Hoi Ioudaioi in the Gospel of John

An Ethnic Designation from an Expelled Community

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on what I believe is the correct translation and interpretation of the term *hoi Ioudaioi* used in the Gospel of John. While there have been many translations and interpretations of what this enigmatic term means in the past two thousand years, it is my contention that the authors of the Gospel of John viewed *hoi Ioudaioi* as referring to the ethnic group of the Jews.

The Gospel of John is a document written from the perspective of a Community, called here the Johannine Community, which felt socially dislocated after they were expelled from the local Jewish synagogue through the use of a *cherem*, a synagogue ban. The reason for their expulsion was because of their views that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. This action and the resulting alienation stemming from it caused a social identity crisis in the minds of the Johannine Community members, who no longer felt that they belonged to the Jewish ethnic group called, *hoi Ioudaioi*. To cope with this dilemma, the Gospel of John was created which attacks key elements of the identity markers of *hoi Ioudaioi*. These identity markers were then replaced with new non-ethnic identity markers based solely on the Community’s interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth.
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Dedicated To My Parents

Who First Opened My Eyes
To the Amazing World of
The Bible
INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to explore the meaning of the term *hoi Ioudaioi* in the Gospel of John. The term occurs 67 times in this Gospel while the singular *Ioudaios* occurs 4 times. This Gospel with its viscous accusations that *hoi Ioudaioi* were opponents of Jesus because of their lineage from their father, the Devil (8.4), has been used to justify anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism throughout history.¹

The question of who *hoi Ioudaioi* are in the Gospel of John (c. 80-110 C.E.) is one that has plagued commentators for centuries. While traditionally this term has been translated as ‘the Jews,’ many post-Holocaust approaches seek to mitigate this possible anti-Judaic translation. Therefore, despite that this term is best understood in an ethnic manner in contemporary Jewish and Gentile writings,² one scholar, Robert Kysar says that “few, if any, responsible scholars today would argue that the reference is to the entire Jewish people.”³ To mitigate anti-Semitic accusations, limited translations have been proposed. Among those that I discuss in this thesis are the propositions that *hoi Ioudaioi* should be translated in a geographical manner; that this term refers to a certain class of

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people, Jewish authorities; or that this term should be translated as pertaining to members of the Jewish religion.

Essentially this thesis answers why the Johannine Community used the term hoi Ioudaioi to refer to those expressing hostility towards Jesus and his disciples in their document, the Gospel of John. This Community began as Jewish Christians in the synagogue of a single location. Around 80 C.E. these Christians were expelled from their synagogue due to their insistence that a crucified criminal, Jesus of Nazareth, was the Messiah. This painful break from the nurturing presence of the greater Jewish society caused the Community to reject the ethnic identity markers of their Judaism and to refer to the dominant community which expelled them by their ethnic name, hoi Ioudaioi. From this viewpoint, the Gospel of John is a document written from the perspective of this socially dislocated Community that is attempting to create its own markers of self-identification. The process, which is shown through the writings of their Gospel, shows the rejection of the ethnic markers of hoi Ioudaioi and their replacement of social identity markers based solely upon their conception of Jesus of Nazareth.

1.1 Terminology

The problem of translating the term hoi Ioudaioi in a non-limiting manner does not exist in the Greek originals. As Wayne Meeks says, for ancient authors and their

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4 Hence, I do not believe that this term should be viewed as anti-Semitic or anti-Judaic as referring to all Jews.

5 While it is widely recognized that "Christians" became viewed as a race or an ethnic group in the third century. This designation is not directly applied to the time period under discussion, Clement of Alexandria's "Preachings of Peter," cited in Denise Kimber Buell, "Rethinking the Relevance of Race for Early Christian Self-Definition," Harvard Theological Review, 94, 2000, pp. 461-462. (444-476), although Buell does attempt to link the term ethne with Christians in such early works as the Shepherd of Herman, Denise Kimber Buell, "Race and Universalism in Early Christianity," Journal of Early Christian Studies, 10, 2002, pp. 429-468.
readers there would have been no difference between Judeans (geographical) and Jews (religious/cultural), both of these factors were part of the ancient Jewish ethnicity.  

The quandary of an adequate English translation for the term *hoi Ioudaioi* has come to the forefront of Johannine studies in recent years. Some scholars now write "the Jews," in quotation marks to show that there is this sense of unease over the proper translation of this term.  

Several social-scientific scholars among them John Pilch and Philip F. Esler argue that the correct translation should be "Judean," without the limiting regional connotation. Esler argues that the translation of the term as "Jew" focuses only on the religious aspect and does not address the issues of regional disparity and the Temple cult. In his estimation, the ancient Mediterranean practice was to differentiate between ethnic groups based on their home territory. Therefore, he argues that while *Ioudaioi* were found throughout the Roman Empire, they and their customs were traced back to the land of *Ioudaia* (Judea) where their Temple was. As Meeks states, the term *hoi Ioudaioi* "denotes the visible, recognizable group with their more or less well-known customs,

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9 Esler mentions that of the forty ethnic groups mentioned in Josephus’ “Against Apion,” only one of these, the Hyskos is non-territorial, Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul’s Letter*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), pp. 63, 66.
who have their origin in Judea but preserve what we would call their "ethnic identity" in the Diaspora."\textsuperscript{11}

For two reasons, I have continued to use the term 'Jew.' Firstly, although I agree with Esler that geographic identification was very important for the ancient understanding of ethnicity, so too was a group's customs including their religious identification.\textsuperscript{12} Secondly, Esler admits that a primary problem with his translation is that the term "Judean" already exists in a limited capacity, it refers to inhabitants of a geographical area, Judea.\textsuperscript{13} It is because of this limited meaning that I continue to translate this as "Jew," following Adele Reinhartz' understanding that a "Jew" in the ancient world would have been best understood as "a member of a national, religious, cultural and political group..."\textsuperscript{14}

1.2 Methodology

While there are many methodological criticisms that have been applied to Christian Testament scholarship, for the purposes of this thesis I have chosen to study the Gospel of John through a combination of the literary-historical and social-scientific methods.\textsuperscript{15} The literary-historical approach is two-fold; studying presumed literary texts as well as the historical milieu in which the Gospel was created. For instance, Rudolph Bultmann in his commentary suggested that there were three sources behind the Gospel

\begin{itemize}
  \item Meeks, "Am I a Jew?" p. 182.
  \item Esler, "Conflict," p. 66.
  \item Adele Reinhartz, "'Jews' and Jews in the Fourth Gospel," found in Bieringer et al, p. 349.
\end{itemize}
of John, a “passion narrative,” a “discourse-source,” and a “signs source.” While the two first hypothesized ‘sources’ have not gained wide acceptance as single documents, the “signs source” hypothesis has. Although, some historical scholars such as Raymond Brown have expressed dissatisfaction with this hypothesis stating that dissection of the Gospel into different sources may only reconstruct the Gospel in the view of the interpreter.

While the historical origins of the Gospel of John were not focussed on in Bultmann’s commentary, another historical critic, J. L. Martyn concentrated on this area. While Martyn’s conclusions based on the Birkhat Ha-minim have produced skepticism in more modern, the list of Johannine scholars who have accepted his hypothesis of the expulsion from the synagogues of the Johannine Community, based on the aposunagogos sayings of John 9.22; 12.42 and 16.2 is impressive. Martyn justly deserves the

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19 J.L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968). Those that follow this position in differing forms are Wayne Meeks, David E. Aune, M de Jonge, Raymond Brown; Rudolf Schnakenburg; Severino Pancaro; W. Nicol; Robert Kysar; G.L. Bartholomew; John Townsend; Jerome Neyrey; David Rensberger; John Painter; G.R. Beaseley-Murray; R. A. Culpepper; D. Moody Smith; Klaus Wengst; James D.G. Dunn; Walter Rebell; Wolfgang Wiebel; Feliks Gryglewicz; Sean Freyne; Takashi Onuki; John Koenig; Peter F. Ellis; R.T. Fortna; Rodney A. Whitacre; Ludger Schenke; Gale Yee; John Ashton; Mark W.G. Stibbe; Martin de Boer; and Helmut Koester, as cited in Motyer, p. 13, n. 21. Those that do not, include Margaret Davies who argues that the aposunagogos sayings of John are in fact creations by the Community to “prove” that the Community has nothing whatsoever to do with Judaism and that members attempting to rejoin the synagogues will be met with hostility. Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel*. JSNT Sup., 69. (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1992), p. 299. Another scholar who has disputed the expulsion theory is Adele Reinhartz who questions how hoi Ioudaioi in chapter nine can have already decided to expel Messiah proclaimers
compliment given to his work by John Ashton as "probably the most important single work on the Gospel since Bultmann's commentary."  

A key hypothesis, which Martyn suggested, was the two-level reading strategy.  

[This] two-level reading strategy is used as a key to the history and life-situation of the Johannine community. This use depends upon the assertion that a particular, defined community produced and read the Fourth Gospel as its foundational text. The two-level reading strategy presumes that the community read the Gospel both as a story of Jesus and as its own story. In doing so, it views the particulars of the community's history, specifically its relationship with the Jewish community, as encoded in the Gospel narratives and hence transparent to its earliest readers.”  

According to Stephen Motyer, Martyn's two-level reading strategy portrays Jesus as appearing in the Gospel as a Jewish Christian healer and revealer while being represented as the founder of the Johannine Community. The Council alluded to in chapter seven is actually the Gerousia, the local Jewish council of the area in which the Gospel was created. The Pharisees of the Gospel are members of the Yavneh Academy, while hoi Ioudaioi represent the 'rank and file' members of the local synagogue. Nicodemus represents "crypto-Christians," Jews who may believe in Jesus but refused to publicly declare this out of fear of expulsion. Finally the aposunagogos sayings do not represent Jewish actions to Christians in the time of Jesus but instead to the Community in c. 80 C.E. Here, hoi Ioudaioi and the Pharisees, acting on the instructions of Yavneh

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and the introduction of the *Birkhat Ha-minim*, the ‘curse of the heretics,’ expelled those that believe Jesus to be the Messiah.\(^{23}\)

While the Jews of John represent the historical people with whom the Community was in conflict,\(^{24}\) the individual figures and their actions in the Gospel should be interpreted as “representative people (disciples, ordinary people: the crowd, Jewish leaders, Samaritans) [who] express representative beliefs and raise representative objections.”\(^{25}\) Therefore, it should be recognized that these representative “Jews” depict not what actual Jews thought or did to Jesus or even what they may have done to the Johannine Community, instead these Jews represent the perceptions of the Johannine Community.\(^{26}\)

While Martyn used some sociological insight to reconstruct the situation that the Johannine Community emerges, the first scholar to consciously seek sociological solutions to the problem of Johannine studies was Wayne A. Meeks. Building on the earlier socio-historical approaches, the social-scientific study of the Gospel of John championed by such scholars as Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rorhaugh\(^{27}\) seeks to understand the function of the Gospel within the experiences of the Johannine

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23 Stephen Motyer, *Your Father the Devil: A New Approach to John and 'the Jews.'* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), pp. 13-14, Motyer criticizes Martyn for being rather selective about the history and texts of the first century C.E. studied in the creation of his theory. For instance, he only uses Josephus four times, Philo once, four Qumran documents and he does not focus on any of the contemporary apocalypses, Motyer, pp. 25-26. A summary of the *Birkhat Ha-minim* will be discussed below in chapter three.


26 While the hostility which is present in the text may have occurred, it is also quite likely more of a perception than a reality, de Jonge, “Jewish,” p. 248; M.C. de Boer, claims that the Johannine perspective of the Jews should be viewed as ‘vilification,” “false accusations motivated by hatred.” “The Depiction of ‘the Jews’ in John’s Gospel: Matters of Behaviour and Identity,” found in Bieringer et al, p. 266.

Community. In this manner of understanding, the history of the Johannine Community is imbedded in the text itself, and while historical criticism may provide confirmation of the Community, the primary evidence must come from the text itself.²⁸ Raymond Brown, while a historical critic who was interested in the historical origins of the Johannine Community, also agreed with this statement stating that while he believed there to be both an evangelist (first author) and a later redactor;

the duty of the commentator is not to decide what was composed by whom, or in what order it originally stood, nor whether these composers drew on a written source or an oral tradition. One should deal with the Gospel of John as it now stands, for that is the only form that we are certain has ever existed.²⁹

What social-scientific criticism of John attempts, is to understand the social situation behind the writing of the Gospel and how this influences the way certain individuals and groups, among them hoi Ioudaioi, are viewed in this Gospel. In this manner, the Gospel of John functioned as “an etiology of the Johannine group [which] provided a symbolic universe which gave religious legitimacy, a theodicy, to the group’s actual isolation from the larger society.”³⁰ Its carefully selected language promoted group solidarity.³¹

For this thesis, I have chosen to explore the situation in a socio-historical manner to explain how the term hoi Ioudaioi is used as an ethnic designation from whom the Community was separated. While I use Martyn’s three stages of Gospel creation, I think

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³¹ Malina, Rohrbaugh, p. 11.
that Martyn goes outside of what the sources say, for instance his supposition of the
*Birkhat Ha-minim* is not justified.

1.3 Outline

This thesis is divided into six chapters including my conclusions. In my introduction, I have discussed the terminology and methodology, which are to be used in this thesis. I have also formulated my argument that the term in question, *hoi Ioudaioi* should best be understood as an ethnic designation, used by a group which has been expelled from the Jews and no longer identifies themselves as belonging to this ethnic group.

In chapter two, I explain what theory of ethnicity I feel is the most justified and the contemporary understandings of the term *hoi Ioudaioi* used by both Jewish and Gentile sources as an ethnic designation.

Chapter three focuses on how the term *hoi Ioudaioi* has been translated as pertaining to the Gospel of John, the three translations in which I discuss and disregard are regional/geographical, authoritative and ethnical from a solely religious viewpoint.

In Chapter four, I discuss theories pertaining to the creation of the Gospel of John and the formation of the Johannine Community. While I discuss J.L. Martyn’s theory that the *Birkhat Ha-minim* was used to expel the Johannine Christians from the synagogues, ultimately this theory is rejected, and the hypothesis of a *cherem* adopted.

Chapter five concludes that for the Johannine Community, the expulsion from the synagogue was the reason for the formation of their social identity. With this event they no longer identified themselves as *Ioudaioi* but instead sought other identifying markers to form a social definition based on fictive kinship.
2

Ethnicity

This chapter seeks to explore the term *hoi Ioudaioi* as an ethnic marker. What is ethnicity and how did this term apply to the Jews in the ancient world? What were their markers of self-identity and how did others identify them? How important were the religious customs and beliefs of the Jews to their ethnic identity?

2.1 Origins of the Term *Ioudaios*

*Ioudaios* (plural = *Ioudaioi*) is derived from the geographical area of Judea (*Ioudaia*). This area is in turn derived from the earlier geographical region Judah, (*Ioudas*) which had received its name from the Jewish patriarch, Judah. Judea became the Roman province in which the narrative of the Gospel of John takes place.

The term *Ioudaios* is applied to the ethnic group whose origins were in Judea and who followed the traditional customs of those who formed their cultural and religious nexus around the Temple in Jerusalem. Josephus states that the term was not used to describe the people until after their return from the Babylonian exile (*Ant.* 11.173).

The English term “ethnic” derives from the Greek *ethnos*, which broadly defines groups sharing similar characteristics. In the time of Homer it was used to designate

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33 Harvey, p. 11.
hosts of men or flocks of animals, while after Homer the term usually denotes nations or people. It is used this way in the Christian Testament.

While there are many different theories of ethnicity, I feel that “the term ‘ethnicity’ [best] denotes both the self-consciousness of belonging to an ethnic group (ethnic identity) and the dynamic process that structures, and is structured by, ethnic groups in social interaction with one another.” This identity is both “socially constructed and subjectively perceived.” Ethnic groups choose the criteria they feel characterizes “them,” in relation to others.

There are two main understandings of ethnicity: “primordialism” and “instrumentalism.” Primordialists consider that ethnicity (religion, territorial association, and genealogy) is a natural evolution from such structures as kinship and social identity. Ethnicity naturally develops from a group who shares similar traits such as religion, language, and race. The primordialist viewpoint is how ethnic groups often view

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themselves, especially under threat. In this way, social cohesion is formed differentiating themselves from "the other." 41

The instrumentalist viewpoint is one that views the ethnic group from an outsider's perspective. This understanding sees ethnic groups as exploiting their shared characteristics to pursue political, religious and/or economic interests. 42 In this manner, ethnic identity is subjective and can be viewed as fluid, changing under pressure. While people are born into an ethnic group ultimately their continued membership in that group is fully subjective. 43

While identifying markers can and will change depending on which ethnic group is being discussed, 44 two social anthropologists have identified six characteristics from which most ethnic groups choose to distinguish themselves from other ethnicities.

- A common proper name to identify the group
- A myth of common ancestor ("myth" is significant, in that it indicates the genealogical accuracy of the claimed descent is immaterial).
- A shared history or shared memories of a common past, that embraces heroes, events and their commemoration.
- A common culture, covering customs, language, religion and so on.
- A link with a homeland, either through actual occupation or by symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples
- A sense of communal solidarity. 45

41 Esler, "Conflict," pp. 45-46; Philip F. Esler, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century," found in Dan Cohn-Sherbok, John M. Court, (eds.), Religious Diversity in the Graeco-Roman World: A Survey or Recent Scholarship. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 26-27 (21-46); Hall, "Ethnic," p. 18; an example of this is Herodotus' definition of barbarians were that they were not Greek, Janowitz, p. 214.
43 Hall, "Ethnic," p. 28, Fishman, pp. 35-41, Buell, "Rethinking," pp. 466-472. In ancient literature there are several examples of people changing their ethnic identity. For instance, in the opening stanzas of a fifth century B.C.E. lost play by Euripides named the "Phrixus," a character named Cadmus, son of Agenor, is said to have been born a Phoenician but when he left Sidon and emigrated to Thebes he changed his genos to Greek. Euripides, fr. 819, cited in Gideon Bobak, "Ethnic Continuity in the Jewish Diaspora in Antiquity," found in John R. Bartlett, (ed.), Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities. (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 177. Another example comes from the second-third century C.E. author Heliodorus in his romance "Aethiopica." A Tyrian merchant became smitten by a young Egyptian girl, named Chariclea. When her father refused his offer of marriage because he was of a different ethnicity from them, the Tyrian replied that he would forego his own ethnos and accept theirs as long as he could marry her, Heliodorus,
Jonathan M. Hall says that of these six identifying features, the two most important for the definition of an ethnic group are the common myth of descent and the association with a specific territory.\textsuperscript{46} While certain features such as language or religion or other cultural traits may be the most visible markers of identification of certain ethnic groups, these traits do not ultimately define an ethnic group.\textsuperscript{47} While Philip F. Esler says that it “is unhelpful to exaggerate the importance” of religion in identifying ethnic groups in the ancient world,\textsuperscript{48} ultimately this thesis is focused on how the Johannine Community was expelled from the ethnic group of \textit{hoi Ioudaioi}, because of how their religious ideas contrasted with the local synagogue.\textsuperscript{49} While Esler is correct not to limit the understanding of ethnicity to religious ideas as Shaye Cohen, for instance, does (as will be discussed below), ultimately religious identification markers may define membership in ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{50}

Marinus de Jonge asks did people in authority consider it possible for \textit{Ioudaioi} to go beyond what was acceptable and to not longer be considered Jews?\textsuperscript{51} He answers this by saying that the divisive issue between \textit{hoi Ioudaioi} and the Johannine Community was

\textsuperscript{44} Hall, “Ethnic,” pp. 20-21.
\textsuperscript{45} John Hutchinson, Anthony D. Smith, “Introduction” John Hutchinson and Smith (eds.), \textit{Ethnicity}. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 6-7, cited in Esler, “Conflict,” pp. 43-44. It should be noted that non-ethnic groups could use these identifying markers or similar ones to create a social identity for themselves, Hall, “Ethnic,” p. 25.
\textsuperscript{47} Hall, “Hellenicity,” p. 9.
\textsuperscript{48} Esler, “Conflict,” p. 44.
\textsuperscript{49} Hall states that religion can be more important to certain ethnic groups than to others, “Hellenicity,” p. 13.
\textsuperscript{50} Hall, “Hellenicity,” p. 9, for the ethnic group of the Diaspora, this was very true, Philo, “On the Embassy to Gaius.” 214-216, cited in D K. Buell, “Rethinking” p. 459.
\textsuperscript{51} Marinus de Jonge, “Conflict” p. 343.
the status of Jesus of Nazareth. Was he the Messiah? Was the interpretation of the Community of Jesus’ authority based on the “correct” interpretation of scripture and his relationship with God the Father? Through their understanding the only path to understanding the Father was through Jesus (14.6).

In Justin Martyr’s Dialogue with Trypho, Justin states that certain groups of Jews were not considered to be “real Jews” because of their religious beliefs, which differed from a key tenet of accepted Judaism of the time. Among these groups were the Sadducees, the Genistae, Meristae, Galileans, Hellenians and the Baptist Pharisees.

2.2 Judaism Defined

While “Judaism” can not be wholly defined in the first century C.E. as many different groups with many different concerns could be classified in this manner, in the time period being discussed (80-110 C.E.) many of the groups, such as Herodians or Essenes had by and large disappeared. In the aftermath of the First Jewish revolt, the one group that typifies “normative,” Judaism was the Pharisaic movement. A study of what they considered “orthodox” may shed light upon the conception of the social identity of the Johannine Community.

One can define the ethnic group of hoi Ioudaioi according to all of the features that Hutchinson and Smith suggested. A collective name, a myth of descent, a shared history, a common culture including religion, a link with a homeland and a sense of communal solidarity. For the Jews identified themselves by name, in two ways, either as

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52 De Jonge, “Conflict,” p. 344.
53 Justin Martyr, “The Dialogue With Trypho,” 80, found in Thomas B. Falls, Writings of Saint Justin Martyr. The Fathers of the Church Series. (New York: Christian Heritage, Inc., 1948), p. 276; another example of a similar situation is found in Revelation 2.9 which reports that there are people who falsely claim to be Jews yet are really members of the synagogue/community of Satan. So too in “Ant.” 11.340-341, Josephus comments that here some Samaritans tried to claim that they were Jewish to gain special
Jews or as Israel. Israel was more of a self-definition especially in Palestine while
\textit{ioudaioi} was used more in mixed Jewish-Gentile circumstances, and by Gentiles to refer
to the Jews.\textsuperscript{54}

A common myth of descent (with the structure of kinship\textsuperscript{55}) also defined the Jews
through their belief that they were children of Abraham. Abraham, according to Genesis
chapters 15-17 was the progenitor of the Jewish race. This was a well-attested theme in
the Hebrew Bible (Isaiah 41.8; 51.2; Psalm 105.6) and in first-century texts Jews could
claim honour through their association with this figure (Matthew 1.2, 17; 3.9, Luke
3.8).\textsuperscript{56} Through this lineage the Jews would be directly connected to the covenant made
between Yahweh and Abraham (Psalms of Solomon 9.8-9; Sirach 44.19-21).\textsuperscript{57}

\textit{Hoi ioudaioi} shared a unique history, shown through key figures in the Hebrew
Scriptures both those now considered canonical or apocryphal. Distinctively shared
cultural traits included religious ideas.\textsuperscript{58} They were also linked to the land of Israel,\textsuperscript{59} the

\begin{table}[h]
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\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
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\textbf{Category} & \textbf{Examples} & \textbf{Notes} \\
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Historical Identity & & \\
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Political Identity & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Categories of Jewish Identity}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{54} W. Gutbrod, "\textit{ioudaios}, Israel, Hebrew in Greek Hellenistic Literature," found in Gerhard Kittel, (ed.),
Publishing Company, 1978), pp.369-371, thus gentiles may praise the morals of the Jews or the God of the
Jews, Peter J. Tomson 'If this be from Heaven...': Jesus and the New Testament Authors in their
Relationship to Judaism. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001, p. 111; Lowe mentions that the term
Israel is used in the Mishnah c. 200 C.E. almost exclusively as a self-identification marker, p. 104. Lieu, p.
247, other texts from the inter-testamental era which show a preference for the term Israel as the covenantal
title are Ecclesiasticus 17.17; "Jubilees" 33.20; O.S. Wintermute, (trans.), found in James H. Charlesworth,
(ed.). \textit{The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha}, vol. 2. (New York: Doubleday, 1985), p. 120 and the "Psalms
\textsuperscript{55} Eliot R. Smith and Michael A. Zarate, “Exemplar and Prototype Use in Social Categorization,” Social
\textsuperscript{56} Examples found in Esler, “Conflict,” pp. 178-179.
\textsuperscript{57} In this category belongs the four pillars of Judaism that James D.G. Dunn identifies with. These are the
notion that 1/ God is one as the Shema (Deut. 6.4) states, 2/ The election of Israel is bound through the
covenant between His people and Yahweh. 3/ This covenant is focussed on the Torah and 4/ the Land of
Israel focussed around the nexus or the Temple in Jerusalem, James D.G. Dunn, \textit{The Parting of the Ways:
Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity}. (London: SCM
\textsuperscript{58} Also known as Judea, but this term like its derivative Jew, is used more as an outsider or mixed
designation.
land of the covenant between themselves and their God, Yahweh. Through their customs and beliefs of their covenant with Yahweh they shared a sense of solidarity.

"...[F]fundamental to Israel’s self-understanding was its conviction that it had been specially chosen by Yahweh, that the one God had bound himself to Israel and Israel to himself by a special contract, or covenant."\(^{60}\)

2.3 Jews = Predominately Religious?

Shaye Cohen, in his work on the boundaries of Judaism states that the term Ιουδαῖοι should always be translated as Judean in an ethnic-geographical manner prior to the Hasmonean dynasty and thus was parallel to other ethnic-geographical designations such as Roman or Thracian.\(^{61}\) In the Roman Republic the usual designation for the Jews was politeuma, laos, or ethnos. This changed, however, in the time of the Roman Empire, when the usual designation was sunagoge, “community,” or “congregation.” According to Cohen this shows a transition in how the Gentiles viewed the Jewish Diaspora communities. They became understood less as ethnic groups and more as religious communities.\(^{62}\) Cohen feels that the Judeans of Judea also began to redefine themselves less in an ethnic-geographical manner and more in a religious manner, however, in the Diaspora they kept the same name for themselves, Ιουδαίοι.\(^{63}\)

Cohen’s argument for the Jewish self-definition is based on four Greek texts found within the Septuagint (second half of the 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) century C.E) written within a

\(^{60}\) Dunn, “Parting,” p. 21.


\(^{62}\) Schurer, History 3.91 cited in Cohen, p. 80.

generation of each other.  

These are two additions to the Book of Daniel; “Susanna” and “Bel and the Dragon” as well as the books of I and II Maccabees. In the first three books mentioned, he maintains that all of the uses of the term Ioudaioi (or Ioudaios) should be translated as referring to regional/geographic designations, while in II Maccabees there is a blending of the ethnic-geographic designations with that of religion. For instance in “Susanna,” she is referred to as a Ioudaia which could be translated as Jewess. Cohen maintains that this should instead be translated in a regional manner, as a Judean for later in the story as a daughter of Judah she is contrasted with two lustful elders of Israel.

In “Bel and the Dragon,” the Persian king, Cyrus, allows Daniel to kill a great dragon or serpent that the Babylonians worshipped as a god. After this event the people cried out that their king had become a Ioudaios. Cohen argues that in the context of Daniel a more correct translation is “Judean.” The reason for this is that in other verses of Daniel such as 1:6, Daniel and his associates are mentioned as children from Judah, a geographical reference. Cohen states that the Babylonian complaint is that their King is not acting as a Babylonian and revering their gods, but instead is acting as a Judean and denigrating them.

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66 “Susanna,” vs. 56-57; Cohen, pp. 85-86.
68 Cohen, pp. 86-87.
69 While Cohen does admit that in this instance, the meaning of the term Ioudaios is beginning to show glimmers of the later meaning of religious distinction and would fit the later rabbinic saying of “anyone who denies idolatry is a Jew,” b. Megilloth 13a, cited in Cohen, p. 86-87.
Cohen's argument here is not particularly convincing, as "Bel and the Dragon" was written after the completion of the Book of Daniel and its use of terms may vary from this work. Secondly, and more convincingly is the concept that the Babylonians reacted in this manner because their King appeared to be turning his back on Babylonian gods. This appears to me to be a religious understanding and thus would contrast with Cohen's claims that in the late second century B.C.E the term Ioudaios should be translated purely in a geographical manner.

I Maccabees contains a history of the Hasmonean dynasty and was written during the reign of John Hyrcanus or shortly thereafter (135-104 B.C.E). In this work, the plural term Ioudaioi is used frequently, usually in the context of the "people", "crowd" or "nation." In all of these contexts the meaning is "Judeans" in an ethnic-geographical sense. The singular, Ioudaios is used once in 2.23 where it states that an aner Ioudaios came forward in the sight of all men to sacrifice to the foreign gods. Cohen says that this should best be translated as a "man of Judah" or a "Judean man." Despite this being in a religious context, Cohen argues that this term should not be translated as Jew or a "Jewish man," because the plural form of this term in this text never refers to "Jew."

Cohen further states that in II Maccabees, Ioudaioi is used to refer to both Judeans in Judea and those throughout the ancient world. He also states however, that in 6.6 a reference is made to a decree by Antiochus Epiphanes to the people of Judea that they were not allowed to keep the Sabbath, celebrate the traditional feasts or even admit to

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70 Myers, p. 258.
72 Cohen, p. 87.
73 Cohen, p. 88.
being a Ioudaios. Cohen grants that this verse clearly anticipates the meaning of the term Jew in a religious sense. For why would Antiochus care if the people identified themselves as Judeans?75

Cohen perhaps simplifies the understanding of these terms a bit much. He attempts to show that there is a clear evolution in which the term Ioudaios is first understood in an ethnic-geographical manner and then later transforms to refer only to the religious customs of the Jews. In this understanding he is unsuccessful and this can be shown through the use of an example from a third century C.E. Roman historian, Cassius Dio. He still felt compelled to clarify that the Jews were an ethnic group known both for their geographical territory and their customs.76 Cohen fails to fully understand that both geography and religion are simply markers of a wider ethnic understanding.

2.4 Ioudaioi in Contemporary Literature: Regional and Religious

Hoi Ioudaioi was used by both Philo (c. 20 B.C.E.-50 C.E.) and Josephus (c. 37-100 C.E.) to refer to the ethnic group of the Jews, contrasting with other ethnic groups such as the Greeks and Romans (Philo, Embassy 281; Against Flaccus 43; Josephus, Antiquities. 1.4; 20.157, 259, 262). Josephus uses this term to refer to hoi Ioudaioi as both those from Judea the region as well as those who follow the customs, which originated in this locale (Josephus, Jewish War 2.43). Among Greek and Roman writers

74 In Iudaica II Maccabees 3.32; 4.11, 35; 5.23, 25; 6.1; 8.10-11, 32, 34, 36; 9.4, 7, 15, 17-18; 10.12, 14-15, 24, 29; 11.2, 15-16; 12.1, 3-4, 8, 34, 40; 13.9, 18-19, 23; 14.5, 6, 14, 37, 39; 15.2, 12. "Judeans" outside of Judea 12.17, 12.30, found in Cohen, p. 89, n. 66.
75 Cohen, pp. 90-91.
a *Ioudaios* was a Jew, a member of the ethnic group living in *Ioudaia*, Judea,\(^{77}\) whose cult center was Jerusalem.\(^{78}\)

One of the marks of identity for the Jewish population was the practice of circumcision. For pious Jews of the Maccabean era, this practice became extremely important as a self-identification marker.\(^{79}\) Josephus in several places in his works mentions that circumcision was a mark of self-identification for the Jewish people, but also admits that circumcision was also a marker shared by other Semitic ethnic groups, such as the Egyptians (*Ant.* 1.214; *Against Apion* 1.169-171; 2.137-143). Josephus however, is not consistent in his mention of circumcision as a Jewish self-identification marker. Instead he focuses on Jewish laws such as those related to Sabbath observance and dietary laws (*Ant.* 14.202, 206, 213, 256-261; 16.163).\(^{80}\)

Circumcision is not mentioned in Latin literature until the first century B.C.E.\(^{81}\) but this identifying marker was used by Latin writers from this time period through until the second century C.E.\(^{82}\) to refer exclusively to the Jews. This sole identification is odd as in the mid 5\(^{th}\) century B.C.E., Herodotus identified the Colchians, Egyptians and the Ethiopians as groups who had always practiced circumcision while stating both the


\(^{79}\) However, for many Jews this marker was more of an inconvenience than a matter or pride, for that reason they tried to hide this marker through the process of *epispasm*, stretching their remaining foreskin over the head of the penis in an attempt to look uncircumcised, Cohen, pp. 39-40.

\(^{80}\) Quite likely the reason why Josephus shies away from identifying the Jews as distinctive based on circumcision is likely due to the revulsion, which his Graeco-Roman audience felt for this practice.

\(^{81}\) Horace “Curtis Iudaetis,” from “Satires” 1.9.69-70, cited in Stern, no. 129.

\(^{82}\) Persius, Petronius, Martial, Suetonius, Tacitus, and Juvenal found in Cohen, p. 40.
Phoenicians and the Syrians of Palestine (later interpreted to be the Judeans) learned it from the Egyptians.\textsuperscript{83}

Greeks and Romans viewed Jews everywhere as belonging to the same ethnic group,\textsuperscript{84} despite encountering many who no longer lived in the geographical boundary of Judea.\textsuperscript{85} Because many of the Jewish-Gentile encounters did occur in the Diaspora, often the cultural beliefs and practices were noted to be the identifying marks of this group, including Gentiles who converted to this way of life.\textsuperscript{86}

2.5 Conclusion

While ethnicity can be defined as "ultimately a matter of group self-recognition and self-identity,"\textsuperscript{87} this is only one half of the correct meaning of ethnicity. The other half is how an outside group perceives these ethnic markers.\textsuperscript{88} This understanding will become more pertinent when we discuss the construction of the social identity of the Johannine Community in chapter four.

Of the six identifying markers of ethnic identity, proposed by Hutchinson and Smith, the three most important markers from a Gentile perspective are the name

\textsuperscript{83} Herodotus 2.104.2-3, cited in Stern, no. 1, Diodorus Sicilus 1.28.2-3 cited in Stern no. 55 and Josephus "Antiquities" 8.262 all argue that the Syrians of Palestine means the Judeans.
\textsuperscript{84} Strabo (c. 64 BCE-24 CE) "Geography," Stern, no. 105, also Josephus "Antiquities" 14.115; "Letter of Aristeas" 38.
\textsuperscript{85} Cohen, p. 74; Ross Kraemer warns that it is often difficult for scholars to differentiate between geographical or religious references, she even states that Ioudaia may have been used as a name, Ross S. Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term "Jew" in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," Harvard Theological Review, 82, no. 1, 1989, pp. 35-63.
\textsuperscript{87} Hall, “Hellenicity,” p. 11.
\textsuperscript{88} De vos, p. 350.
Ioudaios, their religious-cultural traditions including circumcision and their land of origin, Judea. From a Jewish perspective, all six of the markers identified by Hutchinson and Smith could apply, but it appears that the most important ones were their name, their traditions and the land of their covenant, Israel. In an important work by James D.G. Dunn, he concludes that the self-identification of hoi Ioudaioi in the Second Temple period can be viewed as four major points, or “pillars” as he refers to them. These pillars of faith are; monotheism, covenant based on the land of Israel, covenant interpreted through Torah and the Promised Land focussed on the nexus, and the Temple.  

While Shaye Cohen is ultimately wrong in limiting the ethnic designation of hoi Ioudaioi solely to their customs in the first century C.E. he is correct that this is a very important aspect of their self-definition. These customs and beliefs would also be extremely important to the social definition of the Johannine Community, which viewed itself as having been expelled from the ethnic group of the Jews because of religious differences and for this reason replaces these ethnic designation markers with its own markers of identity.

In the next chapter, I discuss how the term hoi Ioudaioi has often been translated in John and how the usage should actually be translated as representing an ethnic designation.

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89 Dunn, “Parting,” pp. 19-36, these pillars will be discussed in chapter five.
Ioudaioi in John

As we saw from the last chapter, the term in question in both Gentile and Jewish writings portrayed a Ioudaioi as a member of an ethnic group that followed unique and traditional customs and who traced their origins to the land of Judea. Frequently, however, when scholars view how the term Ioudaioi (and less commonly its singular Ioudaios) has been used in the Gospel of John, for the most part, this ethnical usage is viewed as irresponsible. In a bid to not sound racist, especially in this post-holocaust world, the term Ioudaioi has been translated and interpreted in many ways but three are the most popular. Members of the Ioudaioi have been interpreted in a regional manner. Another interpretation is to view the Ioudaioi as referring to members of the Jewish/Judeans authorities centered in Jerusalem. Finally, some scholars suggest that a proper understanding of Ioudaioi are that they are members of the Jewish religion that differ from the self-identification of the Community who is responsible for the creation of the Gospel.

3.1 Ioudaios = Judean?

Malcolm Lowe is most well known for his conclusion that hoi Ioudaios should best be translated as Judean in a regional geographical manner. Lowe argues that in his

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work *Against Apion*, Josephus took pains to refute charges that *hoi Ioudaioi* were of Egyptian descent who had been expelled from this country and had settled in Judea, thus taking their name from that country (2.8). From this he concludes that *hoi Ioudaioi* were known in the ancient world as Judeans associated with the region of Judea. He further argues that in all of the five instances in the Gospel where ‘feasts’ or ‘Passover of *hoi Ioudaioi*’ are mentioned (2.13; 5.1; 6.4; 7.1; 9.55), these should be interpreted as ‘feasts or Passover of the Judeans’ for two reasons. The first is that the feasts and Passover were celebrated in the region of Judea, while the second is a way of distinguishing between similar festivals that other groups, among them Samaritans, celebrated.

Some of Lowe’s arguments are persuasive because there are times in the Gospel when the term *hoi Ioudaioi* is used in a context where presumably only Judeans would be present, for instance, the *hoi Ioudaioi* who comfort Mary and Martha in Bethany (11.19, 31, 33, 36, 45). Other examples are when Jesus visits the Temple in Jerusalem during the festival of the Dedication, as this festival does not occur at a time of pilgrimage (9.19, 24, 31, 33), or the *hoi Ioudaioi* who are mentioned are clearly people from or of Jerusalem (1.19; 7.11, 13, 15, 35).

Lowe’s overall arguments however, are not particularly persuasive because of their limitation. As has already been discussed, geographical ties to a homeland are an important part of ethnical self-identification, but they are only part of this definition.

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91 This theory appears in several ancient sources for instance Josephus remarks that Aristotle himself thought this according to his pupil Clearchus, cited in “Against Apion” 1.179. Another source is Strabo’s “Geography” 16.2.34-36;
92 Lowe, p. 106.
93 Lowe, p. 117.
94 Myers, p. 834.
95 Lowe, pp. 121-122.
While many of the verses which mention *hoi Ioudaioi* in John probably are talking about inhabitants of the region Judea, who can be called Judeans, ultimately a wholly geographical translation of this term fails to adequately account for certain uses.

Among the criticisms of Lowe’s argument is that the festivals of Judaism were not defined by location, that is they are not defined as feasts/Passover of Judea, but instead they are defined by their celebrants which would include Diasporan Jews. Other criticisms include when Jesus is recorded to have asked *hoi Ioudaioi* in 10.34 “is it not written in your Law...” The Torah of *hoi Ioudaioi* was not limited to the region of Judea. Also in John 18.20 Jesus states that he taught openly in the synagogues and the Temple where all *hoi Ioudaioi* came together. The purification customs mentioned in John 2.6 are obviously not limited to Judea as the setting in which this pericopae is mentioned is in Galilee, nor are the burial customs of *hoi Ioudaioi* mentioned in 19.40 limited to Judea.

Another notable criticism is why would the parents of the blind man of John 9.22 be afraid of “the Judeans” as according to this understanding, they too would be Judeans?

Finally a major criticism of Lowe’s paper is that he neglects to study the location of the Johannine Community. If as Brown and others maintain, the Gospel was written in the Diaspora, why would the author wish to portray a group with which his audience would have little or no contact?

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97 So too the burial customs of 19.40 were also not limited to Judeans, Reinhartz, “‘The Jews,’” p. 348.
3.2 Judea versus Galilee and Samaria

Several scholars attempting to explain the perceived geographical symbolism in the Gospel have expanded Lowe's regional argument. Wayne Meeks has noted that "the geographical symbolism...is shaped by the apparently deliberate dialectic between Jerusalem, the place of judgement and rejection, and Galilee and Samaria, the places of acceptance and discipleship."99 R.T. Fortna has also concurred stating that Judea is often contrasted with the other areas of Palestine namely Galilee, Samaria and Perea, the Transjordan. In this understanding, Fortna believes that John's use of topography indicates how entire regional groups of people viewed Jesus of Nazareth. While he admits that some Judeans did believe in Jesus (2.23; 7.31; 8.30, 31: 11.42, 45; 12.11) he views these conversions as ambiguous at best.100

Wayne Meeks states that unlike the Synoptics, Judea was Jesus' *patris*, "home-place" (Matthew 13.57; Mark 6.4; Luke 4.24; John 4.44).101 This is despite John's silence on the issue of Jesus' birth at Bethlehem, which is alluded to but never fully, explained (7.42). Instead, the only time that Jesus' earthly paternity is discussed is by *Ioudaioi* in Galilee who maintain that they know his presumably Galilean mother and father (6.42).

In John, unlike in the Synoptics, Jesus is able to perform signs and he is welcomed wholeheartedly in Galilee in John chapter four (4.45) although often in Judea, Jesus is not welcomed. Meeks notes that in the Prologue to John, the Logos, identified as

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98 Brown, "Introduction," pp. 162-163, although Brown does accept that certain verses such as 7.1; 11.8, 54 may refer primarily to Judeans, as there does seem to be some contrast between areas of safety (outside of Judea) and people inside of Judea who wished Jesus harm, ibid.

99 Meeks, "Galilee" p. 169; Wayne A. Meeks, "Breaking Away: Three New Testament Pictures of Christianity's Separation from the Jewish Communities," found in Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frereichs, (eds.). *To See Ourselves As Others See Us: " Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity.* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 96-97, Judea is also noted as a place of rejection in other Christian texts from the first century, 1 Thessalonians 2.14-16 for instance, Harvey, p. 64.

100 Fortna, "Theological" pp. 92-93,
Jesus, 'came to his own, yet his own people did not accept him (1.11).’ It is further stated that ‘for those who did accept him, the logos gave power to become children of God (1.12). In Meeks' opinion then, Jesus brings the word of God to his own people, the Judeans, who reject while the Galileans who accept him are welcomed into the Johannine Community. 102

While I agree with Meeks that the author of John is connecting the rejection and acceptance of the Logos with the rejection and acceptance of Jesus in chapters 1 and 4, however, the acceptance mentioned in chapter one and the subsequent reward is not limited to Galileans. Instead it is broadened to all those who accept Jesus (through the lens of the Johannine Community).

A primary concern with Meeks’ theory is that there is plenty of evidence in the Gospel of John of Ioudaioi believing in Jesus (2.23; 7.31; 8.30, 31: 11.42, 45; 12.11) or at least sympathetic to him (3.22, 26; 4.1; 7.3). What is more the acceptance and rejection of Jesus is linked specifically to the term Ioudaios, which can not refer exclusively to “Judean.”

Several of Jesus’ disciples are Judeans. Among these are Mary, Martha and Lazarus from Bethany (11.1). 103 Also, the identification of people as hoi Ioudaioi can change, if belief that Jesus is the Messiah is fostered. In the raising of Lazarus there are

102 Meeks, “Galilee,” pp. 164-165. Raymond Brown disagrees with this theory and suggests that the Galileans faith was based on signs and thus was weak as based on John 2.23, Raymond Brown, “Gospel of John,” vol. 1, pp. 186-189. Jouette M. Bassler, disagrees with Brown. She states that Brown’s interpretation is awkward because the comment in John 2.23 was made in a Jerusalem setting. The healing that occurs after the welcome in Galilee appears to be positive, Bassler, pp. 248-249.
103 Bethany is a village approximately three kilometers east of the Mount of Olives, Myers, p. 139. While the status of Joseph of Arimathea is still to be determined, he too, is likely a Judean. The location of Arimathea is debated, it either refers to the town of Rahamin which Demetrius II added to Judea from Samaria in the second century BCE (I Maccabees 11.34), or it may be the town of Ramathaim-zophim, also known as Ramah, the home of Samuel (I Samuel 1.1; 19.19). Both of these are in Judea, Myers, p. 83.
people identified as *Ioudaioi*, who are likely Judean Jews in a regional and ethnic sense, and who show sympathy to Mary and Martha (11.19, 45). After the resurrection of Lazarus, many of these *Ioudaioi* believe in Jesus (11.45). In chapter twelve, Jesus is welcomed into Jerusalem by a crowd of people who believe that he is “the king of Israel” (12.13). Some of these people are identified as ‘the crowd who were with Jesus when Lazarus was raised.’ In this instance, the negative label *Ioudaioi* has been changed to the neutral *ochlos*, crowd (12.17).  

In Judea, Galilee and Samaria, there are displays of acceptance and rejection of the belief that Jesus is the Messiah. While two of the four Christological confessions in the Gospel of John occur in Samaria (4.42) and Galilee (6.69); the other two occur in Judea (11.27; 20.28). In John 6.41, 52, Jesus is accosted by *Ioudaioi* while he is in Galilee. There have been various ways to explain the presence of *Ioudaioi* in Galilee. One theory is that these opponents are men sent by the authorities of Jerusalem. Urban von Wahlde and Malcolm Lowe, however, argue that this usage should be interpreted as the work of a later redactor.

3.3 *Ioudaioi* versus Galileans?

Bassler, after reviewing the evidence discussed above, argues that while Judea and Galilee do not represent contrasting places of rejection and acceptance, the term

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104 Another possible example of this is Nicodemus. When he is introduced in John 3.1 he is announced as a Pharisee and a leader of the Jews. In the two other mentions of him in the Gospel, he is referred to as ‘the one who came to Jesus earlier’ (7.50) and ‘the one who had first come to Jesus at night’ (19.39). Nicodemus’ status in the Gospel of John is somewhat ambiguous however.
105 One could argue that the Christological confession of 6.69 is made by the *Galilean* disciple Peter, yet as for the regional identity of Thomas, nothing is definitively known, Myers, p. 1000.
106 R. H. Lightfoot, *Locality and Doctrine in the Gospels*. (London: Harper and Brothers, 1938), p. 150 argues that there are parallels of this happening in Mark 6 and 8, cited in Bassler, p. 251. Lightfoot seems to have not noticed that his does occur in John 1.19, yet in this instance those sent are clearly identified as priests and Levites.
Ioudaioi should be interpreted as those who reject Jesus, while Galilean is used for those who accept Jesus. In this manner, she argues that the designation “Galilean” is synonymous with being a follower of Jesus in Peter’s denial in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 14.70; Luke 22.59). Therefore, in 6.41, 52, Galileans become Ioudaioi as soon as they start to doubt.

This attempt, while interesting and would solve the problem of the identity of hoi Ioudaioi in John chapter six, ultimately fails due to the scarcity of usage of the term Galilean in John. The term only appears once (4.43) and is not used in Peter’s denial to show that he was a Galilean (18.17, 25-26).

The question of whom are hoi Ioudaioi in the Galilean setting of John 6.41, 52 is easily answered from a proper understanding of ethnicity. Several scholars, primarily through a careful study of Josephus have noted the existence of what is known as ‘dual ethnicity’ in the ancient world. Essentially what this refers to is a person who identifies himself/herself with two different ethnic groups. In this understanding then, the Galileans who oppose Jesus should not be viewed as “becoming Ioudaioi” because they

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108 Bassler, p. 255.
109 Bassler, p. 254.
110 The term Galilean never occurs in this manner in the Johannine epistles either.
111 Dunn, “Parting,” p. 144; Esler, “Conflict, p. 67; Cohen, “Beginnings,” p. 81; Jonathan L. Reed, Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence. (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000), p. 24. Roman Jews are mentioned in Josephus “Jewish War” 2.80-81 is contrasted with Antiquities 15.14-15, Jews of Ecbatana contrasted with Jews of Caesarea are noted in “Life” 54-55. In his “Antiquities” 13.249-259, Josephus recounts the Hasmonean conquering and forceful conversion of the Idumeans to Judaism, and states that from this time on they were regarded as Jews. Although in another portion of this work, Josephus only counts Herod as a ‘half-Jew’ because of his Idumean ethnicity, “Antiquities.” 14.403. In the “Jewish War” 2.43, Josephus mentions all the Jews come together to celebrate Pentecost in the Temple at Jerusalem, Jews from Galilee, Idumea, Jericho and Perea. In “Antiquities” 20.142, Josephus talks about a man named Atomos, a Ioudaios who was a Cyprian by birth, while Cohen mentions that it is possible that Ioudaios here is used as a geographical marker, he states that this is quite unlikely, p. 79. Cassius Dio in his Roman History, writes that Gentiles who ‘live by the laws of the Jews’ are known as Ioudaioi despite being of different ethnicity, Cassius Dio, 37.16-17.”
oppose Jesus as Bassler maintains, but they should be viewed as Galilean Jews who are identified in this manner because of both their regional and religious affiliations.

Ultimately, the conception that *hoi Ioudaioi* is best translated as Judean, members of a regional dispute between other areas of Palestine, should be disregarded. While the author of John seems to know Palestinian geography quite well, he does not appear to have used it to portray a deeper "spiritual" significance. As John Ashton has questioned if there is such a big dichotomy between the areas of Judea, Galilee and Samaria, why is this not more evident in the Gospel?

3.4 *Hoi Ioudaioi* as Authorities

In the Synoptic gospels, the opponents of Jesus can belong to many groups within Judaism. For instance, Herodians, elders, Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, as well as the chief priests, in John this has changed with the opponents for the most part all lumped under the term *hoi Ioudaioi*. The only two other specifically named groups in the Gospel are the chief Temple priests and the Pharisees. Possibly the priests are mentioned because they were too important to the Passion story to be excluded, while the Pharisees are important because this sect so heavily influenced Rabbinic Judaism. While all Pharisees are *Ioudaioi*, (1.19, 24; 8.13, 22; 9.13-23, 40; 18.3, 12; contrast John 5.10 with 5.15-18 and 11.46-52 with 18.14) not all *Ioudaioi* are Pharisees. Pharisees are, however, the archetypal *Ioudaioi*, the opponents of Jesus.

That this term is used to denote hostility towards Jesus is universally accepted, but who are the people who are hostile to Jesus? The strongest proponent for the translation

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115 Harvey, pp. 88-89.
in certain cases of *hoi Ioudaioi* as referring exclusively to ‘the authorities’ is Urban C. von Wahlde.\textsuperscript{116} He concludes that the term *Ioudaioi* has three meanings in the Gospel, “1/ a national meaning;\textsuperscript{117} 2/ a regional meaning;\textsuperscript{118} and 3/ a meaning without parallel in the ancient world which he termed the ‘Johannine usage.’\textsuperscript{119}

Of these three usages, von Wahlde limited the first two meanings by referring to them as “neutral usages” and he concentrated solely on the last meaning when the term *Ioudaioi* is used to denote hostility towards Jesus. The conclusions of his 1982 article were that while there are nine unanimous agreements by scholars on *hoi Ioudaioi* referring to authorities (1.19; 2.18, 20; 9.18, 22 (twice); 18.12, 14; 20.19),\textsuperscript{120} in only two verses, 6.41, 52, is there unanimous agreement that these are referring to common people.\textsuperscript{121}

There are certainly instances in the Gospel of John where interpreting *hoi Ioudaioi* as authorities makes sense. For instance, John 11.54 states that ‘because of *hoi Ioudaioi* plans to kill Jesus, he no longer went about openly among them but left and went to the town of Ephraim, staying there with his disciples.’ James H. Charlesworth argues that if *hoi Ioudaioi* refers to “Jewish people,” Jesus could not leave them behind

\textsuperscript{116} *Hoi Ioudaioi* as authorities is attractive to those who believe that the Gospel of John is a reaction to the Academy of Yavneh, see Motyer, “Father,” p. 52.
\textsuperscript{117} This usage covers national/religious customs (2.6; 19.40, 42), feasts (2.13; 5.1; 6.4; 7.2; 11.55) Jewish religious officials (3.1; 18.20); references to “Jews” as a different ethnos from others among them Samaritans and Romans (4.9a, 9b, 22, 18.35), “The Johannine ‘Jews’: a Critical Survey. New Testament Studies, 28, 1982, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{118} John 3.22, Johannine ‘Jews’ p. 46.
\textsuperscript{119} U.C. von Wahlde, “The Jews” p. 43. He also does not discuss the references where the Jews are not overtly hostile to Jesus, (11.19, 31, 33, 36, 45-46, 54; 12.9, 11, 19-20), he states that these should perhaps be translated as Judean in a regional sense, “The Johannine ‘Jews’” p. 46.
\textsuperscript{120} There are also four other verses; 5.10, 15, 16, 18 in which R. Fuller remarks that *hoi Ioudaioi* should be translated as both authorities and people, von Wahlde, “Johannine” pp. 39-40.
\textsuperscript{121} von Wahlde concludes that because 6.41, 52 do not fit his usage they should be regarded as being the work of a redactor, “Johannine ‘Jews’” p. 43. In his later article from 2000, he argues that from his conception of this meaning, the majority of scholars have now concluded that he is correct, p. 44.
by visiting a town that was wholly Jewish. In his opinion then, the two places are contrasted by Jesus leaving a place where *hoi Ioudaioi*, Jewish authorities are, and went to another place where they were not found.

Other examples of *hoi Ioudaioi* as authoritative figures are found in 9.22; 19.38; 20.19. In these instances, those who are afraid of *hoi Ioudaioi* are Jewish in racial terms, yet are said to be scared of repercussions. Marinus De Jonge agrees that in light of the level of fear that is felt by the disciples and those sympathetic to Jesus in the text, *hoi Ioudaioi* should be viewed for the most part as people of authority.

3.5 Criticisms

Some scholars, notably Stephen Motyer and James Dunn, have criticized von Wahlde’s method of studying less than half of the 71 occurrences of the term *Ioudaioi* (*Ioudaios*) in John. Their criticism is focussed on von Wahlde’s method of limiting his study of *hoi Ioudaioi* to only those passages, which he feels portray hostility towards Jesus (and the Community). In their opinion von Whalde’s limited study is bound to arrive at the conclusion that John’s ‘special usage’ of *hoi Ioudaioi* should be translated as authorities. Motyer continues his criticism by saying that many of the instances of the term, which von Wahlde dismisses as ‘neutral,’ refer instead to positive mentions of the Jews. This would seem to cast doubt on ‘the Johannine usage’ as referring to only

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122 James H. Charlesworth, "The Gospel of John: Exclusivism Caused by a Social Setting Different from that of Jesus (John 11.54 and 14.6)," found in Bieringer et al, p. 484, Myers, p. 343.
123 Charlesworth, "Exclusivism," p. 485, Charlesworth admits that in many ancient manuscripts the dichotomy between the two places is not as evident for often the term *ekeithen* “from there” is missing, P45 D I, Syrus Sinaioticus, Latin Vulgate and other Latin texts, ibid.
negative uses. Brown as well, concludes that in many uses of the term in the Gospel, the term *hoi Ioudaioi* appears to be distinct from the authorities and should be interpreted as individuals of ethnic Jewish descent (6.41, 52; 7.15, 32; 8.22, 31, 48, 52, 57; 10.19, 24, 33; 11.8, 54; 13.33; 18.20).\(^{128}\)

As chapter one discussed, the term *hoi Ioudaioi* is usually used to refer to the ethnic group of the Jews. James Charlesworth mentions that it is unfortunate that the authors of John used the term *hoi Ioudaioi* to denote both Jews and the hostile authorities of Judea.\(^{129}\) While von Wahlde among others have championed the translation of this term as “authorities,” Raymond Brown wonders why the author would use the ethnic term *hoi Ioudaioi* to refer to Jewish authorities? Nothing in the term itself found in contemporary literature would suggest this translation to the audience. If the authors of John wished to portray the authorities in this manner, why would they not have used the term *archontes*, or “authorities” more often?\(^{130}\)

### 3.6 Religious Usage

Dunn views the Gospel of John as written around two particular themes, *krisis*, “separation,” (3.19; 5.22, 24, 27, 29, 30; 7.24; 8.16; 12.31) and *schisma*, “division” (7.43; 9.16; 10.19).\(^{131}\) Dunn does not merely translate the term *Ioudaioi* as having only one meaning, instead he views the different uses of *hoi Ioudaioi* to refer to Jews = authorities and Jews = the ambivalent crowd of Jewish people. The Gospel, he states was written

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\(^{127}\) References in chapter eleven, as well as 8.31, Motyer, “Father,” p. 52. Personally I would disagree stating that while *hoi Ioudaioi* are sympathetic to Mary and Martha in chapter eleven, this sympathy does not extend to Jesus for many of them. For that reason, many of them inform of his actions to the Pharisees (11.46), those that ultimately do believe because of this miracle are when referred to in the next chapter, no longer called *Ioudaioi* (12.17).


\(^{130}\) This term is used four times in the Gospel, 3.1; 7.26, 48; 12.42, Brown, “Introduction,” p. 164.

\(^{131}\) Dunn, “‘Parting,’ p. 157; ‘Question,’ p. 198, I would agree with him but for wholly different reasons.
from the position of Jewish Christian dialogue with the sense that while the authorities were persecutors of the Community, the crowds, including Jews, were possible converts. He maintains that the chapters, that show this, are seven through twelve. Throughout chapter seven to ten the crowd debates back and forth about whether or not Jesus is indeed the Christ, with the end result that while many respond in a positive manner others do not (7.31, 40, 43-44; 8.31; 8.48; 9.16; 10.19-21, 31-39, 41-42). In 12.31-43 these events reach their climax with the conclusion that many Jews do not admit to being followers of Jesus because of their fear of being put out of the synagogue.

Brown maintains that the most plausible explanation for the majority of the uses of hoi Ioudaioi is a religious one. Hoi Ioudaioi were viewed by the Johannine Community as those who rejected Jesus as the Messiah (9.22) and the son of God in a religious manner. He further states that, "by translating some uses of Ioudaioi as 'Jewish authorities' and others as 'the Jewish people or the crowd' we do a disservice to the text which seems to have deliberately left the meaning of hoi Ioudaioi vague and general." John's use of hoi Ioudaioi without limiting its meaning to Judean in a regional sense or an authoritative or non-authoritative translation also captures the authors meaning far better, for in the Diaspora, 'Jewish Temple authorities,' 'the crowds

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132 De Boer, "Matters," also agrees with this point, arguing that the Gospel of John must be viewed as inter-Jewish dialogue, p. 270. The idea that the Gospel of John is used as a conversion tool has been criticized. For instance, Marinus de Jonge, states that "it would be strange indeed to attempt to convert people by stories in which the persons with whom they are bound to identify persistently refuse to believe," "Conflict" p. 353.
133 Dunn, "Question," pp. 198-199.
of Jerusalem’ would have little meaning. The audience of John would hear the text and identify *hoi Ioudaioi* as referring to the Jews who they were familiar with.\(^{136}\)

### 3.7 Conclusions

As this chapter has discussed, the translations of *hoi Ioudaioi* as either Judean, in a regional sense or as authorities are not particularly compelling and can be quite limited. While von Wahlde does admit that this translation should not be applied to all of the uses of *hoi Ioudaioi* in John, his other translations of regional or national are not any more convincing. While many of the references can denote Jews from Judea, the perceived dichotomy between the geographical areas of Judea and Galilee (and to a lesser extent Samaria) is simply not justified. While many of the references can be translated as authority figures so too many of them simply refer to common people who also belong to this ethnic group.

Dunn and Brown appear to be correct in suggesting that the term *hoi Ioudaioi* should be translated as ‘the Jews’ and understood to refer to the Jewish people as a whole. Ultimately though both of their arguments, like Shaye Cohen’s, are limited in their understanding of the term ethnicity.

Dunn for instance asks the question “does ‘Jew’ denote ethnic (by this he means geographical) or religious identity?"\(^{137}\) He answers saying that it means both.\(^{138}\) In his understanding then religious identity is not part of Jewish ethnicity.

Brown on the other hand, believes that the authors of the Gospel to differentiate the Jews from other ethnic groups use the term *hoi Ioudaioi* in the Gospel,\(^{139}\) unlike Dunn

\(^{136}\) Brown, “Introduction,” p. 167; also see de Jonge, “Conflict,” p. 352 who states that “the Jews” of John represent those who in the Johannine experience observe Jewish customs and respond negatively to the Community.

\(^{137}\) Dunn, “Parting,” p. 143.
he does not view the understanding of ethnicity to be geographical. Instead, like Cohen, he understands the meaning of ethnicity as referring to the unique customs of the Jews.

As we have discussed in these first two chapters, a proper understanding of ethnicity notes that geographical and religious identity markers are both parts of the Jewish ethnic identity. So if ἡοὶ Ὀιδαῖοι should be seen as an ethnic group with which the Community of John no longer identifies, what happened? What caused the split?

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Fragmenting Identity

This chapter explores scholarly opinions of the origins of the Johannine Community, the creators of the Gospel of John. It is the apparent schism that is of primary interest to this thesis, for what happened to the Community that so changed its self-identity?

While most scholars agree that the date of the composition of the Gospel of John was between 80-110 C.E, the authorship and location still remains speculative because the first half of the second century is curiously silent on the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. While there may be allusions to it in certain works of Justin Martyr (d. 160) these are not entirely clear. In the latter half of the second century however, the Gospel became better known both in both Gnostic and proto-orthodox circles.

4.1 Location

The location of the origins of the Gospel is a topic that has been debated for centuries. Among the top contenders are Ephesus, Alexandria, Antioch or another location in Syria, the Northern Transjordan, or somewhere else in Palestine.

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141 His examples of these include the burial rites of hoi Ioudaioi, 19.40, Brown, “Introduction,” pp. 161-162.
144 Firstly, Ptolemy a disciple of Valentinus wrote a commentary on the Gospel of John, his death may be c. 152 although this has been questioned. Heracleon, another Valentinian composed the first commentary on the Gospel around the year 170 C.E. although the surviving fragments of this commentary do not comment on who composed this Gospel or its original location, Culpepper, “John,” pp. 116-117.
145 Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130-200 C.E.) was the first writer to locate the origin of the work in Ephesus by the apostle John in his second century C.E. work *Against the Heresies* 3.1-2, although the credibility of his
Brown states that Ephesus is still the primary contender as it is almost unanimous in the ancient sources. He also maintains that the location of the Gospel is not particularly important, what is important is the message of the Gospel.

testimony has been questioned however as to its accuracy most notably by Setzer, p. 82 and Culpepper, “John,” p. 123. In other parts of the Christian Testament Jewish hostility against Jesus followers is reported to have occurred at Ephesus, Revelation 2.9; 3.9; Acts 18.24-28, 19.8-20, it is odd that Christians such as Justin Martyr who had lived and studied in Ephesus did not allude to or quote from the Gospel more.

This hypothesis is based primarily on this being the location of the discovery of P52, the earliest known fragment of the Christian Testament corpus. This fragment has been generally dated to c. 125 C.E (although there is a twenty-five year leeway on either side). This Gospel was also popular in Egypt at an early period in both proto-orthodox and the Gnostic circle of the Valentinians. However, there is little direct evidence linking its origins to here. Scholars who hold this position are W.H. Brownlee and J.N. Sanders, Brown, “Introduction,” p. 202.

Ignatius of Antioch may use the Fourth Gospel in his thinking although this has been debated. According to fourth and fifth century C.E. writers, Ignatius was a disciple of the apostle John and parallels have been drawn between the ethical teaching of I John and the Gospel of Matthew, believed by many to have been written in Syria. Other parallels are between the Fourth Gospel and the Odes of Solomon, another Syrian work. Like Ephesus, Antioch is mentioned in early Christian writings with anti-synagogal polemics, Matthew 6.2; 10.17, 23.34. Raymond Brown however argues that the questionable parallels may in fact show similar thinking or the spread of Johannine ideas. Proponents of this theory are W. Bauer and H. Koester found in Brown, “Introduction,” pp. 203, 205.

Reasons for this hypothesis are that the author of John uses Aramaisms and translates some of these into Greek, for instance 1.38 or 1.41. While the areas of Gaulanitis, Bateana and Trachonitis were ruled by the Jewish King Agrippa II until c. 100 C.E. the area was populated by a mixture of Jews and Gentiles according to Josephus (Jewish War 3.56-57). As Gaulanitis is close to the Jordan River, it is possible that John the Baptist still had disciples there at the time of composition. Proponents of this theory include Oscar Cullmann; G. Reim; Klaus Wengst; W. Meeks; Brown, “Introduction,” p. 203. Klaus Wengst argues that there was a connection between the Jews of Yavneh and those at Bathyma in the Transjordan, thus stating that the Birkhat Ha-minim could have thus been used to remove the Johannine Christians from the synagogues, K. Wengst, Bedrangtje, 77-96. Although as will be discussed later, it is most likely that the Birkhat Ha-minim was in fact not an issue in the decision by the local synagogue to expel the Johannine Christians in its midst.

Wayne Meeks argues that this hypothesis most likely that the place of origin for the Gospel and the Community was a small polis in Palestine there is no evidence in the Gospel of a dominant pagan society. “The world” of John is one dominated only by the Judeans, a factor which is not the case in the cities of Alexandria, Sardis, Antioch and others according to evidence collected by A.T. Kraabel, “Paganism and Judaism: The Sardis Evidence,” in Andre Benoit et al., eds., Pagaisme, Judaisme, Christianisme...Melanges offerts a Marcel Simon. (Paris: Boccard, 1978, pp. 13-33; “The Diaspora Synagogue: Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidences since Sukenik,” Aufstieg und Nidergang der romischen Welt, II.19.1, 1979, pp. 477-510; “Social Systems of Six Diaspora Synagogues,” in Joseph Gutmann, ed., Ancient Synagogues: The State of Research, Brown Judaic Studies 22. (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981, pp. 79-91, found in Meeks, “Breaking Away,” p. 101, n. 20. Charles Scobie maintains that “The geographical knowledge [in John of Judea, Galilee and Samaria] is remarkably accurate,” which he feels suggests that the Johannine Community was located in Judea, Scobie, p. 77. Although, I wonder how accurate John’s geography was as he locates Bethsaida in Galilee in John 12.21 while this city was actually located in Gaulantia, Myers, p. 144. Even if the Gospel author was familiar with the geography this hardly means that he was writing in this area, he may have lived there at some time or had visited the area.

Brown, “Introduction,” pp. 204-206. Linguistically speaking, as the term Ioudaioi was used primarily in the Diaspora to designate the ethnic group of the Jews, this may in fact point to its origin. In “I Maccabees” (1st century BCE Palestinian origin) members of the covenant are identified with the label Israel
4.2 Composition

The composition of John’s Gospel is a mismatch of stories and narratives that have been clumsily patched together. There have been several theories proposed for the reason of why this has occurred, although there has been no scholarly consensus on the “correct hypothesis.” Among the proposed hypotheses are the displacement, the multiple-source and the multi-stage theory. The strongest theory and the one adopted in this thesis is the multi-stage theory.

This theory, proposed by scholars such as J. L. Martyn, Urban C. von Wahlde, Raymond E. Brown and John Ashton, suggests that the Gospel was written over many years and shows different stages and interests. It can be combined with the Grundschrift theory (a variant of the multiple source theory), which states that the Gospel started as a rather simple document and was revised when new challenges arose.

Of the adherents of the multi-stage hypothesis, I wish to discuss two theories, those suggested by Raymond Brown and J.L. Martyn. Raymond Brown’s first commentary on the Gospel of John, proposed five stages of composition. In his latest

in all religious-national contexts, in “II Maccabees” (1st century BCE, Alexandrian origin) the term used is Ioudaioi, Lowe, p. 104, n. 11.

151 John Ashton, “Understanding,” p. 160. The three most popular are the displacement, the multiple source and the multi-stage theory of which this thesis adopts as correct. The displacement theory suggests that a single author composed the entire gospel but for reasons unknown the order of the events has shifted. Criticism of this theory has suggested that those who attempt to reconstruct the Gospel to its “original” form will merely construct what they believe it to have been, Brown, “Gospel,”p. xxvi, Ashton, “Understanding,” pp. 160-161. While it has often been noted that the transitions between segments are rough, they do make sense and this has been used to criticize this theory, followers of this theory are C.K. Barrett and Dodd, see Brown, “Gospel,” vol. 1, p. xxvii. Finally, no adequate explanation has been given for how this displacement would have occurred, if the Gospel was originally written on a scroll or even in a codex, even if these came apart, matching the sheets up once again would have been relatively easy, Brown, “Gospel,” vol. 1, p. xxvii. The multiple source theory has had many adherents, among them are Rudolf Bultmann, “Gospel of John,” and his student R.T. Fortna, “Gospel of Signs.” This theory, postulates that the Gospel was composed from multiple sources among which are the Signs Source (or Gospel) usually described as a modified version of chapters three to twelve. Other sources are the Offenbarungsreden, “Revelatory Discourse Source,” which consist of the spoken discourses of Jesus the
commentary, however, he pared these down to two stages. The reason for this is, in his own words, that "...many reviewers found counting up to five very difficult and [thus] complained about the complexity of my approach... [I hope] that this will be less difficult for the arithmetically challenged." 

4.3 Multi-Stage Hypothesis

For Brown, the first stage of the composition was focused on the oral traditions surrounding the public ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Much of this material compliments the Synoptic traditions, however it is quite selective because it represents the interests of former disciples of John the Baptist, among them the one known as the Beloved Disciple. In this stage, Brown hypothesizes that Samaritans and other 'anti-Temple' groups joined the Community and this helped to heighten hostility between the synagogue officials of the Jewish community wherever the Gospel was written.

The second stage was characterized by the formation of the written Gospel after the Community's expulsion from the synagogues. This loss of social identity led to the creation of a higher Christology culminating in the use of the ego eimi predicate and the claim that Jesus was pre-existent as God's Logos. Brown states that with the introduction of Samaritans into their midst and the expulsion from the synagogue, it is quite possible that the Community stopped viewing itself as ethnically Jewish. This is shown in its

153 He actually shows three stages of composition but the last stage deals with the epistles of John, Brown, “Introduction,” p. 75.
154 Brown, “Introduction,” p. 64.
156 Brown suggests that this is why the Gospel of John rejects Davidic notions of the Messiah while emphasizing the Mosaic characteristics, “Introduction,” pp. 67-68, 74.
language of *hoi Ioudaioi* = 'the other' as well as the expressions 'feasts of the Jews (eg. 5.1; 6.4) and 'their Law' (15.25).  

J.L. Martyn postulates three different stages of composition: early, middle and late. His conclusions are similar to Brown's, yet; they differ at some key areas. In the early stage, which may have occurred before the Jewish war, Jesus was viewed as the fulfillment of every Messianic prophecy and title, "the Mosaic prophet, the eschatological Elijah, and the expected Messiah." Jesus followers were still in the synagogue and still identified themselves as ethnically Jewish. Like other Jewish-Christian groups of the first century, they were still Torah observant. It is important to note that the expulsion from the Synagogues was not based on the breaking of Jewish laws, but instead on messianic concerns. During this stage, Martyn says proselytizing only occurred among other Jews; Gentiles and Samaritans were not sought out as converts.
The middle period was characterized by persecution of the Community by local synagogue officials. Martyn suggests that this can be further broken down into two separate events. First those who confessed Jesus as the Messiah were expelled from the synagogue through the reworded *Birkath Ha-minim* (9.22, 34).\(^\text{162}\) It is in this stage that Martyn believes that the use of the term “Johannine Community” becomes relevant. With this forced expulsion, their status changes from a Messianic Jewish community within the synagogue to a non-Jewish community cut off from “their social and theological womb...[their]nurture and security, was not only removed, but even became the enemy who persecutes.”\(^\text{163}\)

The second event in this stage is that of persecution until death.\(^\text{164}\) Martyn suggests that while the expulsion of Christ confessing Jews from the synagogue was helpful in stemming the flow of converts, it did not dam the spill completely. For this reason, the officials tried and executed Christ confessors as blasphemers for suggesting that Christ was a second God.\(^\text{165}\)

Martyn states that it is in this stage that the Johannine Community reinforced its social identity through the replacement of key Jewish ethnic identifying markers. In this stage, the prologue of John was formulated, for “he came to his own and his own people did not accept him” (1.11). For this reason, the Community, rejected the defining characteristics of the Jewish ethnicity, they became people still in this world but not of

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\(^\text{162}\) Martyn, “Gospel,” pp. 103-104.
\(^\text{164}\) The evidence for the persecution and martyrdom of Johannine Christians is fairly slim, while one could argue that Jesus’ execution could be viewed as a two-level reading template for the execution of Johannine Christians, the only direct evidence of this persecution is a prophesied saying of Jesus in 16.2 stating that in the future the disciples may find themselves executed.
this world (15.19), children of God (1.13) born of the spirit not of human nature, desire or will (1.13; 3.5-6).\textsuperscript{166} No longer were the Christ confessors to be considered as disciples of Moses, they instead became disciples of Christ. It appears that in this stage according to the synagogue officials, it became an either/or dilemma.\textsuperscript{167}

It is in this middle period that the term \textit{hoi Ioudaioi} emerged to refer to “the other.”\textsuperscript{168} While the primary membership of the new Johannine Community remained formerly Jewish, Samaritans were welcomed, and possibly Gentiles as well.\textsuperscript{169} It is at this time that mentions of “your fathers” (6.49) and “your law” (8.17) emerged in the written Gospel.\textsuperscript{170}

The third and final stage is characterized by polemics against Jewish Christians who remained in the synagogue and against other Christian groups. This argument is not particularly relevant to the present discussion.\textsuperscript{171}

Ultimately I think that Martyn’s theory is more likely, although Martyn’s insistence on the inclusion of the \textit{Birkhat Ha-minim} discussed in the next section, I think is unjustified.

4.4 Expulsion Theories

James Dunn suggests that the Gospel of John must be recognized as a historical document by exploring the historical and social situation of the Community who wrote

\textsuperscript{166} Martyn, “Gospel,” pp. 106-107, other scholars who agree with this hypothesis are von Wahlde, “Community,” pp. 386; Scobie, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{168} Several scholars state that in the earliest stage the term most commonly used to refer to its opponents is “the Pharisees,” U.C. von Wahlde, “The Terms” pp. 231-253; J. Ashton, “The Identity and Function,” pp. 60-62.
\textsuperscript{170} Von Wahlde, “Community,” pp. 381-382.
\textsuperscript{171} See Martyn, “Gospel,” pp. 107-121.
this work, in. This is not to suggest that the Gospel is itself an absolute truthful
recollection of what occurred, but that it is a Community reaction to historical events,
which prompted its creation.\textsuperscript{172}

While D.M Smith does not deny that Christians were expelled, he does state that
given the evidence available, scholars can not know with any great degree of certainty
what exactly transpired between the Johannine Christians and the \textit{ioudaioi} of the
Synagogue.\textsuperscript{173} Whatever theory one hypothesizes remains at the end simply a theory.
Regardless, "George Smiga, speaking for many others, declares, 'We will be standing
within a strong scholarly consensus when we presume that part of the history of the
Johannine Community included an expulsion from the synagogue.'"\textsuperscript{174} An expulsion
theory explains some peculiar characteristics of the Gospel.\textsuperscript{175} It places a social
framework around the Gospel and helps to explain both the antagonism between Jesus
(and his followers) and the \textit{ioudaioi}, and the high Christology which is shown in the
Gospel.\textsuperscript{176}

According to Wayne Meeks, the separation of the Community from the \textit{ioudaioi}
was integral for the Community’s self-definition.\textsuperscript{177} Essentially, it shows that if one
believes Jesus to be the Messiah, this belief is incompatible with staying among the Jews

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{172} James D.G. Dunn, "The Embarrassment of History: Reflections on the Problem of ‘Anti-Judaism’ in
the Fourth Gospel," found in Bieringer, p. 48 (47-67).
\item \textsuperscript{173} D. Moody Smith, "Judaism and the Gospel of John," found in James H. Charlesworth, (ed.), \textit{Jews and
\item \textsuperscript{174} G.M. Smiga, \textit{Pain and Polemic: Anti Judaism in the Gospels.} (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), p. 137,
cited in Adele Reinhartz, "The Johannine Community and its Jewish Neighbors: A Reappraisal," found in
\item \textsuperscript{175} Reinhartz, "Johannine Community," p. 112.
\item \textsuperscript{176} D. Rensberger, "The Politics of John: The Trial of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel," \textit{Journal of Biblical
Literature}, 103, 1984, pp. 395-396; R. Kysar, "The Promises and Perils of Preaching on the Gospel of
1994), I., p. 759.
\item \textsuperscript{177} Wayne A. Meeks, "Am I a Jew?" p. 182.
\end{footnotes}
of the synagogues, either literally or figuratively. Hence, this explains why Jesus and his disciples are not called *Ioudaioi* and why Jesus refers to the Torah as "your Torah" (10.34). There is a formal separation between the Johannine and the Jewish communities before the Gospel is written, and *hoi Ioudaioi* are no longer expected to convert (12.42).

The expulsion theory rests heavily on three verses found in the Gospel of John. These verses, 9.22, 12.42, and 16.2 contain the only known usage of the term *apousunagogos* in any Greek writing. This word is a compound of the preposition *apo* "away from" and the noun *sunagoge* "synagogue/community." In itself the word does not necessarily have the meaning of expelled from the synagogue but in the contexts in which it is used it certainly does.

The verses are:

[The blind man’s parents denied culpability] out of fear of *hoi Ioudaioi*, who had already agreed to ban from the synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ (9.22).

There were many who did believe in [Jesus], even among the leading men, but they did not admit it, because of the Pharisees and for fear of being banned from the synagogue" (12.42).

[Your opponents] will expel you from the synagogues…” (16.2).

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178 Except for John 4.9, however, this designation will be explained in chapter five.
179 Although Jesus’ comment on “your Torah” is not consistent, see R.A. Culpepper, “Anatomy,” pp. 219-222.
What exactly would exclusion from the synagogue mean? Severino Pancaro suggests four possibilities:

- Exclusion from the synagogue building itself.
- No participation in synagogal gatherings.
- Exclusion from the local Jewish community.
- Exclusion from the national-religious Jewish community of all Jews.\(^{183}\)

While no scholars believe that the first possibility is an option there are proponents for each of the three suggestions left. William Horbury believes that the second option is correct, as the public proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah would negate one's synagogal membership.\(^{184}\) More scholars think that the third option is the most likely. Among this membership are R. Alan Culpepper and Dwight Moody Smith. Smith notes that given the lack of evidence in either Jewish or Christian texts for the term *aposunagogos*, likely this ban was local and was probably temporary.\(^{185}\)

The majority of Johannine scholars however, support Pancaro's fourth suggestion.\(^{186}\) According to Raymond Brown, the Johannine Christians, once expelled from the synagogue, began to think of themselves as other than Jewish, despite many of them being racially Jewish.\(^{187}\)

Other parts of the Christian Testament, most notably the Book of Acts but also in the writings of Paul, discuss conflicts between the emerging Christ-confessing movement and local synagogues. What is consistent in the derivations and punishments discussed, however, is that expulsion from the synagogue is not mentioned. Instead, these Christ

\(^{185}\) D.M. Smith, "Judaism and the Gospel of John," p. 85; scholars who agree are Brown, "Introduction," p. 167; Culpepper, "Gospel," p. 283; Setzer, p. 93, even Martyn admits this may be a possible explanation, "History," p. 55, n. 69.
\(^{186}\) Which is also the suggestion that Pancaro adopts, p. 248.
followers are punished in the synagogues as if they continued to belong to the Jewish community.\textsuperscript{188}

So what do the \textit{aposunagogos} sayings refer to? According to Adele Reinhartz these passages highlight two points which the author wished to express. One is that the expulsion from the synagogue was an action that was dreaded and which curbed potential Jesus adherents from publicly acclamining their support (9.22; 12.42). Second, \textit{hoi Ioudaioi} (9.22) and/or a group among them (Pharisees 12.42) stated this decree.\textsuperscript{189}

### 4.5 Synagogue Bans and \textit{Cherem}

Some Jewish groups did employ expulsion as a form of punishment, among them the group responsible for 1QS,\textsuperscript{190} however, this text certainly does not mention synagogues. Certain rabbinic texts do mention synagogue bans, both temporary, \textit{n'zifah} and \textit{nidui} or permanent, \textit{cherem}.\textsuperscript{191} Is it possible that these bans apply to the context?

\textsuperscript{188} For instance, according to Acts 9.1-2 and 22.5 Saul was given letters of authority by Jewish authorities to arrest and bring back to Jerusalem, followers of the Way, for punishment not expulsion. After his conversion, Paul, according to his own statement was no stranger to punishment from the synagogues and the Jews. According to II Corinthians 11.24-25 he was whipped thirty-nine lashes on five occasions by “Jews,” three times beaten by sticks, and once he was stoned. These punishments, drastic and dreadful as they would have been to endure, are a long way from being expelled from the synagogue or from the community. Paul and Barnabas, according to Acts 13.50, were expelled from the district of Pisidian Antioch after preaching words that “the Jews” were not happy to hear. While it is possible that the term \textit{aposunagogos} could mean expulsion from the Jewish community, Pancaro, pp. 247-248, the word used in Acts chapter thirteen to proclaim the action of expulsion was \textit{exebalon}, “to throw out.” Also, the ones who actually did the “throwing out” were leading men and devout women of the city not “Pharisees,” or “Jews,” Acts 13.50. On two occasions in the Book of Acts, Paul voluntarily leaves a synagogue after a poor reception from local Jews but there is no reason to think that he is formally excommunicated. In Corinth, when Paul was preaching that Jesus was the Christ, some “Jews” disagreed with him and began to insult him. For this reason Paul withdrew and set up a house church next door (18.1, 4-7). A similar situation occurred in Ephesus, again his preaching of Jesus the messiah was met with resistance and public insults. He and his disciples withdrew and formed their own community, 19.8-9. Later however, he arrives in Jerusalem and is warmly welcomed, an event that is unlikely if he had been expelled from other synagogues, Acts 21.20ff, Martyn, “History,” p. 49.

\textsuperscript{189} Reinhartz, “Jews,” p.

\textsuperscript{190} 1QS 6.24-27; 25 refers to exclusion for members from the communal meals while 1QS 7.17; 8.16ff, 22f refers to permanent excommunication for a person who professes views deemed heretical or for transgressions of the Torah, Pancaro, p. 248. Judith Lieu remarks that this ban was to be both physical and symbolic, p. 113.

\textsuperscript{191} Setzer, p. 92.
The first, the *n'zifah*, literally “rebuke,” was an excommunication from the synagogue and was only needed to be declared by one person. The second, the *nidui*, “rejection,” usually required three people for declaration and lasted thirty days. During this time, no one was allowed to get within six feet of the wrongdoer. The third type of expulsion, the *cherem*, could be maintained indefinitely and the person who was under this ban was to be cut off from the community and treated as if they did not exist. Essentially the meaning of this term is “a banned thing” or “a thing devoted.” This noun is derived from the verb *charam*, which can either have the positive meaning “to dedicate [to God]” or the negative meaning “to destroy [by God/Divine command].” In its positive and negative meanings it is viewed as referring to something unspeakably holy or unspeakably unclean.

These last two bans were viewed in early twentieth century publications as likely candidates for an explanation for the *aposunagogos* sayings of John. Some scholars such as David Stern still maintain this possibility. J. L. Martyn however, disagrees, stating that the *niddui* appears to have only been used to enforce purity laws and that the purpose of the ban was not to exclude straying members of the synagogue but instead it

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195 “The Ban,” p. 103.
197 Stern, p. 184.
was used as an inner-synagogue form of discipline. While the permanent synagogue ban, the *cherem*, does appear to have been a better understanding for the expulsion verses of John, Martyn and Pancaro believe that this can not be definitely proven as there is no reference to this term meaning “to excommunicate” until at least the third century C.E.

Nancy Pardee who believes that she has found evidence in the *Didache* of this curse, has recently challenged this interpretation. The verse in question reads “Then the creation of humanity will come into the fiery testing and many will stumble and perish, but those having endured in their faith will be saved by the Curse (the Accursed) itself” (*Didache* 16.5).

The Greek word, which she has translated as “the Curse”, is *katathema* and has traditionally been interpreted as referring to Christ. This verb according to Pardee is rare, occurring only four times in either Jewish or Christian writings and seems to have been created in the Graeco-Roman period, although it is derived from the much more ancient word *anathema*.

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202 Pardee, p. 158.
In Greek writings this term often portrays the meaning of something dedicated to a god. \(^{203}\) *Katathema* is not attested to in the *Septuagint*, instead *anathema* is used when translating the Hebrew term *cherem*, which can mean either dedication to God or banned from God. \(^{204}\) In the inter-testamental period, the term *anathema* only occurs once and refers to an offering, \(^{205}\) while the verbal form *anathematizo* is used to "pronounce a ban." \(^{206}\) In Jewish and Christian writings, the term is interpreted to refer to the more negative meaning, "to curse." \(^{207}\) Both of these meanings are extremely close to the meanings of *cherem* as a synagogue ban.

The term *katathema* occurs only twice in the Christian Testament. In Matthew 26.74 Peter uses the verbal form, *katathematizein* to "curse" and swear that he does not know Jesus. In the Markan parallel 14.71, which Matthew is based upon, the term used for "curse" is *anathematizein*. \(^{208}\) In Revelation 22.3 the substantative term, *katathema* is used but this passage is dependent upon the Septuagint text of Zechariah 14.11, which uses *anathema*. \(^{209}\)

*Anathema* is the more usual term for "curse" in the Christian Testament and appears this way in I Corinthians 12.3; 16.22 and Galatians 1.8-9. \(^{210}\) In the Patristic literature from the fourth century onwards this term is used frequently to refer to

\(^{203}\) Thucydides "History" 1.132.3.3 refers to a tripod that was consecrated to a military victory; Aristotle "Athenian Constitution" 7.4.6 refers to a statue. Euripides in his Ion 310 refers to a person who was dedicated to a temple as *anathema*, cited in Pardee, p. 159.

\(^{204}\) Although as Pardee notes, *anathema* is not the only Greek word used for the translation of *cherem*, p. 162.

\(^{205}\) II Maccabees 2.13, cited in Pardee, p. 163.

\(^{206}\) I Maccabees 5.5, cited in Pardee, p. 163.

\(^{207}\) In this way it is used in Jewish and Christian magical texts, Pardee, pp. 159-161.

\(^{208}\) As cited in Pardee, p. 170.

\(^{209}\) Pardee argues that the term in Revelation probably should be translated as "accursed thing" rather than "ban" as in Zechariah, ibid, pp. 169-170.

\(^{210}\) Pardee links I Corinthians 12.3 with other expulsion bans among them John"9.22 and Ezra 10.8, ibid, p. 170.
"cursing," yet in the early Patristic literature of second century, the term most used in *katathematizo* to refer to those who are accursed.\(^2\)\(^1\)

As Pardee has shown, the Hebrew term *cherem*, which could mean "curse" or "ban", was translated in *Septuagint* Greek as *anathema*, from this the term *katathema* was derived which always means to curse or ban. While the Hebrew term *cherem* is not definitively used as a synagogal ban until the Palestinian Talmud,\(^2\)\(^1\)\(^2\) its cognates, *katathema* and *anathema* are used in this manner in Christian writings of the first century C.E. In this understanding it is entirely possible that the *aposunagogos* sayings of John do in fact refer to a *cherem* like ban.

4.6 Yavneh and the *Birkhat Ha-minim*

J.L. Martyn believes that the expulsion of Christ-confessors from the synagogues was a direct result of the actions of the Council of Yavneh.\(^2\)\(^1\)\(^3\) During the last quarter of the first century C.E. many Jews convened at Yavneh, under the leadership of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai and Rabbi Gamaliel. Here, it is thought that they attempted to define the limits of Judaism and to define "orthodox" thought. Stephen Katz says that it is not unreasonable to assume that here they took measures to dissuade those who had adopted various forms of Jewish Christianity. What measures exactly they took are debatable, as is their influence.\(^2\)\(^1\)\(^4\)

Peter Schafer remarks that "Yabneh's importance after 70 CE as the geographical and spiritual centre of rabbinic Judaism was so great that one may justifiably refer to the period from the destruction of the Temple to the Bar Kochba uprising as the Jabneh

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\(^2\)\(^1\) Found in Justin, Irenaeus and Origen, Pardee, p. 171.
\(^2\)\(^1\)\(^2\) Pardee, p. 171.
\(^2\)\(^1\)\(^3\) Also referred to as Jabneh or Jamnia by some scholars.
\(^2\)\(^1\)\(^4\) Katz, "Issues," p. 44.
Martyn himself admits that Yavneh was not the only centre of rabbinical learning during this period and that it was quite possible that many local synagogues would not have followed the decrees of Yavneh, instead listening only to their own local officials.

What Martyn finds especially interesting is the claim from the Babylonian Talmud (b. Berkoth 28b-29a [6th-7th century C.E.]) that at Yavneh, a composition or adaptation by Samuel the Small of the Birkhat Ha-minim was formed. This "benediction" is the twelfth of eighteen synagogue prayers that were revised at the Academy of Yavneh between the years of 85-95 C.E under the leadership of Rabbi Gamaliel, the successor to Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai. These prayers were to be said three times daily and would help form the self-identification of who belonged to hoi Ioudaioi.

Martyn's hypothesis that this curse was used to remove Jewish Christians from the synagogue has been met with mixed reviews. Many scholars have admitted the
possibility. For instance, John Painter states that while one can not be sure of the exact reasons for the exclusion, the *Birkhat ha-minim* is the only situation that we know of that pertains to the information given in the Gospel of John. In the past twenty-five years however, this hypothesis has been justly criticized.

A copy of the *Birkhat Ha-minim* that was found at Cairo Geniza in 1896 and published in 1925 reads:

1/ For the apostates let there be no hope.
2/ And let the arrogant government
3/ be speedily uprooted in our days.
4/ Let the *nosrim* [Nazarenes] and the *minim* [heretics] be destroyed in a moment.
5/ And let them be blotted out of the Book of Life and not be inscribed together with the righteous.
6/ Blessed are thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant.

Scholars are unsure of when exactly this copy was created, and who exactly the wrongdoers are mentioned in this curse, nor is it known to what extent this version was used. While the prayer is attributed to Samuel the Small at Yavneh, this does not mean that he created it; rabbinic attributions are not always reliable and we have no writings of Samuel with which to compare this.

Martyn suggests that the task of Samuel the Small at Yavneh was to take an existing prayer and to make it relevant to the current situation. Jewish Christians and other heretics would then be forced to pray that they themselves should be destroyed.

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221 John Painter “John 9” p. 38.
222 Cited in Setzer, p. 89.
223 Setzer, p. 90.
Therefore, he concludes that through this prayer, Jewish Christians would leave the synagogues for two reasons. First, if the *minim* faltered while repeating the prayer they would place themselves under suspicion and would be forced out. Second, Martyn suggests that the heretics would not wish to hear anyone else cursing them in the synagogues and would leave the synagogue voluntarily.

Martyn's theory hinges on some rather dubious suppositions. One of these is that the terms *nosrim* and *minim* refer to Jewish Christians and two, that the Jewish Christians would identify themselves in this manner.

Some scholars, have suggested that *nosrim* must refer to Christians because there is evidence in patristic sources that Jews regularly cursed Christians in their synagogues. Other scholars have argued circularly that because *minim* may be an ambiguous term, *nosrim* must refer to Nazarenes, which in turn are Christians.

There are significant problems with the hypothesis that the term *nosrim* refers to Jewish Christians and the *minim* to all other forms of heresy because in this understanding the text would read "Let the Nazarenes (Christians) and other heretics be destroyed." But the text that we have does not include the word "other." Another stylistic concern is that the prayer is known as the *Birkhat Ha-minim*, not the *Birkhat Ha-nosrim*. Furthermore, the term *nosrim* never appears in tannaitic literature (1st century

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224 Martyn, "History," p. 58.
226 While Krauss, pp. 130ff may have been the first to make this suggestion, many other scholars have also suggested this. Among these are J.L. Martyn, "History," p. 58, n. 78; W.D. Davies, pp. 278f; J.T. Townsend, The Gospel of John and the Jews: The Story of a Religious Divorce, in Alan T. Davies, (ed.), Antisemitism and the Foundations of Christianity. (New York: Paulist Press, 1979, pp. 72-97, esp. 86), cited in Kimelman, p. 394, n. 39.
229 Kimelman, p. 233.
C.E.) and only appears once in a passage by R. Johanan (c. 200-279 C.E.). As Kimmelmann points out, if this term was used in liturgy from the first century onwards, one would expect it to become more prominent in other works.\(^{230}\)

In the *Babylonian Talmud* (*b. Sanhedrin* 103a, *b. Berakoth* 17b) Jesus is referred to as *Yeshua ha-nosri*. Interestingly, some of the references in the *Babylonian Talmud* that refer to Jesus in this manner parallel stories in the *Palestinian Talmud* where Jesus is referred to as *Yeshua ben Pantera* (*t. Hull* 2.24 with *bAZ* 16b-17a).\(^{231}\) In conclusion, *nosrim* may mean Nazarenes but this interpretation does not occur until the 6\(^{th}\) century C.E., much later than is needed to convincingly argue its inclusion here.\(^{232}\)

The idea that the term *minim* may refer to Jewish Christians is also not justified. Different scholars have debated what the term *minim* refers to but without reaching a consensus.\(^{233}\) According to one scholar, Naomi Janowitz, the meaning of the term *min* is “a kind or type,”\(^{234}\) while the root of the word *mn* means “separation.”\(^{235}\)

The term *min* or its plural *minim* is not specific in Tannaitic literature. In both the *Mishnah* and the *Tosefta* (c. 200 C.E.) *minim* refers to deviant Jews (*Megillah* 4.8; *tBaba*

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\(^{230}\) Kimmelmann, p. 233.

\(^{231}\) Kimmelman, pp. 234, 395, n. 46. Yet this is a late interpretation, and furthermore if the *minim* here is used to refer to Jewish Christians, why would the term *nosrim* also be used? Setzer, p. 90.

\(^{232}\) Therefore, de Boer’s idea that the Community called itself Nazareans until its expulsion from the synagogues is unjustified, "Depiction," p. 280, n. 64.

\(^{233}\) Janowitz suggests that the term can refer to non-rabbinic Jews, because of the use of the expression, *There are no minim among the nations, b. Hullin* 13b," found in Janowitz, p. 211. Other suggestions are: heretical rabbis as Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*. (Leiden: Brill, 1977) connects the *minim* with proto-Merkavah mystics. R. Travers Herford, suggests that the term could be used to refer to both Gentile and Jewish Christians, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash*. (London; Oxford Publishing Company, 1903), pp. 97-341. Other scholars think that the term refers primarily to Gnostics, Moritz Friedlander, *Der vorchristliche judische gnostizismus*. (Göttingen, 1898), cited in Setzer, p. 90. In the Palestinian Talmud a statement is made that further confuses the consensus. It states that at the time of the destruction of the Temple, there were twenty-four kinds of minim, t. *Sanh.* 10.6, 29c.


Mesia 2.33), and may refer to Jesus († Hul 2.22, 24; Qoh. Rab 7.26). In the later amoraic literature of Palestine (c. 230-c. 375 C.E.) including the Palestinian Talmud, Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah the term minim again refers to deviant Jews although there is never a very specific way to describe these heretics.

In rabbinic terms, a min was essentially a Jew who refused to admit the authority of the rabbinic authorities. From the rabbinical understanding these apostates would be excluded from the covenant of Israel and expelled from the synagogue.

Supporters of this theory often suggest that about the turn of the first century C.E. an irreparable rift occurred between Judaism and Christianity.

From all the evidence, it appears most likely that the term minim merely refers to groups of people that certain Jewish authorities claimed were heretical. In Second Temple Judaism, Jewish “orthodoxy” is a loose term as Jewish identities were based on widely different interpreted texts of Hebrew Scripture. In the time period and the texts that are being discussed, the Jewish authorities are the early rabbinical movement, which had one of its headquarters at the Academy of Yavneh.

Martyn’s assumption that the nosrim and minim would be unable to say the Birkhat Ha-minim and would then “be presumably drummed out of the synagogue

236 Kimelman, p. 229-231.
237 Setzer, p. 90.
238 In many rabbinic tales, minim appear. Sometimes they use magic on rabbis, at other times they debate the meaning of biblical passages. In retaliation, the rabbis announce that their children should be accounted as bastards and their works are unholy († Hullin 2.20), Kimelman, p. 229-231.
241 Simon, pp. 181-182.
fellowship is without basis for several reasons. It is extremely unlikely that Jewish Christians who still worshipped at the synagogue would identify themselves as heretics. The term “heretic” is not a label, which one applies to oneself, but is instead applied by outsiders.243

While the Cairo Geniza Birkhat Ha-minim curses the heretics and wishes for their destruction, there is no mention of expulsion from the synagogues or the community. Even the rabbinic “commentary” on this prayer only mentions that faltering while saying it would earn the saliah sibur, “agent of the congregation” to be removed from his post of praying.244

While a common assumption is that the Yavnean rabbis were anxious to define Judaism in narrow terms, Shaye Cohen disagrees stating that in some ways they were very accepting. This is evident from the contrasting positions of differing rabbis in the rabbinic literature starting from that period.245 Cohen also maintains that our knowledge of Yavneh is very limited, the earliest sources are from the Mishnah written c. 100 years later.246 The authority and the influence of the Yavnean rabbis has also been questioned, with some scholars believing that only some Diaspora Jewish communities would have

244 Claudia Setzer asks who would read the Birkhat Ha-minim as not all Jews would be called to be an agent of the congregation. Later rabbinic commands would limit this to only free men, and it is quite possible that these structures were in place during the first century C.E in Palestine. This would then only refer to less than half of the congregation, Setzer, p. 91. If Setzer is correct and the majority of these would not recognize themselves as minim or nosrim anyway this curse would lose its effect. Even more so if they were merely removed from the prayer post, if there was no expulsion then it is extremely unlikely that the Birkhat Ha-minim would be referred to in the three passages in the Gospel of John.
taken into account their decrees. J. Heinemann states that for those communities, which did follow the decrees of Yavneh, individual communities were allowed to choose the secondary subject matter. Therefore, while it is possible that the Birkhat Ha-minim, if it existed in the Cairo Genizah version in the first century C.E., may have been interpreted by a local synagogue to refer to Christians there would have been no empire-wide persecution of Jewish Christians based on this legislation.

4.7 Conclusions

While the relative date for the composition of the Gospel of John can be determined, not much else historically can be concluded with any real degree of certainty. For this reason, Raymond Brown states that the importance of the Gospel is not to be found in the location of the composition but what is found within the text itself. Of the many theories concerning the composition of the Gospel, Martyn’s theory is the most convincing, although his reliance on the Birkhat Ha-minim hypothesis is not compelling.

As Wayne Meeks states:

It is time to recognize that the birkat ha-minim has been a red herring in Johannine research. Not only do questions remain about its date and the earliest form of its wording—not to mention questions of where and when it would have been effective after it was promulgated—the more fundamental issue for interpreting John 16.2 and John 9’s depiction of the healed blind man’s expulsion is whether these scenes have anything to do with the way the birkat ha-minim would have worked in practice. John does not speak of people who do not go to synagogue services because they cannot conscientiously say the prayers. It speaks of being put out of the synagogue. All we have to assume is that the archontes of the Jewish community in John’s location had simply made up their minds to get rid of these troublemaking followers of a false Messiah.

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247 Setzer, p. 91.
249 Setzer, p. 91.
250 Meeks, “Breaking Away,” pp. 102-103, also see Kimelman, pp. 226-244.
According to the Gospel of John, an expulsion from the synagogue did occur, but it was centered on the messianic identity of Jesus.\textsuperscript{251} The Community’s identification of Jesus as the Messiah forced certain Jewish authorities to expel the Community from the Jewish ethnic group.\textsuperscript{252} A claim that a crucified man was the messiah would have been considered repulsive to the Jewish elite;\textsuperscript{253} hence they repulsed those who claimed this. The most likely expulsion theory that explains the *aposumagogos* sayings refer to a local Christological ban along the lines of a *cherem*.

The next chapter discusses how the expulsion of the Community by *hoi Ioudaioi* formed the social identity of the Johannine Community and how this social identity is expressed in the writing of the Gospel.


\textsuperscript{252} Harvey, p. 93.
Expulsion Results in Formation of Social Identity

As the last chapter focused on the origins of the Gospel of John and the traumatic experience suffered by the Community, this chapter focuses on how this trauma was expressed in the actual text itself. There are differing opinions as to how an expulsion from the synagogue would have affected Jews. Sean Freyne argues that expulsion from the synagogue would separate someone not only from the Jewish Community but also from social and legal status in the Roman Empire, for both the individual and for the Johannine Community of which they were a part.\textsuperscript{254} A little more germane to my thesis is the opinion of C.K. Barrett who believed that by becoming \textit{aposunagogoi}, the Community would have been considered to have renounced the Jewish religion.\textsuperscript{255}

What exactly would this expulsion mean for the Community and how would they express it? Philip Esler has stated:

One of the primary functions of the [Gospel of John]... must have been to provide a reinforcement for the community's social identity, which appears to have been largely negative. It provided a symbolic universe, which gave religious legitimacy, a theodicy, to the group's actual isolation from the larger society [by] "demolishing the logic of the [outside] world, particularly the world of Judaism...."\textsuperscript{256}

In the period of the formation of the Gospel,\textsuperscript{257} as discussed in the last chapter, decisions were made both Christological and social. Hence, the high Christology of John was formed due to the pressures of the Jewish persecution of the Community.\textsuperscript{258} In this

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{253} Charlesworth, "Exclusivism," found in Bieringer \textit{p.} p. 502.
\item \textsuperscript{254} Sean Freyne, "Vilifying the Other," p. 129.
\item \textsuperscript{255} Barrett, "Gospel," p. 362.
\item \textsuperscript{257} The second period of both Brown and Martyn's expulsion theories.
\item \textsuperscript{258} W. Meeks, "Man From Heaven," p. 71; Rensberger, "Johannine Faith," p. 28; Brown, "Introduction," pp. 67-69, 74-75; Martyn "Gospel," pp. 104-105. Graham Harvey disagrees stating that the high Christology of the Community was the reason that Judaism is by Christian self-definition the enemy. The
period the concept of ‘ultimate truth’ was revealed as only being relevant to those who are outside of the ethnic group labeled as *hoi Ioudaioi.*

For this reason it is only after the blind man has been expelled from the synagogue that he “learns the true depth of Jesus’ identity…” Other examples are that all of the Christological confessions in the Gospel take place in the absence of *hoi Ioudaioi* (1.49; 6.69; 11.27; 20.28). Also in this period, crypto-Christians, who refuse to publicly admit their belief in Jesus’ messianic status, are considered to be judged guilty already (12.42-43, 48).

5.1 Imagery in John

The imagery in the Gospel of John is based on dualism between those that believe (the Community) and those that do not identified for the most part as *hoi Ioudaioi.*

This dualism is seen in the symbolism of the Gospel with such contrasting images as light/darkness, life/death that which is from above/that, which is from below, and finally love/hatred.

Fundamental to Johannine Christology is that Jesus was the light of this world (1.4; 8.12), who enters into the world to save the believers. In this capacity he challenges the darkness, which symbolizes the unbelievers (3.20; 12.46). Nicodemus, a Jew who tried to understand but ultimately can not is portrayed in this manner when he visits Jesus by night (3.2). So too, the ultimate rejection of *hoi Ioudaioi* and their consequent
blindness is reported in chapter twelve (12.37-40). This blindness is contrasted with the healing of the blind man’s vision who with his new vision, sees the son of man (9.6-7, 37). 263

As the Jews are in darkness, they are viewed as blind and therefore unable to see the truth. Jesus states that ‘he came into the world (of Judaism) so that those who do not see, would be able to see and those who see might become blind’ (9.39). When some Pharisees overhear this they became angry and accuse Jesus of calling them blind. He is reported to reply that ‘if they were blind they would not be guilty, but as they claim to be able to see (regardless of the truth-from the Johannine perspective-that they are blind) they are then guilty of sin. From the perspective of the Community, the Pharisees claim that they can see is discarded on the basis that they reject the light of God, because they can not perceive who he is. 264

While Jesus is portrayed as light, he is also life (1.3; 8.12). Those who believe that Jesus is the life are granted eternal life (3.16; 3.36; 10.28), in contrast to those who do not believe and will face God’s retribution (3.36) and will die in their sins (8.12). Those that will die are likened to their ancestors who ate manna and died in the wilderness (6.49, 58), unlike those who partake of the flesh of Jesus, the bread of life (6.27, 51, 53).

Ignorance is often attributed to the Johannine opponents because they are ‘born from below in the womb, not above from the spirit’ (3.3; 6.63). While they believe that they know Jesus’ family (6.42-43), they are ignorant of his true origins (3.19; 6.62; 8.42).
Because of this limitation, those from below can not understand (3.12) and would be unwilling regardless (8.43; 12.42-43).

According to Fernando F. Segovia, belief and unbelief are all a measure of love, or lack thereof, for Jesus, who portrays God. \(^\text{265}\) Acceptance of Jesus shows love (15.12-17) while rejection of Jesus by the Jews is shown as hatred towards Jesus and therefore towards God (8.42; 15.23-24). \(^\text{266}\) Love/belief results in believers being expelled from the synagogue while those that hate/disbelieve plot to kill Jesus, and harm members of the Community (16.2). \(^\text{267}\)

This contrasting parallelism between the inhabitants of the two spheres is carefully orchestrated by John to give his own group a greater assurance in its stance outside the synagogue. The [Johannine] Christians need not fear that their perception of the truth is any less secure because of what has happened to them, since those who represent the synagogue have rendered themselves incapable of understanding and are not any longer even the objects of the Revealer’s or his Father’s concern. Here vilification serves not so much to define but to confirm the self that finds itself cut off from its natural matrix... \(^\text{268}\)

5.2 Social Identity Formed Through Replacement

Certain scholars have noted that the Johannine movement was a “de-ethnicizing movement,” which rejects the identity markers of its parent community (Judaism but also Samaritan to a degree) and chooses other identity markers, which may resemble the ethnic markers of the ancient Mediterranean. \(^\text{269}\)

\(^{264}\) Freyne, “Vilifying,” p. 135, so too after Jesus has left, his disciples will see him again but the Jews (or the world) will not, they are blind, (7.33-36; 14.19).


\(^{266}\) Reinhartz “The Jews” p. 345, John 15.25 cites Psalm 69.4 “they hated me without reason.”

\(^{267}\) Sergovia, pp. 270-271.

\(^{268}\) Freyne, “Vilifying,” p. 139.

The origins of the creation of a de-ethnicized movement can be linked to Plato in his work, *The Republic*. In this work, he outlines that only a group that is not concerned with “differentiating inter-generational biological continuities”\(^{270}\) can devote itself to fully serving the public.\(^{271}\) The Johannine Community, formed through the acceptance and belief that Jesus was the Messiah, transcends ethnic designations, welcoming all who believe this, even former Samaritans and Gentiles. Together they can all become children not of an earthly womb, but of God (1.12-13; 3.5-7).\(^{272}\)

As outlined in chapter one, ethnic groups can be defined through self-identification markers. For the purposes of this thesis I chose to use the six features of ethnicity which Hutchinson and Smith have suggested. These are ‘a formal name; a common myth of descent; a shared history including revered figures; an association with a specific territory; a distinctive shared culture including religious customs; and a sense of communal solidarity.’\(^{273}\) For the Johannine Community however, the only one that applies is a sense of communal solidarity, a marker that could be used to define other types of groups, among them fictive kin.\(^{274}\)

\(^{270}\) Fishman, p. 12.

\(^{271}\) Ibid.

\(^{272}\) A similar idea can be outlined from Paul’s letter to the Galatians 3.28.


The Community does not identify itself with any particular formal name. As viewed in chapter one, the two most important features of ethnic groups are the myth of common descent and geographical ties to an ancestral homeland. The biological kinship group and lineage were extremely important in the ancient Jewish understanding of identity as social scientists have proven. Yet the Gospel of John barely recognizes Jesus' earthly paternity unlike the Gospels of Matthew (1.1-17) and Luke (3.23-38). Instead, the notion of Jesus' heavenly paternity is emphasized (3.16-18, 35; 5.19-23, 25; 11.4, 27; 14.13; 19.7; 20.31) and the acceptance of the Community into this 'family of God' (1.12-13; 3.5-6; 17.21).

Finally, the issue of a link with an ancestral homeland is also strangely absent in John. Arguments have been made to link Jesus' *patris* with the region of Judea, and the place of acceptance as Galilee. As has been shown however, there is no real evidence to support that one area of the land of Israel was more significant than any other area. In

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275 Although a case can be made for the identification of the Johannine Community with the covenantal term Israel as this remains a positive term in the Gospel. John the Baptist first mentions that his purpose was to reveal the Chosen one of Israel, 1.31; Nathaniel the 'disciple in whom there is no deception,' is mentioned as 'a true Israelite' in 1.47; Nathaniel responds by proclaiming that Jesus is the king of Israel, 1.49. Jesus ironically calls Nicodemus a Pharisee and an *archon of hoi Ioudaioi* a teacher of Israel while mocking his lack of knowledge, 3.10, and finally in John 12.13 Jesus is welcomed into Jerusalem by a crowd of people welcoming the 'king of Israel.' John 15.1-17 with its statement that Jesus and his disciples represent the true vine is also often taken as an allusion to Israel as interpreted through the light of Isaiah 5.1-7. Brown, "Gospel," vol. 2, p. 676; Schnackenburg, vol. 3, p. 103; Malina and Rohrbaugh, p. 233. However, the term "Israel" is never definitively accepted as a formal title for the Community, and never appears this way in the Johannine epistles.


277 In John, Jesus' earthly parentage is mentioned in a rather offhanded manner by Jewish Galileans who comment that Jesus was the son of Joseph, 6.42.

278 Manuscripts such as P66, and Sinaiticus (4th century) instead read that the Logos as not born of human stock, desire or will but from God himself. Very different interpretation, however, because of the nature of the Johannine Community and its structure which is evidently a fictive kinship group which is focussed on themselves as Israel, the child of God, probably the majority of the texts are correct in this reading. Lieu, p. 41.
both Galilee and Judea, Jesus is accepted and rejected as the Messiah. Jesus affirms that worship of the Father should not occur in any particular geographical area, either on Mt. Gerizem or in Jerusalem, but that true believers worship God in spirit and truth (4.23-24). This further proves the irrelevancy of geographical origins for the Johannine Community. 279

Cultural traits including religious identity are important in this replacement motif for the Johannine Gospel. For this portion of the thesis, I should like to discuss James Dunn’s four pillars of Judaism, mentioned in chapter one, and how the Community through their work, replaces each motif to refer strictly to Jesus as the revelation of God.

5.3 Four Pillars

James Dunn admits that there were many forms of Second Temple Judaism and thus finding criteria to fit every sect is difficult, although in the time period of which this thesis is limited to, the criteria is considerably narrowed. The markers which Dunn identified as common throughout the different types of Judaism and which helped to formulate the religious self-identity of the Jewish ethnic are:

• God is one.
• The election of Israel is bound through the covenant between His people and Yahweh, shown through veneration of certain customs and figures.
• This covenant is focused on the Torah.
• The covenantal Land of Israel is focused around the nexus of the Temple in Jerusalem. 280

279 Lieu, p. 129.
5.4 Monotheism

According to James Dunn, “monotheism was absolutely fundamental for the Jew of Jesus’ day.” The Shema (Deut. 6.4) was to be repeated daily, and this idea is affirmed in repeated Jewish writings. Yet in the Gospel of John, one of the strongest attacks upon Jesus is that he ‘made himself equal with God (5.18)’ thus committing the sin of blasphemy and for that he deserved death from the Jewish perspective (10.36; 19.7; Lev. 24.16).

That Jesus is viewed as divine or semi-divine, shows the schism between the Jewish Johannine communities, for the Johannine Jesus does not attempt to modify his answers to be more pleasing to the implied Jewish audience. Instead, he boldly states that he is the one whom God has chosen to work through, even though it is this charge that according to John 19.7 is the reason he is put to death.

In the Gospel, Jesus uses the term ego eimi “I am” to refer to himself and this is viewed by hoi Ioudaioi to profess the equation of Jesus and Yahweh as seen in Exodus (6.35; 8.12, 24, 28, 58; 9.5; 10.7, 9, 11, 14; 11.25; 13.19; 14.6; 15.1, 5). This claim and the Jewish response of not asking for a clear explanation, shows, according to John Ashton, that the Community has gone beyond the acceptable schismatic nature of the Judaisms of the time. They had crossed into the unacceptable chasm of blasphemy and the rift between the two communities was unable to be mended.

284 Ashton, “Understanding,” pp. 139-141.
Is the Johannine Community elevating Jesus to a position of divinity, superseding Yahweh? Certain scholars would disagree, saying that Jesus is in fact viewed in this Gospel as an intermediary figure between humans and God. While he is viewed by the Community in certain verses as equal to God (5.19-30; 10.30), this is based on the notion that God had granted him full knowledge of creation (1.1; 5.20) and the power to judge in His name (5.22, 27). Also on two occasions Jesus mentions that ‘the Father is greater than I,’ (14.28), and that Yahweh is the only true God (17.3). The idea that a human could be raised up to this level however, is not unique in Second Temple Judaism or even beyond, such examples can be found as Melchizedek (11Q13), Enoch (I, II Enoch) and Enoch-Metatron (III Enoch).

5.5 Covenant and “Historical” Figures

Fundamental to the Jewish self-identity was the concept that their one God had bound himself into an obligation with them. For this covenant, two figures are extremely important. One is Moses, the Lawgiver, and the second is Abraham the patriarch of the Jewish people.

Unlike Matthew, John does not view Jesus as a second Moses but instead as a figure superseding him (1.17-18; 6.48-58). Likewise Jesus is not a fulfillment of the Law or prophets but instead these scriptures have witnessed about him (5.46).

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285 Malina and Rohrbaugh, p. 266 argues that Jesus should be viewed as a power broker between the patron God and his clients, the Johannine Community.
286 Two texts, which state this explicitly, are Jubilees 15.31-32 and Psalms of Solomon 9.8-9, cited in Dunn, “Parting,” p. 22.
After the expulsion from their synagogue, the authors of John recognize two communities: the disciples of Moses and the disciples of Jesus (9.28). The designation of Jews as disciples of Moses is paralleled in b. Yoma 4a, which refers to Pharisees as distinct from Sadducees as ‘disciples of Moses.’ While other exact references are scarce, Martyn states that “Moses is the normatively authorized figure of Judaism...” The Gospel here proclaims that one can no longer be part of both communities as they are distinctly different.

In John, Jesus is identified as ‘the Prophet like Moses’ who was to come into the world (6.14; 7.40; possibly 9.17; Deuteronomy 18.15, 18). The feeding of the five thousand and the bread of life discourse in chapter six also likely refer to this identification of Jesus as a figure like Moses but superseding him.

As mentioned in chapter one, Abraham was considered to be the father of the Jewish race (Genesis 15-17; Isaiah 41.8; 51.2; Psalm 105.6). In Jewish-Christians communities such as Matthew’s people could claim honour through their association with this figure (Matthew 1.2, 17; 3.9) as through this lineage, Jews would be directly connected to the covenant made between Yahweh and Abraham (Psalms of Solomon 9.8-9; Sirach 44.19-21).

In the Gospel of John, Abraham is only mentioned in one passage, in a debate between hoi Ioudaioi and Jesus. Here the Jews claim lineage from Abraham but are

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290 Martyn, “History,” p. 103.
291 De Jonge, “Christology,” p. 352, so de Boer states: “Discipleship to Jesus and discipleship to Moses are presented as distinguishable, comparable, and incompatible modes of being Jewish,” “Depiction,” p. 276. However, I would disagree with de Boer’s use of the term ‘Jewish’ to also refer to the Johannine Community.
rebuked by Jesus (8.39-41a). Jesus then claims that Abraham rejoiced at the sight of him (8.56) and that “before Abraham ever was, I am” (8.58), placing himself above their claims to Abraham.  

5.6 Covenant Based on Torah

Central to the rabbinic movement of first century Judaism was the Torah and to a lesser extent, the other Jewish Scriptures. “Torah as given to Israel as part of God’s covenant with Israel, obedience to the law of Moses as Israel’s response to God’s choice of Israel to be his people...as the way of living within the covenant maintaining and manifesting status as the people of Yahweh.”

The Torah of the Jews, according to Dunn, functioned as an identity marker, distinguishing hoI Ioudaioi from other ethnic groups. With the publication of Severino Pancaro’s epic work in 1975, the importance of the Torah in the Gospel of John has been fully recognized. The Torah and the rest of the Jewish scriptures are used primarily in an apologetic manner to legitimize the following of Jesus as the Christ. In this way,
the Torah is interpreted in a manner that supports the claims of the Johannine Community. This is similar to the famous line of Matthew 5.17; “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them.”

The conflicts in the Gospel are often focussed on what is the “correct” way to interpret the Jewish Scriptures. What is very interesting is that some of the Johannine Jesus’ claims challenged certain Jewish interpretations of Scripture. Jesus states in 1.18 and 5.37 that the Jews have never heard the voice of God nor seen his shape which challenges the Jewish claims of Moses and Enoch (Exodus 33.23; Genesis 5.22, 24; Sirach 17.13-14; I Enoch 46.1).

_Hoi Ioudaioi_ are viewed as those who are so ignorant of their own scriptures that they can not understand the Sinai revelation (5.37), and can not keep their own Law (7.19). The authority of Moses and Abraham is belittled; they are shown, as inferior to Jesus, like their Law. This denigration suggests that anyone who continues to follow this path after the coming of Jesus is blind and therefore can not adequately ever see the truth. It is only through belief in Jesus as the Messiah (which a _Ioudaios_ will not do) that a _Ioudaios_ will be able to perceive the ‘true’ meaning of the Scriptures, as outlined by the Johannine Community.

John’s Jesus quotes scripture in his arguments with the Jews (6.45; 7.38; 8.17; 10.34), he defends himself by alluding to Law (7.22-23). Contrasting with Jesus’ use of Scripture, _hoi Ioudaioi_, also made use of these texts, quoting it in 6.31 and alluding to it

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300 Menken, p. 445-446.
302 Lieu, p. 42.
in 7.42 and 12.34 to “prove” that Jesus can not be who he says he was. Because of Jesus’
claims to be the son of God the Jews sought to kill him through an interpretation of their
Law (19.38, possibly using Lev. 24.16). 303

While the Torah, including the prophets of hoi Ioudaioi is often used in this
Gospel to ‘prove’ that the interpretation by the Johannine Community is ‘the truth,’ the
Torah is often viewed as being superceded by Jesus. Both the Community and hoi
Ioudaioi revered the Jewish scriptures but they differed significantly on the interpretation
and belief of who Jesus was and whom he represented. 304

5.7 Markers of the Covenant Found within Torah

Both Jewish and Gentile sources discuss religious customs of hoi Ioudaioi as a
form of social identification. Among the customs discussed are circumcision, 305 dietary
laws 306 and Sabbath observance. 307 In the Gospel of John these are not viewed as
important. Circumcision is mentioned only once, in 7.22-23 as something that hoi
Ioudaioi do, which seems to suggest that the Community no longer practiced this.
Dietary laws are not alluded to at all and while Sabbath observance (maybe non-
observance would be a better term) is mentioned, this practice is not integral to the
argument that Jesus had deified himself (6.10f; 9.14; 7.19ff). 308

According to Dunn, by the time of the completion of the Gospel, the Community
had turned away from a central tenet of Judaism. Instead of viewing the Torah as the
path to understanding God and remaining in covenant with him, they instead viewed

303 Menken, p. 446.
305 Genesis 17.9-14; Petronius, “Satyricon” 102.14; Fragmenta 37; Tacitus, “History.” 5.5.2; Juvenal,
306 Lev. 11.1-23; Deut. 14.3-21; I Maccabees 1.62-63; Plutarch “Quaest. Conviv” 4.5, cited in Dunn,
Jesus as the revelation of God (6.39; 10.29; 15.19; 17.6, 8, 9, 12, 24; 18.9), for whoever sees Jesus, sees God (12.45; 14.9).\footnote{309}

Charlesworth states that the Johannine claim that there is only one way to God but instead of through Torah, it is through belief that a convicted and executed criminal was the chosen one of God, would be considered anathema by many first century Jews. For this belief would imply that God had broken the covenant with them.\footnote{310}

Unlike a Jewish Christian community such as the one that penned Matthew, the Community of John does not suggest itself as an alternative branch of Judaism, that is to say a Judaism that followed the Messiah Jesus. Instead, a primary motive for the writing of the Gospel of John is to portray this alternative reading of Scripture as the correct way. From the viewpoint of the local synagogue officials, the Community’s rejection of the centrality of Torah, cuts itself off from the proper understanding of the Law.\footnote{311}

5.8 Covenant based on the Temple

In the pre-70 C.E. period, the Temple of Judea was a religious, political and economic nexus. But overshadowing these last two meanings, and continuing its importance even after its destruction, was its religious connotations (I Kings 8.48; 9.3; Psalm 76.1-2; 87.1-3; Isaiah 49.14-16; Ezekiel 43.6-7; Sirach 36.18-19).\footnote{312} “The Torah made [the] Temple, the pivot and focus... The life of Israel flowed from the altar, what made Israel was the center, the altar.”\footnote{313}

\footnote{307} Exodus 31.16-14; Deuteronomy 5.15; Josephus “Against Apion” 2.282, cited in Dunn, “Parting,” p. 30.
\footnote{308} Freyne, “Vilifying,” p. 123.
\footnote{310} Charlesworth, “Exclusivism,” p. 508, also see P.O’Hare, The Enduring Covenant. (Valley Forge: 1997).
\footnote{311} Freyne, “Vilifying,” p. 124.
\footnote{312} Dunn, “Parting,” pp. 32-33.
\footnote{313} Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, Ernest S. Frerichs, (eds.), Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 74, cited in Dunn,
In John, Dunn maintains that Jesus has a positive attitude towards the Temple as both the Temple and its subsequent feasts and festivals are mentioned repeatedly as he went there on pilgrimages. Motyer disagrees, stating that in the Fourth Gospel, the cleansing of the Temple episode occurs at the beginning of the Gospel, not at its end. The reason for this is so that the readers can understand that the true significance of both the Temple and the festivals is in Jesus, not in the Temple.

While the Gospel of John does state that Jesus went to the Temple and attended the festivals of the Jews, Raymond Brown believes that the “Temple’ should be viewed in a two-level reading to refer to the synagogue from which the Johannine Community was expelled from. In this way, for the *aposunagogoi* neither the “Temple” (synagogue) nor its feasts and festivals are relevant for the Community. For in the post-Temple period, the Community believed that they received guidance from the Spirit

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315 Following Jesus’ identification with the Temple (2.19) Jesus is viewed as the ‘true’ meaning of the “Sabbath (chapter 5) the Passover (chapter 6) Tabernacles (chapters 7-10) and the feast of Dedication (chapters 10-12).” Stephen Motyer, “The Fourth Gospel and the Salvation of Israel: An Appeal for a New Start,” found in Bieringer, p. 98. 92-110
(14.16-17) and that their worship was to be in spirit and truth (4.24). In this way, John’s Jesus was symbolically shown to be “the light, the bread, the lamb, the way, the source of living water, [in this way] the fulfillment not merely of the temple but of the feasts associated with it.” In this manner, the replacement of the Temple and the festivals with Jesus was a defensive self-assertion for those Christians who left the synagogue to join the Community.

5.9 Conclusions

There is scholarly consensus that an expulsion from the sunagoge in the first century C.E. would have a profound impact on the members of the Community’s personal identity as well as their social identity. From the perspective of the Community, they were cut away from the embracing arms of their mother community and thus reacted in a way that legitimated their own separate existence. Therefore, their self-identity was formed through the negative portrayal of those who had expelled them.

These measures can be explained as the reason why in the Gospel there is so much dualistic imagery used, with the positive sign associated with the Community and the negative with hoi Ioudaioi. The high Christology of Jesus which was created in

320 A personal identity is “a function of genetically transmitted and familially conditioned variations that distinguish one individual from another,” whereas a social identity is “the knowledge of one’s membership in a social group, together with the value and significance that is attached to this membership,” Hall, “Ethnic,” p. 30; also see Philip F. Esler, “Jesus and the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict,” found in Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce J. Malina, Gerd Theissen, (eds.), The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), p. 186; Malina, “New Testament,” p. 62
322 And to a lesser extent to the kosmos, the social world where the ethnic groups competed for honour, Freyne, “Vilifying,” p. 118.
this period was one facet of the denigration and replacement of the ethnic markers of the Jews, among these are 'the four pillars of Judaism' as outlined by James Dunn.

I maintain that from the viewpoint of the Community, they were cut off from 'Judaism,' expelled from their local synagogue and they responded by severing the ties to this ethnicity as viewed through their work, the Gospel of John. However, certain scholars disagree with this assessment because of two verses in chapter four of this Gospel, these verses I believe interpreted correctly conclusively prove that the Community viewed itself as a group outside of the ethnic group of hoi Ioudaioi.

In the Gospel of John, the first person who is specifically identified as a Ioudaios is Jesus (4.9). This is the only time in the Gospel when Jesus or one of his disciples is labeled in such a manner. What is more, later in this chapter, Jesus, while in conversation with a Samaritan woman says to her 'he soteria ek ton Ioudaiov estin,' which has usually been translated as 'salvation is of/from the Jews.'

This translation has been interpreted traditionally in wholly positive terms. Peter Tomson states that "Jesus emphatically welcomes this appellation (4.9)." While David Rensberger and Sean Freyne accept that with this statement, Jesus (and by extension the

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323 Malina, Rohrbaugh, p. 99.
325 Peter J. Tomson, "The names Israel and Jew in Ancient Judaism and in the New Testament," Bijdragen, 47 no 3 1986, p. 281, found in Harvey, p. 89. While Rudolf Bultmann interpreted this verse as an editorial gloss, "Gospel"p. 189, other commentators disagree among them Brown, "Gospel," I, p. 172 and Schnackenburg, "John," I, p. 436. Robert Kysar maintains that both John 4.9 and 4.22 were written when the Community was still part of the synagogue, although he admits that this interpretation has gained little support, Kysar, "Anti-Semitism," p. 123, ibid n. 28.
Community) is affirming his self-identity from within Judaism,\textsuperscript{326} despite that this interpretation is at odds with the message of the rest of the Gospel.\textsuperscript{327}

Other scholars have correctly identified that the traditional translation has been a misnomer. First, the designation of Jesus as a Ioudaios comes from a Samaritan woman from whom Jesus asks for a drink of water. From her perspective the term Ioudaios would have carried derogatory implications, as these two ethnic groups did not traditionally mix.\textsuperscript{328} Jesus does not explicitly state that he is not a Ioudaios but his actions speak for this as he does associate with her.

Furthermore, Jesus identifies himself as representing a separate group from the ethnic groups of the Samaritans and the Jews. This is shown in a passage that I have translated in what I believe was the intention of the authors of John. The woman says:

\begin{quote}
Our (Samaritans) fathers worshipped on this mountain,\textsuperscript{329} though you (Ioudaioi) say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. Jesus said, believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you (Samaritans/Ioudaioi) will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You (Samaritans/Ioudaioi) worship what you do not know; we (Johannine Community) worship what we do know, for salvation has left the Ioudaioi (4.20-22).
\end{quote}

The correct understanding of this verse hinges on the interpretation of preposition \textit{ek}. The primary translation of this preposition is “out of, motion away from,”\textsuperscript{330} and in this translation occurs in 30% of its uses in the Gospel of John.\textsuperscript{331} While it can have other meanings such as “of” meaning “inclusion in,” the translation of this preposition in any

\textsuperscript{327} Especially 8.44 where the Johannine Jesus calls hoi Ioudaioi ‘sons of the Devil.’ Like myself Graham Harvey feels that the positive affirmation of this verse is based on faulty translation.
\textsuperscript{328} They did not associate publicly with one another if it could be helped and it was considered a transgression of Jewish purity laws to share utensils or in this case a water jug, Arndt, Gingrich, p. 783, Malina, Rohrbaugh, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{329} The Samaritan Temple was on Mt. Gerizem, Myers, p. 412.
\textsuperscript{330} Liddell, p. 234, Arndt, Gingrich, 233.
manner other than "out of, motion away from" conflicts with the understanding of Ioudaioi in this Gospel.

Both the Samaritan woman's question and Jesus' answer use the second person plural. This mention of "you" in the plural who will not worship in Jerusalem can hardly be connected with the singular Samaritan. Instead this sentence must be directed towards a plural perceived audience, which I have interpreted as both Samaritan and Jewish. As ignorance is attributed to the Jews in other places in the Gospel (3.10; 12.35, etc), this interpretation should not be surprising. This explanation can also be viewed as valid because of Jesus' words that "the hour is coming-indeed is already here-when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (4.22-23). This again indicates that neither the Samaritans nor the Judeans were worshiping the Father in the manner chosen as 'correct' by the Johannine Community.

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331 Thirty-six out of one hundred and twenty uses of this preposition, not counting when it is used in conjunction with other words. John 1.32; 2.22; 3.13, 14, 27; 4.12, 22, 39; 5.24, 27; 6.31, 32, 33, 41, 42, 50, 51, 53, 58, 62; 64, 65; 7.17, 22; 8.28, 42, 59; 11.19; 12.2, 28, 32; 13.21, 31; 17.6; 20.9; 21.14.
332 This verse may be alluding to John 1.13 and 3.5 which discuss the creation of the 'children of God' as a designation for the Community. Collins states that in the Prologue of John, the Logos is stated to have walked among "us." He believes that this first person plural is referring to the Johannine Community and can be linked with the first person plural of 4.22, Collins, "Speaking," found in Bieringer, p. 287.
Conclusions

This thesis has sought to understand the correct translation of the term *hoi Ioudaioi* as it is used in the Gospel of John through a historical and social-science interpretation. The traditional translation of “the Jews” has been criticized in recent years for several reasons. One is that this term has been used by anti-Semites to promote hatred of this ethnic group, culminating in the Holocaust. Others believe that the translation “the Jews” is limiting as this refers primarily to the religion of this group. I disagree with this and conclude that the understanding of the term *hoi Ioudaioi* is best understood as those members of the local ethnic group of the Jews who were hostile to the conception of Jesus as the Messiah from the perspective of the *aposunagogoi*, the Johannine Community. These expelled members (as well as Samaritans and Gentiles who joined them later) formed their own social identity through the replacement of the ethnic identity markers of the Jews.

In chapter two, I discussed the proper understanding of the term “ethnicity” and how this affects one’s understanding of the term *Ioudaios* in the ancient world. My studies concentrated on the understanding of the term *hoi Ioudaioi* in the contemporary literature leading up to and including the first century C.E. My conclusions to this chapter are that both religious customs and geographical origins should not be considered as defining aspects of ethnicity, however, “proper” religious thought can portray membership within an ethnic group.

In chapter three, I discussed the three main translations of the term *hoi Ioudaioi* in current scholarship. I concluded that translating ‘the Jews’ as regional, authorities or as
members of the religion of Judaism is limited. These translations suffer from a proper comprehension of ethnicity. While Brown and Dunn’s belief that the term should be viewed as religio-ethnic comes closest to the truth, ultimately it too is limited in its understanding.

Chapter four focussed upon the theories of the composition of the Gospel of John and the formation of the Community that penned it through expulsion from the local synagogue. According to the Gospel itself, something drastic happened between the local communities, although the exact details are not forthcoming. J.L. Martyn’s theory that it was the Birkhat Ha-minin I feel must be rejected, however, I do think that the expulsion of the Community from the synagogue is connected to a local synagogue ‘ban’ a cherem.

Chapter five states that whatever form the expulsion did occur in, this shattered the social reality of the Johannine Community and in their search for self-identification they attacked their former ethnic markers. With the rejection of hoi Ioudaioi, and with the understanding that ‘salvation has left the Jews,’ the new Community formed its own social-identity based on non-ethnic identification markers.
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