrayal of his death. The scattering of Jn 16:32 reflect an understanding of a change in the status of Jesus without the use of language that could be deemed provocative. The Fourth Gospel maintains its link with Zechariah but it does it in a different manner than the Synoptics.

### **5.12 The Role of 1 Enoch and Shepherd Imagery**

The origin of *1 Enoch* is a challenging proposition and the question of its composition has produced many different solutions. The antiquity of at least some of its traditions show strong indications of predating the Maccabean era and its use at Qumran gives it a stature in Second Temple Judaism not understood before 1947. From the standpoint of its use in Second Temple Judaism its compositional history is not as significant as the claim to authority ascribed to it by the use of the name of “Enoch”.

For the purposes of this study focusing on the fourth book is critical because of the imagery used in it. The fourth book of this text (chapters 83-90) has been described as the dream visions based on the statement of the narrator in 83:1 in which he states he saw the events of these chapters in visions. What is of particular interest for this study is the use of the shepherd/pastoral metaphor starting in chapter 89 to describe the relationship of Yahweh with His people. The history of the Jewish nation from its embryonic beginnings in the post-Flood era to the future eschatological kingdom of chapter 90 is told using this metaphor. Indeed the willingness of the narrator to use this approach chapter after chapter demonstrates a commitment to this literary technique that is remarkable.

Of perhaps even more importance is the dissemination of *1 Enoch* throughout Second Temple Judaism. There is no question that the Qumran community was familiar

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<sup>329</sup>Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1181.

with the fourth book of *1 Enoch* and the shepherd/pastoral metaphor in it. 4Q204, 4Q205, and 4Q206 all quote from *1 Enoch* 89 and use this metaphor. The imagery of the Jewish nation as being sheep guarded by Yahweh permeates this book. This suggests that anywhere this book was used by Jewish people this imagery would be familiar to its readers. In this regard the continuation of pastoral and shepherd imagery by pseudepigraphical texts demonstrate that from at least the time of David until at least the first century CE the shepherd/pastoral image was important to the symbolic expression of Jewish identity. The familiarity of the Qumran community with not only *1 Enoch* but also with the portions of the dream visions that use the shepherd/pastoral metaphor provide another indication that the use of this metaphor was common in late Second Temple Judaism to describe Yahweh and His people. Any employment of pastoral imagery by the Fourth Gospel would occur in the light of centuries of use.

### **5.13 Matthew and the Lost Sheep of Israel**

Mt 25:31-46 contains a description of future judgment that divides the nations as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats (v. 32). The sheep are placed on the right hand in the position of honor while the goats are remanded on the left side (v.33). There is no doubt that the sheep are the righteous because the King invites the sheep on the right hand into the kingdom (v.34). While the place of this judgment within the theology of Matthew and early Christianity is an important issue, it is not the focus for this study. The use of the shepherd/pastoral metaphor here in a scene of eschatological judgment is significant in its own right because it clearly describes how the image of sheep and shepherd were used to teach the concept of judgment in Matthew.

The distinctive phrase “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt. 10:6; 15:24 KJV) is evidence of a clear linkage between the pastoral metaphor and national Israel. It also provides a greater literary context for understanding the parable of the ninety and nine (Mt 18:12-14; Lk 15:4-7). In this parable one out of a hundred sheep goes missing and the owner of the missing sheep finds it. This would suggest that this parable was part of early Christianity’s collective memory of Jesus’ preaching apart from the Fourth Gospel. A parallel to Ezek 34:11-16 is very suggestive. In the Ezekiel passage Yahweh goes out to search for the lost sheep, finds them, restores them, and celebrates His care for His

flock. Jer 23: 1-8 also uses the same imagery of Israel as a lost flock that needed to be rescued by Yahweh.

To Jewish Christian readers the symbolism of the lost flock, Yahweh's search for the lost sheep, and the parable Jesus tells in Matthew and Luke would clearly indicate that this parable should be interpreted as Jesus taking the role of Yahweh. Thus anyone familiar with Matthew who compared the Fourth Gospel to it would recognize the use of similar imagery. Thus the strains of Jewish Christianity represented by Matthew, the Jews of the Qumran community in a text like 4Q504, and the broader Jewish community familiar with *1 Enoch* would understand the use of the pastoral imagery of shepherd and sheep.

#### **5.14 John 10 and the Good Shepherd**

The parable of the Good Shepherd in the tenth chapter of the Fourth Gospel is well-known for its portrayal of Jesus protecting the flock against predators. What has made it equally famous is the controversy that has surrounded it in academic studies. Beutler's statement that "Neben dem Prolog ist der Hirtenrede Jesu wohl immer noch der umstrittenste Text des Joh(evangeliums)"<sup>330</sup> is perhaps too strong but it does highlight the challenges of examining this parable. This controversy has not stopped certain viewpoints gaining currency concerning its interpretation. This parable has often been interpreted as being a critique of the Jewish Palestinian leadership and particularly the Pharisees.<sup>331</sup> Certainly there is no shortage of criticism in this parable for those who neglect the flock.

The parallels to criticism of false shepherds in the postexilic works of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Zechariah are obvious. If it is assumed that Jesus is comparing the Pharisees with the poor leadership that led to the demise of the First Temple, this parable becomes a scathing indictment of their conduct. What is less apparent is whether this approach is correct in fully understanding the identity of those being challenged. The very indefiniteness of the characters in this parable is in contrast to parables like the

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<sup>330</sup> Johannes Beutler, "Der Alttestamentlich-Jüdische Hintergrund der Hirtenrede in Johannes 10," in *The Shepherd Discourse of John 10 and its Context* (eds. J. Beutler and R.T. Fortna; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 18. "Next to the Prologue Jesus' Parable of the Good Shepherd is the most controversial passage in the Gospel of John." Personal translation by candidate.

<sup>331</sup> Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 180.

Sower in the Synoptics which explain the characters. The vagueness of the temporal relations also does not lend itself to certainty in establishing links to particular groups or persons. To make the Pharisees the definitive target of this parable seems premature. The ambiguity of this parable is worth further examination.

Thyen's analysis of the difficulty is worth quoting, "Die bekannten Schwierigkeiten bei der Auslegung der Hirtenrede bestehen neben der Frage nach der Identität von 'Dieb', 'Räuber', 'Wolf', 'Fremdem' und 'Mietling'."<sup>332</sup> Thyen has captured the critical difficulty faced by interpreters. The characters of the parable are difficult to understand and can become a morass for interpreters. Thyen does not become encumbered by this problem because he turns the focus onto what is known and that is the central figure of Jesus in this parable.<sup>333</sup> He has grasped the key to this parable even if the identities of the other characters in this parable are unknown. It is the identity and role of Jesus.

Jesus as the Door and the Good Shepherd is the center of this parable. In Jn 10 Jesus identifies himself as the door of the sheep (Jn 10:7)<sup>334</sup> before he identifies himself as the Good Shepherd (vv. 11,14) and he makes reference to those who came before him as being thieves and robbers (κλέπται καὶ λῃστές) in Jn 10:8. This contrast does not specifically identify any individual as being a thief or robber nor does a firm time line seem obvious. Nor does the remainder of this parable explain terms such as the wolf (τὸν λύκον) or the hireling (ὁ μισθωτὴν) in Jn 10:12 that are used to designate those who attack the sheep. The grammar of this passage reinforces the central identity of Jesus because Jesus is the ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός. "Der bestimmte Artikel vertritt also eine particula exclusiva."<sup>335</sup> There is no other shepherd beside Jesus. This provides a contrast not only with passages that describe David as a shepherd but ones that show Moses as a

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<sup>332</sup>Hartwig Thyen, "Johannes 10 im Kontext des vierten Evangeliums," *The Shepherd Discourse of John 10 and its Context* (eds. J. Beutler and R. T. Fortna; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 129. "The well-known difficulties concerning the explanation of the parable of the Good Shepherd stand by the question concerning the identity of the thief, robber, wolf, strangers, and hireling." The original German is an independent clause that is part of a longer sentence. The author's translation condenses it while preserving the essential point that the identity of the characters of the parable under question is a complex matter. Personal translation by candidate.

<sup>333</sup> Thyen, "Johannes 10," 129.

<sup>334</sup> P 75 reads "ποιμην" instead of "θρονα." This study has opted for the traditional reading.

<sup>335</sup>Thyen, "Johannes 10," 131. The definite article represents an exclusiva particula. Personal translation of the candidate.

shepherd as well.<sup>336</sup> The shepherd metaphor for the Fourth Gospel is one that has now subsumed the shepherd metaphor of the Hebrew Scriptures.

David as the shepherd-king and Moses as Yahweh's appointee are not superior shepherds to Jesus. Jesus as the Good Shepherd now fulfills the role of Yahweh as Shepherd and the new David of Ezek 34:11-31. Jesus appropriates to himself the imagery of both figures in the Good Shepherd parable as he both guards the sheep like Yahweh (Ezek 34:12) and becomes the only shepherd like the new David (Ezek 34:23, 24). This merger of imagery would also serve as a response to a text like 4Q504 that uses the imagery of the new David and shepherd metaphor to point to the future. Thus the Davidic identity of Jesus is being asserted in the Fourth Gospel but it is done in a way that only those familiar with Jewish tradition would be quick to recognize it. Anyone familiar with 4Q504 could be expected to understand the statement being made in this parable.

Jesus is embracing the identity of the new David without identifying with the chaos of the Jewish Revolt by the use of the shepherd metaphor. The Good Shepherd parable by the Johannine community allows Jesus to be portrayed as a figure who fulfills the expectations of the new David by focusing on internal renewal rather than political militancy. The challenge of being the new David without courting the attention of Domitian in his search for David's descendants is answered. Jesus is revealed as being the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy without the immediate attention of the Roman state being pointed toward Jesus. Thus the question of Jn 7:42 of whether the Messiah must be Davidic is answered in the affirmative by the parable of the Good Shepherd in Jn 10. Thus the identities of the other characters of this parable may be deliberately ambiguous because anyone who attempted to lead the sheep who was not Jesus could not be the Good Shepherd. The controversy of analyzing this parable would thus be mitigated if efforts were focused on affirming what could be known rather than what cannot be proved. Jesus is the Good Shepherd; those who claim to be the good shepherd and are not are the thieves and robbers.

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<sup>336</sup> Exod 3:1 has Moses taking his father-in-law's flock to Horeb where Yahweh reveals to Moses the Divine name (Exod 3:14) and Isa 63:11 refers to Moses as a shepherd who led Israel through the sea.

### 5.15 The Other Sheep

This focus on Jesus as Good Shepherd helps to make sense of the other famous reference by Jesus to “other sheep” (ἄλλα πρὸ βάρβαροι) in Jn 10:16. This text again can be read as a coded reference to be deciphered. The difficulty comes not so much in understanding the sheep as being a referent to the populace but to understanding who the “other” are. Identifying the “other” as the Gentiles, the followers of John the Baptist, or some other group is possible but not certain. The problem with these identifications is that Jesus gives no explanation in the narrative framework of John 10 for this phrase and no editorial comment is given to explain it. This is in marked contrast to the nature of Jesus’ statement concerning the Temple in Jn 2:21 in which the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple is explained as referring to Jesus’ body. The editorial explanation that would have simplified or even solved this question is absent and this may be deliberate.

What does seem clearer is that the symbolism of the sheep had a special connection with the Jewish people. The linkage of the imagery of the sheep with some other group presses that imagery in a new direction. The reference to other sheep could easily be viewed as a categorical statement repudiating a narrow view of Jewish identity. Jesus has sheep that hear his voice (Jn 10:27) and if they come from more than one locale the important fact is that Jesus is the only shepherd. In the terminology of the Fourth Gospel “sheep” with its attendant imagery from the Hebrew Scriptures is not limited to a certain class or group of people. From this vantagepoint the search for understanding the precise referent Jesus is making in referring to “other sheep” is secondary to understanding the impact of Jesus’ message.

The message of certain of the Scrolls and of Josephus would assert that outsiders to the Jewish community or even other segments within the broader Jewish community were unacceptable because of their origin. The reference to “other sheep” stands as diametrically opposed to this concept. Inevitably the contrast between these two viewpoints on the nature of Jewish identity could be expected to lead to some sort of confrontation. If a Samaritan woman could be viewed as having enough worth to discuss the subject of the Temple in Jn 4, certainly Samaritans and others outside a narrow ethnic Jewish focus could be viewed as having enough worth to be part of one sheepfold.

Consequently the desire to establish Jewish identity as being anti-Roman as happened during the Jewish Revolt is self-defeating. Jesus as the Good Shepherd is not the prisoner of any form of Jewish nationalism that seeks to use the Temple as a bar to other ethnic groups.

### 5.16 Barabbas

The person of Barabbas and the custom of the release of the paschal prisoner have generated a great deal of controversy especially concerning its historicity.<sup>337</sup> As important as this question is, it is as equally important to try to grasp the intertextual significance of this character within the Fourth Gospel. Barabbas plays a role in the Fourth Gospel that is beyond the Passion Narrative. He is arguably also part of the Good Shepherd discourse and provides an important interpretive clue as to how that passage should be treated.

The use of the name Barabbas deserves special recognition as a literary device because its translation from the Aramaic as “son of the father”<sup>338</sup> raises important issues. It is even possible that if the variant spelling of “Barrabbas” is accepted his name meant “son of our teacher.”<sup>339</sup> Assuming this man was a historical figure, there is a low probability that this was a given name since it suggests it was either a *nom de guerre* or a nickname bestowed on this man by his enemies. Given that Bar-Kochba was used as a title by the leader of that revolt, its employment as a title is plausible. It may have even been a title that was transferable for one individual to another. The possibilities are varied but none can be conclusively adopted or refuted due to the slight amount of information about Barabbas.

The most salient point in linking Barabbas to Jn 10 is that he is described as being a  $\lambda\sigma\tau\upsilon$  (Jn 18:40) and it is this term that deserves serious attention. The Fourth Gospel uses a term that had acquired a particular connotation with Josephus. Brown is careful to note that Josephus in passages like *J.W.* 2.13.2-3 uses this term to describe “banditti or guerrilla warriors who, from mixed motives of plunder and of nationalism,

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<sup>337</sup> Carson, *John*, 586. The best ancient support for a release of a Passover prisoner is from the Mishnah, *Pesahim* 8:6, which describes the rules for slaughtering a lamb for those whose condition is uncertain including one who is promised release from prison.

<sup>338</sup> Brown, *John*, 856.

<sup>339</sup> Brown, *John*, 856.

kept the countryside in constant insurrection.”<sup>340</sup> In the particular passage just noted Josephus describes the  $\lambda\sigma\tau\alpha\varsigma$  as the Sicarii who used assassination to advance their goals. Their first notable victim was the high priest Jonathan who died in the years leading to the Jewish Revolt. Clearly this rebel group was one that the Johannine community would not be keen on being linked with in any shape or form.

During the revolt itself Josephus uses this term to describe key rebel figures. John of Gischala is reported as using his band of robbers ( $\lambda\sigma\tau\alpha\varsigma$ ) to maneuver to gain control of Galilee in the earlier days of the Jewish Revolt (Josephus, *J.W.* 2.21.2). Since Josephus is the target of these actions when he was in control of Galilee, it is evident that the use of this terminology is intended as an indictment of John of Gischala. The irony that Josephus was himself a rebel at this point is suggestive in that this term was used for those who were totally committed to the fight against Rome.

John of Gischala is not the only target of Josephus. Simon Bar-Giora is described as linking up with the bandits ( $\lambda\sigma\tau\alpha\varsigma$ ) at Masada (Josephus, *J.W.* 4.9.3). He uses it as a base to wage guerrilla war. After this success his force of slaves and robbers (Josephus, *J.W.* 4.9.4) grows to be a popular movement involving average citizens in the territory under his control. He becomes popular enough that he is treated by many as a king who is strong enough to fortify a village and caves for his purposes (Josephus, *J.W.* 4.9.4). Both John of Gischala and Simon Bar-Giora are described as  $\lambda\sigma\tau\alpha\varsigma$  and given the description of both figures it would seem obvious that this term was a very dangerous label to be applied to anyone in the post-70 CE world of Jewish and Roman relations.

Several further observations concerning Simon Bar-Giora’s actions as described by Josephus deserve comment. The term “king” is linked with his name even if he was never crowned or recognized by any other ruler. The interest for Roman in suppressing such popularly recognized kings is obvious. The refusal of Jesus of a popular kingship in Jn 6:15 acquires a new urgency when viewed in this light. Secondly Simon Bar-Giora was connected with the resistance at Masada. Whether that means any Qumran connection with Masada involves a link with Simon Bar-Giora, is too tentative to assert. It does indicate that Masada was a magnet for the Jewish resistance and the area around

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<sup>340</sup> Brown, *John*, 857.

Masada would attract attention because of its use as a base. Thirdly Simon Bar-Giora made extensive use of the network of caves in the wilderness for his military purposes. This suggests that the cave as a hiding place for both men and scrolls was a common practice around the Dead Sea area.

One possibility to consider is that Josephus' use of  $\lambda\sigma\tau|v$  was not an invention on the part of Josephus but an adoption by him of existing practice. This term may have evolved as the catchword to describe the Jewish resistance in general and its use as propaganda was employed by Josephus. In any event the use of  $\lambda\sigma\tau|v$  to a reader of the Fourth Gospel who had any familiarity with Josephus' work would immediately invite comparisons. The manner in which  $\lambda\sigma\tau|v$  is used in Josephus would seem to be similar to the way in which the Gospels describe Barabbas as being a rebel and killer. Clearly by the time the Fourth Gospel was published the use of this term was loaded with connotations that were anti-Roman.

Having Barabbas described as both "son of the father" and  $\lambda\sigma\tau|v$  would invite an immediate comparison with Jn 10. Hence it could very well be argued that the thieves and robbers of Jn 10 were the false messianic figure of Jesus' day. In Jn 10 Jesus is the good shepherd; his opposition are  $\lambda\sigma\tau\alpha\epsilon'$ . In Jn 19 Barabbas (son of the father) is branded a  $\lambda\sigma\tau|v$ . He is about to be judged until Jesus acts as his substitute. The contrast between Jesus who addresses God as his Father in Jn 15 and Barabbas "the son of the father" is also evident as well to any reader/listener who was familiar with Aramaic. Since Aramaic would be a language spoken by the Jewish populace, the literary connection would be much more obvious to them than to reader/listeners who were not familiar with it. The imagery is rich and presents a striking contrast of Jesus with Barabbas.

In the interest of balance it is worth noting that the linkage argued for in the previous paragraphs between the parable of the Good Shepherd and Barabbas has its critics. Schnackenburg does not see any sort of connection between the usage of  $\lambda\sigma\tau|v$  in the Fourth Gospel and Josephus.<sup>341</sup> His interpretation of the parable of the Good

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<sup>341</sup>Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (trans. Kevin Smith; 3 vols.; Palm Publishers: Montreal, 1968), 281-282.

Shepherd leads him to the conclusion that its use is not focused on the question of whether this term refers to an anti-Roman rebel. It would appear that Schnackenburg is focused on the theological contrast within this parable between Jesus and false messiahs. Clearly Schnackenburg is correct to make this distinction but this distinction can be made and still note the stark contrast between Jesus and Barabbas. In his note discussing this question he credits the evangelist with deliberately describing the thieves executed beside Jesus as something other than λῆσταις because it illustrates the evangelist's "apologetical tendency."<sup>342</sup> Schnackenburg would have been better served by making his argument based on linguistic usage of this term within the Fourth Gospel and its use in the post-70 CE environment.<sup>343</sup>

### **5.17 The Good Shepherd and Barabbas**

The dichotomy between Jesus and Barabbas as a contrast between the Good Shepherd and an impostor is one that is very suggestive. Jesus is prepared to die for the good of the flock while Barabbas has his life saved from capital punishment. Jesus' kingdom is not from this world but Barabbas is fighting to establish his own personal empire. The Good Shepherd discourse indicates that Davidic language is used by Jesus to describe his own ministry without directly identifying himself as a descendant of David. Given the probable context of the formation of the Fourth Gospel this is a very significant identification of Jesus' mission. Barabbas in contrast has an identity that is hard to penetrate and relies on vagueness for security. For Jesus being beyond the politics of Pilate and Barabbas is much more important than saving his own life. It is only the Good Shepherd that sacrifices for the sheep. A false shepherd sacrifices the flock to save his own life. For the Fourth Gospel there can be only one Good Shepherd and Barabbas is not him. The dual concern of the Fourth Gospel in dealing with Jewish and Roman concerns makes sense because this text is a product of the post-70 CE world.

The question remains as to why the use of the shepherd metaphor would be capable of escaping Roman attention since the shepherd metaphor for ruler was well-known to the ancient world. In particular it can be demonstrated that the use of the term

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<sup>342</sup>Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, n.22, 504.

<sup>343</sup>Keener in his brief comment on Barabbas and Jn 18:40 (Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary*, 2003, 1117) notes that this was Josephus' and the aristocracy's title for insurrectionists. Insurrection does not support the idea of a peaceable kingdom in Jn 18:36. Making Jesus and Barabbas opposites serves the goals of the narrator of the Fourth Gospel.

“shepherd” as a euphemism for leader or ruler is attested as being used by Tiberius. Since he was the emperor at the time of Jesus’ death, the currency of this term for the Gospel tradition cannot be doubted. The response Tiberius is credited to making to certain provincial governors who wished to increase taxation was quite pastoral. “A good shepherd shears his flock; he does not flay them.” (Suetonius, *Tib.* 3.32) The obvious correlation between ruler with shepherd and taxpaying subject with sheep is simple and straightforward. Nevertheless by identifying Jesus as the Good Shepherd who rejected the approach of Barabbas in Jn 18 the message that comes from the Fourth Gospel is that Jesus would have no part of insurrection. Thus the interview of Jesus and Pilate in the final verses of Jn 18 establishes that Jesus’ kingdom while superior to any other was not the type of kingdom Rome feared.

This allows another tension to be managed. Jesus is prepared to challenge anyone who would usurp the prerogative of deity and this would include any emperor who claimed it such as Nero or Domitian. Jesus’ implied challenge of the imperial cult is not linked with an overt reference to kingship or David. Thus the language is careful even if it is emphatic. The assertion of Jesus’ kingdom is made in this parable without using the term “kingdom” because the sheep belong in a sheepfold. That this analogy could be recognized by thoughtful Jews and Jewish Christians is clear. Thus any focus on Nero in the east using Jerusalem as the new seat of power is alien to the Johannine community. Jerusalem as the temple city is not a subject of interest to the Johannine community. The interests of other persons whether Jewish or Roman using the temple site for their own purposes are the actions of thieves and robbers.

### **5.18 The Shepherd of Hermas**

Pastoral imagery that employed the use of the shepherd/sheep imagery did not die with the completion of the Fourth Gospel. The use of the shepherd metaphor is also found in early Christian texts that were not deemed canonical. The most obvious example is the text known as the *Shepherd of Hermas*. The date of this text has been debated and given the strong possibility that it could be a composite work dating this text is not a simple task. The evidence of the Muratorian Canon has been used to date this text to late in the second century CE.<sup>344</sup> If this date is not accepted due to questions about the

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<sup>344</sup>James S. Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 107.

reliability of the information from the Muratorian Canon, the *Shepherd of Hermas* could be dated earlier. If it is dated to the early part of the second century CE, than it would indicate that the shepherd metaphor was active outside the Fourth Gospel in the broader Christian community at roughly the same time both texts were composed. If the later date is accepted, it would indicate quite probably the influence of the Fourth Gospel on shaping subsequent vocabulary for the Christian church. In either event the power of the shepherd metaphor is demonstrated.

In the fifth vision of this book a figure is introduced who is described as being dressed like a shepherd (5.1). His ministry is described as being a mentor to Hermas (5.5) and the shepherd is further described as being the angel of conversion (5.7). He is not a messianic figure but he is commissioned from heaven to provide guidance to Hermas. In the sixth similitude of the book Hermas is taught the parable of the shepherds of the sheep (6.5.1). Two shepherds are described in different situations with different flocks. One shepherd is described as the angel of luxury and deceit (6.2.1) who leads sheep who represent Christians who succumb to the pleasure of this world (6.2.3). Another shepherd is described as the angel of destruction (6.3.1) who administers discipline to Christians to bring about repentance and a return to God (6.3.6). Possible inspirations for the use of the shepherd/pastoral metaphor could be Ezek 34:1-10 and/or Jer 23:1-4 in which Yahweh laments the poor shepherds who have led the flock of His people astray.

Another point of consideration is the symbolism of the door in the ninth similitude. The door under consideration is part of a tower that is being constructed. The door is described as being the Son of God (9.1.1) and the reason he is described as a door is that no one can come to God except through the Son of God (9.1.5) The parallel to the statement by Jesus that he is the door (Jn 10:9) in the Good Shepherd discourse is clear even though the parallelism is not exact.

The use of the shepherd metaphor and pastoral language was common to different traditions in the late Second Temple era and in the era that followed it. It would also indicate that the use of the shepherd/pastoral metaphor was used in similar but different ways from the Fourth Gospel. The difficulty in establishing precise literary dependencies or dates should not obscure the far more significant reality that the shepherd/pastoral motif was well understood in both Jewish and Christian circles. From

an intertextual standpoint the use of this metaphor could be used in different ways but the common thread of the shepherd being the instructor and the sheep being the followers of God is dominant.

Perhaps the most significant implication for the *Shepherd of Hermas* for this study is that the imagery of the door and the shepherd has become a part of Christian cultural expression some time after the Fourth Gospel was finished. This suggests the impact of the Good Shepherd parable on the broader Christian community was significant enough to provoke imitation and adaptation. This again suggests that the parable had an impact at a popular level among Christian believers. The power of the image of the Good Shepherd to inspire the faithful deserves recognition as well. In an oral/aural world the communication of imagery could be far more effective than many written words.

### **5.19 The Apocryphon of Ezekiel**

One of the most fragmentary texts of the pseudepigrapha is one that has been titled the *Apocryphon of Ezekiel*. Since the text has not survived intact, it is known from secondary quotations and from one fragment among the Chester Beatty Papyri.<sup>345</sup> Given that several different texts from various authors over a wide range of time quoted it, the strong possibility exists that it was a text with wide circulation in early Christianity. The fact that the text did not survive in its entirety creates a limitation when examining its historical context. Within that limitation it provides several helpful insights. The best known passage that survives is a parable of a lame man and a blind man challenging the unfairness of a king. This story is found in both rabbinical and non-rabbinical sources in differing versions and has been designated fragment 1. The remaining fragments are short quotations of didactic material found mostly in the works of church fathers that include Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria.

Dating the *Apocryphon of Ezekiel* has proved to be a challenge given that so little of it has survived to provide clues about its origin. Since Clement of Alexandria quotes from it, it definitely cannot be a product of the second century CE. The consensus date for its origin is 50 BCE to 50 CE<sup>346</sup> and this dating rests in part on assumptions on how and why Christians would adopt a Jewish text. This dating estimate

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<sup>345</sup>J.R. Mueller and S.E. Robinson, "Apocryphon of Ezekiel," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; New York: Doubleday), 1:488.

<sup>346</sup> Mueller and Robinson, "Apocryphon of Ezekiel," 488.

is probable but the possibility of a date even earlier cannot be eliminated. By establishing a date no later than the latter decades of the Second Temple era it can also be established that the pseudonymic use of Ezekiel was common by the first century CE. The need to enhance the authority of one's pronouncements by the use of the name of Ezekiel and even quotations spliced into a newer work highlights a gain the importance of the postexilic prophets for even the early patristic era.

The most important quotation from this text for the purpose of this study is Clement of Alexandria's quotation of Ezek 34:14-16. The quotation emphasizes the healing and restoration of the sick and broken on the holy mountain and the act of the shepherd caring for them. The quotation of a significant portion of the chapter that reflects the theology of the new David demonstrates that at the end of the first century CE this passage had resonance among patristic thinkers. Further the last phrase of this excerpt "I will be near to them as the garment to their skin" (*Apocr. Ezek.* 5) would seem to reflect to Jer 13:1<sup>347</sup> in which Yahweh sticks closely to His people like a garment clings to skin. The use of Jeremiah in this conflation of two prophetic sources highlights the importance of Jer 23 for the new David/shepherd theology. Certainly all the elements exist in this quotation of the *Apocryphon of Ezekiel* for Clement of Alexandria to use it to burnish the credentials of Jesus as being the new David/shepherd who fulfills the mission of Yahweh in guarding His people.

Clement's quotation is corroborated by a fragment from the Chester Beatty Papyri that confirms the essentials of Clement of Alexandria's quotation.<sup>348</sup> This indicates that Clement's use of the *Apocryphon of Ezekiel* does not reflect a particular interpretation on his part. This strengthens the position that the shepherd/new David metaphor was a common one to both Jewish and Christian tradition. Clement of Alexandria's quotation provides an important vantage point to consider the use of the shepherd metaphor at c. 100 CE. He was prepared to use a Jewish source that probably predated the Jewish Revolt and quite possibly predated Jesus' ministry. This Jewish source was based on a passage of Ezekiel (Ezek 34) that was central to the defining of a hope for a new David. How Clement intended to use it is unfortunately unknown. Yet the

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<sup>347</sup> Mueller and Robinson, "Apocryphon of Ezekiel," 495.

<sup>348</sup> Mueller and Robinson, "Apocryphon of Ezekiel," 488.

fact that he was using such language at approximately the same date the Fourth Gospel was composed indicates that the shepherd metaphor was a living motif to that generation of Christians. The endurance of the shepherd metaphor indicates that the Fourth Gospel was part of a tradition that identified Jesus with it.<sup>349</sup> This suggests the Johannine community may have been influential in popularizing this motif. The link between the shepherd metaphor and Jesus is nonetheless clear.

### **5.20 Fourth Ezra, the Shepherd, and the Flock**

In examining the context of the shepherd discourse of Jn 10 it would be worth considering the use of related language in the text of *4 Ezra*. *4 Ezra* is generally dated to c. 100 CE<sup>350</sup> and while the nature of the composition and its probable redaction is an open question much can be learned from it. While the opening and the closing to this book possibly show indications of alteration by Christian scribes, the core of this book was written by Jew(s) coming to grips with the post-70 CE situation. Its close relationship with *2 Baruch* is generally agreed<sup>351</sup> and this is will have further implications for this study. The strong possibility that *4 Ezra* was written or redacted at roughly the same time as the Fourth Gospel also makes it useful for comparative analysis of the Fourth Gospel.

The establishment of direct linguistic links between *4 Ezra* and the Fourth Gospel or particular Qumran texts is difficult. The best preservation of *4 Ezra* is in Latin with Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic possibly being its original language of composition. Nevertheless critical terminology and themes transcend the original language and provide an opportunity for comparison. It contains a fascinating quote from one character to Ezra the prophet. Ezra has been reminded of his leadership status in the previous verse and he is now exhorted to not forsake his people “like a shepherd who leaves his flock in the power of savage wolves.” (*4 Ezra* 5:18) The parallel to Jn 10:12 in which Jesus warns

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<sup>349</sup> The new David/shepherd metaphor would of interest to those concerned with understanding the role of Ezek 34-48 in the light of royal messianic expectations. Gentile Christians and non-Jews would not have the same interest. Thus other Christian texts of this era do not include this metaphor. That only illustrates that the shepherd metaphor was used enough to be noticed but not so frequently as to be the dominant motif for Jesus. The Synoptics do not include the parable of the Good Shepherd but that does not mean this parable is not important to early Christianity just because it is only found in the Fourth Gospel.

<sup>350</sup> B.M. Metzger, “The Fourth Book of Ezra,” in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; New York: Doubleday), 1:520.

<sup>351</sup> Metzger, “The Fourth Book of Ezra,” 522.

against the hireling who abandons the sheep is obvious. Further reference is made to “all the flocks that have been fashioned you (Lord) have provided for yourself one sheep, and from all the multitude of people you (Lord) have gotten for yourself one people.” (*4 Ezra* 5:26, 27) Again the parallel to Jn 10:16 in which Jesus speaks of bringing his followers into one common fold is straightforward. Added to these references are the allusions in various Qumran texts like 4Q504 4.7 which use pastoral imagery to describe the new David.

Another point of comparison between *4 Ezra* and the Fourth Gospel is the use of imagery that reflects the Davidic element in both texts. The fifth vision of *4 Ezra* provides the key element for comparison. Dan 7 provides the primary thematic material for this vision. The fourth kingdom of Daniel’s book is reinterpreted in the fifth book of *4 Ezra* as being represented by an eagle. The obvious reference for this symbol is Rome and the imperial eagles of the legions were constant reminders of the Roman adoption of this symbol. The role of the Messiah in vanquishing the eagle is clear. He is described as a lion that comes from the forest (11:37; 12:32). The use of this imagery is quite significant. The Lion of Judah is described as the Root of David (Rev 5:5) in the Revelation. The use of the forest suggests a link with Isa 10:34 and the messianic use of the forest. The revelation of this messiah will take place at the end of days (*4 Ezra* 12:32) and the obvious parallel to the Qumran expectations is notable.

Since this messiah is described as being of Davidic descent (*4 Ezra* 12:32), the clash between the Davidic messiah and the Roman empire is couched in eschatological language. Since the core of *4 Ezra* was probably composed between the Jewish Revolt and the Bar-Kochba Revolt, important issues are raised. This text is predicting in eschatological and even apocalyptic language the demise of the Roman empire at the hand of a Davidic messiah. There are significant differences between the Qumran texts and *4 Ezra* but there are agreements in theme as well. The similarities between 4Q174, the *War Scroll*, and the Isaiah peshers with the fifth vision of *4 Ezra* are focused on two critical points.

Firstly is the expectation of the demise of the Romans and secondly the critical role of finding a messiah to execute this mission is stressed. These common themes indicate that a messiah who attacked Rome was still current even after the Jewish Revolt.

These links do not prove that the group or individual who produced *4 Ezra* was a product of the Qumran community or was directly influenced by it. This possibility while real is too tentative to prove with the data previously discussed. What is much more readily apparent is that the theme of the Davidic messiah survived in non-Jewish Christian circles after the Jewish Revolt and that the shepherd motif was part of this Davidic imagery. As well the titanic eschatological battle of the fifth book of *4 Ezra* resonates with both the *War Scroll* and Revelation.

These points of comparison between *4 Ezra* and Jn 10 highlight again the critical importance of identifying Jesus as the Good Shepherd who is not a political militant. The imagery in *4 Ezra* was one that was militantly opposed to Roman rule. The expectation of a messiah in *4 Ezra* is one that would seem to have more in common with Barabbas than with Jesus.

### **5.21 Conclusion**

The situation facing the Johannine community was one that required great care. The Fourth Gospel was written with sensitivity to a readership that included the marginalized and oppressed. The sensitivity that Jesus shows to the Samaritan woman indicates that the Fourth Gospel had chosen to embrace those who were otherwise ostracized by society. Jesus unlike Josephus is not impressed with physical temples and whether Jerusalem or Mt. Gerizim is the right place to worship. Jesus felt no need to enlist a pantheon of powerful male figures to bolster his case. He was interested in the welfare of the Samaritan woman. Showing care for a marginalized woman was an excellent way to alienate Jewish and Roman males who were more interested in politics than people. Yet hope for the world is what the Fourth Gospel is about and not politics.

The Fourth Gospel was not written to appease the powerful but it was also written with discretion. The use of the shepherd metaphor to identify Jesus as Davidic and the use of the parable of the Good Shepherd to create a contrast with Jesus and Barabbas indicate that Jesus was to be portrayed as a man of peace. The Davidic identification is made but it is done so in a way designed not to create embarrassment for Rome. Those familiar with the concept of the new David as shepherd would be able to see this linkage. There is no attempt to create friction between different ethnic groups by polarizing polemics. The assumption that the Fourth Gospel was anti-Jewish misses the

most salient point of the Fourth Gospel. Jesus' message was one that transcended gender, race, and politics. He is the door for the sheep and this door opens to those who are prepared to come through the door. The role of a shepherd is to protect the sheep and not expose them to thieves and robbers. The Cleansing of the Temple is not the act of a militant revolutionary but of a royal messiah come to replace the Temple with something better. The Second Temple was gone but that did not mean hope was gone. Jesus as the replacement for the Temple was willing to shepherd the sheep.

Those who read, listened, or composed *4 Ezra* or works like them came with a different set of expectations about the future than those who viewed Jesus as the fulfillment of the temple cult. Jesus' claim to be the replacement for the Temple needed to be described in language that was both sensitive to the Jewish heritage of early Christianity and alert to the dangers of the post-70 CE world. For the Fourth Gospel the role of the Temple needs to be understood as part of the coming of the new David, the Messiah of Israel which is Jesus. This message was only part of the challenges facing the Johannine community. To any survivors of the Qumran community the need to showcase Jesus as the new David was a priority for presenting the message of Jesus to them. Furthermore the role of Jesus needed to be written in a manner that did not attract undue Roman attention. For the Johannine community the Temple had a different meaning than Josephus and militant Jewish nationalists. The living Temple was the new David who was the Good Shepherd, Jesus.

## **Chapter Six: The Johannine Community and the Post-70 CE World**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The world did not come to an end after the Temple was destroyed in 70 CE. What came to an end was Judaism having a physical Temple and this had implications for both Jews and Christians. Eschatological expectations for any Jewish or Christian group that were predicated on the existence or absence of the Temple would be either diminished or boosted. The title of this chapter draws attention to the reality that the Johannine community had to deal with the changed circumstances it faced. It would need to explain the post-70 CE world in a way that made sense to its own community while being mindful of the dangers around it.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain why the Johannine community would be under stress from certain Jewish opponents and the Flavian dynasty. Since the world did not end in 70 CE, the rise of the Flavian dynasty would be a factor in how the Johannine community now lived. The problem of how the Johannine community coped with the stresses around it needs to be seen in more than an academic light. It needs to be also understood in terms of the social forces that moved against it.

This chapter assesses key evidence to understand what pressures faced the Johannine community. The Flavians as a new dynasty would be consolidating their power and this means the threat of Nero *redivivus* and the threat of another Jewish revolt would be topics of interest to them. The letters of Pliny the Younger to the emperor Trajan provide insight in how Christians in c. 100 CE were treated. While these letters date to the decade after the last Flavian emperor Domitian, they are useful because they describe a world close to the Flavian one and directly influenced by that dynasty. Combined with these pressures evidence is adduced from the famous Eighteen Benedictions that demonstrates the Johannine community could be expected to face opposition from certain Jewish groups.

The problem facing the Johannine community was that it was being pressed from two sides at the same time. Concentrating on either just the Jewish or Roman pressures in isolation will not give the full picture of how the Fourth Gospel was

composed in the era that came after the Jewish Revolt. This study has concentrated on reiterating this theme because that reality was the world of the Johannine community.

## **6.2 Ruler of the World**

For those accustomed to living in a nation in which the rule of law is respected and personal safety is the norm, it is difficult to understand the chaos and uncertainty of societies that are in constant flux. A stable social order is taken for granted and the fears of those who live in turmoil are often ignored. The world of the Roman empire had a rough but precarious order and if it was disturbed the consequences could easily be tragic. In the ancient world the transition of power from one ruler to a successor was often the point of greatest uncertainty. The opportunity for rival claimants to attempt to seize power was real and the history of both the Roman republic and empire is filled with such collisions.

In Suetonius' evaluation of the rise of the Flavians he credits their dynasty with providing stability to the empire (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 10.1). Whether Suetonius is making an accurate historical observation or whether he is currying favor, the emphasis on stability is significant. Stability was perhaps the most precious commodity that any ruler could provide in the ancient world. Whether he was just or wicked, old or young he was expected to provide predictability for his subjects. The demise of Nero had shredded the equilibrium of the empire and the infamous year of the four emperors (69 CE) had done nothing to repair it. The uncertainty and chaos that civil disorder brought to the Roman empire meant that the average person would suffer. The regaining of the social equilibrium through the rise of a strong ruler would provide relief for the average person by simply bringing order out of chaos.

This provides some context for Vespasian's admiration by his fellow Romans. They had a vested interest in his success and his personal triumph provided a measure of security for his own people. In that respect he fulfilled a role similar to Augustus. While his reign was much shorter than that of Augustus, he solved the same problem that Augustus did. The internal rivalries of the great Roman houses were bleeding the Roman body politic to such an extent that the very future and indeed dominance of Rome was in jeopardy. Both Augustus and Vespasian brought civil peace and they preserved the social and political stability of their world. The preservation of that stability was

something that Vespasian's successors would seek to maintain. If the Johannine community was viewed as a threat to that peace, it could expect to receive the attention of the empire.

While Jewish Palestine was only a small portion of the Roman empire and the Diaspora were only a small drop in a multicultural milieu, the Jewish people had a degree of importance that went beyond their own relative small size. As remarked earlier the Jewish Revolt could have been successful and it would have marked a monumental strategic turning point in the history of the empire. Just as the Seleucid empire was fatally weakened by the Maccabean Revolt, so could have the Roman empire been weakened by the Jewish Revolt. What happened at Jerusalem had an impact in Rome.

### **6.3 Josephus and the Samaritan Temple**

The account by Josephus of Alexander the Great's interaction with the Jewish population as part of his invasion of the Persian empire could be viewed as being a historical oddity. The attention Alexander the Great shows the Jewish population of Jerusalem in Josephus' account does not seem to be reflected in the accounts of non-Jewish historians. Even if Josephus has embellished Alexander the Great's contact with the Jewish people, what Josephus has to say is important.<sup>352</sup> Clearly the manner in which Josephus portrays Alexander the Great as respecting Jewish customs does have an impact on those reading his account in the ancient world. Alexander the Great's life became a decisive turning point in the affairs of the ancient world and it should not be ignored. The very name of the conqueror of the Persian empire would generate interest in those who read Josephus.

Josephus seems quite inspired to claim Alexander the Great as being a friend of the Jewish people. He is portrayed as giving an offering to Yahweh in the Temple (Josephus, *Ant.* 11.8.5). This sacrifice is described as being guided by the high priest and this would help curb the criticism of the propriety of a pagan ruler offering sacrifices to Yahweh. Alexander the Great's offering of a sacrifice according to Jewish custom should not be ruled out as being historically implausible. The polytheism of ancient Macedonia

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<sup>352</sup> As noted earlier in the discussion on Eusebius and Domitian, simply evaluating the historical validity of a controversial story is not the sole task of the academic. An account whether fact or legend that influenced the history of a people needs to be treated seriously. In a narrative approach the impact of that story is treated as being of significance because of its historical impact on its listeners and not because of its historicity.

and Greece would allow him to participate in a sacrifice at Jerusalem. The observation that something could happen is not the same as stating that it did happen. Having a pagan ruler offer sacrifice would be a controversial move by any Jewish high priest. Obviously the question of ritual purity would be on the minds of many Jews but this story whether historical or not contains a message of political acceptance. For Josephus showing that Alexander the Great viewed the Jerusalem Temple as a valid center of worship is worth risking the criticism of whether his actions polluted the Temple.

The question of the role of the monarch in the temple cult is raised by this account. Alexander the Great is not Davidic or even Jewish and he is offering a sacrifice. Yet the justification for this action is that Alexander the Great had seen a vision exhorting him to attack the Persians and that he is fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel (Josephus, *Ant.* 11.8.5). Thus his actions are acceptable because he is chosen by Yahweh. Josephus' account of Alexander the Great learning of Daniel's prophecy of a Greek victory over the Persians needs to be seen in the literary and theological context of the first century CE. The source critical question of whether the second half of Daniel stems from the time of the Maccabean Revolt is important but the perspective of late Second Temple Judaism was that Daniel was a prophet. Josephus is at pains to link Alexander the Great with the authority of Daniel and he succeeds in that goal. The authority of this text for explaining or defending a pagan ruler's actions would imply that Daniel was a respected source at the time of Josephus' writing. By linking the Temple cult, Alexander the Great, and Daniel together Josephus was creating a triad that would help further his larger goal.

The possible value of Daniel as a text for Josephus lies in the message that the forces of history are controlled by Yahweh and that the rise and fall of foreign kings is part of Yahweh's plan. This account is useful for Josephus' later purposes of explaining the rise of the Flavians as part of the will of Yahweh. Daniel as a text makes sense of the interactions of foreign kings and faithful Jews even when the faithful suffer persecution. The lessons of Daniel in the Persian period and the triumph of Alexander the Great to inaugurate the Hellenistic era prove useful to Josephus. It prepares the groundwork for the explanation Josephus proffers for the events of the Jewish War. Josephus did not just record history; he also interpreted it.

#### **6.4 Qumran Eschatology and the Jewish Revolt**

Given the concern of the Qumran community for dealing with the last days, the question arises as to how that community would view the events of the Jewish Revolt, the destruction of the Second Temple, and the last stand at Masada. The Jewish Revolt was not simply a nationalistic struggle or an agrarian revolt of the oppressed. While these aspects of the Jewish Revolt are significant, the religious implications are paramount. Particularly for the Qumran community the events of the world around them were part of Yahweh's work. Palestine was not simply a geographical designation for pious Jews; the Promised Land was an inheritance from Yahweh that needed to be cleansed.

Expectations of war, violence, and upheaval were central to many texts found at Qumran and the context of these struggles was always within a theological framework. Given the confidence expressed in various Qumran texts regarding the firm control Yahweh had of the past, present, and future the events of the Jewish Revolt would have been viewed as occurring within the providence of His encompassing will. Indeed the constant call for the Kittim to be destroyed fits within the rubric of these texts. The more difficult question to answer is whether the Jewish Revolt would have been viewed as representing an aspect of or even the ultimate stage in the last days.

Obviously the demise of the settlement at Qumran during the Roman drive to Jericho in 68 CE makes it an extraordinarily task to determine what the response of the Qumran community was to the Jewish Revolt. In an earlier chapter of this study the textual history of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* was examined in the context of the political developments from pre-Herodian times to the fall of Masada. The point was made that the texts of the Qumran community could be expected to have an influence beyond the demise of the physical site at Qumran. The Qumran settlement needs to be understood as not only a network of caves but also as part of the religious and historical fabric of late Second Temple Judaism. One of the areas in which that influence could be examined is in the eschatological expectations within the Scrolls themselves. Literature influences history.

#### **6.5 4Q252 and Eschatological Amalek**

The purpose of 4Q252 may involve more than providing commentary on selected passages from Torah. It may also provide a contemporary call to arms for the

faithful of the covenantal community. The injunction to eliminate Amalek (4Q252 4.2) is given an eschatological context in the Qumran text different from that found in Torah. 4Q252 quotes Yahweh's injunction to Moses that He will destroy Amalek (Exod 17:14). Brin notes that the context of Exod 17: 14-16 does not include the phrase the "last days" (???? "????") found in the Qumran text and that this modification may reflect a need to identify Amalek with opposition to the Qumran community.<sup>353</sup> Obviously with this interpretation the Qumran community is availing itself of Moses' words to provide theological protection for one of their current polemics. This rather arbitrary use of Torah on closer examination may yield a different nuance.

There is also a reasonable possibility that the Qumran exegete is using what twentieth century scholarship would have described as redaction. Brin raises an alternative interpretation that the phrase "generation to generation" (???? ????) used to describe the duration of the war against Amalek in Exod 17:16 may provide the basis for the Qumran exegete to view the Exodus passage as being in fact eschatological and referring to the last days.<sup>354</sup> In part he bases this option on his study of the ways "generation" (???) was used in Hebrew Scriptures and the Scrolls.<sup>355</sup> Dt 25:19 also includes a call for Amalek to be destroyed but that is to occur when Israel is at peace with all its other enemies and is in possession of its land. Arguably this general peace with the enemies of Israel has never completely happened in the history of the nation of Israel and the only time it was likely to occur would be in the eschatological endtime. Certainly in the Roman era Israel did not possess its own land.

By using the context of both the references in Exodus and Deuteronomy the Qumran exegete could reasonably conclude that the time Yahweh's word would reach its ultimate fulfillment would be in the "last days" (????? "????"). Whether other of his contemporaries would have agreed with his interpretation or not, it does reflect a viable approach given with what is known of exegetical practice at Qumran. It also needs to be remembered that how the readers of this text would interpret it is also unknown. What is clear is that Amalek is thrust into the "last days" (????? "????") in this Qumran text when that sense is not obvious from the Torah passages. A pesher that included support for the

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<sup>353</sup> Gershon Brin, *The Concept of Time in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 334-335.

<sup>354</sup> Brin, *The Concept of Time*, 334-335.

<sup>355</sup> Brin, *The Concept of Time*, 335.

coming of the messiah from the Davidic line was its vehicle. The combination of extreme stress, eschatological fervor, and the adaptability of the Qumran exegete to changing circumstances should not be underestimated.

### **6.6 The Eschatological Perspective of the Gospels**

What the Qumran community expected as an eschatological future would have reverberations for the Johannine community. The intellectual core of early Christianity was Jewish and Jewish intellectual norms predominate in the discourse of the earliest strata of Christian writing. Even for streams of early Christian thought that were not Johannine the importance of Jewish tradition was critical. The basis of Pauline thought is rooted in Torah and his arguments while alert to Gentile issues are rooted in his foundational rabbinical training. The subtext of the debate at the Council of Jerusalem (c. 49 CE) is focused on issues that not only involve an intellectual appreciation of what the affirmation of Jesus being the Christ meant but also on what emotional distance Jewish Christians needed to give to ethnic non-Christian Jews. The identity of Jewish Christianity and its defense as a legitimate interpretation of Judaism rests on an appreciation of Jewish tradition that blends both an appreciation of Jewish culture and its written record. To sacrifice or even modify that tradition would be a momentous event in the development of Christianity. This provides a context for understanding the eschatological dimension to the Fourth Gospel and how it may differ or even emulate the Qumran community.

Any discussion of the eschatological perspective of the Fourth Gospel inevitably draws into a discussion of the eschatological theology of Jesus and the eschatological perspectives of early Christianity. The history of New Testament scholarship has covered this topic perhaps as deeply as any subject in the discipline and there is no need to cover previously researched material. Nevertheless certain observations need to be reiterated. Eschatological issues were important to early Christians and the need for such a resolution is indicated by the discussions in various epistles concerning eschatological issues. I Cor 15:20- 58 contains a detailed account of the doctrine of the resurrection. I Thessalonians discusses the return of Jesus and the Day of the Lord (I Thess 4: 13-5:11). 2 Pet 3:8-18 contains a long involved discussion on the inevitability of Jesus' return and the rationale why it has not occurred as soon as some

expected. Clearly the text of 2 Pet 3 indicates that there was in some quarters discomfiture with the patient waiting for a better time. The Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics both contain perspectives on what the future should hold and what the meaning of the kingdom entailed.

Matthew as a book ends with the promise that Jesus will be with his followers until the world ends (Mt 28:20). If this language is viewed as being similar to that found in Qumran in 4Q252 and other texts with a strong eschatological focus, it would represent an eschatological sign post that would be understandable to those outside the immediate followers of Jesus. Even though Matthean eschatology would differ from 4Q252 in its vision of a peaceful future the use of such language could be expected to attract attention. Matthew and Luke both share an account of Jesus promising thrones to his disciples to judge the twelve tribes of Israel in an eschatological future (Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30). Assuming a unified eschatology of Matthew this would mean that there is a relationship between Jesus' promise at the end of the book and his promise to his disciples to judge the twelve tribes. Unraveling that whole relationship is not the goal here; rather it indicates the issues that attentive readers would face in understanding Matthew's Gospel in comparison with eschatological texts from Qumran.

This interest in Matthean and even Synoptic eschatology would be enhanced by the question of what Jesus meant when he spoke of the kingdom of God. The eschatological sense of the expression "the kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven" in the Synoptics would develop a very immediate sense if they were viewed as representing an imminent eschatology that called for changes in the temporal world within a very short period of time. Thus when Mark announces in Mk 1:14 that John the Baptist has been imprisoned and in Mk 1:15 Jesus is preaching the inbreaking of the kingdom of heaven the possibility of a connection between the two events could be maintained. The linkage between the "kingdom of God" and events in Jewish Palestine would be a significant issue for Jewish Christians. That the question of the kingdom was important to the earliest disciples is evident by a reading of Acts. Acts begins with the disciples asking Jesus (Acts 1:6) for a timetable for the restoration of Israel's kingdom. The eschatology envisioned in this statement would appear at first reading to have more in common with

eschatological expectations from the Qumran community than the future envisioned within the Fourth Gospel.

### **6.7 Kingdom of God in the Fourth Gospel**

The meaning of the kingdom of God is given a distinct interpretation in the Fourth Gospel. The terminology of the kingdom of God or of the kingdom of heaven as found in the Synoptics is not part of the normal vocabulary of the Fourth Gospel. It does occur in Jesus' discourse with Nicodemus in Jn 3 when Jesus instructs Nicodemus that the kingdom of God is entered by being born again (Jn 3:3) and by water and spirit (Jn 3:5). It is important to realize that the kingdom of God is defined in clearly religious and non-threatening language. When Nicodemus reappears again in the Fourth Gospel he comes with Joseph of Arimathea (Jn 19:38, 39) to claim Jesus' body. Establishing the otherworldly nature of the kingdom Jesus described in Jn 3 helps to portray Nicodemus' later action as that of a concerned follower rather than of a post-death conspirator. The kingdom in Jn 3 is a kingdom that is focused on a world beyond the temporal.

When the term "kingdom" (βασιλεῖα) is used again to describe Jesus' work in this world (Jn 18:36) he is before Pilate. "Kingdom" is couched in terms that are peaceful. Pilate takes the initiative in questioning Jesus about being the King of the Jews. Jesus' response that his kingdom was otherworldly (Jn 18:36) is non-threatening. The term kingdom is used in the Fourth Gospel when Jesus is questioned about his role and not as a sign of Jesus' eschatology. It is not used with followers of Jesus or as part of a public discourse. This is in marked contrast with the Synoptics which commonly have kingdom of God terminology as part of the didactic discourse of Jesus. This reversal of interest in the use of kingdom terminology is striking when viewed in conjunction with how the Fourth Gospel treats Jesus' Davidic heritage. Terms that could identify Jesus as being an anti-Roman rebel are used in ways that highlight Jesus' interest in a kingdom far removed from Rome. Rather when Jesus is before Pilate Jesus explains his mission as one that is to witness to the truth (Jn 18:37). The kingdom Jesus leads is one that is interested in bringing the truth to those who listen to it (Jn 18:37).

The kingdom of truth was available to those who listened to it but the location of that kingdom was not confined to one spot in Palestine. As has been suggested in a previous chapter Thomas' role in Jn 20 in his dialogue with Jesus may have been

orientated toward the contemporary situation of the Johannine community. One aspect that needs to be evaluated is the Thomas tradition of his preaching in India. If the tradition of Thomas reaching India is viewed as reliable or as rooted in historic events, it would indicate that the disciples did indeed take the injunction to evangelize the widest reaches of the world seriously.

The principal written source of this tradition is the *Acts of Thomas*. The historical reliability of the *Acts of Thomas* is not a simple matter to verify. The miracles in this text are quite fantastic and raise questions about its historical credibility<sup>356</sup> and that serves as a strong warning to treat this text with caution. What is easier to support historically is the tradition that Thomas reached India. The identity of a king Gundaphar has been supported by archaeological evidence and the possibility of him being the king mentioned in the *Acts of Thomas* in connection with Thomas cannot be overlooked.<sup>357</sup> Thus Thomas' connection to an Indian king is plausible even if the other details are uncertain. This does not make the *Acts of Thomas* a reliable historical source but neither is Josephus viewed as being wholly accurate. What does seem highly probable is that the Thomas tradition has at least some basis in historical fact and that perhaps more importantly early Christianity was aware of the geographical realities of the known world.<sup>358</sup> Thomas as evangelist to India would also provide another perspective to view Jesus' comments in Jn 10:16 concerning the "other sheep" which were to become part of one flock under Jesus. The eschatological future of the Fourth Gospel certainly allowed for "other sheep" and if Thomas' activities as evangelist to India were part of the community history of the Johannine community, Thomas would serve as a very useful messenger.

This context gives perspective to the role of Thomas in identifying Jesus as risen in Jn 20. He is a figure who is part of the future of Christianity. This focus on the future also sheds light on how the concluding chapter of the Fourth Gospel treats Peter. Jn 21

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<sup>356</sup>Samuel Moffet, *A History of Christianity in Asia* (2 vols.; New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 27.

<sup>357</sup> Moffet, *A History of Christianity*, 29.

<sup>358</sup> The Thomas tradition to India is on balance historically probable even if virtually nothing else from this tradition is certain. Even if the Thomas tradition is dismissed as legend, the power of the legend cannot be ignored. As has been argued elsewhere in this study the impact of a legend is real even if the legend is not. The narrator of the Fourth Gospel was influenced by the world of his time and the narrative approach in this study utilizes this insight. Forcing the Fourth Gospel to be a prisoner of the expectations of the contemporary world is not fair to the reality that the Fourth Gospel is an ancient text.

does not give the impression that the mission of Peter and the early church was to be reaching an immediate terminus. Rather the opposite impression is given to the reader. The expectation of Jn 21 is that there will be a future for Peter in shepherding the church. Indeed the rumor that the Beloved Disciple was to live until Jesus returned needed to be quashed (Jn 21:23). While it is tempting to try to find possible reasons for this action, what is evident is that the text of Jn 21 was careful to point to a future that focuses on proclaiming that Jesus was the legitimate Son of God. The focus is on broadcasting this message to the widest possible audience.

This focus on evangelism needs to be also understood with regards to the message of the Synoptics and Acts. The sentiment expressed in the interest for a restored Israelite kingdom in Acts 1 provides indirect support for the viewpoint expressed in the Gospels that the disciples did not understand the significance of Jesus' death. If they were still musing after Jesus' reappearance to them of a national Israel, they did not understand the meaning of Jesus' death in the sense of Jesus offering himself as a salvific sacrifice. This statement does not portray the disciples as being particularly gifted theologians from a Christian perspective and this discredit on their behavior shows that the early church was prepared to challenge their own. Perhaps part of this confidence is seen in how Jesus handles this question. Jesus' rebuke that they were not to be entrusted with detailed knowledge of the eschatological future (Acts 1:7) but were to be focused on missionary work (Acts 1:8) strongly suggests a different set of priorities. It also suggests that the eschatology being set forth for the early church as normative is one that envisions a future that at least allows for reaching the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The end of the world envisioned in the last two verses of Matthew is a call to preach the Gospel throughout the world to the very end (Mt 28:19-20). It was not a call to attack the Kittim at the end of the world.

### **6.8 Vespasian as World Ruler**

Knowing that the eschatological ferment of Second Temple Judaism was alive and well in various forms helps to make sense of how Roman historians understood the link between Jews and Romans. Suetonius' reference to the prophecy of the world ruler (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 10.4) provides a critical perspective for understanding the Roman response to the Jewish Revolt. Josephus' publication of this prophecy (Josephus, *J.W.*

6.5.4) as noted in a previous chapter had found a place in Roman historiography.

Whether this prophecy was indeed the catalyst for the Jewish Revolt or not, it became the starting point for Suetonius' explanation of the events that lead to the rise of Vespasian (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 10.5). Suetonius is at pains throughout his description of Vespasian to remind the reader of Vespasian's humble origins. Whether this was an effort to elicit sympathy for his memory or whether it was an embarrassment that could not be dismissed, Suetonius leaves the impression that Vespasian's origin could be viewed as being too humble to be emperor. The prophecy serves as a means of making Vespasian the legitimate ruler of the empire. Whether the Flavians would have had any significant understanding of Jewish practices and history is not the issue. Whether they could grasp the political implications of a prophetic oracle from the east and exploit it for their own purposes is the relevant issue and the evidence points in the affirmative.

Suetonius' reference to Josephus (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 10.5) comes in a catalogue of signs and omens that were listed to demonstrate that Vespasian was predestined to be emperor. Suetonius makes an effort in his description of Vespasian to show the care with which Vespasian regarded temples and portents. For Suetonius the pagan omens that predict Vespasian's rise are the correct context to place Josephus' testimony and this suggests nervousness about Vespasian's legitimacy. Vespasian is portrayed as being chosen by the gods and this would deflect any charge that Vespasian was a rank opportunist who exploited the confusion after Nero's ouster to make himself emperor.

Suetonius wrote his narrative of the *Twelve Caesars* after Josephus had completed both *Antiquities* and the *Jewish War*. Whether Josephus' work was used as a source by Suetonius or whether he used Roman sources for his analysis of Josephus, the fact remains that Josephus is part of the story of Vespasian as told by a Roman aristocrat. Given the importance of the Jewish Revolt to the rise of the Flavians it should be no surprise that Josephus finds himself part of the story.

The importance of Alexander the Great endorsing the temple at Jerusalem now becomes apparent. A world conqueror who supported the claims of the Jerusalem Temple would balance a Roman emperor who destroyed it. Josephus does not allow for the possibility that these events occurred outside Divine providence. Just as Alexander the Great fulfilled the role predestined for him so did the Flavians. Since the Flavians were

responsible for the destruction of the Second Temple, having Alexander the Great endorse it demonstrates that the Temple was not the problem. Thus the legitimacy of the Temple as a symbol for Judaism could be maintained while admitting both Alexander the Great and Vespasian were Divine agents. For the survivors of the Qumran community and for the Johannine community this interpretation of history would be a challenge to their views on the legitimacy of the Temple. The Flavians were not going away quietly.

### **6.9 Titus and Berenice**

The relationship of the Flavians with Judean royalty included more than an academic interest. Vespasian's eldest son and future successor, Titus, became enamored with a member of the Herodian dynasty. Her name was Berenice and Titus' liaison with her became a point of comment by the historians.<sup>359</sup> His interest in her was more than fleeting. He maintained his liaison with her even while his father groomed him as his heir.<sup>360</sup> This did not go unnoticed and the negative response by the Roman public ultimately led him to disavow her.

The fact that a prominent Roman would cohabit with a minor member of an eastern dynastic family is hardly significant of itself. Mark Anthony and Julius Caesar were both charmed by Cleopatra and she represented Egypt at a significant time in the evolution of the late Roman republic. Queen Berenice was not a major historical figure but she was from Jewish Palestine and her relationship with Titus demonstrates that the Flavians would have had more than elementary knowledge of the history of the region. They could be expected to be acquainted with her family and the political implications that would have for the Roman interest in Jewish Palestine. While Judea was not the center of Roman interest in their empire, for the Flavians it had become a focal point both for their involvement in the Jewish Revolt and their more personal contacts. The importance of those contacts in understanding how Rome was governed should not be ignored in analyzing the interactions of the Flavians with both Jews and Christians.

It also demonstrates that any history by Josephus would have had implications for the Flavian dynasty beyond the immediate history of the Jewish Revolt. Any aspect of the history that could influence opinion concerning Berenice would have reflected

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<sup>359</sup>Chris Scarre, *Chronicle of the Roman Emperors* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 73.

<sup>360</sup> Scarre, *Chronicles*, 73.

directly on Titus and indirectly on Vespasian and Domitian. The political fates of the Flavians were all influenced by the events of the Jewish Revolt. This observation in and of itself does not mean Josephus rewrote Jewish history to make it conform to the Flavians' wishes. What is manifest is that Josephus' history just like Suetonius' and Tacitus' had implications for the contemporary world in which it was written. Josephus would have been naïve to have missed this corollary and that point needs to be kept in mind in reading his version of history. The actual circle of persons who might come into contact with what Josephus wrote would be relatively small but they would be influential in the arena of politics. The events of the past were political realities in the contemporary world of Josephus.

### **6.10 Nero and the East**

Suetonius makes a rather cryptic reference to Nero and the difficulties Rome suffered in Armenia and Syria (Suetonius, *Nero* 6.39). Given the brevity of his statement it could seem that this is only a passing comment meant to footnote the details of Nero's reign. An alternate and arguably much better interpretation is that Suetonius' very brevity is an attempt to gloss over a much more serious situation. His allusion to the military difficulties suffered by Rome in this region need to be set in a larger framework. Asia Minor forms a giant peninsula. To the north is the Black Sea, to the south is the Mediterranean, and to the west are the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Only in the east is Asia Minor accessible by land. Any invader seeking to move against it by land is compelled by geography to come from the east. Parthia was never known as a naval power but its horsemen exhibited great mobility when encountering Roman forces. Syria and Armenia form the first line of defense for Asia Minor in the west and Egypt in the south. To lose either could set an even more momentous set of events in motion.

This road was almost left open by the incompetence of one of Nero's generals named Lucius Caesennius Paetus who thoroughly lost the confidence of his own soldiers (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.25). His desultory actions in the mid-60's CE against Parthia were only retrieved by the steady performance of Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo in retrieving the situation and reaching a satisfactory accommodation with the Parthians (Cassius Dio, *Hist.* 62.23.1-4). Corbulo's success cast him in the role as an alternative to Nero but he never embraced it (Cassius Dio, *Hist.* 62.23.5-6). Nero ultimately repaid Corbulo's

loyalty with execution (Cassius Dio, *His.* 62.17.5) and the sentiment that Nero was ultimately loyal only to himself and not the empire is clear. At the point when opposition to Nero was reaching a critical mass Suetonius records an interesting observation about Nero. Apparently certain astrologers made predictions that Nero could gain an alternate throne in the east and that throne would include Jerusalem (Suetonius, *Nero* 6.40). The seriousness of this prediction is open to question but the fact that Suetonius recorded it indicates that it was part of the political invective passing in Rome. It also reinforces the idea that Jerusalem represented an alternative and willing site for a kingdom and Nero was the sort of man who would take it. Nero was more important than Rome and would trade its glory for his own in the east or at least his enemies believed this was so.

The question that starts to emerge from a close analysis of the Roman sources is the impression that Nero was viewed as not only an unworthy emperor but as a potential traitor-in-residence with a following that was both dangerous and well connected. Suetonius describes Nero as being an incredibly perverted man who engaged in the strangest of sexual practices (Suetonius, *Nero* 6.28) yet after his death he still had a following (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 12.57) who honored his memory. Why such an unpopular man would have a following seems strange but for all his hostility to Nero Suetonius records this as fact. This disconnect may receive a partial answer from events during the Flavian era. The mention of Nero *redivius* living in Parthia (Suetonius, *Nero* 6.57) made a great impression on the Parthians according to Suetonius. Why the Parthians should have any particular affection for a Roman emperor seems strange. Given the long history of hostility between the Romans and the Parthians it is hard to imagine that Nero or his memory charmed the Parthians into making an emotional attachment with him. A better explanation for the interest in Nero is that it offered the Parthians a means of sowing dissension in the Roman state. Having a Parthian backed candidate become Roman emperor would be a great coup for them. If one wanted to provide an alternative candidate to the Flavian dynasty, using a pretender claiming to be Nero was probably the best means of unsettling them. Who knows maybe even Jerusalem could be reclaimed for Parthia like it was briefly (40-37 BCE) during the dying days of the Roman republic

The Flavians were certainly aware of the pitfalls of contemporary Roman politics. Tacitus includes in one of the speeches of Vespasian's supporters an exhortation

for Vespasian to fight for the empire (Tacitus, *His.* 2.76) when he is not yet emperor. The inference was clear. Corbulo was loyal to Nero and was murdered for his loyalty. Why should Vespasian risk the same for another weak emperor? The same message rings loudly for his sons who succeeded him. If Nero *redivivus* was making waves in the east it was best to be on one's guard since the east had a history of danger. From personal experience Titus and Domitian would know that having a new king in Jerusalem could be used by the Parthians as a means to threaten Rome.

### **6.11 Jewish Christianity and the Jewish Revolt**

It is into the spider web of Roman intrigue and politics that the Johannine community had to live. The relationship of Jewish Christianity with the broader Jewish community during and after the Jewish Revolt cannot be examined without reference to the famous tradition of the flight of the Jewish Christian populace from Jerusalem to Pella. According to tradition the church at Jerusalem received a revelation to leave Jerusalem as a result of the Jewish Revolt and move to safety in Pella.<sup>361</sup> As important as the question is of the historical basis of the tradition,<sup>362</sup> the significance of the tradition for grasping the self-understanding of the Jewish Christian church is more important for this study. What the tradition says about relations between Jewish rebels and Jewish Christians provides evidence for understanding the post-70 CE world.

All the Jewish resistance movements described by Josephus during the Jewish Revolt were fundamentally incompatible with Jewish Christianity for the simple reason the Jewish Revolt had no place for Jesus as Messiah. The Pella tradition is important in that it represents the view of the Jewish Christian church on what the church did during and after the revolt in dealing with the rebels. There is no good reason to believe that there was any sympathy for the Jewish Revolt from Jewish Christians. The stress on leaving Jerusalem and returning after hostilities indicate that Jerusalem under the hand of Jewish rebels was considered far more dangerous to Jewish Christians than direct Roman occupation after the war. The historicity of the flight from Pella will be debated for a long

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<sup>361</sup>Barbara C. Gray, "The Movement of the Jerusalem Church During the First Jewish War," *JEH* 24.1 (January 1973), 1.

<sup>362</sup> Gray, "The Movement of the Jerusalem Church," 2. Gray in her article provides a defense of the tradition as being basically historically plausible from critics including the late S.G.F. Brandon who regarded it as at best suspect. As noted earlier this story had an impact on Christian history. Whether historical fact or pious legend, the story existed and had an impact on early Christianity. For this study that impact is what is key.

time but what seems quite clear is that the source behind this tradition saw no common ground with the rebels.<sup>363</sup>

The tradition of a church composed at least in part of members who predated the Jewish Revolt rests on the authority of Epiphanius, Eusebius, and Hegesippus<sup>364</sup> and the strength of this tradition has important implications. It would seem evident that Roman rule was considered preferable to that of Jewish rebels. Even those who deny the historical integrity of the Pella tradition should be impressed by the fact that even after the growth of imperial persecutions of the church the Pella tradition continued. For Jewish Christians the Jewish Revolt was viewed as a descent into madness and not an attempt at liberation.

The infighting among various Jewish groups in the Jewish Revolt as recorded by Josephus (Josephus, *J.W.* 5.13.1) was deadly and vicious with little room for mercy. The source of these rivalries could be attributed to reasons varying from personality conflicts to outright greed to genuine differences of opinion. Partly these differences can be attributed to different religious expectations. This clash of opposing interpretations of Judaism did not end with the Jewish Revolt. The prospect for renewed hostilities between various groups after the Jewish Revolt should not be underestimated. If part of this motivation for contrasting attitudes to Roman rule is based on differing interpretations of Judaism, the basis for inter-Jewish polemics would be even greater. This prospect of continuing animosity or even outright hostilities between Jews was real.

### **6.12 Ephesus, the Roman Empire, and Provenance**

In examining the possible provenance of the Fourth Gospel it is important to remember that its impact is influenced by factors that are both direct and indirect. For Gentile readers/listeners the need to clarify the kingdom Jesus was teaching may have been more acute in non-Jewish parts of the empire. After 70 CE the connotation of kingdom and Jew would conjure up images of the Jewish Revolt. Ephesus has been the traditional consensus for the location of the Johannine community. That consensus has

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<sup>363</sup> Again while the evidence for this tradition is solid, viewing it as legend does not obscure the more important point that Jewish Christianity was incompatible with the Jewish Revolt. The impact of this story on the state of Jewish and Jewish Christian relations after 70 CE is obvious. Wherever the account of the flight from Pella was told, the message of extreme tension between the rebels and Jewish Christians would be reinforced.

<sup>364</sup> Gray, "The Movement of the Jerusalem Church," 7.

been challenged with alternate locations such as Palestine, Syria, and Egypt being suggested.<sup>365</sup> It is at this point provenance needs to be examined in more detail.

Ashton in his discussion of the origins of the Fourth Gospel reflects an impression that this Gospel was composed in an environment that was Jewish<sup>366</sup> somewhere in the Roman empire<sup>367</sup>. Ashton is sure that the location was not Ephesus<sup>368</sup> but his interest is not so much on a location as the influences on the Fourth Gospel. Keener in his extended discussion on the provenance of the Fourth Gospel finally opts for Roman Asia (probably Ephesus or Smyrna) with the caveat that Syro-Palestine (possibly Galilee or Antioch) could be the right location.<sup>369</sup> He also sees influence from Galilee on the Roman Asia location because of possible movement of some of the Johannine community from Galilee to Roman Asia.<sup>370</sup> Keener does an admirable job of surveying the evidence and pointing to the many different influences on the Fourth Gospel. Keener does not select a provenance so much as a range of influencing historical factors that lean to Roman Asia. Ultimately his conclusion still points to the traditional view because Roman Asia still includes Ephesus even if his support for this option is lukewarm. Keener's difficulty in coming to a hard conclusion underlines the difficulty in examining the provenance of the Fourth Gospel. The influences on this text are bigger than one city.

The case for Ephesus is still strongly based on several considerations. The ancient tradition of Ephesus being the provenance of the Johannine community is an important argument for this position.<sup>371</sup> The lack of unanimity for those seeking an alternate location is also a mark against moving the Johannine community from Ephesus. Also telling is the history of Ephesus and how that history could influence the Johannine community in its approach to the Fourth Gospel. It is possible as Schnackenburg noted that a variety of geographical locations influenced the Fourth Gospel<sup>372</sup> but tracing those hypothetical locations is beyond the scope of this study. The best choice is still Ephesus and that is the location where this text would first have been read and heard.

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<sup>365</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 150-151.

<sup>366</sup> Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 97.

<sup>367</sup> Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 97.

<sup>368</sup> Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, n.71, 98.

<sup>369</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary*, 149.

<sup>370</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary*, 149

<sup>371</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 152.

<sup>372</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 152.

Ashton, Keener, and Schnackenburg highlight one very significant point. The influences on the Fourth Gospel are varied and that makes studying the Fourth Gospel a genuine challenge. While these scholars have different views on the provenance of the Fourth Gospel, they show a rough unity in highlighting the multifaceted character of the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel is bigger than Ephesus or any other alternative location. That reinforces the point made previously that the Fourth Gospel was composed in a world in which both Roman and Jewish factors were significant. What is useful to note is that Ephesus with a possible transplanted population from Jewish Palestine, serves as microcosm of that stress.

If Ephesus is taken as the environs of its composition, it would mean that it was composed in a city that was imbued with the imperial cult. The role of the cult of the emperor at Ephesus was extensive and this is important for understanding the situation facing the Johannine community. In his study van Tillborg mentions seven different types of locales ranging from temples to private homes in which the emperor was venerated.<sup>373</sup> The extensive links between society in Ephesus and veneration for the emperor penetrated the fabric of the city. This could only have accelerated during the reign of Domitian. The building of an emperor temple in the time of Domitian<sup>374</sup> marks an increase in attention and focus on the emperor during the very years the Fourth Gospel was most probably being composed. This factor needs to be considered in assessing the situation facing the Johannine community. All possible locations cited as being the provenance of the Johannine community reside within the Roman empire and Ephesus was a hotbed of interest in the imperial cult.

This reality of the Roman empire is the most decisive factor in assessing the significance of the provenance of the Johannine community. Persecuted or ostracized groups do not have the luxury of easy social interactions with the outside populace. The assumption that ideas can be freely expressed in a society where dissent is either stifled or incarcerated is simply misleading. The Johannine community did not live in a society where the media was independent, the courts were impartial, and government was by the will of the people. It existed in the world of imperial Rome and more particularly the

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<sup>373</sup> Sief Van Tilborg, *Reading John in Ephesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 195-196.

<sup>374</sup> Van Tilborg, *Reading John*, 184.

Fourth Gospel was composed during the days of Domitian or in the years after his assassination. It was written in a world in which the Roman political situation played an integral part in shaping its message.

### **6.13 The Fourth Gospel and the Possibility of Imperial Informers**

In evaluating the handling of Jesus' Davidic descent in the Fourth Gospel one aspect to consider is whether there was a need for Christians of that era to be circumspect in their dealings with the Roman government. This question deserves attention from a number of different directions. The relationship of Christianity with the state has varied throughout the years and different situations have produced differing responses from both governments and the church. The situation of the Johannine community at the end of the first century CE was complicated and demanded a careful response to the exigencies of their world.

The possibility of harassment, arrest, and punishment at the time of the composition of this text for the Johannine community was significant. Certainly the prevalence of informers in the time of Domitian is well attested. The evidence of Pliny the Younger from the early part of the second century CE strongly suggests that Christians as a group were important enough for him to obtain detailed knowledge of their activities for the purpose of compiling a report.

The public reading of texts also comes into play in examining the role of informers in Christian meetings. Any text that was read in the meetings of the Johannine community would be understandable to all those who were fluent in the language(s) of the speakers. Assuming Greek was the language of at least most of these meetings, anyone who spoke or understood Greek could be a possible informant for the authorities. Texts in Aramaic or Hebrew would be understood almost exclusively by those of Jewish heritage. Readings of the Gospels in which Jesus' Davidic lineage were celebrated could be a subject of interest to those who were intent in listening to whether Jewish Christians were really loyal to Rome.

### **6.14 Pliny the Younger's Letter to Trajan on Christians**

It is from a non-Christian source that perhaps the best evidence of the general situation at Ephesus at the end of the first century CE can be gained. The record of the famous letter of Pliny the Younger to the emperor Trajan (Pliny, *Ep. Tra.* 10.96) on the

proper manner of dealing with Christians is illuminating for understanding the attitude of at least some of the Roman elite toward Christianity after the passing of Domitian. For there is no doubt that this letter comes from one who was part of the upper echelon of the Roman ruling class. Pliny's role as a representative of Trajan in administering Bithynia and Pontus (Pliny, *Ep. Tra.* 10.17b) makes him knowledgeable both of the region he helped govern and the political realities of provincial life in the Roman empire. His province was adjacent to Asia which surrounded Ephesus. He even had been in Ephesus as part of his travel to his province (Pliny, *Ep. Tra.* 10.17a). While his evidence does not directly affect the church as Ephesus, it comes from a region and a time with close links to it.

Pliny's letters cover a great many topics ranging from the personal to the public administration of the province he served. As part of his public duties this meant he pronounced judgment on persons charged with the crime of being Christians. In this regard this particular letter is nothing special in the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan. The difficulty of dealing with Christianity was a problem on par with fixing the public baths or selecting the right number of soldiers for a task. Yet from the standpoint of those early Christians and those who now study them this letter provides an insider's perspective on how and why Christians were a threat to the Roman peace.

For Pliny they were a sufficient threat to employ the full powers of the state against them. Pliny's investigative techniques included both espionage and the use of coercion (Pliny, *Ep. Tra.* 10.96). He admits that some of his information came by way of an informer. He does not elaborate whether this informer was from a Christian turned renegade or a spy sent to infiltrate the Christians meetings. In any event certain lapsed Christians explained that the purpose of the local church meeting was to honor Christ, bind themselves to commit no theft, adultery, and to defraud no man. Afterwards in the day they eat a simple meal together. There is no conspiracy against anyone and Pliny does not accuse the Christians of any crime or even of political dissent. He reports that these meetings had stopped since the ban on political meetings had taken place. At some point he had still felt uncertain enough of his situation to order the torture of two female slaves who were deaconesses to gain further information. Whether in fact the Christians truly stopped meeting or simply became more creative in how they met is a point worth

remembering. It also beggars belief that Pliny finds nothing dangerous about Christians but still regards them as an enemy. How can people who bind themselves together to do good constitute a threat when even Pliny believes they are harmless?

The answer lies not in what they did wrong but in what they did right. As part of his regimen to ascertain the allegiance of suspected Christians he makes them sacrifice not only to the gods but also to a statue of the emperor (Pliny, *Ep. Tra.* 10.96). If they fail to sacrifice, the obvious inference is that as Christians they cannot serve Trajan. The role of the imperial cult in maintaining control of the empire is evident. That should again be no surprise because it had proved useful for other emperors. Nero had used it to cement the loyalty of Tiridates of Armenia during the mid-60's CE in a settlement that had involved Parthia (Cassius Dio, *His.* 62.23.3-4). The intermixture of Roman religion and politics is clear in other letters from Pliny as well. Pliny asks to be granted membership to a priesthood for the ostensible reason of making public prayers for the emperor. (Pliny, *Ep. Tra.* 10.13). Whether Pliny was truly devout or merely seeking to add another title to his personal resume, the use of a priest's office for political purposes was something Pliny understood. In another of his letters to Trajan (Pliny, *Ep. Tra.* 10.8) Pliny asks for permission from Trajan to place Trajan's statue with those of former emperors in a temple that Pliny had constructed. Trajan grants permission for this request with the very modest rejoinder that he usually is reluctant to accept displays like this (Trajan, *Ep. Tra.* 10.9). Yet no matter how reluctant he really is, he still approves.

Underlying the pleasantries between Pliny and Trajan the unmistakable interest of Pliny in making an overt display of loyalty to Trajan is evident. Trajan reciprocates this interest by encouraging this display. Pliny was not shy in his support of Trajan and if he used religion and raids on Christian gatherings to advance his career, so be it. In the game of power which the Roman elite played religious freedom was not even a factor to consider. Their part in maintaining their status in the empire came first.

This disrespect to Christianity is in contrast for his regard of local religious sensibilities as long as they conformed to his view of empire. In one of his letters providing advice (Pliny, *Ep.* 8.24) he advises one of his fellow Romans who is sent to Greece on the commission of the emperor to show respect for the gods of Greece. Pliny further celebrates Greek culture and views it as a fount from which Rome gained both

justice and law. This provides another basis to understand why Christianity was unacceptable. Greek culture was thoroughly polytheistic; Christianity acknowledged Jesus as the Christ. This monotheism does not allow both the emperor and Jesus to be worshipped. Thus when Christians refuse to honor the imperial cult they attack one of the foundations that Trajan and Pliny are seeking to use to bring unity to the empire. Since the Fourth Gospel is very aggressive in presenting Jesus as the only way to the Father, the clash between these worldviews is far from surprising. The choice between Jesus being the savior of the world or the emperor is evident from at least the time of Nero onwards.

### **6.15 Trajan's Response**

Worthy also of consideration is the response of Trajan to Pliny's letter (Trajan, *Ep. Tra.* 10.97). It is briefer and more concise than Pliny's but it is as equally as valuable a source of information. Trajan's attitude could be described as a mix of forbearance and intolerance. He is opposed to a systematic hunt for the Christians. Pliny's enthusiasm for torture and informers does not seem to resonate with Trajan. The organized persecutions of other emperors are not in vogue and Trajan seems less nervous of the Christians than Pliny. According to Trajan if any Christians are discovered, they are to be pardoned as long as they honor the gods. Anonymous charges are not to be condoned and the spirit of Trajan's reply seems to focus on keeping the appearances of state control intact. It is only when public attention is drawn to Christians and they refuse to renounce their faith does a serious problem develop. Trajan certainly is not tolerant of Christianity and firmly reserves the right to interfere in matters of religious expression. Yet neither is he eager to perpetuate a bloodbath. The suspicion that Pliny was overeager in demonstrating his fervor for the maintenance of law and order emerges. Yet if that was the case Trajan only wanted to control the severity of the persecution of Christians; he did not want it stopped outright.

The conclusion that could be drawn from the correspondence between Pliny the Younger and his emperor is that Christianity could exist as a faith on the margins of the empire provided its members were prepared to pay lip service to the traditional gods and the emperor. Alternatively its adherents could also be very, very careful about attracting publicity. Dangers from informers and those who would renounce Christianity under pressure meant that potentially anything that was said or written by Christians could be

used as evidence against them. This situation was most emphatically different from the one that nineteenth and early twentieth century Christianity encountered in the Western world. It is important to remember this distinction when evaluating the Fourth Gospel.

### **6.16 Birkat Haminim and the Eighteen Benedictions**

No discussion of the formation of the Fourth Gospel would be complete without at least some consideration of the birkat haminim. The famous benediction to exclude heretics has become an important consideration in understanding the formation of the Fourth Gospel since the publication in 1968 of J. Louis Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*. The view that this benediction was created after the fall of the Temple for the express purpose of forcing the expulsion of Jewish Christians has been popularized by Martyn's work. Martyn's view that the polemic within the synagogue between those who accepted Jesus as Messiah and those who did not after 70 CE was fundamental to the identity of the Johannine community and thus the Fourth Gospel has attracted both supporters and detractors. Whether Martyn is right or wrong he has changed the course of Fourth Gospel studies.

Certainly by the time of the early patristic fathers hostility between Jews and Christians had regrettably increased. Support for Martyn's opinion can be derived from Justin Martyr's disputes with significant Jewish figures in the second century. Certainly Justin Martyr viewed the divide between Jews and Christians in terms as stark as expressed in the birkat haminim. His evidence while significant in its own right comes from the middle of the second century CE. It is post-Bar Kochba and the fallout of that event needs to be considered in the manner in which he handles his material. Justin Martyr is writing at a minimum of several decades removed from the time of the composition of the Fourth Gospel. In using his work as a guide to the events immediately following the Jewish Revolt these two factors need to be kept in mind. He is not a contemporary of the composition of the Fourth Gospel like Josephus. This raises the question of the date of the birkat haminim and what impact it could have on the formation of the Fourth Gospel.

As important as Martyn's work has been for Fourth Gospel studies, it has stirred spirited critiques that have also changed the nature of the academic debate. Stephen G. Wilson in his summary of the evolution of the debate since Martyn's original work

identifies perhaps the most important problem with Martyn's position. There are good grounds ranging from the vocabulary used in this malediction to the number of editions of the birkat hamanim to question whether Martyn's dating of it to the post-70 CE era is valid.<sup>375</sup> Instead of the birkat hamanim being the pivotal event in the formation of the Fourth Gospel it becomes possible to view it as having originated in the last days of Second Temple Judaism. Wilson's conclusion that the birkat hamanim should not be overemphasized in the split between Judaism and Christianity<sup>376</sup> provides a different perspective than Martyn. If the birkat hamanim is one of many factors facing the Johannine community, its importance is not pivotal to its formation.

Even as Wilson downplays the impact of the birkat hamanim he does note the seriousness of Jewish Christians being targeted in a synagogue setting in which they are formally cursed.<sup>377</sup> The carefulness of Wilson's position reflects a difficulty inherent in all evaluations of the importance of the birkat hamanim. The rabbinical sources and the early patristic fathers are engaged in a polemic. The fairness of the charges and counter-charges made makes it extraordinarily difficult today to evaluate the evidence. Evaluating the date of the sources and their relevance in the post-70 CE era depends on how accurate one believes the rabbinical sources were. The birkat hamanim were a factor in the debate between Jews and Christians but an uncertain one to judge.

Martyn has modified his position as well. In the third edition of his famous book Martyn dates the birkat hamanim to between 85 CE and 115 CE with a preference to the early part of the period.<sup>378</sup> This broader dating would suggest that the Fourth Gospel was not reacting to a specific act of anti-Jewish Christian hostility but rather the references to being put out of the synagogue reflect the spirit of the times. This is a departure from a view that would see c.85 as a firm date for the adoption of this benediction. The implications of Martyn's evolution should be noted. This would suggest that Jn 16:2 should not be used as a fixed point for historical reconstruction but as an observation that would seem prudent from any time after c. 30 CE. The Fourth Gospel is not a reaction to

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<sup>375</sup>Stephen G. Wilson, *Jewish Reactions to Christianity Jews and Christians 70-170 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 180.

<sup>376</sup>Wilson, *Jewish Reactions to Christianity*, 183.

<sup>377</sup>Wilson, *Jewish Reactions to Christianity*, 183.

<sup>378</sup>Martyn, *History and Theology*, 61.

the dividing of the synagogue but a response to a longer term evolution of different views of Judaism.

Clearly the synagogue mattered to early Christianity. The blatant anti-Semitism of the post-Constantine church was not the milieu of the Johannine community. It was part of the Jewish tradition and felt comfortable with it. The impact of the confession of faith in Jesus as being the Messiah had resonance not only with the Johannine community but also in other Jewish circles. Obviously if Jewish Christianity was not a threat, it would not have required special measures to counter it. This indicates that messianic longings were still alive in different segments of Judaism even after the destruction of the Temple. “The recognition that the Johannine believers were excluded from the synagogue for the confession that Jesus is the Messiah, whenever or wherever that happened, is what is crucial, whether this was part of a general policy or restricted to a particular locality.”<sup>379</sup> The division of synagogue and church was a painful experience to Jewish Christians but the issue of the messianic significance of Jesus in hindsight makes this divide look inevitable.

### **6.17 Synagogue, Persecution, and the Eighteen Benedictions**

Schwartz in his study (*Imperialism and Jewish Society*) calls his tenth chapter “The Synagogue and the Ideology of Community”<sup>380</sup>. While his book starts and ends on a different timeline than this study, the title of his chapter is very useful. The synagogue was a critical part of Jewish society and its importance for Jewish Christians seems obvious. What is not so obvious is how, when, and where the split between Judaism and Jewish Christianity became final. The synagogue as a place of community was important as a meeting place and to be excluded from that meeting place would have consequences. For Jewish Christians to be excluded from the synagogue would be an act of social upheaval. Whether that upheaval is tied to Jn 16:2 is another question.

The fundamental problem facing interpreters of the Fourth Gospel is to ascertain whether the hostility and polemic found toward Jews by the Constantine church is evident in the Fourth Gospel. The critical question for reading Jn 16:2 is locating its historical core. The Qumran community was even more marginalized than the Palestinian

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<sup>379</sup> John Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah* (2nd ed.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 77.

<sup>380</sup> Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, 275-289.

Jesus Movement and 4QMMT shows disagreement between Jewish groups. Yet there is no question the Qumran community was Jewish. The Saducees and Pharisees had disputes yet they were Jewish. The very strong disagreements in late Second Temple Judaism and even after the destruction of the Temple do not necessarily equate with the fallout of the Bar-Kochba Revolt. Being sent out of the synagogue was not pleasant but the Qumran settlement had coped in internal exile.

The Fourth Gospel is not anti-Jewish because of this observation any more than 4QMMT is anti-Jewish. As for the warning of being killed in Jn 16:2 it makes sense given the narrative strategy of the Fourth Gospel. Jesus will die and he will die at the hands of Pilate. Pilate and his soldiers executed Jesus. Pilate was part of the imperial government and Jesus was executed as a messianic pretender. His execution should be no surprise.

#### **6.18 The Eighteen Benedictions, Heretics, and the Arrogant Kingdom**

The need to remember the Roman pressure on the Fourth Gospel is amplified by further study on the birkat haminim. In Alexander's analysis of the birkat haminim he concludes that there are two critical motifs which are part of every version of the benediction. The first is the prayer for the demise of the kingdom of the arrogant and the second is the call for judgment on the heretics.<sup>381</sup> If it is assumed that the kingdom referenced is the Roman empire and the heretics are Jewish Christians, this creates an interesting contrast. This would be the expected interpretation of these two allusions based on traditional exegesis. Yet why should these two groups who have would appear to have little in common with each other be thus linked? Alexander's discussion on the juxtaposition of these seemingly unrelated issues leads him to no firm conclusions. The issue he raises is worth considering in more depth because of the questions it raises.

Other aspects of the Eighteen Benedictions should be noted as well and they help to provide insight in addressing this situation. Prayers for the coming of the messiah, a reconstituted national state, and the restoration of the Temple order of service<sup>382</sup> are not only issues that could strike Jewish Christians as being objectionable

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<sup>381</sup> Philip S. Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," in *Jews and Christians The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135* (ed. James D.G. Dunn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 7.

<sup>382</sup> Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," 11.

but also could be construed as being anti-Roman. The linkage of these three issues provide a platform for a plan to replace the post-70 CE situation with one that would have striking similarities with the Hasmonean kingdom. The political overtones of these issues are obvious and bold. There is no attempt to disguise an agenda that is both ardently nationalistic and religious. The Eighteen Benedictions contain elements that would exclude not only Christians but Jews who did not subscribe to the particulars outlined in these prayers.

Alexander also stresses that the identification of heretics in this text should be seen more in terms of the identification of rabbinical opponents rather than as a specific polemic against Jewish Christians.<sup>383</sup> As opponents of the nascent rabbinical movement in c.100 CE Jewish Christians would be targets for opposition. Other groups that challenged them and who still thought of themselves as being Jewish would also be in opposition to rabbinical authority. The diversity of Second Temple Judaism was starting to give way to fewer and more rigid expressions of faith than previously seen. It may be that Jewish Christians were the biggest opposition to rabbinical influences in this era and Alexander's distinction is mostly a matter of nuance. Regardless this post-70 CE environment still showed a great deal of fluidity in the early decades after the destruction of the Second Temple.

Furthermore another factor to add to Alexander's observations is the strengthened enforcement of the *fiscus Judaicus* toward the end of the first century CE. Goodman's strong suggestion that the payment of this tax after 96 CE was a marker for those who wished to identify with Judaism<sup>384</sup> is an important consideration. It points to a possibly critical marker in Jewish and Christian relations. The readjustment of the *fiscus Judaicus* by Nerva could mark a dividing point that forced Jewish Christians to be identified as either Jew or Christian but not both. Certainly it played at least some part in creating a wedge between the communities and in any event it served as a visible reminder of the fallout of the Jewish Revolt.

The fact that Nerva's reign (96-98 CE) occurs so close to the best estimates of the publication of the Fourth Gospel needs to be noted. Obviously Nerva's actions could

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<sup>383</sup> Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," 9.

<sup>384</sup> Goodman, "Diaspora Reactions," 33.

have had a profound but unintended impact on Jewish-Christian relations while the Fourth Gospel was being composed or soon before it was composed. Any shift in Jewish relations with Christians is of interest because of its possible affect on the composition of the Fourth Gospel.

### **6.19 Politics and the Eighteen Benedictions**

The possibility that the link between the expected fall of the Roman empire and the beliefs of the Christians has a logical cohesion in the formation of the Eighteen Benedictions should be recognized. After the fall of the Second Temple the interests of Jewish Christians could be better protected by the Roman empire than by a Jewish state that did not tolerate dissent. This is not meant to imply that the Roman state had any love for Christianity in the first century CE or that early Christians were enthusiastic supporters of a regime that practiced the imperial cult. That is certainly not the case. What it did have was a different interest in Jewish Christianity than that of the Jewish rebels in the Jewish Revolt.

In some respect this acquiescence to Roman rule would seem at odds with the portrayal of Pilate in the Gospels in which he executes Jesus with limited concern for his guilt or innocence. The attitude of the book of Revelation toward the Roman state has been viewed as strongly hostile toward Roman rule. There is no doubt that aspects of this text view Roman rule as being antithetical to the will of God and that the day of its demise cannot come too soon. Indeed this acceptance of Roman rule would seem to be at odds with the impression of Roman hostility toward Christianity in the pre-Constantine era. Yet this is not the whole story.

This perception needs to be weighed toward the situation that emerged during the Flavian era. The state of the relationship between Christians and Roman authorities varied with the political situation inside the empire and that situation evolved from Vespasian to Domitian. This acknowledgment of political reality helps explain why in the text of the Gospels, Acts, and the Pauline epistles both opposition and support for the Roman government is expressed. Josephus was keen in his portrayal of Jewish history to show figures like Alexander the Great and Vespasian supporting the proper role of Judaism in the life of their empires even when Jews were victims of Hellenism or Rome. As circumstances changed so did the range of informal alliances in Jewish Palestine.

While neither side had any particular love for each other, the fluidity of changing circumstances could be expected to produce varying degrees of hostility toward Christians from the Roman government. In the era between the Jewish Revolt and the Bar-Kochba Revolt the state of the relationship of Judaism with Christianity was going through realignment and the interest of the Roman state in the activities of Jews and Christians was being conditioned by the fallout from the Jewish Revolt. The fallout of the Jewish Revolt continued until at least the time of Hadrian. Justin Martyr's witness of the hostility of Bar-Kochba toward Christians is important to note. "In the Jewish War which raged lately, Barcochebas, the leader of the revolt of the Jews, gave orders that Christians alone should be led to cruel punishments unless they would deny Jesus Christ and utter blasphemy." (Justin, *I Apology* xxxi)<sup>385</sup> This hostility did not spring from a vacuum and given the choice between Roman rule and that of Bar-Kochba it would be no surprise that Christians in general and Jewish Christians in particular would opt for Roman rule. What needs to also be remembered is that Justin Martyr came after the Fourth Gospel. The community that helped shaped the Fourth Gospel lived in a world in which the Jewish Revolt was the near past and the Bar-Kochba Revolt was the coming future.

#### **6.20 Conclusion: The Center of Christianity in c. 100 CE**

The formation of the Fourth Gospel occurs at a critical juncture in the transformation of the broader Christian community. The death of the Second Temple marked a sea change in Jewish and Roman relations. A new dynasty now ruled Rome and the question of whether the Flavians had divine sanction for their rule was being mooted by Josephus. While Josephus was writing for the Roman court and can be regarded as a propagandist, the very fact that the Temple was gone was a sure sign that the times had changed. The old Roman willingness to embrace a limited tolerance for Jewish religious practices that included the temple cult was gone. Coupled with this new scrutiny for Jews was the Flavian concern for their own survival. They had ridden the Jewish Revolt to power but the ghost of Nero and the threat of a counter-coup always lurked. The paranoia that Nero or a pretender who claimed to be Nero could appear from the east would have made the Flavians nervous. Indeed the strange event would be if the Flavians were not concerned with threats to their security. New Testament scholarship needs to be aware of

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<sup>385</sup> Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," n. 33, 22.

the Roman pressures on the Johannine community. The Fourth Gospel was written after the Jewish Revolt when Rome was dominated by a dynasty that knew Judaism because it had destroyed the Second Temple. It was also a dynasty that needed to preserve stability.

This state of affairs placed the Johannine community in a challenging position. The eschatology of the Synoptics was very clear in embracing Jesus as leading the entrance of the kingdom of God. Texts like 4Q252 were also not shy in presenting a view of the future that had no room for a Roman empire. The aggressive eschatology that characterized the Synoptics and 4Q252 were very dangerous for the Johannine community to proclaim in the post-70 CE era. The evidence presented from Pliny the Younger's correspondence indicates that the Christian church in Asia was the target of systematic espionage in c.100 CE. The Johannine community needed to present its message to slaves and the poorly educated without raising the ire of Roman authorities. This was a difficult challenge but it needed to be met. The message of Jesus being the Messiah needed to be stated in terms that did not imply that Jesus was destined to battle Vespasian at the end of the world.

Paradoxically the tradition of Jewish Christian flight to Pella during the Jewish Revolt raises the question of whether Roman rule was preferable to Jewish government for Jewish Christians. The Eighteen Benedictions provide evidence that divisions were growing within Judaism and these divisions would not allow Jewish Christians to maintain links with both the synagogue and the church. Controversy exists concerning whether the birkat haminim were aimed at Jewish Christians or whether they were aimed at all opponents of certain rabbis. While that question still needs more study, what can be determined is that tensions between the synagogue and the church were on the rise. The Bar-Kochba Revolt ultimately drove these divisions even wider apart. As much as the Johannine community had to be careful in dealing with the threat of imperial spies it also had to deal with the survivors of the Jewish Revolt who still hated Rome. The reality that the Johannine community had to deal with these dual foci is a constant theme throughout this study because it is such an important factor in understanding the composition of the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel was a product of the post-70 CE world and it should not be a surprise that it reflects the world around it.

## **Chapter Seven: The Temple after 70 CE**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The Temple was destroyed during the Jewish Revolt; its memory did not die with its physical destruction. The title of this chapter points to the importance of the Temple for the generation that experienced its destruction and that lived through the turbulence that followed. This memory was an important element in shaping the hopes of some Jews for a Third Temple and for Jewish Christians proclaiming that Jesus was the replacement for the Temple. A stark dichotomy develops in the post-70 era between pro-Third Temple Jews and Jewish Christianity on the need for a Temple because the question of the Temple was tied so closely to that of the Messiah. For the Fourth Gospel the replacement for the Temple was Jesus; for Jews who wanted a Third Temple Jesus was not a sufficient replacement for the temple cult. The struggle for the souls of those who were drawn to both Jesus and a physical Temple was joined as each side made its case.

The hope for a Third Temple had political implications as well. Temples were more than religious symbols. They also represented the social identity of those who worshipped at it. Thus the fact that the Fourth Gospel omits any mention of the destruction of the Second Temple becomes an important question regardless of the date of its composition. The Synoptics are not shy to talk about the destruction of the Second Temple but the Fourth Gospel is. The rebuilding of the Temple would have implications for the Roman empire because it would provide an alternate center of power for any potential Jewish opposition. For the Johannine community this would have implications as well. This leads to the question of what the Roman response would be to a Third Temple and the Bar-Kochba Revolt helps to provide at least some answers.

One of the questions facing both New Testament and rabbinical scholarship is assessing the significance of the Bar-Kochba Revolt. This revolt occurred approximately sixty years after the Jewish Revolt and it can either be viewed as a historical footnote or the definitive end of the dream for a Third Temple. The approach of this chapter to this problem is that the hope for a Third Temple led from the ashes of the Second Temple to the Bar-Kochba Revolt. The leader of this revolt was viewed by at least some Jews as a messianic figure and this revolt produced coinage that indicates it sought to rebuild the

Temple. The significance of these elements indicates the Bar-Kochba Revolt was a significant historical event. The time period between the Jewish and Bar-Kochba Revolts was a time of interest in the hope for a Third Temple and the Johannine community responded by proclaiming Jesus was greater than any physical Temple.

## **7.2 The Third Temple**

The destruction of the Second Temple and of Jerusalem by the Flavians led Roman army did not end the Jewish Revolt. The resistance at Masada continued even after this event. It is even possible that scattered remnants of the Jewish resistance still continued to resist after Masada in the wilderness but time and attrition conspired to make them ineffective. Even after Masada was reduced by force of Roman arms the dream of Jewish independence continued. The outbreak of the Bar-Kochba Revolt in 132 CE demonstrates that the Romans were not secure in Jewish Palestine even after the Jewish Revolt.

The results of the Jewish Revolt need to be set in perspective with other conquests of physical Israel. The Jewish population while devastated by death and enslavement was not banned from living in Jerusalem and its environs after the Jewish War. The name of Jerusalem was not changed and a program to “Romanize” it was not launched until later. The harsher and more lasting initiatives came either just before or after the Bar-Kochba Revolt. It needs also to be remembered that the Hellenistic empires that fought over physical Israel gave way to the Maccabean Revolt and the Hasmonean kingdom. The Roman reconquest of Palestine was reversible; historical precedent said it could be done. What was more problematic was how and when this national rebirth could be achieved.

If the dream of a purified Land still continued, the dream of a rebuilt Temple is another more challenging matter to consider. The temple cult and the physical edifice of a temple structure had ended by 70 CE but to expect that it died from Jewish consciousness the same year would seem simplistic. There is definite evidence from various sources that hope for a Third Temple continued to percolate in the era between the Jewish Revolt and the Bar-Kochba Revolt. If it took decades for the Third Temple to be built, so be it. It had taken at least seventy for the Second Temple to be raised from ashes into an edifice.

### 7.3 The Temple as Fortress

The Temple was not exclusively a religious or even a political center and this consideration plays an important role in the events of its destruction. It was also a very practical stone building put together with considerable architectural skill. Particularly after the renovations inaugurated by Herod the Great it occupied a significant portion of the walled city of Jerusalem and its size spoke volumes of the effort in time and treasure to build it. One aspect of the Temple not commonly considered is the role of the Temple complex as a potential fortress. The Temple had several advantages as a military structure. It occupied a strategic portion of the city that placed the possessor of the complex in an advantageous position. It provided a large, secure edifice that could station large numbers of men. In Jerusalem with its narrow streets and small houses the ability to bring together a body of formed men in a centralized location would provide an insurgent with a distinct advantage. Furthermore the courtyard to the Temple provided a flat, obstacle free stretch of ground dominated by the height of the Temple that provided no natural cover for an attacker seeking to rush the Temple proper. This would enable any defender in the Temple armed with bow and arrow to dominate this ground. This would enable an outnumbered defender to fight on much more even terms with a numerically superior attacker.

These advantages were not lost on the Romans when they besieged Jerusalem and the Temple. Tacitus notes the use of the Temple as a fortress (Tacitus, *His.* 5.12). His low opinion of the Jewish religious faith does not stop him from making backhanded compliments noting the provisioning of water against a siege (Tacitus, *His.* 5.12). He further bemoans that the Claudian policy of allowing the rebuilding of Jerusalem's fortifications (Tacitus, *His.* 5.12) increased the rebel's ability to resist. According to the record of Josephus the insurgents in the Jewish Revolt gained control of the Temple and used it as a base for their operations (Josephus, *J.W.* 6.3.1). Notwithstanding the consecration of the Temple as a place of worship the very practical advantages offered by it were put to use as a defensive position in the siege<sup>386</sup> of Jerusalem. The observations put forward previously provide at least some of the possible rationale why this occurred.

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<sup>386</sup> Paul K. Davis, *Besieged 100 Great Sieges from Jericho to Sarajevo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 38.

The Jewish Revolt had been a time of great suffering<sup>387</sup> and the Temple had become a place of slaughter.

If the Temple complex survived, what guarantee existed that it would not be used as a base of operations against the Romans again? If one puts oneself in the place of the Roman leadership besieging Jerusalem, a simple explanation emerges. The destruction of the walled portions of Jerusalem along with the Temple complex assured future Roman leaders that Jerusalem's ability to act as an effective center of opposition was greatly reduced.

#### **7.4 Leontopolis**

The history of the evolution of the various Jewish temples is inextricably tied to political developments in the history of Jewish consciousness. The archetype of the first Temple was the Tabernacle which was built after the Exodus from Egypt. Moses is credited with leading its building in Torah. Given the importance of Moses in Jewish tradition it would be fair to say that the Tabernacle provided a visible symbol of establishment in the Promised Land. Its prominence to the Deuteronomist is a testament to its place in the cultic ritual of the Jewish nation. The building of the First Temple was perhaps the most significant act attributed to Solomon. The building of Solomon's temple is a signal of the permanency of the Davidic line and the development of Israel from a confederation of tribes subject to repeated foreign domination to a monarchical nation-state that dominated its sphere of the Mediterranean world. Indeed it could be argued that Solomon's construction of this temple marked the legitimatization of the Davidic line in the eyes of both Israel and her neighbors.

Even after the division into two kingdoms the role of the Temple as a political symbol prompted Jeroboam I to establish the cult of the golden calf in Bethel and Dan (I Kgs 26-33). The destruction of this temple in the debacle of 586/7 BCE was only partially healed by the rebuilding of the Second Temple in the postexilic era. The disappointment of those who remembered Solomon's Temple (Ezra 3:12; Hag 2:3) was profound and the slowness of its reconstruction did nothing to enhance its grandeur. This lesson was not lost on Herod the Great and his effort at transforming the Second Temple

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<sup>387</sup> Davis, *Besieged*, 39. Davis uses both Suetonius and Josephus as sources for his comments. It is interesting to note as a military historian he has no problem using them even when he is cautious of their claims.

into an architectural masterpiece was founded on solid political reasoning. Enhancing the glory of the Temple was a sure way of attracting positive attention for the ruler sponsoring the renovation of the most important building for the Jewish people.

The Jerusalem Temple was not the only temple associated with Judaism after the Exile. The temples at Elephantine and Leontopolis in Egypt demonstrate that the migration of Jewish people to Egypt had an influence on the culture surrounding them. Whether these temples are viewed as alternatives to the Jerusalem Temple or simply monuments to it<sup>388</sup>, the presence of the temple at Leontopolis provides insight into the Roman attitude toward a Third Temple. The closing of the temple at Leontopolis occurred as a consequence of the Jewish Revolt.<sup>389</sup> Since there is little evidence of the Egyptian Jewish community becoming involved in this struggle, this action might be viewed as overkill on the part of the Romans. The rationale from a Roman standpoint for the closing of this temple would seem rooted in their experience at Jerusalem fighting certain Jewish rebels in the Jerusalem Temple. The temple at Leontopolis could be viewed as a rallying point for further Jewish resistance. As the siege at Masada demonstrated the willingness of certain elements of the Jewish resistance to keep fighting was very great. The potential for the temple at Leontopolis to turn into a citadel of resistance just like the Temple at Jerusalem was a chance not worth taking from a purely strategic sense.

One aspect of the Leontopolis temple to consider is what impact it had on the attitudes of varying Jewish groups toward the temple cult at Jerusalem. From the perspective of the Qumran community with its attachment to a pure Jerusalem there would be appear to be no room for an alternative temple at Leontopolis. Any other group that espoused a “Jerusalem first” approach could be expected to have the same opinion. There seems to be no Roman interest in using the temple at Leontopolis as a means of dividing the broader Jewish community into pro or anti-Leontopolis camps. The temple at Leontopolis was viewed as a problem and not as an opportunity to change the face of Judaism. If the temple at Leontopolis had been allowed to act as a replacement for the

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<sup>388</sup> The question of whether these temples represent a syncretistic trend in Judaism amplified by Hellenism while important is not the focus of this study. The Fourth Gospel makes its appeal to its readers/listeners based on Jesus’ actions at the Jerusalem Temple. What the demise of the temple at Leontopolis has to say about Roman attitudes toward a Third Temple at Jerusalem is the salient point for this study.

<sup>389</sup> Goodman, “Diaspora Reactions to the Destruction of the Temple,” 31.

one in Jerusalem, the distinctiveness of Judaism could have been undermined. The closing of the Leontopolis temple indicates that the Romans were conscious of the importance of the Jerusalem Temple as a rallying point and they were in no mood to take chances with the future.

If the temple at Leontopolis was unacceptable, there is no reason to believe that any interest in rebuilding a Temple at Jerusalem would receive Roman approval. Rather the destruction of the Leontopolis temple sends a strong signal that any national religious symbol of Judaism was a target for Roman control. Any movement for a Third Temple could be expected to elicit the immediate and engaged attention of the Roman authorities in their quest for maintaining the status quo.

### **7.5 The Absence of the Destruction of the Temple**

This concern for temples brings the discussion back to an important question in understanding the Fourth Gospel. One of the enigmas of the Fourth Gospel is the riddle of why there is no clear reference to the destruction of the Temple if this text was composed after 70 CE. Certainly it would seem appropriate for a text that highlights the importance of Jesus as a replacement for the Temple cult to include the observation that the Second Temple was destroyed. What could be a more vivid contrast for the Fourth Gospel's theology to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus in Jn 20 and compare it with the end of the temple system in that same book? Yet there is no direct, clearly identifiable statement in the Fourth Gospel that does this. This omission has not gone unnoticed<sup>390</sup> and it has raised questions concerning the date of the composition of this text and its purpose.

The lack of a clear marker to indicate that the Second Temple was destroyed has been used by Robinson<sup>391</sup> in his critique of the nearly unanimous view that the Fourth Gospel was post-70 CE in its composition. The simple explanation for Robinson as to why there is no mention of the demise of the Second Temple in this text is that the Temple was still standing when it was written. For in Robinson's view the text dates to the pre-70 CE era<sup>392</sup> and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple were still in the future. The Fourth Gospel for Robinson then becomes tentatively the first Gospel to be

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<sup>390</sup> Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 13

<sup>391</sup> Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 276.

<sup>392</sup> Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 307.

started and tentatively the last to be finished.<sup>393</sup> This arrangement of the order of the Gospels turns conventional approaches on their head. Undeniably moving the date of the composition of the Fourth Gospel earlier than 70 CE solves the issue of the omission of the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem but it creates others. From a source critical standpoint making this text both the earliest and latest Gospel is highly problematic. Further the tradition of the patristic fathers stands in direct opposition to Robinson's answer and the need to provide an explanation of how the patristic fathers erred so badly becomes apparent. Thus the concerns of critics both ancient and modern are not effectively answered. Robinson's solution to one problem creates difficulties in understanding how other events took place.

Indeed Robinson has seized on a significant issue even if other factors make the dating of the Fourth Gospel to a pre-70 CE date highly problematic. If the Fourth Gospel is viewed as being influenced by the world around it, this glaring omission seems incredible. It is with this context in mind that Jesus' predictions of the demise of the Second Temple need to be considered. Perhaps no chapter on the subject of the eschatology of Jesus has been analyzed and debated as Mk 13. Jesus' statement that the Second Temple would be destroyed (Mk 13:2) has been viewed as both proof of his predictive ability and as prophecy *vaticinium ex eventu*. As important as this discussion is, it has sidelined another issue which is how Mark narrates this discussion.

It begins with a statement from an unnamed disciple expressing admiration for the beauty of the Second Temple (Mk 13:1). The Herodian pedigree of this enhancement of the Temple did not temper this person's enthusiasm for it. This indicates that even among those who followed Jesus Herod the Great's efforts to endear himself to the Jewish populace had not been totally in vain. The physical grandeur of the rebuilt Temple may have been no substitute for good government and genuine piety but it still engendered a reaction. Jesus' response is swift and attacks the very impressiveness of the Temple. Its beauty was only temporary because its destruction was inevitable (Mk 13:2). The emotional shock of such a statement that marginalized the significance of the Temple should not obscure the implicit comparison Jesus is making. Just as the Qumran community in a text like the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* provided an alternative to the

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<sup>393</sup> Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, 307.

Jerusalem Temple, Jesus is doing the same because the Temple in Jerusalem was ultimately expendable.

It is in this cultural context that the question of Jesus' relationship with the temple cult and even more specifically the physical edifice of the temple complex needs to be remembered. The Temple was not just a national religious symbol; it was a living presence for many Jews. Therefore the way in which the New Testament portrays Jesus' relationship with the Temple and in particular the Fourth Gospel does a great deal to establish Jesus' teaching on the role of the Temple in Jewish life. Whether the Fourth Gospel was dependent on Mark or not, the impact of Mk 13 on early Christianity was significant. The eschatology of Mk 13 was a factor that the Johannine community could not ignore. In the Jewish trial of Jesus in both Matthew's and Mark's account Jesus is accused of plotting to destroy the Temple in three days (Mt 26:62; Mk 14:58). The same charge is repeated at the site of the crucifixion (Mt 27:40; Mk 15:29). Having such a charge circulate even among the Jewish Christian community would be a problem. If texts supportive of Jesus like Mark and Matthew mentioned this charge, imagine what the enemies of the early Christians could do.

The manner in which Jn 2 handles Jesus' statement that the Temple can be destroyed and Jesus can raise it in three days (Jn 2:19) gives every indication that it was constructed to deal with the charge found in the Matthean and Markan accounts. In a previous chapter the role of Jesus as a replacement for the Temple was discussed. That discussion does not preclude Jn 2 being used further as a statement of defense for Jesus' relationship with the Temple. There is no denial of Jesus' statement. Rather there is an affirmation of it and an editorial comment that clarifies it by making the reference to the Temple a reference to the Temple of Jesus' body (Jn 2:21). This clarification leaves no doubt that Jesus was not an insurgent who sought to destroy the Temple in the portrayal of the Fourth Gospel. This implication needs to be assessed in the manner in which Jesus is portrayed dealing with the Temple. If Jesus was viewed as an anti-Temple radical in the time of Pilate, he could be viewed as being suspect both from the Roman viewpoint and the establishment of the Jewish religious leadership. The Romans would view him as being dangerous because he threatened social stability and Jews would view him as being a renegade. Praising or even commenting on the destruction of the Temple in the Fourth

Gospel could be seen as providing evidence that Jesus' comments were not about the Temple of his body but about the end of the Second Temple. By focusing on the Temple of his body the charge that Jesus was anti-Temple could be answered and the rationale for a Third Temple could be critiqued as well. Why focus on a Third Temple when Jesus was alive from the dead?

### **7.6 Temple Desecration**

The concept of the sanctity of a temple was well-known in the ancient world. To violate the integrity of a temple was to invite severe punishment on oneself. The desecration of a sensitive religious shrine like a temple was a matter that the Romans could instinctively understand. The marked differences between Jewish and non-Jewish religious practices often led to tension between the Jewish populace and the Roman authorities but both cultures understood the need to respect the sanctity of the Second Temple. The willingness of Rome to tolerate the Temple Police controlling the Temple compound during the lifetime of Jesus indicated that on this sensitive point Roman flexibility could be seen. Religious shrines had a symbolic importance that needed to be respected.

Attacks on the Temple compound were treated very seriously by late Second Temple Judaism. One of the great questions in evaluating the *Psalms of Solomon* is identifying the Gentile ruler responsible for the capture of Jerusalem who is consequently vilified for his actions. The dating of this text is therefore linked to the correct identification of this person. Critically all serious candidates for the role of the great Temple polluter can be dated from the Maccabean Revolt to the Jewish Revolt. Any lessons gleaned for an analysis of this text would be therefore applicable to understanding the environment of the Fourth Gospel. This would further allow the *Psalms of Solomon* to have been written during the lifetime of the Qumran community. The best candidate for this polluter is Pompey<sup>394</sup> who in his capture of Jerusalem in 63 BCE entered the Temple. If the *Psalms of Solomon* is dated soon after Pompey's death in 48 BCE, this text

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<sup>394</sup>R.B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1985), 641.

would fit into the Herodian era and would have been circulating during the time of Jesus' life.<sup>395</sup>

There is no consensus in scholarly circles concerning the community that stood behind this text. Solid arguments can be advanced for either a Pharisee connection or even an Essene link.<sup>396</sup> The possibility that this text could have been produced in Essene circles is important because it serves as a powerful reminder of how open late Second Temple Judaism was to the influence of different groups including Essenes. The Qumran community's link to the Essene expression of Judaism suggests that the *Psalms of Solomon* had a message that would find a home with it. Even if it was produced by Pharisees or by a group that still remains unknown, the features which it holds in common with other Second Temple Jewish literature demonstrate that the ideas within it would resonate beyond its own immediate circle.

The revulsion of the author/redactor of this text toward the desecration of the Temple is pronounced. In *Pss. Sol.* 2:2 the defilement of the Temple is described as being conducted by Gentiles after Jerusalem is captured. In the next verses the defilement of the Lord's sanctuary is bemoaned as having resulted initially from the sons of Jerusalem forgetting their obligations and Yahweh abandoning them to their fate. The corollary that Gentile defilement of the Temple would have never happened if the sinfulness of the inhabitants of Jerusalem had not set off this chain of events is obvious. The linkage between the sanctity of the Temple and the need for purity is established in terms that leave no doubt that the key to avoiding future defilement is a commitment to purity. The Temple Cleansing of Jn 2 in which Jesus liberates the Temple compound from the traders resident in it expresses such a desire for purity. The stress on Jesus struggling for the sanctity of the Temple fits in well with the ethos coming from the *Psalms of Solomon* that stressed the importance of being vigilant in defending the honor of the Temple.

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<sup>395</sup> It is doubtful that the narrator of the Fourth Gospel would have read Josephus. It is quite possible the narrator would have been acquainted with the *Psalms of Solomon* given their reasonably wide circulation. What is much more likely is that the anti-insurgent language of Josephus would have been known to the Johannine community. When Josephus wrote concerning the Jewish Revolt, his writing had contemporary application. Unless the Johannine community had no knowledge of the Flavian attitude toward Jews, it is highly probable they had heard the injunction not to revolt. The Flavian coins minted in recognition of the Jewish Revolt (discussed earlier in this study) support this conclusion.

<sup>396</sup> Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," 2:642.

The Gentile ruler responsible for desecrating the Temple does not escape unpunished for his actions. His death in Egypt (*Pss. Sol.* 2:26) demonstrates that this man is an insignificant figure who is judged (*Pss. Sol.* 2:30). The need to establish the supremacy of Yahweh in the midst of the turmoil of the fall of Jerusalem and the desecration of the Temple seems clear. What is also evident is that the penalty for desecration of the Temple is divine judgment. There is no escape for those who violate the sanctity of the Temple whether they are Jew or Gentile. Any sign of arrogance on the part of a Gentile conqueror is reason for judgment. For Jesus to be identified as being sympathetic to the desecration of the Temple in any way would not be helpful in spreading the message of his death and resurrection.

It is also worth remarking on the fact that the title generally given for this text is the *Psalms of Solomon*. Whether this was the original title or not, it is suggestive of how this text was viewed by its earliest audiences. The similarity between *Pss. Sol.* 17 and Ps 72 of the Hebrew Psalter which was attributed to king Solomon<sup>397</sup> suggests that this connection reflects a suitable historical context for this text. This should be no surprise. Its identification with the son of David who built the first Temple is an important literary and historical marker for this composition because Solomon's reign was an important time in Jewish history. Solomon represents a powerful symbol of the fusion of the Temple and the Davidic dynasty and this memory of the past could easily serve as a vision for the future. For Jesus who identifies the Temple as his Father's house (Jn 2:16), the memory of the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7 is something that is positive and needs to be celebrated. Yet it needs to be done in a way that is sensitive to the realities of the post-70 CE world.

Celebrating the destruction of the Second Temple would not endear the Johannine community to Jewish readers of the Fourth Gospel. The very mention of such a well-known event could easily be seen as rubbing salt in the wounds of the Jewish people. Furthermore given the prominence of Jesus' prediction of the demise of the Second Temple in Mk 13 Jesus could be viewed as supporting the actions of those who desecrated the Temple. Again the question facing the Johannine community was not simply recording events; it was recording events in the light of the post-70 CE world.

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<sup>397</sup>Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," 641.

For there may have been at least another good reason why discussing the last hours of the Second Temple was impudent. Forces still existed in the wider Jewish community that hoped for another Temple and this hope for a renewed Temple had implications that went beyond a desire for a revived temple cult.

### **7.7 Hebrews, the Temple, and the Fourth Gospel**

In examining the relationships of the Fourth Gospel with Qumran texts it is important to remember that other New Testament writings show important points of contact with them. One book in particular could provide almost endless grist for analysis. The book of Hebrews with its respect for Jewish tradition and ritual while maintaining the superiority of Jesus provides a wealth of points of comparison between it and Qumran texts. The angelology of Heb 1 is worthy of contrast with the angelology of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifices*. Texts like 11Q13 that discuss Melchizedek provide a context to understand the use of that figure in Heb 5 and 7. The role of the priesthood is another topic for concentrated discussion. For this study the most important point of concern is the attitude of the book of Hebrews towards the temple cult. Indeed Hebrews' focus on ritual and the relevance of it to Jesus as the Messiah provide an important part of the context for understanding any impact a hope for a Third Temple might have on Jewish Christians.

The question of the authorship of Hebrews has proved to be one of the great mysteries and cottage industries of New Testament research. The lack of consensus and the variety of viable candidates offered demonstrate that this question is no closer to solution than it was at any time. The significant point for this study is that of the candidates suggested ranging from Paul in the ancient world to latter suggestions like Barnabas and Apollos none of them appear to be involved in the compilation of the Fourth Gospel. Hebrews therefore represents a different tradition within early Christianity from the Johannine community. The difficulty in establishing a date for this book is linked to the mystery surrounding its author(s). The date for the book of Hebrews is again not easy to determine because Timothy's imprisonment (Heb 13:23) does not easily fit into chronologies based on Pauline texts. The discussion of the temple cult in Hebrews gives the impression of the temple cult still being current at the time of the writing of Hebrews and this would suggest a pre-70 CE date. The absence of any

mention of the destruction of the Temple could be viewed as evidence for it being written before 70 CE but this is not conclusive. Interest in the temple cult did not die with the Jewish Revolt and Hebrews could have been written to counteract interest in its revival. Furthermore as noted in the previous discussion on the destruction of the Temple in the Fourth Gospel its silence on the issue does not mean it was written pre-70 CE. Ultimately unless a breakthrough occurs in conclusively identifying the author of this book the date of this text remains elusive and could be dated to either side of the Jewish Revolt.

What is not elusive is the definitive nature of the author of Hebrews rejecting the need for continued animal sacrifice. Heb 7-10 systematically presents a case for the replacement of the cultic system of sacrifice with the work of Jesus as the ultimate High Priest. The temple cult is not attacked as being superstitious or misguided. It is rather presented as being superseded by the sacrifice of Jesus. The animal sacrifices of the past were a temporary marker until Jesus made the permanent sacrifice. Because of the death of Jesus there is no need for further sacrifice because of the ultimate sacrifice on his part. If Torah and the sacrificial system were more important to Jewish Christians than the work of Jesus, Christianity would soon run the risk of becoming indistinguishable from other movements within Judaism. For those dedicated to the understanding of Jesus' messianic mission as being one that transformed the role of the Temple this challenge called for a meaningful response. The focus on the person of Jesus in contrast to the physical Temple created a stark contrast. Either Jesus represented the fulfillment of the sacrificial system which rendered it redundant or he did not. Thus the need for the Second Temple or a Third Temple is rendered redundant. Jesus is superior to the old system and to revert to it would be to render the death of Jesus meaningless. The message of Hebrews is one that challenges its readers/listeners to grasp that the temple cult was not an end in itself. It was a means to an end.

This focus on Jesus as the replacement for the temple cult has implications for the Davidic identity of Jesus. The author of Hebrews does not specifically identify Jesus as being of Davidic descendant but there are strong indications that Jesus' Davidic ancestry is acknowledged. Heb 7:14 identifies Jesus as being of the tribe of Judah in the midst of a section identifying him as a priest of the order of Melchizedek. The theology of Hebrews is constructed around a portrayal of Jesus being a superior High Priest and

the author of this text integrates Jesus' non-Levite heritage into this presentation. The acknowledgment of the Messiah's kingdom is seen in the quotations of 2 Sam 7:14 (Heb 1:5) and Ps 45:6, 7 (Heb 1:8, 9). The reiteration of the Davidic covenant in the context of Hebrews is remarkable considering it occurs in the first chapter of the book and most of the focus in the remaining chapters is on Jesus' role as the perfect priest.

Clearly the author of Hebrews viewed Jesus' messianic fulfillment as occupying both the offices of king and priest. The quotation of 2 Sam 7:14 is also found in 4Q174 but it is noticeable that the messiah of that text is seen in royal and not priestly terms. In Hebrews rather Jesus is identified as being the priest-king from the tribe of David. The linkage of the shepherd metaphor with Jesus in a permanent covenant (Heb 13:20) is suggestive of the connotation of the new David of Ezek 34-38. The shepherd metaphor applied to Jesus in Hebrews is suggestive given the importance of the portrayal of Jesus as priest within this text. Jesus is the priest-king in Hebrews who is the fulfillment of the temple cult.

### **7.8 Epistle of Barnabas**

The question of whether the *Epistle of Barnabas* indicates a Jewish Christian interest in a Third Temple is worthy of consideration. The date for this text is very probably from the earliest decades of the second century and may come just before the Bar-Kochba Revolt in c. 130 CE.<sup>398</sup> The most significant dynamic driving this text is the question of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism.<sup>399</sup> As the text enumerates the ways in which Jesus is the fulfillment of the hopes of the believer the issue of the role of the Temple emerges. Clearly the issue of the significance of the Second Temple and a possible interest in a Third Temple were matters of interest to the person(s) responsible for this text. The Second Temple is described as a mistaken hope (*Ep. Barn.* 16:1) and the focus for believers is to be on building a temple of the inner person that pleases the Lord (*Ep. Barn.* 16:7-10). This text (*Ep. Barn.* 16:3, 4) speaks of the demise of the Second Temple brought on by the Jewish Revolt and the activity of some to rebuild it. Maddeningly this text is enigmatic in describing who was responsible for the interest in rebuilding it. They are vaguely described as serving the enemies who destroyed the

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<sup>398</sup> Bart D. Ehrmann, *Lost Scriptures Books That Did Not Make It Into the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 219.

<sup>399</sup> Ehrmann, *Lost Scriptures*, 219.

Second Temple. A firm identification of this group(s) would be easier if the events leading to the Bar-Kochba Revolt had a chronicler like Josephus but such is not the case. Thus the question of whom the author(s) of this text were trying to combat remains murky. Certainly the attitude of the group behind this text was that the destruction of the Second Temple was a necessary event (*Ep. Barn.* 16:5) that allowed for a better focus on Jesus as the Son of God. The point remains that interest in a rebuilt Temple was a significant concern of the *Epistle of Barnabas*.

For a non-Jewish Christian the appeal of a Third Temple would be limited. There would be nothing in his or her cultural background that would easily tempt a return to some hypothetical renewal of the temple cult. For many Jews and Jewish Christians the appeal is far more obvious. The Temple was an integral part of the world they knew or at least their parents knew. The epistle to the Hebrews went to great pains to show the superiority of Jesus to the temple cult. The concern in that text for Jewish Christians to not lose sight of the superiority of Jesus as High Priest is palpable. The *Epistle to Barnabas* tries to address the same underlying concern but is much more awkward in its reasoning and less sure of its grasp of Jewish tradition. Nevertheless it is very clear in its opposition to a Third Temple. This would suggest that a fear of a Third Temple in the church in the era just before the Bar-Kochba Revolt existed. It was also a matter worth combating with the written word.

### **7.9 Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai**

Of the many significant names in the history of rabbinical studies the person of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai is pivotal. His lifespan marks a bridge between the last decades of Second Temple Judaism and the earliest days of the post-Temple world. The story of his escape from the siege of Jerusalem from Vespasian during the Jewish Revolt, his role in the foundation of the school at Yavneh after the Jewish Revolt, and his position in shaping the whole future of the rabbinical movement are events that are inextricably linked to his name. Indeed it is the power of his name that makes whatever he says about a Third Temple important. Whether the events attributed to Yohanan ben Zakkai are solid historical fact, legend, or a combination of both, the authority of his person is important. It was a means of communicating what the response of tannaic rabbinical thought was to the Jewish Revolt. For the purpose of this study the most

important issue is the perspective of Yohanan ben Zakkai toward a possible Third Temple. Whether he represented a minority or majority position, it is still evidence of interest in a Third Temple.

The famous exchange between Yohanan ben Zakkai and Joshua ben Hananiah on the fate of the Second Temple deserves consideration for the insight it gives concerning the rabbinical attitude toward the destruction of the Second Temple:

“Once as Rabban ben Zakkai was coming out of Jerusalem, Rabbi Joshua followed after him, and beheld the Temple in ruins. Woe unto us, Rabbi Joshua cried, that this place, the place where the iniquities of Israel were atoned for, is laid waste. My son, Rabban Yohanan said to him, be not grieved. We have another atonement as effective as this, and what is it? It is acts of lovingkindness, as it is said, “For I desire mercy and not sacrifice” (Hos. 6.6).”<sup>400</sup>

The exchange between Yohanan ben Zakkai and his disciple Joshua ben Hananiah on the role of the Temple is capable of at least two different interpretations. It could be viewed as a definitive answer to the future of the Jewish faith after 70 CE. The destruction of the Temple was secondary to what was truly important. Torah had survived and its power had not been diminished. Practicing acts of goodness towards each other was more important than the cultic activity of the Temple. The importance of the temple cult was not in the actual sacrificial act but in the spiritual, mediating aspect of the sacrifice. Yahweh still loved the Jewish nation and they needed to love each other.

On the other hand it could also be viewed as a means of managing a difficult situation. A principal if not the principal center of Jewish religious tradition was gone and replacing it was a traumatic experience for the Jewish nation. Focusing on Torah and acts of personal piety become by default the center of Jewish faith. Glossing over the magnitude of the disaster of losing the Temple becomes a problem that needs to be managed. The exchange between the rabbis is an exhibition of the tensions within the first generation of the tannaic rabbinat on what a post-70 Judaism attitude toward a rebuilt Temple should be. The attribution of the destruction of the Second Temple to the sins of the people leaves by inference the possibility open that repentance and godly living could prompt the Temple to be rebuilt. The destruction of the First Temple and the Exile were attributable to the sins of the people. Whether again this was the dominant

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<sup>400</sup> Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body*, 54. Quoted from *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* (trans. J. Goldin; Yale Judaica Series 10; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 34.

view or the ramblings of a small minority, it was part of the mix of opinion attributed to the immediate period after the destruction of the Second Temple. Why could not history repeat itself again and bring a Third Temple?

### **7.10 The Sibylline Oracles and the Man with the Sceptre**

Perhaps the most challenging text to deal with in analyzing Jewish literature from the Second Temple era and its immediate aftermath is the Jewish *Sibylline Oracles*. Their composition as a rival for the Roman Sibylline texts seems obvious. The Roman *Sibylline Oracles* were said to be predictions of the future and its Jewish imitation claimed the same privilege. The dating of this composite work moves in all probability over centuries and establishing date and provenance for the various parts of the completed text is difficult. Analyzing the various books is a better approach and elements of book five provide a possible insight into the era between the Jewish Revolt and the Bar-Kochba Revolt. Considering that book 5 was probably composed in c.100 CE<sup>401</sup> it would be roughly current to the works of Josephus and the Fourth Gospel. Book five of this text would therefore provide another avenue for understanding Jewish expectations in the era between the Jewish and Bar-Kochba Revolts.

One of the key motifs in book five is the prospect of the return of Nero. The rumor or fear of the return of Nero as a historical curiosity has been already noted as Suetonius used it as an element of his description of Nero. It is in this context of rumors of the return of Nero that certain aspects of book five demand interest. He is portrayed as fleeing to the Parthians (*Sib. Or.* 5.148) after being called a king of Rome (*Sib. Or.* 5.138). He is identified as being responsible for the destruction of the Temple (*Sib. Or.* 5.150) even though his contribution to the Jewish Revolt was only being the emperor at its onset. No historical proof exists Nero made it to Jerusalem but a link is made here nonetheless. This historical error can either be viewed as simple vilification of Nero or perhaps a crude merging of the identities of Nero with Vespasian. In any event the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple becomes a focus for revenge and Nero becomes an object of scorn. After this denunciation of Nero a judgment against Rome for its crimes is announced. A star will arise that will punish the land of Italy (*Sib. Or.* 5.155-

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<sup>401</sup>John J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; 2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1985), 390.

161). The possibility that the reference to the star could have messianic overtones is well worth considering.<sup>402</sup> Num 24:17 and its famous reference to a Star of Jacob had a profound impact on Jewish understanding of messianic expectations. The use of the star motif in the book of Matthew to designate the birth place of Jesus was part of early Christian teaching and the messianic emphasis is evident. The title Bar-Kochba (Son of the Star) used by the leader of the revolt that bears his name is further evidence of the messianic usage of the star symbol. The imagery of a fight between Nero as ruler of Rome and a messianic figure is certainly suggested even if the imagery is not based on historical reality but popular legend.

Another figure emerges in book five who may also have messianic links. This figure (*Sib. Or.* 5.414-15) is introduced as a man from heaven who received a sceptre from God. The sceptre reference would seem to be an obvious allusion to Num 24:17 which described the coming messiah as the Star of Jacob and a Sceptre. The royal implication of this allusion seems obvious as well. Reference also needs to be made to 1QM 11.6 which quotes Num 24:17. The militant, expansionist, and eschatological framework of the *War Scroll* fits with the role described for the man from heaven in book five. The man from heaven is prepared to use fire and destruction (*Sib. Or.* 5.418) to accomplish the needed purification. The heavenly descent motif would also seem to have a parallel with Jn 3:13 which describe Jesus' origin as heaven. Whether the man from heaven also shows parallels with Jewish mysticism concerning the ascension of Moses into the heavenly world is a valid question. It is not as crucial as establishing the clearly messianic motifs of the sceptre for this study and will not be a focus of investigation.

The man from heaven is not idle and he is revealed (*Sib. Or.* 5.422) making a holy temple and the emergence of an interest in a Third Temple theme can now be confidently asserted in book five. This is significant because the linkage between a messianic figure and a new temple is now being made. The destruction of the Second Temple is repaired by the building of this new temple. Certainly there is no sign in this section of book five that Torah has extinguished all interest in the temple cult. There is also no doubt that these events and descriptions are all placed after 70 CE. The theme of an earlier section of this book (*Sib.Or.* 5. 397-413) laments the destruction of the Second

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<sup>402</sup>Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," 1:392.

Temple with vivid language that ends with a denunciation of the king who destroyed the Second Temple (*Sib. Or.* 5.408-13). The role of the man from heaven appears to be part of a plan to repair the damage of the destruction of Jerusalem. Clearly the destruction of the Second Temple did not eliminate the hope for a Third Temple. Indeed it may have even given birth to an eschatological interest in a Third Temple. These things are accomplished during a time period when history is being permanently redefined (*Sib. Or.* 5.432) by divine purpose. Rather than extinguishing interest in the temple cult, the fallout of the Jewish Revolt prompted the circle responsible for book five to express hope for another temple with language that could easily be interpreted as being eschatological.

The strong possibility that book five contains elements of a messianic hope that shares characteristics with both the Fourth Gospel and certain Qumran texts indicates that there was overlap between various Jewish conceptions of the M/messiah. What is important to note is that book five demonstrates a strong interest in a messianic figure and a Third Temple in contrast to the Fourth Gospel which stresses Jesus as the Messiah. The man with the sceptre and his interest in the construction of another temple provide more evidence for the view that a Third Temple was part of the worldview of some Jews in the post-70 CE world.

### **7.11 4Q521**

It is in conjunction with book 5 of the Jewish *Sibylline Oracles* that evidence from Qumran becomes possibly quite useful for understanding messianic expectations in the first century CE. The surviving fragments of 4Q521 (*4QMessianic Apocalypse*) contain an expectation of the actions of the royal messiah. This text clearly and unambiguously presents an expectation of a royal messiah that shows points of comparison with both book five and the Fourth Gospel. The wider context of 4Q521 includes elements that point to a royal messianic reference. 4Q521 2.2.7 refers to the throne of everlasting royalty as part of the possession of the royal messiah. The picture of a royal messiah ruling in benevolence is very clearly seen and a sceptre would be expected to be part of the regalia of a king. While this link cannot be viewed as conclusive, based on the evidence within 4Q521 it seems to be possible. The use of the sceptre motif for a messianic figure in book five of the *Sibylline Oracles* fits with the

throne imagery of 4Q521.<sup>403</sup>

The Lord/Messiah of 4Q521 shares much with the picture of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. The characteristics of the Messiah are enumerated in 4Q521 and they definitely show significant points of comparison. The recognition by name of the just (2.2.5) shares a parallel with Jesus' meeting with Nathaniel (Jn 1:49). The healing of the blind (5.2.8) is paralleled with Jesus' healing of the blind man (Jn 9:6). The raising of the dead (5.2.11) invites comparison with the raising of Lazarus from the dead in Jn 11. Even the freeing of prisoners (5.2.8) could be seen as having a parallel in Barabbas being released instead of Jesus (Jn 19:40) by Pilate during his questioning of Jesus. Anyone familiar with 4Q521 who accepted the legitimacy of the arguments of this Qumran text would be confronted with Jesus meeting the tests of this text. The portrayal of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel resonates with expectations found within 4Q521 and this makes the Fourth Gospel a powerful argument for Jewish Christians to argue that Jesus is the Messiah.

The ideas found within 4Q521 should therefore not be viewed as being sectarian or unique to the Qumran community. The idea of a healing, ministering M/messiah resonates with a broader cross section of the Jewish community than perhaps previously thought. The strong probability that expectations of the royal messiah found at Qumran continued to live after the destruction of the community needs to be recognized. The fact that the Fourth Gospel and book five of the *Sibylline Oracles* takes these expectations and use them in different ways only illustrates the state of turmoil that existed in Jewish thought after the Jewish Revolt.

### **7.12 The Synoptic Connection, 4Q521, and the Fourth Gospel**

In noting the parallels between the Gospel passages and 4Q521 (*4QMessianic Apocalypse*) it is interesting to note that these parallels are rare in the comparative study of Qumran literature and the New Testament. Usually Qumran literature and the New Testament do not show this degree of similarity. In their study of 4Q521 Tabor and Wise take great care in pointing out the Synoptic and particularly Lukan similarities to

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<sup>403</sup> The term "sceptre" may be part of 4Q521 as the letters 's' are found together next to lacunae in this text on fragment 2 column 3. The Hebrew word for sceptre is 'שֵׁטֶר' and it is possible this is the term used. Other options are viable as well so this option remains only possible.

4Q521.<sup>404</sup> Indeed the close verbal linkages prompt Tabor and Wise to argue for a very interesting proposition. More specifically Tabor and Wise argue that Luke and Matthew using Q incorporate a “pre-Synoptic formula for identifying the Messiah.”<sup>405</sup> This formula would then be common to both the Jesus movement and the Qumran community. This would suggest that the Synoptic writers could have used this formula to press the claims of Jesus being the Messiah to non-Christian Jews. Tabor and Wise theorize that this formula could have been used between different Jewish groups who had a messianic focus.<sup>406</sup> While this suggestion is very interesting, it is only a suggestion. Certainly it makes sense to argue that the Jesus movement and the Qumran community knew about each other. Whether they argued with each other is harder to say. What can be known is that the Synoptic tradition shows a very interesting link with 4Q521 on the characteristics of the Messiah.

In noting the close verbal ties between 4Q521 and the Synoptic tradition it is important to note that the same verbal linkage is not found with the Fourth Gospel. That does not mean there is no link between 4Q521 and the Fourth Gospel. Tabor and Wise argue that the Messianic formula seen in the Synoptics and 4Q521 is dependent on Isa 35 and Isa 40.<sup>407</sup> This suggestion would indicate why this Messianic formula would be of interest to the Fourth Gospel. John the Baptist being the voice in the wilderness (Jn 1:23) is clearly based on Isa 40:3. The actions of the Messiah described previously are seen in the Fourth Gospel. Some of these concerns are thematic and could easily fit with the Fourth Gospel. “For the Lord will consider the pious, and call the righteous by name, and his spirit will hover upon the poor, and he will renew the faithful with his strength.” (4Q521 2.2.5-6)<sup>408</sup>

Jesus called Nathaniel in Jn 1 and he is certainly portrayed as preaching to the poor, needy, and pious. Added to this is the figure of John the Baptist who is a critical figure to all the Gospels. A linkage between 4Q521 and the Fourth Gospel is very

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<sup>404</sup> Tabor and Wise, “4Q521 ‘On Resurrection’ and the Synoptic Gospel Tradition: A Preliminary Study,” in *Qumran Questions* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 160.

<sup>405</sup> Tabor and Wise, “4Q521,” 160.

<sup>406</sup> Tabor and Wise, “4Q521,” 161.

<sup>407</sup> Tabor and Wise, “4Q521,” 161.

<sup>408</sup> “???? ???? ???? ??” ??? ? ??? ???? ? ? ???? ???? ???? ? ? ?

tenable. While the verbal links are weaker, the action links are just as strong in the Fourth Gospel.

One further point needs noting. Not all interpreters would see the messianic figure as being a king in 4Q521. Puech in his study on 4Q521 notes two important considerations. Firstly it is possible this text is referring to two messiahs based on the difficulties in reading the text.<sup>409</sup> Secondly some like Collins have argued that the figure being described is a prophet.<sup>410</sup> Fitzmyer is of the same opinion<sup>411</sup> even though his admission that the figure treated in this text goes beyond the ordinary Old Testament figure of a prophet weakens his case.<sup>412</sup>

The argument that the figure is a prophet experiences difficulty when the importance of anointing is seen in the context of Hebrew tradition.<sup>413</sup> Kings and priests were anointed figures. To argue for a prophet being the subject of anointing is too difficult a proposition to maintain. As to the question of whether one or two messiahs are being described, it is best to show caution. A two messiah focus certainly is possible given what is known of Qumran history. In this case it seems more likely that one messianic figure is envisioned due to the need to fulfill the specific requirements outlined in 4Q521.

### **7.13 The Temple and Bar-Kochba**

In deciphering the intentions of the Bar-Kochba movement the evidence of numismatics is important evidence due to the scarcity of written material. There is no Josephus for Bar-Kochba<sup>414</sup> and this forces the researcher to consider other sources. This also does not mean Bar-Kochba was a minor historical figure unworthy of significant attention.<sup>415</sup> Horbury in his study of the Jewish Diaspora Revolt under Trajan sees

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<sup>409</sup>Émile Puech, "Some Remarks on 4Q246 and 4Q521 and Qumran Messianism," in the *Provo Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. Donald W. Parry and Eugene Ulrich; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 554.

<sup>410</sup> Puech, "Messianism," 556.

<sup>411</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 94.

<sup>412</sup> Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*, 94.

<sup>413</sup> Puech, "Messianism," 556.

<sup>414</sup> Michael Avi-Yonah, "The Second Temple (322 BC-70 AD) Jews, Romans and Byzantines (70-633)," in *A History of Israel and the Holy Land* (rev. ed.; ed. Michael Avi-Yonah; New York and London: Continuum, 2001), 171.

<sup>415</sup> The Bar-Kochba Revolt lacks a Josephus; it still has other sources like rabbinical tradition and archaeological finds. To assume an event is unimportant because the written record is sparse does not stand the test of close scrutiny. The finds at Qumran were not appreciated until after the Second World War and

messianic influence on the Jewish Revolt and the Bar-Kochba Revolt.<sup>416</sup> Indeed Horbury would also see messianic influences on the Diaspora Revolt<sup>417</sup> and this would provide an even stronger argument why the Bar-Kochba Revolt should be studied. Furthermore the Bar-Kochba Revolt was a significant military event. Avi-Yonah suggests an entire Roman legion perished in the mountains of Judea.<sup>418</sup> Indeed Avi-Yonah compares the situation facing the Jewish population in Palestine after Bar-Kochba to the days of Antiochus Epiphanes.<sup>419</sup> The Bar-Kochba Revolt was significant for both military and potentially messianic reasons and its coinage is its best surviving witness.

As noted in a previous chapter the use of coinage to provide a propaganda message was well known in the ancient world. Rulers both pagan and Jewish used coins to communicate and the messages that communicated often revolved around questions of political and religious legitimacy. The famous question of the legitimacy of paying taxes in the Synoptics (Mk 12:13-7, Mt 22:15:22, and Lk 20:20-26) is answered by Jesus by asking whose image is on the coin. The answer of rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's has been interpreted in various ways but what is clear is that having the image of the emperor on a coin was a sign of his authority. The minting of coins after the start of the Jewish Revolt served as an obvious declaration of independence from Roman rule. The advent of similar coins to mark the Bar-Kochba Revolt served the same purpose. What the coins of the Bar-Kochba Revolt say about Bar-Kochba give information not only about his revolt but the aims of the revolt associated with his name.

There appear to be clear indications that Bar-Kochba viewed his revolt as both messianic and supportive of a Third Temple. The discovery of coinage that shows a star set above a temple<sup>420</sup> is noteworthy because of the imagery expressed in this coin. The use of star imagery as being a sign of messianic hope is well-documented in the late Second Temple era. The use of star imagery with the coming of the M/messiah as

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that has radically changed the contemporary understanding of late Second Temple Judaism. Bar-Kochba influenced Roman policy and that speaks volumes concerning his historical impact.

<sup>416</sup> William Horbury, "The Beginnings of the Jewish Revolt under Trajan," in *Geschichte-Tradition-Reflexion Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag* (eds. Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 295.

<sup>417</sup> Horbury, "The Beginnings," 303.

<sup>418</sup> Avi-Yonah, "The Second Temple," 171.

<sup>419</sup> Avi-Yonah, "The Second Temple," 175.

<sup>420</sup> Andrew Chester, "The Parting of the Ways: Eschatology and Messianic Hope," in *Jews and Christians The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135* (ed. James D.G. Dunn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 259.

evidenced in Num 24:17 is evident in the material found at Qumran and in the New Testament as well. As noted earlier the Matthean account of magi coming from the east to follow the star to the home of the infant Jesus in Mt 2 show resonance with Num 24:17. There is no reason to believe that it did not have the same significance in the generation after the fall of the Temple in 70 CE. Its use in the Bar-Kochba Revolt cannot provide a definitive description of a program for a rebuilt temple but it does demonstrate that the Temple was part of the message of Bar-Kochba.

Other coins also show Bar-Kochba being described as prince of Israel.<sup>421</sup> The use of the term “prince” (?? ?) begs an obvious comparison to that of the prince of Ezek 40-48. The conjunction of the messianic and temple motifs with a self-declared prince of Israel cannot be ignored. The possibility that Ezek 40-48 provided inspiration or a template for the ideology expressed by the Bar-Kochba movement is a point worth considering. Certainly he was acknowledged as being the Messiah by some during his lifetime. The famous statement of Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph in the Palestinian Talmud that described Bar-Kochba as the King Messiah (y. *Ta’anit* 4:5) indicates that the memory of support for Bar-Kochba lasted long enough to be included in the Palestinian Talmud. The lingering hope for a rebuilt temple (y. *Ta’anit* 4:7) in that same text suggests that even with the passage of time after the failure of the Bar-Kochba Revolt the expectation by some in rabbinical Judaism for a rebuilt temple existed. The hope for a M/messiah and a Third Temple did not die with the Jewish Revolt. It continued into the second century CE.

The obvious conclusion to be drawn was that Bar-Kochba wanted his symbol, the star, to be seen with that of the Temple. While it is possible that the imagery of the temple could be viewed as a reference to the Second Temple, this does not seem likely. Why an insurgent movement fighting Rome would be interested in reminding its supporters of the painful defeat of 70 CE seems counterintuitive. The prospect of liberating Jerusalem and Jewish Palestine from Roman rule and reestablishing a Third Temple would seem to be the best option in evaluating his coinage. The best way of celebrating the memory of the Second Temple would be to focus on rebuilding the Temple in the same way the Second Temple rebuilt the First Temple.

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<sup>421</sup>Chester, “The Parting of the Ways: Eschatology and Messianic Hope,” 259.

### 7.14 New Jerusalem Texts

One further consideration of a hope for a rebuilt temple is to consider the eschatological expectations of the New Jerusalem texts found at Qumran. Their contribution to the expectation of a hope for a Third Temple is hard to assess given the demise of the Qumran settlement before the fall of Jerusalem but anyone influenced by these texts who survived the Jewish Revolt could use them as a guide for the future. The topic of the New Jerusalem in the texts recovered from Qumran (2Q4, 4Q554, 4Q555, 5Q15, and 11Q18) (*New Jerusalem Texts*) includes no complete copy of any particular text. Portions were recovered from four different caves (Caves 2, 4, 5, and 11) and it is again worth reiterating that texts recovered from multiple caves are possible indicators for popularity, importance, or a plan for their survival. The centrality of Jerusalem as a renewed, purified locale fit as a place of worship emerges as concern in these texts. Again this should be no surprise as 4QMMT stressed the sanctity of Jerusalem. Indeed the obvious comparison to the Qumran New Jerusalem texts is again Ezek 40-48. The New Jerusalem texts do not copy Ezek 40-48 even though they seem influenced by its thematic concerns. The detailed description of the urban planning and the physical architecture of 4Q554 and 5Q15 are reminiscent of the detailed urban precision of Ezek 40-42. The use of the tribes of Israel for geographical organization (4Q554) is echoed in Ezek 48:1-8. The New Jerusalem texts include references to continuing cultic practices (2Q4 4) and a physical temple (4Q554 1.2.18) that invite comparison to Ezek 43:13-27. All of these emphases echo the concern in Ezekiel for a reorganized and purified temple cult. A physical cult with physical sacrifices and a physical temple are all in evidence both in the Qumran New Jerusalem texts and Ezek 40-48.

The question of how the New Jerusalem texts relate to any messianic expectations is difficult to evaluate. There is no clear mention of a new David or a royal messiah in the recovered texts. The absence of a certain reference to a royal messianic figure does not mean that the issue is closed given the fragmentary nature of the surviving texts. There is an interesting portion of 4Q554 that may have relevance to other texts. 4Q554 2.3.14-22 contains snatches of a description of a conflict. Critically the Kittim, Edom, Moab, and Ammon are part of this description of opponents. If this is a reference to eschatological conflict in which the royal messiah battles the Kittim, it could

indicate a role for the royal messiah in the New Jerusalem. The number of lacunae and the lack of context make it well nigh impossible to establish particulars. Other questions can be posed with a credible hope of being answered. Any fragment that includes the groups previously mentioned in an eschatological context raises possibilities of links with the *War Scroll* and other similar texts.

If the Qumran New Jerusalem texts were read in comparison to Jewish Christian texts like Hebrews, the differences could not be starker on the issue of the temple cult. For early Christians Jesus represented the fulfillment of the sacrificial system while Jews influenced by the Qumran texts would still see a role for a temple cult. It also indicates that a text like the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* that projects a living temple of worshippers was not the final answer on the subject of a physical temple for the Qumran community. Just as the *Temple Scroll* projected a future with a refurbished temple so did the New Jerusalem texts. This mixture of future hopes could be expected to survive the Jewish Revolt and play a part in the intramural Jewish debates between the Jewish Revolt and the Bar-Kochba Revolt.

### **7.15 Revelation, David, and the Fourth Gospel**

Any study of the Fourth Gospel that seeks to place its composition into the wider context of Jewish and Jewish Christian discussion needs to be prepared to interact with issues arising from the book of Revelation. Revelation shares with the Fourth Gospel the distinction of being generally believed to have been written within the same era.<sup>422</sup> Indeed the expectation from the early church was that John the Apostle wrote Revelation soon after the Fourth Gospel was composed. While its linkage with the Fourth Gospel in having the same author has come under heavy attack over the centuries, its relationship with the Johannine community should not be doubted. Whether or not both the Fourth Gospel and Revelation have the same author, it is significant from an intertextual perspective that they were perceived by their first audiences as coming from the same

<sup>422</sup> An alternate solution for the differences between the Fourth Gospel and Revelation is to argue that Revelation was actually written in Nero's era and shares with Q and Mark roughly the same time of composition. By making Revelation a pre-70 CE text the historical context of the anti-Roman imagery corresponds to other Jewish and Jewish-Christian texts that have not been influenced by the Jewish Revolt. Admittedly the number of contemporary scholars holding this position is a minority but it does provide a logical explanation to explain the aggressiveness of Revelation.

author. A reading and interpretation strategy for the Johannine community allowed both of these texts to thrive within their own environment. Thus a high probability exists that even if Revelation was written by another author(s)/redactor(s) than the Fourth Gospel it came from the same group as the one that stands behind the Fourth Gospel.

Certainly both texts contain a christology that stresses the importance of Jesus. The portrayal of Jesus in Revelation is markedly different though in one respect than in the Fourth Gospel. The careful handling of Jesus' Davidic heritage in the Fourth Gospel gives way to an explicit acknowledgment in Revelation of that reality. His identification as being the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev 5:5) and the Root of David (Rev 22:16) is an explicit allusion to his Davidic heritage and the aggressiveness of this statement is in stark contrast to that witnessed in the Fourth Gospel when Jesus is before Pilate. Given the tradition that Revelation was composed in internal exile in a prison setting this should be no surprise. The author of Revelation had no fear of raising the ire of Rome because he had already been imprisoned. The need for subtle language to nuance Jesus' Davidic heritage was not necessary because the situation was different.<sup>423</sup> The author of Revelation had no need to be cautious because nothing could be gained from caution.

The vision of the New Jerusalem in Revelation is about the person of Jesus. He and the LORD are the Temple of the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:22) and this provides the focal point for understanding the finale to the text of Revelation. The vision of the Temple in Ezek 40-48 is adapted to the vision of the New Jerusalem in Revelation. The appropriation of the river imagery in Rev 22 found earlier in Ezek 47 is used to make a dramatic point. By using this language the text of Rev 22 achieves a significant

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<sup>423</sup> It could be argued that the recipients of the text of Revelation would still be interested in maintaining the peace and would not want to risk using a polemic text like Revelation. That consideration is worth noting as it would seem to contradict the idea that the Johannine community was interested in a careful handling of the Davidic identity of Jesus. Nevertheless on closer examination this argument needs to be amended. The tradition of internal exile/prison around the formation of Revelation (Rev 1:9) indicates that the only likely way this text could ever circulate would be after the release of the author from prison. If the author of this text was arrested during the reign of Nero or Domitian, the most likely time for release would be after the death of the emperor. When the political climate changed, it would become possible for Revelation to start circulating among the Christian community. This is an important consideration. The political circumstances facing both texts were different.

Whether it would be given public readings immediately after the release of the author of Revelation is difficult to ascertain. Revelation's inclusion in the canon was not a simple matter and its origin in a time of stress may account for that problem. The key point is that Revelation has a tradition of being forged in internal exile/prison and the Fourth Gospel was written as an evangelistic text. The author of Revelation writes like a person expecting martyrdom; the Fourth Gospel reads like an advertisement for a peaceable kingdom.

theological transposition. In the Ezekiel text the river flows from the Temple (Ezek 47:1) and provides food and healing (Ezek 47:1). In Revelation the river flows from the throne of God and the Lamb (Rev 22:1) as it achieves the same purpose of providing food and healing (Rev 22:2). The language in Revelation clearly seems meant to echo the wording of parts of Ezek 47. When coupled with the statements of Jesus in Jn 7:37-39 in which living water is promised to flow from every believer, a picture emerges of Jesus providing the necessary fulfillment of the Temple. Living water flows from Jesus because he is the Living Temple for the Johannine community. If a link is made to the pouring out of blood and water in Jn 19:34 when Jesus' body is pierced, the imagery of Jesus being the Living Water of the Temple<sup>424</sup> comes full circle. He is both the Living Temple in his death and in his new life.

The adoption of this imagery of Jesus' fulfilling Ezekiel's vision may not prove compelling for some who seek more explicit textual links between Ezekiel and Revelation. The point under consideration is not whether this linkage is compelling exegesis from the standpoint of contemporary scholarship but whether it would prove compelling for the Johannine community. As has been noted previously the Fourth Gospel shows attention to the social marginalized nature of its community. The vividness of the imageries seen in the Fourth Gospel and Revelation are an aid to understanding the links being made for those who could only hear the story as someone read it to them. The imagery of Jesus as the Living Temple is made so poor slave women could have a text written and read for them that respected their social situation.<sup>425</sup>

What also needs to be reiterated is that the detailed eschatology of Revelation ends with its focus on Jesus. Not only is he the New Temple but his identification as being from the root of David (Rev 22:16) still stands as part of his claim to authority. The temple cult disappears but the identification with David does not. David was king in Jerusalem before the first Temple was built and the new David is the Temple in the New Jerusalem. The New Temple of Ezekiel is thus fulfilled in the person of the Lamb (Jesus) and God (the Father) in this interpretation. Scripture is not broken and the authority of

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<sup>424</sup> Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 1181.

<sup>425</sup> The possibility of a female source behind the Fourth Gospel has as much validity as any source suggested by previous generations of scholarship. Thus the importance of examining texts as whole entities that need to be compared with other texts has been stressed in this study.

Yahweh is not diminished. Obviously not every Jew who read Revelation would find this transposition satisfactory. Certainly many critics influenced by the Enlightenment would find the logic flawed. Nevertheless this type of transposition was used by the Qumran community and would be recognizable to those familiar with that community's exegetical techniques. This is not meant to imply that everyone influenced by Qumran would read Revelation and embrace its message. Rather it seems that there was sufficient commonality between the exegetical approaches of Revelation and the Qumran community so that Jewish Christians after 70 CE could write texts that used methodology recognizable to any survivors of the Qumran settlement or community. How soon Revelation would be circulated is another question but the Johannine community used symbolism familiar to non-Christian Jews.

Worth also considering is the thematic unity between these two books and Hebrews on the question of the need for the temple cult. Jesus as the replacement for cultic practice and for a physical temple site is a theme that seems to resonate in these texts even though the probability of them all being written by the same person is low. What seems evident is the issue of the temple cult was important to Jews who either embraced Christianity or came into contact with Jewish-Christians during the last days of the Second Temple or in the years following the destruction of the Second Temple.

#### **7.16 Conclusion: Implications of the Hope for a Third Temple**

This chapter opened with a discussion of the issues tied to a Third Temple and front and center among these issues was the impact of a Third Temple on both the politics of the Roman empire and the relationship between Jews and Christians. As different as Roman politics and Jewish/Christian theology sound they are linked at the question of the Temple. A Third Temple would be a political challenge to Rome and a flashpoint between those who believed Jesus was the replacement for the Temple and those who would fight for a rebuilt Temple. The Jerusalem Temple could serve both as a fortress and as a place of worship. If it was ever rebuilt, it could act as a citadel of resistance like it did during the Jewish Revolt. Hence even the temple at Leontopolis was a target for Roman destruction because this temple could become a center to rally opposition to the Roman government.

This point needs to be reiterated because the social milieu of the Johannine community required it to live with these dual tensions. Raising the issue of the destruction of the Second Temple in the Fourth Gospel would be a dangerous move. The *Epistle of Barnabas* portrayed Jesus as a replacement for the temple cult on theological grounds but it also served to keep the social peace of the empire. The demise of the Second Temple was still a very raw wound. Other texts like the fifth book of the Jewish *Sibylline Oracles* which advocated a new Temple would have added tension to the state of Jewish and Roman relationships. Politics and theology is a combustible mix and the issue of the Third Temple was a volatile one for all involved. That is why the Fourth Gospel shows such sensitivity in handling the issue of the destruction of the Temple. The absence of the mention of the demise of the Second Temple shows triumphalism was not part of the Fourth Gospel. Thus the arguments of the book of Hebrews even if predates the Jewish Revolt and comes from outside the Johannine community are important for understanding the care with which the Fourth Gospel deals with the temple cult. In Hebrews Jesus is the replacement for the temple cult not because the temple cult was evil but because its purpose was now fulfilled. In the post-70 CE era this point was even more obvious. The death of the Second Temple was a wound that had not fully scarred when the Fourth Gospel was composed and its handling of the issue of the Temple highlights this state of affairs.

The controversy surrounding a Third Temple also affects texts recovered near Qumran. Certainly there was an expectation in the New Jerusalem texts for a rebuilt Temple and the fact that the Johannine community through the book of Revelation proclaimed Jesus as the replacement for the Temple is no accident. This is not to say that the book of Revelation was written to combat the Qumran community. Rather it demonstrates that there was a deep division within Jewish thought on the nature of the Temple in the New Jerusalem. While both sides used similar vocabulary and sources, their conclusions on the need for a new Temple were radically different. The messiah/temple link for the Qumran texts is a continuing theme. For the Johannine community the temple cult is replaced by Jesus.

What is clear is that there was a segment of Jewish opinion that outlasted the Jewish Revolt that was interested in Temple restoration. How large and how influential a

body of opinion is open to debate but it was important enough that it merited discussion after 70 CE in rabbinical sources. The destruction of the Second Temple in the Jewish Revolt was not the definitive end of the temple cult. For some at least it was only a pause. The sting of the Bar-Kochba Revolt and the dashed hopes for a Third Temple meant that the memory of such a hope only made the subject more painful. It is after this revolt, that the subject of a renewed Temple starts to finally disappear as a pressing subject in Jewish history.

For the Fourth Gospel the question of the revival of the Temple would be very alive at the time of its composition. The need to be mindful of both Roman and Jewish concerns demanded a thoughtful response. It is a question that needed to be addressed and dealt with both carefully and clearly. The answer to this issue was to point to the person of Jesus. What is significant in terms of the Fourth Gospel's presentation is that in Jn 2:19 Jesus proclaims that the destroyed Temple would be raised in three days and that the Temple was Jesus. Jesus was superior to a rebuilt Temple and the challenge for Jewish Christians in the era between the Jewish Revolt and the Bar-Kochba Revolt was to maintain that perspective. Jesus was the only answer for the Johannine community.

## **Chapter Eight: Final Conclusion**

### **8.1 What If?**

What if the Fourth Gospel had never been published? That question is best answered indirectly. All three of the Synoptics share a fundamental sameness even in the midst of their own special contributions. The Fourth Gospel provides a jarring difference with the commonalities of the Synoptics and it is almost a surprise to find instances in which the Fourth Gospel contains common material with the Synoptics. Without the Fourth Gospel our picture of early Christianity would be much more limited. Yet it is the uniqueness of the Fourth Gospel that demands attention.

The Fourth Gospel's differences from the Synoptics provide a possible and indeed probable explanation of why it was needed. The world of the Synoptics whether they were published before or after the Jewish Revolt was shaped by the last decades of Second Temple Judaism. In contrast the Fourth Gospel was composed and published in a world that was very much shaped by the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the failure of the Jewish Revolt. The Fourth Gospel was distributed in an era in which the relationship between Judaism, Christianity, and the Roman empire was going through a thorough redefinition. That redefinition demanded the attention of the Johannine community and they produced a text that defined the person of Christ in the new post-Temple era. That definition required sensitivity to the realities of both the Jewish and Roman political situation while maintaining fidelity to the assertion that Jesus was the Son of God.

### **8.2 The Audience and the Narrative**

The methodology used in this study to grapple with the issues posed in the previous paragraph has been described as "big-picture" narrative. While other studies of the Fourth Gospel have presented convincing descriptions of how the narrative pieces of the Fourth Gospel work, the cumulative implications of this work need to be seen. The historical impact of the Fourth Gospel as a completed, unified text needs to be seen in its own right. The Fourth Gospel had a message and the devices of plot and character were meant to deliver that message. The Fourth Gospel's message was that Jesus was the Son of God and it did that very well. The problem that faced the narrator of the Fourth Gospel was that communication in the post-70 CE world for Jews and Christians had its

own peculiar challenges. After the Jewish Revolt the whole issue of Jewish and Jewish Christian messianism became much more complex. The Johannine community lived in a world that required both discretion and boldness for it to survive.

This mix of caution and daring can be seen in the very practical matter of communicating to its members. The role of literacy in the ancient world in understanding how texts were used needs to be remembered in assessing the Fourth Gospel. Reading and writing were a privilege and not a right in that world. The world of the printing press was not the world of early Christianity. The willingness of the Fourth Gospel to embrace marginalized persons has already been noted as a theme for this book. Not many low status persons were literate in the first century CE. Slaves and women would be key listeners of this text and this text would need to be written with their background in mind. In the Fourth Gospel the use of narrative to build a story and to portray Jesus as being the Son of God is used to support its thesis. The Fourth Gospel expects its readers and listeners to pay attention to flow of the story and to hear the message that is given.

The Fourth Gospel needed to reach the illiterate while at the same time it needed to be mindful of Roman government officials reading this text and Jewish readers comparing its quotations of Torah with their own versions of Torah. The impact of the Fourth Gospel on its readers would come both from how it was both read and heard by its first audiences and that was a complex matter. This view of the audience goes beyond questions of whether the primary recipients of this text were Jew or Gentile, Palestinian or Asian. The listeners of the Fourth Gospel lived in the Roman empire and were part of a society in which imperialism influenced the social and religious life of its population.

### **8.3 Jewish Milieu of Early Christianity**

The next challenge that needed to be met for the Fourth Gospel was dealing with the Jewish context of early Christianity. The consensus of the post-World War II era on the Jewish milieu of early Christianity deserves to be carried to its logical conclusion in the case of the Fourth Gospel. The present consensus that late Second Temple Judaism was constituted of many divergent parts deserves to be balanced with the realization that the constituent members of that diversity were categorical in their claims. While contemporary scholarship has learned to appreciate the many different expressions of Judaism, it is important to note that the participants within Second Temple Judaism had a

different perspective. The disputes between the Saducees and the Pharisees as outlined in the Mishnah highlight the internal divisions within Judaism in the late Second Temple era. Clearly proclaiming Jesus to be the Son of God would be disputed by many Jews but at the same time Jewish Christians could expect to find common ground with Jewish groups critical of the *status quo* during Jesus' lifetime. The early Jewish Christians were clearly not the only group to have an emphatic difference of opinion with the Jerusalem Jewish leadership and Pilate.

In the case of the Qumran community this was manifested in a critique of both the Roman occupation and the leadership of the Jerusalem Temple. Furthermore both the Qumran community and early Christianity expected a messiah of Davidic heritage to inaugurate a new era. Clearly there were differences in expectations between the two groups but after the Jewish Revolt any expectation of a royal messiah could be expected to engender significant Roman interest. The demise of the Qumran settlement in 68 CE and the hiding of the scrolls indicate that after the Jewish Revolt there would be survivors from the community influenced by its ideas but living in a world in which the Kittim (Rome) had triumphed. The challenge for the Fourth Gospel would be to reach people who had an expectation of a Davidic messiah but whose hopes had been dashed by the Jewish Revolt.

#### **8.4 The Jewish Revolt and the Next Era**

The historical impact of the Jewish Revolt should never be minimized in understanding the profound revolution it wrought in Jewish, Christian, and Roman relations. With the hindsight of history it appears inevitable that the Jewish rebels who challenged Roman control of Jewish Palestine would be defeated. They were too few, too divided, and lacked the resources of the Roman empire in waging war on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean. That is the benefit of hindsight. How events unfolded at that time in history need to be seen from a vantagepoint rooted in the events and experience of the early first century CE and not the contemporary world.

The Jewish Revolt was not the end of the struggle between Jewish nationalism and Roman imperialism. The Bar-Kochba Revolt demonstrated that the Jewish Revolt had not settled the questions of temple and even messiah in 70 CE. After the Jewish Revolt Roman and in particular Flavian sensitivities were awakened to any display of

Jewish nationalism. Any sign of an attempt to rebuild a Jewish nation-state was a warning of clear and present danger to the Roman empire. Yet paradoxically the demise of the Temple did not extinguish Jewish nationalism in either religious or political expressions but rather forced it into a subterranean holding tank. The Diaspora Revolt and the Bar-Kochba Revolt did not occur in a vacuum. The Jewish Revolt was not the definitive end of popular Jewish nationalism in the Roman era. It was the beginning of that end and the playing out of its end game lasted decades. It is in this context that the Fourth Gospel's handling of the question of Jesus' Davidic lineage and the role of the Temple become extremely significant.

### **8.5 What is a Davidic Messiah?**

The claims of Jesus as Messiah could now easily be interpreted as being provocative and sinister if read against the events of the Jewish Revolt. The fact that Davidic descent was a crucial claim for early Christians in establishing the correctness of their position as Jesus being the Messiah created a tense situation. The option of compromising the doctrine of Jesus' Davidic descent would alleviate Roman concern for Jesus' lineage but it would destroy the credibility of Christianity and alienate Jewish opinion that viewed Davidic heritage as being indispensable for the Messiah. The circles that produced the *Psalms of Solomon* and certain of the Dead Sea Scrolls were Davidide in their approach. Any view of a royal messiah that abandoned David would fail the test of credibility with these groups. Balancing Roman and Jewish concerns would not be easy.

David was both the greatest king in the history of Israel and the receiver of a promise concerning the Temple. The link between David and the Temple is integral to the history of Israel. It is also integral to understanding the role of David in the national consciousness of the Jewish nation after the Roman conquest. The power of a historical personage to act as a rallying point should not be underestimated. The very carefulness of the Fourth Gospel in addressing the figure of David and the meaning of kingship should therefore not be a surprise. Therefore talking about David in the reign of Domitian for Jewish Christians was potentially a dangerous enterprise. Furthermore the political implications for Christian opposition to the imperial cult were a matter that the Roman

elite could easily understand. Dealing with Jesus' Davidic heritage would require considerable finesse.

Yet while the church needed to deal with Roman concerns it also needed to reach the broader Jewish community with the message that Jesus was the Davidic messiah. It succeeded in doing so with a very careful presentation of Jesus' claims to be the Good Shepherd. To any survivor of the Qumran community familiar with 4Q504 (*4QWords of the Luminaries*) the use of the Davidic shepherd imagery to portray Jesus was clear linkage of Jesus with the prince of Ezekiel's Temple. Very carefully and astutely Jesus is proclaimed to be the Davidic messiah but not a limited, ethnically driven messiah bent on martial glory. He is the Good Shepherd whose sheep go beyond one flock and whose claims are greater than a Roman emperor. The Fourth Gospel does not hide Jesus' Davidic heritage; it reveals it to the reader observant enough to care.

The appeal to scripture in the Fourth Gospel was integral to any appeal to Jewish opinion that sought to reconcile the Christian doctrine of the crucified Messiah with the new David of Ezekiel. The importance of Jewish tradition to the Qumran community demanded that any appeal made to those influenced by this tradition be prepared to defend their interpretation on the grounds of scripture. Late Second Temple Judaism shows itself to be very much aware of the literary currents around it and the cross pollination of ideas between various groups is not as discrete as previously thought. What does emerge is that an appeal to Torah and Prophets was viewed as being very powerful by not only the Fourth Gospel but other non-Christian Jewish traditions. The boundaries of this scripture may not be easy to define but they are nevertheless evidenced in multiple sources. The Fourth Gospel could not disappoint in affirming that Jesus was the Messiah. It needed to show that Jesus was the new David of Ezekiel's Temple and this claim would create interest if not acceptance among survivors of the Qumran community. The need to reach Jewish readers was still a Fourth Gospel concern.

### **8.6 The Place of the Temple in the Fourth Gospel**

If the question of the Davidic lineage of Jesus was not contentious enough, the question of the role of the Temple would be bound to elicit even more interest. In the second chapter of the Fourth Gospel Jesus makes a provocative statement. He asserts that if the Temple is destroyed it can be raised in three days (Jn 2:19). Some of his Jewish

listeners interpret this as an attack on the Temple (Jn 2:20). Certainly it is a bold statement but is it anti-Temple?

The statements of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel that could be viewed as being anti-Temple need to be set in the larger context of the entire book. Jesus describes the Temple as being his Father's house (Jn 2:16). The christological implications of this statement should not obscure the inherent respect evident in the choice of words for the Temple. The Temple is worthy of honor because Yahweh is represented there. At the feast of tabernacles Jesus is at the Temple (Jn 5:14) and at the next feast of tabernacles (Jn 7:14) he again teaches in the Temple. Obviously Jesus' statements in Jn 2 did not preclude him from making the Temple a key destination in his teaching career.

His choice of words in Jn 2 also needs to be set in the context of post-70 CE Judaism and Christianity. The Temple has been destroyed at this point and Jesus is portrayed as describing it as having been his Father's house. There is no attack on its legitimacy as being the product of Herod the Great or it being castigated as an inferior construction. Rather its sanctity is important enough for Jesus to defend its integrity by chasing away the moneychangers (Jn 2:15).

Yet paradoxically the importance of the physical Temple pales in importance to its successor. What is more even more important for the Fourth Gospel is the proposition that Jesus is the replacement for the Temple. It is at this point that survivors of the Qumran community and other non-Christian Jews would be confronted with the theological revolution that the Fourth Gospel is asserting. The Temple has served its purpose and the end of the temple cult marks its replacement in the person of Jesus. Jesus' body as a resurrected Temple stands in contrast with the destroyed temple in Jerusalem. For Jews who had experienced the anguish of the destruction of the Second Temple this was a proposition that could be viewed as being either challenging or comforting. For survivors of the Qumran community or Jewish rebel groups the message that Jesus was greater than the Temple would be a monumental challenge to their worldview.

### **8.7 The Challenge of a Third Temple**

Nevertheless for many Jews having Jesus as the replacement for the Temple was not an option. This had implications for Jewish Christians. For those who wanted a Third

Temple the energy required to make it happen would have consequences for Jewish Christians whether they liked it or not. Ethnic nationalism is a very potent force and when tied to religious fervor it can have explosive consequences. Thus the Romans would have no interest in a rebuilt Temple and could be expected to deal harshly with those who had dreams of a Third Temple. The last stand in the Temple before the Romans finally burned it in 70 CE marked the nadir of the Temple as being a place of peace. A temple built in peace had perished in war and the danger of history repeating yet again made no sense to Rome.

These observations also provide context for understanding the perspectives of both Josephus and the Fourth Gospel in the post-70 CE era. One of the ironies of Josephus' histories is the perspective he occupied as a member of a priestly family. It was not as a member of the nobility or as a scion of the Davidic house that he fought Rome. As a resistance leader against the Romans he followed the example of the Maccabees. As a priest he both fought the Romans and defended the Flavians. Chilton's opinion that Josephus' portrayal of the Flavians was designed to show them as interested in preserving the integrity of the Temple<sup>426</sup> illustrates a marked difference in approach with the Fourth Gospel. Josephus needed to show solidarity with the Temple even though he became an apologist for the Flavians.

The Fourth Gospel provides a totally different perspective. The glorification, suppression, or rebuilding of the physical Temple was not an interest of the Fourth Gospel. The focus on the person of Jesus was the paramount concern. For the Fourth Gospel the Temple needed to be understood in the light of Jesus' death. For Josephus writing about the Second Temple was a means of ensuring there would be no Third Temple. The Fourth Gospel lived in a world in which temples were political as well as religious symbols but to the Johannine community Jesus was greater than any temple because he was superior to politics and to cultic practice.

### **8.8 Final Summary**

This presentation of the Fourth Gospel allowed two different but at the same time complementary challenges to be answered. Firstly Jesus could be affirmed as being

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<sup>426</sup> Bruce Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus* (University Park, Penn.: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 77.

harmless to imperial hegemony. Given the insecurities of the Flavian dynasty and the battering Roman self-confidence received in the initial stages of the Jewish Revolt, this is a significant point. That is why Jesus' portrayal in the Fourth Gospel is so vital for dealing with this Roman insecurity. The rejection of a popular kingship and Jesus' denial of a kingdom of this world establish his Messiahship as being greater than a political kingdom. This is why the literary message of the Fourth Gospel still has historical significance. The Fourth Gospel's portrayal of Jesus as a peaceful king mattered in maintaining the social and political equilibrium of the Johannine community. The Fourth Gospel is undeniably a literary work with a strategy as it deals with historical questions that challenged early Christianity.

The second objective achieved was a means of providing an explanation of recent Jewish history that dealt with both the issues of the Davidic messiah and the relevance of a physical Temple. Josephus' work provided one interpretation of history but the conclusions he reached would be unacceptable to many Jewish readers. The Fourth Gospel sought to provide a framework in which Jews and Jewish Christians could encounter Jesus' claims to be the Son of God in light of the events of the Jewish War. Obviously not everyone who encountered the Fourth Gospel would be swayed with its portrayal of Jesus and its message of a kingdom from another world. Yet it did have a profound impact and its message that Jesus was the Son of God was meant to outlast its authors. On that count there is no doubt the Fourth Gospel succeeded in its goal.

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Special Notes: Golb's allusion to Pliny the Elder was based on the *Natural History*, book 5, 15.73; trans. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 2 (London, 1942), p.277. The *Natural History* is mentioned but not cited on page 21 of this work. Moffet's source for the allusion to the *Acts of Thomas* on page 175 of this study is Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 1.13. The source for Eusebius is deemed speculative by Moffet hence the tradition can be cited with confidence but not the source.