TEXT AND CONTEXT:
Anti-Judaism and the Gospel of John

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Introduction

The Gospel of John is widely considered to be the most spiritual[1] and enigmatic of the Gospels found in the New Testament. There seems to be a fascination with the Fourth Gospel that arises because it is so radically different from the other New Testament Gospels. As Stephen Harris states,

> From the moment we read the opening lines of John's Gospel – 'When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was (1:1).' – we realize that we have entered a world of thought strikingly different from that of the synoptic Gospels.[2]

The Gospel of John *is* different from those of Matthew, Mark and Luke (termed the "Synoptic" Gospels – meaning literally, "seen together" – because of their strikingly similar narratives). It differs "in the style and content of Jesus' words," and it also presents the chronology and geography of Jesus' ministry as occurring over a period of three years and alternating between Galilee and Judea.[3]

In addition to differing in its narrative, the Fourth Gospel also presents Christians with a very different theology and Christology than is found in the Synoptic Gospels. The ultimate concern of the Gospel of John is to proclaim that Jesus is the incarnate Word of God, and as such, Jesus brings God fully into the world (1:14). According to John's Gospel, Jesus' relationship with God redefines the nature of God's relationship with the world. In this theological aspect, the Gospel of John is a pivotal work in the

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[1] In 200 CE, Clement of Alexandria believed that the author of the Gospel of John, aware that the physical facts of Jesus' ministry had already been recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, had been irresistibly moved by the Spirit to write a "spiritual gospel" that portrayed the divine nature of Jesus (see Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*). For many contemporary readers, the epithet "spiritual gospel" still remains synonymous with the Gospel of John.

[2] Stephen L. Harris. *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction* (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1988), 140.

[3] "The Gospel According to John," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1990), 942.

New Testament that provides the Christian church with its foundational understanding of the nature of Jesus as the exalted, heavenly Christ. Its unique theology and Christology, combined with its elevated literary style, has made the Gospel of John "'the favourite Gospel,' or as Luther puts it: 'chiefest of the Gospels, unique, tender, and true.'"[4] In short, the Gospel of John is indeed very different from the Synoptic Gospels; it is considered more beloved and spiritual in narrative, and more accurate and true in Christology. But the Fourth Gospel is different from the Synoptics in another, more troubling way: in addition to being considered the most spiritual of the Gospels, it is also considered by many scholars "as either the most anti-Semitic or at least the most overtly anti-Semitic of the gospels."[5]

The Christian Church has a long and undeniable history of anti-Judaism that dates back to the earliest emergence of the first followers of Christ as a distinct movement within the Jewish tradition. In recent scholarship, much emphasis has been placed on the New Testament as the point of origin for this legacy of Christian anti-Judaism and the basis from which early church writers took their negative portrayal of the Jews and Judaism.[6] The Gospel of John has been included among the writings that are most vitriolic and hostile toward the Jews, and thus will be my starting point for the examination of anti-Judaism in Christianity. To understand more clearly the ways in which the Fourth Gospel can be interpreted as anti-Jewish, it is necessary to examine the specific passages that scholars claim are hostile to the Jews. If the evidence supports the claim that the Gospel of John is indeed anti-Jewish in nature, I believe investigating the

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[4] As quoted by H. Latimer Jackson, *The Problem of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1918), 1.
[5] Samuel Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 101.
[6] Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 43.

historical context in which the Gospel was written may help contemporary readers to understand the reasons for its anti-Jewish sentiment. From there, I will trace the ways in which early church writers used the Gospel of John to facilitate and validate their anti-Jewish polemics by extracting its anti-Jewish passages from their original historical setting and applying them to the writer's own context. I believe that the disregard for the historical context of the anti-Jewish passages in the Gospel of John allowed early Christian theologians to exceed even the original hostility in the Gospel, which applied to particular Jews within a particular context. The role that the Gospel of John has played in the development of anti-Judaism within the early Christian tradition is one that must be critically examined in order to prevent contemporary theologians from similarly misinterpreting the biblical text and thus biblically sanctioning a modern-day universal anti-Judaism.

Definition of Terms

A serious theological investigation of anti-Jewish sentiment as it is found in the development of early Christianity is often hampered by confusion in terminology and misuse of pertinent words such as "anti-Semitism" and "anti-Judaism." The problem, as Princeton Religion Professor John Gager notes, is "the tendency...to use terms like anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in a global manner, as if they encompassed the full range of interactions between Jews and non-Jews in antiquity."[7] Hostility toward the Jews came from pagans, Christians, and Gentiles alike at the start of the Common Era; but the reasons for such hostility are complicated and diverse. To subsume this diversity under

[7] John G. Gager, *The Origins of anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1985), 9.

one catch-all heading belies the complexity of the issue and begs for a more precise definition of terms.

Further complicating the issue is the fact that, although the two terms "anti-Judaism" and "anti-Semitism" are often used interchangeably, they do not share the same meaning. Mary Boys offers the most concise differentiation between the terms: "Anti-Judaism refers to the attitudes, arguments, polemics, and actions that flow from supercessionism.[8] It is thus a theological term...The term anti-Semitism is a racist designation...to denote a hatred of and hostility to Jews, regarded as an inferior ethnic group."[9] Using the terms interchangeably, and disregarding the distinction between theological and racial tension as it pertains to Jews in antiquity, can easily confuse the issue of hostility toward the Jews. In any case, it is anachronistic to use "anti-Semitism" in regard to early Christian development. When Wilhelm Marr coined the term in the early nineteenth century, "it was not used in relation to matters of religion or to Christian sentiment."[10] For this reason, I will not use the term "anti-Semitism" in assessing the Fourth Gospel and its subsequent interpreters, although other theologians whom I quote may do so. It should be understood that I am dealing only with hostility resulting from religious tensions between Jews and early Christians.

Even the terms "Christians" and "Jews" present a unique problem when investigating the interaction between the two groups in antiquity. Differentiating between Jews and Christians, especially when discussing the earliest years in the development of Christianity, gives the incorrect impression that they were two distinct

[8] Christian supercessionism is the belief that Jesus has fulfilled the law of the Old Testament, and Christianity has thus replaced Judaism as the only valid path to God's salvation.
[9] Boys, 11.
[10] Sandmel, xx.

and separate groups. As Samuel Sandmel rightly points out, "in the time prior to the rise of the term *Christian* the new movement was simply a grouping deemed to be within Judaism, however much it differed from other groupings within Judaism...it is technically incorrect to speak of the movement in its earliest phases as Christianity."[11]

Because it is technically imprecise to use the term "Christians" when speaking of the movement that started after Jesus' crucifixion, I will substitute "followers of Christ," "members of the Jesus Movement," or "believers in Jesus," to indicate this emerging group as it was in the early development of the Christian movement. The term "anti-Jewish sentiment" is meant to designate the hostile *attitude* leveled toward the Jews due to theological disagreement, whereas "anti-Judaism" implies the explicit literary *manifestation* of such attitudes. Although a subtle distinction, I believe it will be helpful in examining the way in which hostility toward the Jews progressed from attitudes and actions into literary expression. To clarify further these terms, I will use them only in reference to the theological hostility that arose from religious differences between the early followers of Christ and the groups they identified with the term "Jews."

Within the category of Christian anti-Judaism, Gager offers a refinement of D. R. A. Hare's categories that further distill and clarify the issue of anti-Judaism. Particularly pertinent is the recognition of an "intra-Jewish polemic" that developed during the early Christian movement.[12] This took the form of an internal (and sometimes hostile) debate amongst Jews regarding the meaning and control of central Jewish symbols. There was not, however, an outright rejection of these symbols as seems to occur with later forms of

[11] Sandmel, xix.
[12] Gager, 9.

Christian anti-Judaism.[13] This issue of distinguishing between critique and opposition toward the Jews from both internal and external sources will become more relevant in the examination of material from the Gospel of John and early Christian theologians.

The Gospel of John has often been considered highly anti-Jewish in recent academic discussions. Before affirming this claim, however, we must first define the characteristics that make a piece of literature anti-Jewish. Simply expressing harsh criticism or dogmatic exclusivism cannot be the only criteria. Otherwise, it would be difficult indeed to explain "the same dogmatic exclusivism and harsh, and at times even harsher, criticism that we encounter in the Old Testament."[14] Instead, the criterion that distinguishes the harsh sentiment in John as possibly anti-Jewish is "not the severity of the criticism, but the distinction the author makes between himself and 'Israel' or 'the Jews.'"[15] The "insider" criticism the Jews offer of themselves in the Old Testament is not hateful; it challenges what James Sanders has called the theology of blessed assurance.[16] However, if someone considering himself detached from Judaism offers such criticism, such sentiment is no longer intra-Jewish polemic, and is instead anti-Jewish sentiment.

One must be careful when attempting to distinguish between the emerging followers of Jesus and Judaism, because the division between these "fraternal twins [of faith] happened neither quickly nor uniformly."[17] The boundaries separating the two faiths were not fully and firmly defined until several hundred years later. This means that

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[13] Some scholars argue that later Christians did not make an outright rejection of Jewish symbols, but instead reappropriated the symbols so that they were no longer recognizable as Jewish.
[14] Craig A. Evans, "Faith and Polemic: The New Testament and First-century Judaism," in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity,* ed. Craig A. Evans and Donald A Hagner (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 3.
[15] Evans, 9.
[16] See J. A. Sanders, *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text: Canon as Paradigm* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 61-73.
[17] Boys, 48.

the earliest followers of Jesus, including the author of the Gospel of John, were faced with a very real problem of "working out their identity as disciples."[18] Originally the early followers of Jesus were participants in the Jewish religion, and presumably many were still living in or near Jewish communities, which means that it is unclear whether these earliest followers ought to be considered "insiders" or "outsiders" to the Jewish faith. Stephan Wilson suggests that it makes little difference whether the polemic was from inside or outside the Jewish fold because "what one group saw as an intramural tussle, the other could have seen as an extramural conflict, as may well have been the case with Matthew, John, and others."[19] In addition, Wilson suggests that any "insider" or "outsider" distinction cannot be made with any accuracy or precision. In either case, whether he considered himself an "insider" or an "outsider," many scholars believe that the author of the Gospel of John was attempting to forge some sense of identity separate from the Jews, and this attempt to define his community may also have been what prompted the author of John to present both the Jewish religion and people in such a negative manner.

I also make a distinction between two kinds of anti-Judaism: particular and universal. "Particular anti-Judaism," is the term I use to describe anti-Jewish sentiment that is specific to a group of Jews within a specific historical context. This term is meant to contrast with "universal anti-Judaism," which designates an anti-Jewish sentiment that is applied to all Jews across all historical eras and cultures, with utter disregard for the historical source and context that produced such a sentiment. Having thus carefully defined what is meant by anti-Judaism, it is now possible to examine the ways in which

[18] Boys, 48.
[19] Stephen G Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians 70-170 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 299.

such anti-Jewish sentiment developed first in the Gospel of John and then in the early Christian movement.

The Gospel of John

Although considered by many Christians as the most spiritual Gospel in the New Testament, many modern scholars also consider the Gospel of John as the most anti-Jewish in nature. There are two ways in which this Gospel can be interpreted as anti-Jewish: its directly negative portrayal of the Jewish people, and its indirect invalidation of the Jewish religion. Much scholarly attention has been given to the way in which the author of John makes repeated use of the term *Ioudaioi* ("the Jews"), and moreover the way in which this term is most frequently used in a pejorative manner. It is easy even for contemporary Christians to understand these passages as anti-Jewish in nature. More difficult to detect is the anti-Jewish way in which the author of John appropriates such Jewish customs and symbols as the Passover, the Messiah, and Jewish laws. Although such appropriation of Jewish symbols by the early followers of Jesus does not seem overtly anti-Jewish to contemporary readers, ancient Jews would have clearly understood such passages to be antagonistic to their own understanding of their religious symbols. As John Townsend puts it, Jesus in the Gospel of John "is a challenge to all the essential elements of Judaism."[20] Thus, whether directly challenging "the Jews," or indirectly challenging the Jewish religion, the Gospel of John can be interpreted as anti-Jewish in nature. The most pertinent aspect of anti-Judaism for this endeavor is that of the directly negative portrayal of the Jews in the Gospel of John, which will be treated in this section. Issues of indirect anti-Judaism as they arise in the Fourth Gospel will be discussed, as they pertain to particular issues in subsequent sections.

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[20] John Townsend. "The Gospel of John and the Jews," as quoted in John Gager's *The Origin of Anti-Semitism,* (New York: Oxford University Press1983), 151.

Direct anti-Jewish Sentiment Against "the Jews"

The most outright form of anti-Judaism in the Gospel according to John as compared to the Synoptics is the way in which the author depicts "the Jews" as being the cause for the emerging Jewish-Christian controversy. While in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus' opponents are "usually Pharisees, scribes, priests, and elders, in the Fourth Gospel, they are uniformly 'the Jews.'"[21] In the Gospel of John, the Greek term *Ioudaioi* ("the Jews") appears seventy times, often used to portray antagonists of Jesus. The term appears only sixteen times in the Synoptics, and then it is often "in relationship with the use of the phrase 'king of the Jews,' and the term does not normally denote the opponents of Jesus."[22] The Gospel of John's appropriation of the term *Ioudaioi*, as well as the numerous times that the term appears in a pejorative sense, suggests that the author intended for the term to convey a negative meaning that is absent from the Synoptic accounts. This discrepancy raises the question of *why* the author of John departs so drastically from the Synoptic authors in the depiction of "the Jews."

Before examining the reasons for such hostility, it will be helpful to examine specific instances in which the author of John uses the term "the Jews." In doing so, the various ways in which the Gospel portrays the Jews will become clearer. First, let us examine the ways in which the Jews are portrayed in a positive or neutral manner. Jews are sometimes presented as admirers of Jesus, who are amazed by his teachings and want to follow him:

> The Jews were amazed and asked, 'How did this man get such learning without having studied?' (7:15).

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[21] Sandmel, 101.

[22] Thomas D. Lea, "Who Killed the Lord? A Defense Against the Charge of Anti-Semitism in John's Gospel," *Chriswell Theological Review* (Spring 1994), 105.

> Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there, and came... (12:9).

Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and a Jewish leader, is portrayed in a very positive manner. First, he seeks Jesus and is taught by him:

> There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him" (3:1-2).

Later, Nicodemus is portrayed as defending Jesus to the Pharisees, his own people (7:50-51), and accompanying Joseph during the burial of Jesus (19:39).

In addition to the Jews portrayed as admirers and students of Jesus, the Fourth Gospel even depicts certain Jews as believers in Jesus:

> To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teachings, you are really my disciples (8:31).
>
> Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him (11:45).
>
> ...For on account of him, many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him (12:11).

However, these passages become ambiguous and confusing when one notes that the Jews depicted in passage 8:31 soon become opponents of Jesus and the targets of Jesus' most vitriolic rebuke of the Jews in the Gospel of John. Some of the Jews described in passage 11:45 later participate in the plot to kill Jesus.[23]

One of the most confusing things for the reader to note with regard to the positive portrayal of the Jews is that Jesus himself is identified with the Jews in his exchange with the Samaritan woman in chapter four. She clearly recognizes him as Jewish, stating

[23] Robert Kysar, "Anti-Semitism and the Gospel of John," in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity,* ed. Craig A. Evans and Donald A Hagner (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993),115.

directly, "You are a Jew." Rather than rejecting this claim to his Jewish heritage, Jesus acknowledges it, and then proclaims clearly: "We worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews (4:22b)." This alignment of Jesus with the Jews and his own Jewish heritage raises the question of why, in later passages, he would engage in such hostile exchanges with "the Jews."

Some scholars argue that, despite Jesus' occasional alignment with the Jews, as in 4:22b, the Gospel of John is "of all documents the furthest removed from Judaism."[24] It is interesting to note the way in which the narrator seems detached from Judaism, perhaps indicating that the "implied reader is thus distanced from an understanding of Judaism."[25] Such expressions as "the Jewish Passover" (2:13) and "the feast of the Jews" (5:1) suggest that the author does not participate in these events, and these occurrences belong solely to "the Jews," who are separated from both the author and the implied audience of Jesus' followers. In this way, the author of John seems fully detached and separated from his Jewish heritage.[26] This indication of separation between the implied reader of the Gospel and the Jews may be indicative of the supposed separation from the Synagogue that the Johannine community experienced as a result of professing faith in Jesus. By distancing himself and his community from Jews and Jewish heritage, the narrator may be setting up an "us" (early followers of Christ) versus "them" (the Jews) dichotomy. Such a dichotomy allows the author to define his community over against the Jews, and the Jews then become antagonists to the emerging group of people professing faith in Jesus. This tension will be discussed further in the analysis of the history of the Johannine community.

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[24] J. Louis Martyn. *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 16.
[25] Kysar, 115.
[26] Kysar, 115.

Complicating the claim that the Gospel of John is the most anti-Jewish in nature is the perplexing fact that the Jews are not always depicted in this adversarial manner, nor are they consistently depicted as hostile to Jesus and his mission. As I have shown, there are several instances where the Fourth Gospel seems to allow the Jews neutral or even positive status in the narrative. For this reason, "some [scholars] have sought to deny the fundamental anti-Judaism of the Fourth Gospel."[27] Although there are indeed seemingly pro-Jewish passages – verse 11:45 reports that "many of the Jews...believed in him" – it seems most plausible that, by their belief in Jesus, "such individuals cease thereby to be Jews" in the author of John's eyes, and become part of the early Jesus movement.[28] If this is the case, then these positive portrayals of the Jews should actually be interpreted as positive portrayals of the early followers of Christ, and therefore are not relevant to the study of "the Jews" in the Gospel of John.

While there are indeed scattered positive portrayals of the Jews in John's Gospel, they are most pervasively portrayed as opponents to Jesus' movement and as the "antagonists of the hero of the story."[29] Urban C. von Wahlde, after a thorough word analysis of *Ioudaioi*, notes the "hostile" usage of the term in passages where the Jews "desire to kill him, to excommunicate him, to stone him, they accuse him of being possessed, of being a Samaritan, of blaspheming."[30] Von Wahlde discusses the following examples:

> So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. Jesus said to them, 'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.' *For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him*; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was

[27] Gager, 153.
[28] Gager, 153.
[29] Kysar, 115.
[30] Urban C. von Wahlde, "The Johannine 'Jews': A Critical Survey," *NTS 28* (January 1982), 47.

> even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God (5:16-18).
>
> After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because *the Jews there were waiting to take his life* (7:1).
>
> At these words the Jews were again divided. Many of them said, '*He is demon-possessed* and raving mad. (10:19-20). (All italics were added for emphasis.)

If the Gospel of John presents an accurate historical portrait, and such opposition actually existed, then the Jewish hostility toward Jesus and his movement caused many who believed in Jesus to fear and mistrust both the Jews and Jewish leaders.

In addition to being cast as overt opponents to Jesus' mission, the Jews are also portrayed as both ignorant and blind to the true nature of God, for "they consistently fail to understand the nature of Jesus."[31] In chapter 6, when Jesus declares himself to be both from heaven and the bread of life, the Jews are dumbfounded:

> At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"...Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (6:41-42, 52).

This is seen again in chapter 7, when the Jews cannot understand what Jesus means when he declares that he will be only with them for a short time, and he will soon go where none can come. The confusion of the Jews is immediate:

> The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people are scattered among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What did he mean when he said 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?" (7:35-36).

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[31] Kysar, 115.

It seems that whatever Jesus reveals about himself, the Jews either misunderstand or reject his message. The author of the Fourth Gospel portrays them as blind and ignorant, a negative characterization that will be intensified by Christian theologians in the following centuries.

In addition to being ignorant about the new faith in Christ, the Jews are also "presented in the narrative as untrue to their own faith and tradition."[32] They are shown as incapable of understanding their own scriptures, as is demonstrated when Jesus says to them:

> You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life (5:39-40).

That the Jews do not immediately recognize Jesus seems to indicate that they are unable to interpret the meaning of their own sacred texts. The Jews are also accused of not keeping the Torah in 7:19, when Jesus says to them, "Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law." In addition to charging the Jews with being unable to understand their own scriptures or adhere to their own laws, the Gospel of John also accuses the Jews of placing their loyalties with Caesar instead of God, as is seen when Pilate tries to hand over Jesus to the Jews as their king:

> "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "*We have no king but Caesar,*" the chief priests answered.

That the Jews were unfaithful to their own traditions is a charge that originates in the Fourth Gospel, but it is one that will continue to be leveled against the Jews by Christian theologians for centuries.

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[32] Kysar, 115.

The most vitriolic passage of the entire Gospel, however, found in Chapter 8, combines several negative characterizations of Jews into one extremely hostile charge against the Jews. This passage does not portray the Jews as "merely" hostile enemies of Jesus' movement, but goes so far as to declare that the Jews are descendants of the devil:

> Jesus said to them [the Jews]... 'You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies (8:44).

According to this passage, the Jews have *never* worshipped God, and their rejection of Jesus, and their hostility to his movement, is nothing more than the manifestation of their rejected status, which has existed for as long as the Jews have claimed to be God's chosen people. The Jews are both antagonists to Jesus and unfaithful to their own tradition, which is why Jesus revokes their status as descendants of Abraham. Clearly, this passage states that Israel no longer has anything but a negative status before God, and indeed they never even were God's chosen people. Considered by many modern scholars to be the most anti-Jewish passage in the entire Gospel of John, this is also a key passage used by the early theologian John Chrysostom to construct his highly anti-Jewish homilies that he delivered on the Fourth Gospel.

In addition to the many ways in which the Jews are negatively portrayed in the Fourth Gospel, the reader "is further kept off balance by the way in which these characters labeled Jews are distinguished from other groups in the narratives."[33] Kysar notes many specific instances where the author of the Gospel of John goes to great length to distinguish "the Jews" from the "people of Jerusalem (7:25), the crowds (7:13; 12:17), the Pharisees (7:32-35; 9:13, 18), Ephraimites (11:54), Galileans (4:43-45), and other

[33] Kysar, 115.

individual characters in the narrative such as the parents of the blind man (9:18), Martha (11:19, 31), Caiaphas (18:14), and Joseph of Arimathea (19:38)."[34] Although history places all of these individuals and groups of people squarely within the context of Judaism, the author of John offers no textual clues to lead the reader to recognize them as such. The result is that the reader does not associate "the Jews" with these individuals who are sometimes portrayed in a positive manner, but rather "the vague name, 'Jews,' becomes in the reader's mind representative of opposition to Jesus and his mission."[35]

It is important to note, when discussing these passages that portray the Jews in such a negative manner, that von Wahlde argues that these highly anti-Jewish passages regarding the nature and status of "the Jews" apply to the Jewish authorities and *not* to the common Jewish people. Supporting this notion, Robert Kysar states, "Few, if any, responsible scholars today would argue that reference is to the entire Jewish people, for such a view would make no sense given that nearly all of the characters – and certainly Jesus and the other main characters – of the Gospel are themselves Jews."[36] D. Moody Smith further supports this claim, stating,

> "The Jews" are not all Jewish people, or even all Jewish people contemporary with Jesus or with the Johannine community. Rather, "the Jews" represent the emerging authoritative group, those who are seeking to establish a canonical interpretation of what Judaism is, and moreover, one that excludes Christians.[37]

Therefore, it is possible, and perhaps even probable, that the author of the Gospel of John intended the hostile and pejorative portrayal of "the Jews" to be a reflection of the tension that emerged between the Jewish leaders and the early followers of Jesus more than a

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[34] Kysar, 115.
[35] Kysar, 115.
[36] Kysar, 118.
[37] D. Moody Smith. *The Theology of the Gospel of John* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), 171.

generation after Jesus' death, and therefore not a universal reflection on *all* Jews throughout history.

The Historical Context of the Johannine Community

As noted earlier, Samuel Sandmel assessed the Gospel of John as "either the most anti-Semitic or at least the most overtly anti-Semitic of the gospels."[38] A close study of the portrayal of the Jews in this gospel seems only to affirm this judgment. Many recent scholars, however, claim that an accurate understanding of the historical setting of the community in which the author of the Fourth Gospel was writing helps us to understand, if not excuse, the harsh tone of this gospel.[39] Supporting this view, Robert Kysar states that the anti-Jewish sentiment nurtured in the text of the Gospel "is properly understood only in the light of the historical origin of the document."[40]

Raymond E. Brown contends that the author of the Fourth Gospel was prompted to write the Gospel after the expulsion of his Christian community from their synagogue home.[41] While the theories surrounding the reason for such an expulsion vary, many scholars now agree that the Gospel of John was written in response to this expulsion, and thus the Gospel "reflects the ongoing dialogue between the Jews and Christians in the heated process of the separation."[42] Within the Gospel of John are passages that may

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[38] Sandmel, 101.
[39] Kysar, 113.
[40] Kysar, 114.
[41] Raymond E Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966).
It should be noted that there was not just one Jewish synagogue to which everyone belonged, so the term "synagogue" is meant as a cipher for the entire Jewish communal worship that occurred within the multitude of synagogues that existed in Jewish antiquity.
[42] Kysar, 120.

reflect the actual experiences of the community, dramatizing the interaction between the synagogue and the Johannine community.[43]

The emerging Johannine community needed to form its own identity, separate from the synagogue and Jewish tradition that they were no longer a part of. Early Christians therefore defined themselves against the Jews and Jewish traditions. Kysar explains that that this self-definition occurred in the Gospel of John because "if basic Christian identity is at stake, in order to clarify that identity the evangelist [must] resort to a drastic either/or schema to define the distinction between the Christian and the Jew."[44] The author from this early Christian movement was perhaps forming an identity defined in opposition to Judaism, which may have just rejected the Jesus movement as inauthentic to the Jewish tradition. It is this need to identify the followers of Christ as authentic that may have prompted the author of John to revoke from the Jews their heritage as descendants of Abraham, and instead name them as descendants of Satan (8:39-44). In this passage, the author invalidates the Jewish faith, leaving the emerging faith of the believers in Jesus to be validated in its place. Such an identity crisis makes the polemic tone of this passage, as well as others in the Gospel of John, understandable. The polemic fulfilled the needs of forming an identity for the fledgling Christian movement.

Supporting this theory, Samuel Sandmel sees the designation of the Jews as opponents of Jesus not as a reflection of the Jews as they were in history, but rather "a reflection of the Gospel writer's environment."[45] Sandmel contends that the negative portrayals and condemnations of the Jews that abound in the Gospel of John "reflect not

[43] Martyn, 37.
[44] Kysar, 121.
[45] Sandmel, 118.

Jesus in his age but the ongoing bitterness between Jews and Christians that had accumulated in the intervening decades."[46] Sandmel understands the negative portrayal of the Jews to be a result of tensions that arose between the followers of Christ and the other Jews more than a generation after the death of Jesus.

Raymond Brown posits that the Gospel of John can be read on several levels, so that it tells us the stories of *both* Jesus and of the community that followed him.[47] Through an analysis of the complex way in which the Gospel presents "the Jews," it may be possible to reconstruct something of the Johannine community's history. In doing so, the Gospel may reveal a reason for hostility toward "the Jews" that was purely a situational reaction to specific Jews and not originally intended to become a universal application to all Jews.

According to J. Louis Martyn, Chapter 9 of the Fourth Gospel provides several critical pieces of information that help to reconstruct such a conflict between the synagogue and the followers of Christ. In this chapter, Jesus had just restored the sight to a blind beggar, but the blind man's parents were afraid to acknowledge that Jesus was responsible for the miracle because

> They were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue (9:22).

Marytn focuses on this passage because it provides four key elements that command attention: "(1) the expression 'the Jews,' (2) the verb with its adverbial modifier 'had already agreed,' (3) the messianic confession of Jesus, and (4) the predicative nominative

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[46] Sandmel, 118.
[47] Raymond E. Brown. *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

'an excommunication from the synagogue.'"[48] The first two elements, he concludes, demonstrate that some formal agreement had taken place between the Jewish leaders *before* the writing of the Fourth Gospel. This indicates that this passage does not portray an arbitrary decision on the part of the authorities in this particular instance, but rather, the authorities had previously felt the need to make a formal decision regarding the followers of Jesus, and such a decision had *already* been made before this particular episode was recorded by John.

This decision of the Jewish authorities was made in regard to those who confessed belief in Jesus as the expected Messiah, and the Jewish leaders seem to have deemed this belief incompatible with "continued membership in the synagogue."[49] The key passage that Martyn uses to support this claim is John 9:28, when Jewish authorities insulted the beggar, saying: "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses!" This statement, though scarcely conceivable in Jesus' lifetime (for it supposes that authorities at that time recognized Jesus' few disciples as somehow comparable to the innumerable Jewish disciples of Moses), is understandable in the later context of the Johannine community, when the synagogue viewed Jesus' followers as rivals of Judaism.[50] This statement seems to depict the problem facing many in the end of the first century: choose to be a disciple of Moses or of Jesus, or, in other words, choose between Judaism and this emerging Christianity.[51]

This threat of expulsion from the synagogue is not found in any other documents or New Testament materials, so it seems to be a problem specific to the Johannine

[48] Brown, *Community* 38.
[49] Brown, *Community* 38.
[50] Martyn, 39.
[51] Smith, 170.

community. Yet not only were early followers of Christ in the Johannine community in danger of being expelled from the synagogue and Jewish community, the author of the Gospel of John portrays them as in danger of being put death.

> They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God (16:1-2).

The fear of expulsion from the synagogue and possible death among those professing Jesus as the expected Messiah was so great that the author of John depicts even the authorities who believed in Jesus as afraid to confess such a belief:

> Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believe in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue (12:42).

The problem facing the Jewish community, as described by the author of John, was that anybody who confessed a faith in Jesus was in immediate danger of being excommunicated from the synagogue, or, worse still, put to death. Many Jews, even some rulers, did in fact believe in Jesus, but kept that faith to themselves because of the danger in confessing such a belief. Others, like the blind beggar who revealed his commitment to Jesus, were cast out immediately from the community.[52] In light of this hostility that the Johannine community believed it faced from Jewish authorities and the synagogue, it is perhaps understandable that the Fourth Gospel offers a negative portrayal of the Jewish authorities that carried out the expulsion of the Johannine community from the Jewish synagogue.

In different areas and times at the end of the first century, there were varied relationships between Jews and the early followers of Jesus; not all of these relationships were hostile in nature. However, the Johannine community was engaged in one of the

[52] Martyn, 41.

most hostile relationships with Jewish authorities. As a result, extreme hostility seemed to be the normal course of action for both Johannine Christians and Jewish authorities in regard to each other. Both parties were steeped in conflict, and it is clear that Jewish authorities were as hostile, or perhaps even more so, to the Johannine community than the other way around.

J. Louis Martyn offers "the single most important datum" for reconstructing the way in which Jewish authorities may have perpetuated hostility against early followers of Christ.[53] He posits that the threat of expulsion of the believers in Christ from the synagogue was related to the *Birkath ha-Minim*, a curse of exclusion within the Eighteen Benedictions. The Benedictions comprised one of the most important Jewish prayer texts after 70 CE, and the *Birkath ha-Minim* was the twelfth Benediction, directed specifically against the *minim* (heretics). Martyn suggests that Jewish authorities reworded the Twelfth Benediction of the standard Eighteen Benedictions of the synagogue service in order to include the petition that heretics (including the early Christians) be destroyed and excluded from the Book of Life.[54] The full English translation of the Twelfth Benediction may be rendered as follows:

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 Nazarenes [early Christians] and Minim [heretics] be destroyed in a moment
5. And let them be blotted out of the Book of Life and not inscribed together with the righteous.
6. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the proud!

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[53] "John," in *The Books of the Bible: The Apocrypha and The New Testament*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989), 206.
[54] Martyn, 59.

The formulation of this prayer "is an official and authoritative decision, and it is directly related to the Christian movement."[55] With regard to this Benediction, Smith posits that "suspected Christ-confessors would be appointed to lead the Benedictions, and if they refused they would reveal themselves as such."[56] Such a revelation could potentially have led to the feared expulsion from the synagogue, and could perhaps have led to execution for heresy as well. Martyn claims that the Benediction is therefore intended to solidify Judaism by "*culling out* those elements which do not conform to the Pharisaic image of orthodoxy."[57]

Since Martyn's statement regarding the Twelfth Benediction, there has been a continued debate between scholars regarding its date of its composition and intended purpose. Martyn argues that is possible that it occurred during the time period when the Johannine community was facing persecution at the end of the first century C. E. Martyn's evidence supporting his dating of the Benediction is less solid than many scholars would like, yet Martyn and other scholars continue to look at the Twelfth Benediction as evidence for the controversy between Jews and early followers of Christ that is depicted in the Gospel of John.[58]

It is evident from even this cursory look into the Gospel of John that it contains strong anti-Jewish language and makes use of extremely anti-Jewish polemic in order to distinguish and validate the followers of Christ from the Jews. The Fourth Gospel also raises the issue that perhaps persecution and separation from the synagogue inflamed the

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[55] Martyn, 59.
[56] Smith, 54.
[57] Martyn, 59.
[58] Whether or not the Benediction was used in the liturgical practice against the Johannine believers, both the Fourth Gospel and the Twelfth Benediction indicate the same climate of "schism" between Jews and early followers of Jesus in the late first and early second century CE.

hostilities between the Johannine community and the Jews. The debate continues among scholars as to whether this makes John universally anti-Jewish. I contend that the Gospel *is* anti-Jewish, but it is not universally so. More precisely, the author of John was writing from within a particular context, and in response to a particular experience (his community's expulsion from the synagogue), and thus the author's anti-Jewish polemic is formulated against the specific Jewish community in the author's particular context. But even if this is the case, it raises the question of how early Christian theologians would later use to the Gospel of John to promote anti-Judaism, where readers of the Gospel now outside its original context interpreted the invective against the Jews in light of their own very different setting in history.

Emerging Christian Anti-Judaism from the Second to the Fourth Century

The early development of Christianity, as it occurred from the second to the fourth centuries, saw an increase in the polemic against the Jews that "developed in the exegetical tradition which underlies the New Testament."[59] Given the highly anti-Jewish nature of the Gospel of John, one would expect that early Christian theologians would rely heavily on this Gospel as the biblical base for supporting this increase in anti-Jewish polemic. Curiously, this is not the case for most of the second and third centuries CE. References to the Gospel of John are strangely absent in the works of early theologians; and the Fourth Gospel is not directly used to create an anti-Jewish polemic until the late fourth century in the writings of John Chrysostom. Why did Christian theologians refrain from using the Gospel of John to create their anti-Jewish polemic for more than two centuries? Moreover, without the Gospel of John, how did anti-Judaism develop in early Christianity? What were the religious and political motivations from the second to the fourth centuries that prompted early Christians to promote such anti-Judaism?

Early Distrust of the Gospel of John

Scholars estimate that the Gospel of John was most likely written circa 90 C.E., and "a final redaction of may have taken place some 10 or 15 years later after 1-2-3 John."[60] However, the Fourth Gospel had considerable difficulty being accepted by the early Christian Church; it received opposition from the Roman church as late as 200 C.E.,

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[59] Rosemary Radford Ruether. "Anti-Semitism and Christian Theology," in *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era?* Ed. Eva Fleischner (New York: KTAV, 1977), 82.

[60] "The Canon of The New Testament," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1990), 1046.

and many early theologians distrusted it long after it was included with the Synoptic Gospels in early formations of what would become the New Testament canon.[61] The distrust of the Gospel of John occurred both "because of sharp differences of John from the Synoptics and because of its early second century use by the Gnostics."[62]

Some scholars argue that there was originally only one gospel, and this "earliest gospel was unwritten."[63] The oral tradition of the gospel was carried to outside communities, where it was written down. Thus "an individual written Gospel was looked on as the local variation of the one basic gospel," and there is little indication that the author of any one of the canonized Gospels expected his audience to read another gospel besides that which he had written.[64] Furthermore, the written gospels were most likely intended as supplements to, rather than substitutions for, the oral gospel.

Before "about 180 CE church writers do not mention the Gospel [of John's] existence."[65] In the second century, however, when the Gospel of John came into communities familiar with the any of the Synoptic Gospels, it seemed to enter into competition with them, partly due to its radical break from Judaism. Goodspeed argues:

> It must have made a great impression, and naturally seemed to challenge not so much the old oral gospel as the newer written forms of the gospel such as those of Mark at Rome, Matthew at Antioch, and Luke at Ephesus. These books, or at least Matthew and Luke, with their more Jewish ways of presenting Christianity, must have been brought forward by conservative people opposed to the new gospel, and came into competition with it.[66]

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[61] "The Canon of the New Testament," 1047.
[62] "The Canon of the New Testament," 1047.
[63] Edgar J. Goodspeed. *The Formation of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1928), 33.
[64] "The Canon of the New Testament," 1047.
[65] Harris, 141.
[66] Goodspeed, 35.

Thus the Gospel of John's radical separation from Judaism and the Synoptic tradition is perhaps one reason why it was initially ill-received and distrusted by early Christians.

The other major difficulty that the Gospel of John faced in gaining acceptance during this time period was the fact that the Gnostics (a religious group considered heretics by early Christians) had appropriated it as part of their own set of important scriptures. Because the Fourth Gospel was so popular with heretical groups and so different from the Synoptic Gospels, many early Christians were suspicious of its authorship and authenticity.[67] Caius, a Roman presbyter writing at the beginning of the third century, designated the Gospel of John as the work of Cerinthus, a Gnostic teacher.[68] The association of the Gospel of John with the Gnostics made it necessary for the Church to pursue the authenticity of apostolic authorship in order to give it credibility.[69]

To solve this problem, Iranaeus of Lyons (d. 202 C. E.) affirmed that the Gospel of John was written by the Beloved Disciple: the Apostle John, son of Zebedee and brother of James.[70] Thus the official stance of the Church at the beginning of the third century was that the Gospel of John, like the Gospel of Matthew, "had as its author an eyewitness of the life of Jesus."[71] Contemporary scholars now believe it is unlikely that the Apostle John wrote the document bearing his name. Such criticism regarding the apostolic authorship of the Gospel of John also occurred during the middle of the third century when a group within the church (designated by the epithet "Alogoi") suggested

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[67] Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fritmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, eds. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1990), 946.
[68] Werner Georg Kümmel. *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Howard Clark Kee. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 197.
[69] Brown, Fritmyer, and Murphy, 946.
[70] Harris, 141.
[71] Kümmel, 196.

the Fourth Gospel was indeed written by the Gnostic Cerinthus.[72] Church historian Eusebius also suggested that it was possible that Iranaeus confused the Apostle John with a presbyter from Asia Minor known as "John the Elder."[73] The lack of confirmation that the author of the Fourth Gospel was the Apostle John, and the suggestion that the author was instead perhaps part of the heretical Gnostic group, lent a stigma to the Gospel of John that caused it to be distrusted as an authentic Gospel for many years, and it is perhaps for this reason that Christian theologians from this period did not use John directly to support developing anti-Jewish sentiment.

The Continued Rise of Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity

During the development of Christianity during this time, and despite the distrust for the Gospel of John, the charges "against the Jews in the writings of the early church fathers, though similar and often parallel with those in the New Testament, are intensified and expanded to include God's ultimate and final rejection of the Jews."[74] During this time, there seems to have been a shift in ideology among the early Christian theologians from an opposition to the tenets of Judaism as a means of salvation to an opposition to the Jewish people themselves.[75] This shift led first to outright religious hostility toward the Jews, and later to their political persecution. Early Christian theologians justified such hostility because they believed the Jews to have been totally rejected by God and themselves to have permanently inherited God's favor.

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[72] Kümmel, 197.
[73] Harris142.
[74] Lee Martin McDonald. "Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers," in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 216.
[75] McDonald, 216.

An often-overlooked factor leading to anti-Jewish sentiment was the fact that from 100 to 400 CE, despite widespread Christian belief that they had replaced the Jews as God's chosen people, "the Jews were fervent in their missionary zeal, proselytizing many to their faith."[76] In the early years following the emergence of Christianity, the Jews continued to enjoy religious and material prosperity despite the Christian claims that God had rejected them. Furthermore, their proselytizing was so successful that many Christians who opposed the Jews on account of their religion had wives who converted to Judaism.[77] The Jews retained many adherents and admirers, much to the chagrin of early Christian theologians. Such theologians contributed to the anti-Judaic literature identified as part of the *Adversos Judaeos* (Against the Jews) tradition.

The anti-Jewish themes brought forth in the *Adversos Judaeos* literature "center around two major theses: (1) the rejection of the Jews and the election of the Gentile church, and (2) the abrogation of the Law."[78] The hermeneutical method the church fathers used to prove the rejection of the Jewish people was to apply the negative judgments and descriptions found in the Old and New Testaments solely to the Jewish people, and then attribute messages of faith and promise to the new Gentile Christian church.[79] Although this belief is consistent with the underlying anti-Jewish sentiment found in the Gospel of John, the early distrust of the Fourth Gospel meant that very few church fathers directly referenced the Gospel of John when writing *Adversos Judaeos* literature.

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[76] McDonald, 221.
[77] W. H. C. Frend. *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 41-42.
[78] Ruether, "Anti-Semitism and Christian Theology," 82.
[79] Ruether, "Anti-Semitism and Christian Theology," 82.

Christian literature in the early centuries of the Common Era was often written for the purpose of defining and justifying emerging Christian beliefs. Early Christian theologians faced several difficult problems, the first of which was the fact that it was fundamentally dependant upon the symbols and scriptures claimed by another religious community (the Jews). Another problem early theologians faced was the fact that the Jewish community was able to present arguments that seemed to establish effectively their legitimacy of these scriptures and traditions. Most problematic for early Christian theologians, however, was the fact the Jewish community was still appealing even to those professing a belief in Jesus Christ. Early theologians, therefore, felt an urgent need to distance themselves from their Jewish history in order to validate the merits of Christianity. This was achieved by vilifying the Jews, and invalidating the Jewish religion, in order to explain the necessity of the new Christian religion.

Theologically, the Christians and the Jews "had positions that were mutually exclusive, each claiming to be the sole heir of the biblical faith."[80] For Christianity, anti-Judaism was perceived to be an intrinsic element in self-definition and self-affirmation. As such, some scholars now say the *Adversus Judaeos* literature "was not created to convert Jews or even primarily to attack Jews, but to affirm the identity of the church, which could only be done by invalidating the identity of the Jews."[81] This was accomplished by exegeses of Old Testament and New Testament materials that mention the Jews in a pejorative manner, and creating sermons or commentaries on these anti-Jewish passages. As Rosemary Ruther argues,

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[80] Rosmeary Ruether. *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 180.
[81] Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 181.

> It was virtually impossible for the Christian preacher or exegete to teach scripturally at all without alluding to the anti-Judaic theses. Christian scriptural teaching and preaching per se is based on a method in which anti-Judaic polemic exists as the left hand of its Christological hermeneutic.

Anti-Jewish sentiment had become so embedded in Christian self-definition that it became practically impossible for the early theologians to separate the two elements from each other. In this way, exegesis of New Testament passages became the vehicle for expressing early Christian anti-Judaism. As its authenticity became popularly accepted nearing the end of the third century CE, the Gospel of John with its strongly anti-Jewish themes and passages became a key element as the polemic moved into the fourth century. Before moving to an examination of the way in which the Gospel of John was directly used to support the anti-Jewish polemic in the fourth century, it is worth noting that at least one theologian in the late second century CE used the Gospel of John *indirectly* to create one of the most strongly anti-Jewish works to come out of the early Church.

Melito of Sardis

Many scholars consider Melito of Sardis' *On Pascha*, written in the late second century ostensibly to settle a dispute on the time of day at which to keep the Pascha, as one of the most vitriolic and astonishingly anti-Jewish works to emerge from the early Christian tradition.[82] According to Alistair Stewart-Sykes, one of the most predominant factors explaining Melito's hostile relationship to Judaism was the fact that he was "a Christian standing in the Johannine tradition."[83] Although Melito does not directly quote

[82] Alistair Stewart Sykes. *Melito of Sardis/ On Pascha: With the Fragments of Melito and Other Material Related to the Quartodecimans* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 11.
[83] Sykes, 26.

the Gospel of John when creating his anti-Jewish polemic, it is clear that he shares the same theology that is found in the Fourth Gospel.

Melito makes the claim that Christ superceded the law, and the law of the Jews found in the Old Testament was replaced by the coming of Jesus. On this topic, he says:

> For the law was a word, and the old was new, going out from Sion and Jerusalem, and the commandment was grace, and the type was a reality, and the lamb was a son, and the sheep was a man, and the man was God.[84]

Here, he associates the Son of God with a lamb, and the epithet "Lamb of God" is only found in the Gospel of John. Melito also clearly associates the law of the Old Testament with the preexistent "Word of God," which is the description of Jesus found in the opening passage of the Gospel of John. In this passage, he more clearly illustrates that Jesus (as the Word of God) replaced the law:

> The Gospel is the narrative and fulfillment of the law, and the church is the repository of reality...the law was wonderful before the illumination of the Gospel. But when the church arose and the Gospel came to be, the type, depleted, gave up meaning to the truth: and the law, fulfilled, gave up meaning to the Gospel.[85]

Thus it is that Jesus came to fulfill the law, which is a sentiment contained also in John 15:25: "This is to fulfill what is written in their Law." Although Melito does not quote from the Gospel of John to support the claim that Christ superceded the law by virtue of being the Logos, the sentiment is one found in the Johannine tradition, especially its theology of "The word made flesh" (John 1).

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[84] Cf. *On Pascha*, 7.
[85] Cf. *On Pascha*, 40-42.

In a claim that is strikingly similar to that found in the Gospel of John, Melito affirms that the Jews are blind, and they "do not listen to Jesus, nor do they see God in him."[86] He states:

> You were not Israel. You did not see God. You did not perceive the Lord, Israel, you did not recognize the first born son of God...[87]

This idea of Jewish blindness to the nature of Jesus is found in John 1:10-12 and John 9: 35-41, so again it seems as though Melito is indeed aware of the Johannine theology.

The most critical evidence that suggests that Melito was writing from a Johannine perspective is the claim that the Jews persecuted and finally executed Jesus:

> But you cast the vote of opposition against your Lord, whom the gentiles worshipped, at whom the uncircumcised marveled, whom the foreigners glorified, over whom even Pilate washed his hands: for you killed him at the great feast.[88]

Many scholars claim that with this passage, Melito became the first theologian to charge the Jews with deicide (the murder of God that resulted from the crucifixion of Christ). It seems, however, that this is merely an expansion upon the Johannine "attempt to shift the blame for the crucifixion away from the Romans," and it is only John's treatment of the Jews that makes possible Melito's charge of deicide. For this reason, Sykes argues, "It is not Melito but John who is the first to make the charge of deicide against the Jewish people."[89]

Although Melito does not directly quote passages from the Gospel of John, as he does with passages from the Old Testament and the Synoptic Gospels, it seems evident that his theology coincides with that found in the Fourth Gospel. His knowledge of the

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[86] Sykes, 26.
[87] Cf. *On Pascha*, 82.
[88] Cf. *On Pascha*, 92.
[89] Sykes, 26.

anti-Judaism found in the Gospel of John enables him to create such a hostile anti-Jewish polemic, and Melito's charge of deicide is one that will be repeated by subsequent theologians in the centuries to follow. The anti-Jewish sentiment that is found in Melito's *On Pascha* illustrates the problem that occurs when the anti-Jewish sentiment found in the Gospel of John is taken out of its historical context and makes its way into Christian theology. In the fourth century, John Chrysostom exemplifies this problem with his direct treatment of the Fourth Gospel.

The Rise of Christian Anti-Judaism in the late Fourth Century

The fourth century C.E. marked a "decisive moment in the history of both Judaism and Christianity."[90] Although there was little interchange of theological ideas between Jews and Christians, this was a time when the two religions reached an unprecedented degree of separation and mutual exclusion. Moreover, the fourth century brought the critical conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity that allowed Christianity to rise to a political authority. This uprising of political power was "to the advantage of the Christians and the detriment of the Jews."[91] The new Christian authorities, backed by Constantine, were "faced with the immense task of imposing moral and intellectual standards on the happy-go-lucky Roman world."[92] The Christian church "had a mass of nominal adherents" who professed to be Christians but did not totally renounce Judaism. In fact, many Jews who had converted to Christianity refused to give up their adherence to certain Jewish customs and laws. This "Judaizing" by early Christians "regularly provoked anti-Jewish polemic on the part of ecclesiastical leaders."[93]

The political victory of the Christian church meant that it enjoyed official recognition, and "increasingly, the power over the whole executive machinery of the empire."[94] Many upper class Roman citizens converted to Christianity, and this "brought

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[90] James Parkes. *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism,* (New York, The World Publishing Company, 1961), 153.
[91] Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken. *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era,* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978), 25.
[92] Meeks and Wilken, 155.
[93] Gager, 118.
[94] Parkes, 156.

into the Church a large membership which was probably already hostile to the Jews"[95] because of the uprisings incited by the Jews in the previous centuries. The one event that remained at the center of political unrest above all others was the controversy regarding the destruction of the second temple that had occurred in 70 CE, and the subsequent Jewish attempts to rebuild it.[96]

Christians interpreted the destruction of the temple as the fulfillment of the prophecy in Genesis 49:10: *The scepter will not depart from Judah...until he comes to whom it belongs*. As Robert Wilken states,

> For Christians, the decisive point was that the destruction of the temple and the dispersal of the Jews from Jerusalem had occurred within a generation of the life and death of Jesus (Origen *Hom.* 14.13 *in Jer.*)...Without the temple, there were no longer an altar, priests, worship, or sacrifices (*Hom.* 17.1 *in Joshua*). The emergence of the Church coincided with a profound transformation of the condition of the Jewish people and the practice of the Jewish religion. "The word of God had abandoned the assembly of the Jews and there is now another assembly, the Church, which is drawn from the nations" (*Hom.* 14.15 *in Jerem.*).

By the fourth century, the notion that the destruction of the temple was a physical manifestation of God's rejection of the Jews was widespread in Christian writings. By the time Constantine had made Christianity the official Roman religion, "the spread of Christianity supported the view that Jerusalem would never again belong to the Jews and that the temple would never be rebuilt."[97]

To the dismay of Christians, however, this view was challenged when the emperor Julian began a full-scale refutation of Christianity, and undertook the project of rebuilding the temple in 363 CE. This emphasis on the temple renewed the conflict

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[95] Parkes, 158.
[96] Robert L. Wilken. *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 134.
[97] Wilken, 138.

between Jews and Christians over the legitimacy over Jewish law. Julian's challenge to Christianity was so volatile because it suggested that if the rebuilding of the temple and "the observance of the Law were legitimate, then Christianity was illegitimate."[98] The impact of this challenge was felt most in areas where there were large amounts of Judaizing Christians, who, "by celebrating the Jewish festivals, and observing the law, proclaimed by their very actions that the Jewish rites were legitimate."[99]

Amid the upsurge in Judaizing Christianity, the Church Fathers in the fourth century found it necessary to sow the seeds of anti-Judaism into Christian theology in order to quell the fascination with Judaism and re-validate the Christian faith. In Antioch, where large numbers of Christians were attending the synagogues instead of the churches, Saint John Chrysostom expressed his anti-Jewish sentiments with a rhetorical violence and hostility that is unsurpassed by any of his other contemporary theologians.

He was prompted to write his homilies due to the fact that members of his community "not only failed to share the official view of Judaism as contemptible and inimical to true faith, but had even gone so far as to involve themselves in Judaizing practices."[100] Far from depicting a widespread hostility towards the Jews on behalf of Christians, however, Chrysostom's invective seems to indicate "the exact opposite: a wide-spread Christian infatuation with Judaism."[101] Although the separation between Christianity and Judaism had occurred on a theological level, it seems that Christians had a much more difficult time separating from Jewish tradition on a practical level. While the homilies are directed toward members of his own community for their continued

[98] Wilken, 148.
[99] Wilken, 148.
[100] Gager, 120.
[101] Meeks and Wilken., 31.

participation in Jewish practices, and his wrath is clearly directed at the Judaizers, yet he seeks to punish the Jews for this occurrence.

In Chrysostom's sermons against the Jews and Judaizing Christians, "the doctrine of the reprobation of the Jews appears, not as the condemnation of Jews of past time, but as the way of viewing contemporary Jews."[102] Although a majority of anti-Judaic authors during this time wrote about the reprobation of the Jews, Chrysostom differs from them in that he took Scriptural passages out of their historical anti-Jewish background to support his present-day anti-Jewish polemic. In his Commentaries on the Gospel of John, Chrysostom used the anti-Jewish passages found therein to condemn his contemporary community of Jews and Judaizers more than two centuries after the passages were originally written.

The anti-Judaism in the Rhetoric of Saint John Chrysostom

John Chrysostom, considered among the greatest of Greek Fathers and named a saint of the Catholic Church, was bishop of Antioch in 386 C.E. Although admired for his eloquence and gifts in preaching ("Chrysostom" is a Greek epithet meaning "golden-tongued"), Chrysostom's language against the Jews is exceedingly intemperate and hostile. Considered "the greatest of the Christians sophists," Chrysostom was a preacher masterfully trained in the art of rhetoric.[103] He employed a whole range of rhetorical techniques in his homilies attacking the Jews, and these techniques enabled the sermons to seem even more vitriolic and abusive.

[102] Ruether, 174.
[103] Wilken, 104.

Fourth century rhetorical style reveled in excess and exaggeration, and the technique of hyperbole was highly effective in producing such an effect. "The rhetors overstate, they magnify, they use poetical and grandiloquent words for simplest actions; everything is writ larger than life."[104] Although Chrysostom did not follow the formal requirements of fixed speeches and the rhetorical condition, the abusive rhetorical techniques "are apparent in the use of half-truths, innuendo, guilt by association, abusive and incendiary language, malicious comparisons, and in all, excess and exaggeration."[105] Some scholars argue that such exaggerations "should not be taken at face value or thought to reflect the opinions of the orator."[106] It is not my intention to misalign the character of Chrysostom by claiming that he was hatefully anti-Jewish as evidenced by his rhetorical speeches. Rather, I am concerned with showing the way in which sacred Christian scriptures, when in the hands of a skillful rhetorician, can become tools for supporting hateful anti-Jewish polemic.

Homilies Against the Jews

Chrysostom delivered a series of eight sermons against the Jews in 387 C.E. These sermons employ some of the most anti-Jewish rhetoric found in his entire collection of work. Although steeped in the rhetorical tradition, these sermons "also employ a distinctly Christian invective, drawn from earlier Christian writings and from the Christian and Jewish Scriptures."[107] Chrysostom merges traditional rhetorical themes, such as the charge of Jewish immorality, with Christian themes such as the Jews'

[104] Wilken, 107.
[105] Wilken, 116.
[106] Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen. *John Chrysostom*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 148.
[107] Wilken, 123.

apostasy, faithlessness, rejection of God, and hardheartedness. Wilken offers one such example from Homily 1.2:

> "Do not be surprised if I have called the Jews wretched. They are truly wretched and miserable for they have received many good things from God yet they have spurned them and violently cast them away." This passage from the first homily begins with familiar terms from the sophistic invective, but it takes a distinctly Christian turn with the addition of an explanation for presumed Jewish inferiority.[108]

By supplying a Christian rationale for such traditional invective, Chrysostom expertly merges rhetorical tradition with scriptural language.

Another way in which Chrysostom merges rhetoric with Christian themes is by first using New Testament passages to support his polemic; then, as if to acknowledge that the Jews do not accept the authority of these passages, he singles out chance passages from the Old Testament that also seem to support his invective. He takes passages out of their historical context in the Old Testament and uses them against the Jews in order to exaggerate, insinuate, and imply guilt by association.[109]

To support his rhetorical style of insinuation, textual support for these homilies is derived mostly from Old Testament prophecies, but Chrysostom does refer to the Fourth Gospel in his first *Adversus Judaeos* homily. He says that although many "respect the Jew and think that their present way of life is a venerable one...I hasten to uproot and tear out this deadly opinion." Chrysostom declares that the Jews have been cast aside by God, and "when God forsakes a people, what hope of salvation is left? When God forsakes a place that place becomes the dwelling of demons." Chrysostom's reason for God's rejection of the Jews is based on verse 8:19 in the Gospel of John:

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[108] Wilken, 123.
[109] Wilken, 124.

> Then they asked him, Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my father," Jesus replied. "If you know me, you would know my father also."

From this passage, Chrysostom argues that the Jews are thereby false in their claims that they love and adore God.

> No Jew adores God! Who says so? The Son of God says so... Could I produce a witness more trustworthy than the Son of God? If then, the Jews fail to know the Father, if they crucified the Son, if they thrust off the help of the Spirit, who should not make bold to declare plainly that the synagogue is a dwelling of demons?

From verse 8:19, Chrysostom asserts that the Jews did not know God because they did not know Jesus. He makes this claim by expertly using the rhetorical technique of textual expansion. He seamlessly supplements the actual Gospel text with his own anti-Jewish sentiment: because God had therefore cast aside the Jewish people, the synagogue is now a dwelling place of demons because the Jews have been forsaken. According to Chrysostom, the Son of God has said this to be true, and therefore nobody can argue the validity of his claim. However, using the interpretive method of textual expansion, Chrysostom actually went beyond the text to further his own agenda: to stop Christians from attending the synagogue by declaring the synagogue a dwelling of demons, and he cleverly attributed those opinions to the Son of God as well to make such a claim seem infallible. By expanding upon this gospel passage is to insist that the Jews do not know (and therefore do not love) God, Chrysostom is therefore able to easily support his personal argument that Judaizers ought to avoid the synagogue.

One of Chrysostom's most dangerous rhetorical methods in these homilies is that of transmutation: extracting anti-Jewish passages from their original historical context

and applying them to the Jews living in Chrysostom's own day. This is particularly evident than in Chrysostom's labeling of Jews "Christ Killers" in the sixth homily:

> You did slay Christ, you did lift violent hands against the Master, you did spill his precious blood. This is why you have no chance for atonement, excuse, or defense (6.2).

This theme is replete with overtones borrowed from Melito's charge of deicide in *On Pascha*, which applies the condemnation of the particular Jews who participated in the killing of Christ depicted in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke to all Jews in the fourth century context. This transmutation is the most dangerous of the rhetorical techniques because it allows for a historically contextualized passage to be reapplied in a new historical setting without regard for the particularity of the passage. This is the way in which particular anti-Jewish passages in the Gospel of John becomes universally applicable to all Jews in all historical contexts.

Homilies Commenting on the Gospel of John

Chrysostom relied heavily on the textual expansion method of interpretation in his Homilies 53 and 54 commenting on the Gospel of John. In these two homilies, he explicates the verses leading up to the passage where Jesus declared the Jews to be sons of the devil in 8:44. In Homily 53, beginning at verse 8:12, Chrysostom works through the reasons the Jews continued to question Jesus about his identity and the validity of his testimony. When the Jews ask Jesus about his identity and do not understand that he is telling them about God, Jesus replied

> When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him (8:28-29).

As a result of this discourse, "many [Jews] put their faith in him." Chrysostom declares this passage, which seems to portray the Jews in a positive way because they believed in Jesus, as an indication of the truly abhorrent behavior and imperfect faith of the Jews. (Even their apparent faith is improperly motivated, according to Chrysostom.) Thus, Chrysostom *exceeds* the anti-Jewishness found in the Fourth Gospel.

First, Chrysostom claims that Jesus brought his discourse with the Jews "down to a lowlier level"[110] in order that they might understand and believe. Although this is not contained in the text, he arrives at the conclusion that Jews were not capable of understanding a complicated message regarding the nature of Jesus. Yet even, when the passage clearly indicates that the Jews believed Jesus, Chrysostom concludes:

> They did believe, then, not as they ought, but infrequently and sporadically, when they were pleased and were soothed by the humility of His words. The Evangelist [author of the Gospel of John] showed that they did not have perfect faith by the words that immediately followed, since by these they insulted him once more.[111]

Chrysostom's attack on the Jews here is two-fold. He impugns their intelligence by arguing that Jesus delivered to them a lowlier message, and therefore "they heard something less sublime, in order that they might be convinced."[112] Moreover, even when the Jews did believe in Jesus' "less sublime" message, Chrysostom declares their faith fickle and tenuous by claiming that the next words the Jews spoke to Jesus were insults. This accusation is not textually accurate, as the next thing the Jews said to Jesus was an inquiry asking him to clarify his statement that the truth will set them free. They replied:

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[110] Saint John Chrysostom. *Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist: Homilies 48-88,* trans. by Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin, S.C.H., (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1959), 60.
[111] Chrysostom, 60.
[112] Chrysostom, 60.

> We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free? (8:33)

Chrysostom does not directly refer to this passage, nor does he pursue the reason he believes these words to be an insult to Christ. He makes the claim, leaves it unsubstantiated by not citing it, and allows the audience to believe that the Jews did indeed formulate some insulting reply to Jesus, and that these insults invalidated their tenuous belief in Jesus' message. This is another example of Chrysostom's textual expansion, where he reaches beyond the Gospel to invoke an even stronger anti-Jewish sentiment than was present in the text. He claims that the Jews were incapable of understanding Jesus unless he brought his discourse to their lowly comprehension level, and even if they understood his message they would not be true believers. These claims are not directly present in the Gospel of John, so Chrysostom invents them by textual expansion in order to support his anti-Jewish polemic.

In Homily 54, Chrysostom uses yet another rhetorical device against the Jews, similar to textual expansion, where he invents dialogue that *could* or *should* have taken place between Jesus and the Jews, and then refutes such supposed dialogue with the same vitriol as if it had actually occurred in the Gospel text. Some examples:

> Yet, if it were incumbent on them to wax indignant, *they should have done so* at the first part of what He said: 'You shall know the truth.' *They should have said*: 'What's that? Do we not now know the truth? Is our Law false then, and our knowledge too?' However, they were not concerned about any of this...[113]

> Next, to prevent them from saying: 'We have no sin' *(for probably they would have asserted this)*, see how He neatly included them in the category of sinners.[114]

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[113] Chrysostom, 66.
[114] Chrysostom, 68.

Including in his homilies things that the Jews might have said, or would have been likely to say, in an ingenious way for Chrysostom to misalign and insinuate against the Jews without actually citing scriptural references (there are none!) for support.

As a skilled rhetorician and preacher, Chrysostom employed a variety of rhetorical techniques to support his anti-Jewish polemic. Chrysostom's masterful use of rhetoric enabled him to expand upon the anti-Jewish sentiment already contained in the Fourth Gospel, so that those passages became the justification for a much deeper and broader anti-Judaism than is even contained within the Gospel of John. Chrysostom's methods of interpretation allowed him to create — from what had been a very particularized anti-Jewish sentiment in the Gospel of John —a universally applicable anti-Jewish sentiment. An examination of the way in which Chrysostom manipulates the Fourth Gospel to support a hateful polemic against the Jews illustrates the inherent problem that arises when a biblical text is read outside of its original historical context.

Conclusion

The Gospel of John is one of the most valuable books in the New Testament, as it provides Christians with an understanding of the nature of Jesus as the Christ that is not found in any of the Synoptic Gospels. But despite its valuable contribution to Christian theology and Christology, modern scholars must recognize that the Fourth Gospel also contributed to the rise of anti-Judaism in early Christian development.

This use of the New Testament to support anti-Jewish polemic cannot, however, be dismissed as a problem inherent only to the early development of Christianity. It is a problem that still plagues Christianity and Judaism today, although the horror of the *Shoah* served as an awaking to many Christians to the irreparable damage done to the Jewish people because of the Christian designation of "the Jews" as God's enemies. Many churches now recognize the harmful way in which New Testament scripture has contributed to this problem. As Mary Boys reports,

> The United Methodists observe that uncritical use of anti-Jewish New Testament writings has "caused untold misery and forms the basis of modern anti-Semitism."[115]

Boys also recounts the confession of the Alliance of Baptists, who declare,

> As Baptist Christians we are the inheritors of and, in our turn, have been the transmitters of a theology which lays the blame for the death of Jesus at the feet of the Jews; a theology which has taken the anti-Jewish polemic of the Christian Scriptures out of its first century context and has made it normative for the Christian-Jewish relations...[116]

[115] Boys, 254.
[116] Boys, 254.

Both these confessions recognize the dangerous ways in which New Testament Scriptures have contributed to the persecution of the Jews when they are read uncritically and without regard for the historical context in which they were written.

The Gospel of John undeniably contains anti-Jewish passages, but its contribution to the rise of anti-Judaism occurred because early theologians extracted those passages from their particular social and historical context and attempted to apply them to another place and time. To ignore the social, religious, and historical context of the Gospel of John opens up the danger of interpreting it as if it were written for any other group of people than the first-century Johannine community that was in crisis because its faith in the revelation of God in the person of Jesus.

It is all too tempting for contemporary theologians to repeat the mistakes of early Christian theologians like Melito and Chrysostom by supplying what seems to be implied by the Fourth Gospel, thus extending and fortifying the Gulf between Christianity and Judaism.[117] And although the Gospel of John seems to point in the direction of universal anti-Judaism, its historical context indicates that it is responding only to a particular group of Jews in a particular place in time. The attempt to extract a universally anti-Jewish sentiment from the passages in the Gospel of John is an irresponsible interpretation of the message contained with its pages.

Recognizing the potentially harmful nature of the anti-Jewish passages in the New Testament, particularly those in the Gospel of John, forces the Christian community to reevaluate its deficient methods of interpreting Scripture "without sensitivity to its literary and historical context."[118] It also raises the question of how the Bible, which is

[117] Smith, 173.
[118] Boys, 177.

replete with problematic passages that have been the source of countless anti-Jewish polemics throughout history, can be considered either relevant or a source of revelation for contemporary Christians. Can contemporary Christians regard the Bible as authoritative despite its antiquated hostile attitude toward the Jews, or must they instead accept the claim that Christians "cannot accord revelatory authority to any oppressive and destructive biblical text or tradition"?[119] Must Christians consider the Gospel of John irrelevant to contemporary society because of its obsolete bias against the Jews? Or is there perhaps some way to salvage the text, so that it is both relevant and revelatory to contemporary Christians without also being harmful to contemporary Jews?[120] The answer is complicated, and it depends largely upon how the contemporary reader interprets the nature of Scripture.

If the reader interprets the Bible in a literalistic fashion, so that "each word of the Bible [is] equally and fully divine," then there is no way for the text to be reinterpreted for contemporary society because interpretation is reduced to merely the "determination of the words in their written context."[121] With this interpretive method, Scripture is seen as the unchanging and unquestionable dictations of divine revelation as they were given to a passive author. Thus, the anti-Jewish passages in the Gospel of John cannot be viewed as simply the hostile sentiments of a human author directed against particular Jews in a particular historical context; such passages are instead viewed as indisputable sentiments of God. This literalistic method of interpretation not only allows Christians to construct universal anti-Judaism from passages in the Gospel of John, but it allows them

[119] Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, as quoted in Boys, 191.
[120] A text is relevant if it is understandable and applicable to the reader within his or her own context; it is revelatory if it communicates the nature of the divine to the reader.
[121] Boys, 192.

to validate and perpetuate such a sentiment to the detriment of contemporary Jewish-Christian relations.

Mary Boys vehemently rejects the literalistic method of interpretation: *In light of all that Christianity has visited upon the Jewish people, a refusal to reinterpret our sacred scriptures would be a sinful disregard of tradition.*[122] The primary step toward reinterpretation of problematic involves understanding the historical context in which they were written. To recognize the context of the Gospel of John is not meant to diminish the problematic nature of its anti-Jewish passages, but rather to understand what exactly these passages meant in their original context in order to help determine what they *ought* to mean in our contemporary context. Determining what a passage *ought* to mean in contemporary context requires the reader to surrender the belief that a text has only one fixed meaning and to accept that it instead has a surplus of meanings that allow it to be continually reinterpreted.[123] It is this act of continuous reinterpretation that keeps the Gospel of John both relevant and revelatory to contemporary society.

The Gospel of John's significant contribution to the rise of anti-Judaism in early Christianity occurred largely because its anti-Jewish passages were not reinterpreted within the early theologians' historical context. Despite its invaluable theological and Christological contributions, contemporary Christians *must* recognize this anti-Jewish legacy left by the Fourth Gospel. These passages must then be removed from a place of literal interpretation in contemporary context and re-placed within their own historical context. The recognition and re-placement of these anti-Jewish passages allows them to be reinterpreted and thus serve a positive function in contemporary Christianity.

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[122] Boys, 194.
[123] Boys, 196.

According to Sandra Schneiders, "their ultimate revelatory purpose may be to alert us to the ways in which Christian experience can go wrong."[124] As I have shown, early Christian theologians used the anti-Jewish passages Gospel of John to create lasting anti-Jewish polemics that persist to this day. These problematic passages, once re-placed and reinterpreted, can serve as reminders of the mistakes of our forbearers, and can prompt the contemporary Christian not to repeat the same mistakes. The Gospel of John is meant to be a proclamation of the "Good News" for all Christians. Successfully re-placing and reinterpreting the anti-Jewish passages found in the Fourth Gospel can ensure that this message is never again bad news for the Jewish people.

[124] Sandra Schneiders, *Beyond Patching: Faith and Feminism in the Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 66.

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