RACE IN JOHN:

RACIALIZING DISCOURSE IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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Last but by no means least, I would like to thank my family, whose patience knows no bounds: Ron and Dean, my parents; Rick and Mary, my parents-in-law; and my two wonderful children, Harper and Grayson. I must mention my departed grandfather, Ferdinand Grayson, with whom I share a name: life-long Sunday School teacher, social worker, and ανθρωπος του Θεου.

This work is dedicated to my wife, Hope, an extraordinary woman of faith: spring of wisdom, reader-of-drafts, and—when called for—roller-of-eyes. For her unflagging belief in me, her seemingly endless patience, and her superhuman ability to tolerate hours of speculation over the referent of one pronoun,[1] I am eternally grateful.

Οικον και ὑπαρξιν μεριζουσιν πατερες παισιν, παρα δε Θεου ἁρμοζεται γυνη ανδρι.
House and wealth are inherited from ancestors, but a well-suited wife is from God.
– Proverbs 19:14

[1] The "our" (ἡμων) of Jn. 4:20, to be exact. See Chapter 3.

Abbreviations

Ant.	Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* 2d ed. Chicago, 1979
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CJ	Origen, *Commentary on John*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSHJ	*Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*
JSJPHRP	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
J.W.	Josephus, *Jewish War*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
L-S	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott. *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon.* Oxford, 1889
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon.* 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford, 1996
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*

NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York, 1983
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*

PREFACE

Well, of course I participate in racism.

Not intentionally, not willingly, not happily—but how could it have been any other way? Negative racialization forms an ever-present reality that no one can fully escape, even as we reject and struggle against it. Growing up in the Deep South in the late 20th century, I was surrounded by racist messages as pervasive as the air I breathed. A copy of *Little Black Sambo,* from my mother's own childhood, adorned the family bookshelf, and family lore included apocryphal tales of an uncle who had been a member of the Klu Klux Klan. In my home town of New Orleans, caricatures of overblown racial dialect were featured on the popular morning talk show "Walton & Johnson," and Confederate flags adorned houses and cars. Several public monuments to the Confederacy dotted the civic landscape, and these have only been coming down recently, after pitched battles aimed to prevent their removal. One such memorial, honoring fallen Confederate soldiers, had to be quietly removed in the hours before dawn because of the death threats that had accompanied an earlier, better-publicized attempt. When I began this project, a stony-faced Robert E. Lee still stood atop his 60-foot marble column in the center of Lee Circle, arms crossed, facing North;[2] the statue has since been removed.[3] In myriad ways, subtle and blatant, the message that some human beings are superior based on the supposed category of "race" was reinforced, over and over again. No matter how much I

[2] Brasted, "For New Orleans Confederate monument neighbors, life becomes a headache," *The Times-Picayune,* May 2, 2017. http:www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/05/confederate_monuments_neighbor.html, accessed on May 5, 2017.

[3] Jeff Adelson, "New Orleans Completes Removal of Confederate Monuments with Take Down of Robert E. Lee Statue," *The New Orleans Advocate,* May 19, 2017. http://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/article_40dccfac-3c91-11e7-8121-83e3757dd400.html. Accessed January 1, 2018.

disapproved of such messages, they were as pervasive and inescapable as the air I breathed, and I could no more avoid them than I could hold my breath. And just as the damage from heavy smoking remains in the lungs of ex-smokers, who knows what tars and toxins blacken the lining of my soul to this day?

It is not as if the racism I grew up with was unique to my home town; far from it. We have all drunk the Kool-Aid. Here in the turn-of-the-millenium United States, we have all imbibed more racist messages than we could ever count in our television, our music, our news and our daily interactions. They pervade both "high" and "low-brow" culture, from stand-up comedy to political speech. Racism is in the water main, and any U.S. resident who wasn't raised beside a clear mountain stream and fed by wild ravens has had a bellyfull of it. And just as mercury accumulates in the bodies of wild fish, who knows how these harmful messages continue to damage us? Even as we struggle against it, who can claim to be "free" of the racism in which we all swim?

The author of the Fourth Gospel, like all humans, also lived among pervasive and inescapable messages broadcast throughout his culture. John did not live in a vacuum. Like all Christ-believers of the first century, he woke up every morning and stubbed his toe on Empire.[4] And the ideology of the Roman empire proclaimed the superiority of some peoples over others, in ink and inscription, monument and marble. Pervasive ideas about race and peoplehood circulated at all levels, from the "high culture" of philosophy with its more systematic theories of race, to the "low culture" of satires and novels. John lived and moved in a world with its own myriad views on race, and no matter how divinely inspired he may have been, it is naive to imagine that nothing of the surrounding culture made its way into his thought.

[4] Warren Carter commonly uses this phrase in lectures to express the pervasiveness of imperial ideology, for residents of the Roman Empire.

This is the very issue that concerns us in this study. How did Mediterranean attitudes about ethnicity influence John's gospel? And what does John have to say—or at least imply—about race? Looking into these questions is no "mere" academic exercise. It bears a direct impact on the ongoing production of racism in America. For John's gospel is one of pervasive voices which shapes our thoughts today. In the United States, Christianity is one of the most powerful forces of public opinion. The implications about race that lie dormant in John have the power to shape Americans' racial thinking on a profoundly deep level.[5] Because most Christians would claim to reject racism, we are little-inclined to find it in our very scriptures. If indeed, it is lurking there, we would sooner drop our gaze than look it in the eyes.

This task is especially urgent at this moment in U.S. history. Many were confident that the U.S. electorate could not possibly elect a presidential candidate endorsed openly by several racist organizations, whose promises included the construction of a wall on the border to Mexico, and bans on Muslims entering the United States. Perhaps such rhetoric could have won votes at one time, popular wisdom held, but not today. And yet, Donald Trump, who employed overtly racializing rhetoric during his campaign (and welcomed the support of white supremacists), *was* elected. At this very time, his administration is pushing forward several points of an agenda which seems directly aimed at immigrants, particular ethnic groups. The response of much of the mainstream media, following the election, was shocked disbelief. How could this have happened? But the elements and influences that allowed for the election of such a candidate were

[5] I am put in mind of a disturbing image that went "viral" after the Klu Klux Klan protest held in Charlottesville, NC, over the removal of Confederate monuments across the South, held on August 12, 2017. The photo shows an African-American officer standing in front of a police barrier, behind which are several white supremacists—one dressed in KKK regalia, two giving a Neo-Nazi salute, and one holding a Confederate flag in one hand, and a sign in the other. The sign reads, "Jews are Satan's Children – John 8:31-47, John 10:22-33." Katz, Andrew. "The Story Behind the Viral Photo of the Officer and the KKK," *Time,* August 14, 2017; Accessed on April 3, 2018, at http://time.com/4899668/charlottesville-virginia-protest-officer-kkk-photo.

always there. Ignoring these voices, or ascribing them only to "nut-jobs," overlooks how pervasive such thinking really is in U.S. Culture.

Ignoring racism does not make it go away. This is as sure in the field of New Testament studies as it is in contemporary U.S. culture. Much Christian scholarship on John takes an apologist tack, concerned to show that the Fourth Gospel is not *really* as anti-Semitic as it sometimes seems. Bieringer *et al.* suggest that many scholars are motivated to avoid any acknowledgment of anti-Judaism in John, for fear that their exegetical work may play right into the hands of anti-Semites.[6] But I would suggest that such avoidance is not helpful. Those with racist agendas have proven themselves perfectly capable of finding fodder for their ideologies in John—with or without any assistance from serious scholars.[7]

The most insidious influences are the ones left unexamined. For every Confederate monument we loudly protest, how many more subtle racisms go unnoticed, indulged—even chuckled at? Or how many are excused as products of their time, artifacts of artistic merit that

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[6] "The honest attempt of critical scholarship to face up to the sinfulness present in biblical texts, in order to correct them, is here perverted and misused as an argument of vile and repugnant ideologies. Perhaps this is one of the implicit yet subconscious concerns underlying the immense efforts of many scholars to avoid avoid at all cost the admission that the author or the text of the Fourth Gospel is contaminated by anti-Judaism." Bieringer, Reidmund, Didier Pollefyt, and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville, "Wrestling with Johannine Anti-Judaism: A Hermeneutical Framework for the Analysis of the Current Debate," pp. 3-40 in *Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel* (edited by Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefeyt, and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

[7] Members of the white supremacist "Christian Identity" movement use John to bolster their profoundly disturbing vision of a primordial, irreconcilable chasm between whites and all other races—although Jews are singled out for the most intense vilification. In the tract "The Two Seeds of Genesis 3:15," hugely influential among "Christian Identity" groups, Dan Gayman writes, "Read all of John 8:38–59. This entire chapter is a continuation of the enmity that was to exist between the seed of the serpent and the Seed of the Woman. In John 8:44 Jesus Christ told the Jews (and the Word of God is telling you) that the Jews are of their father the devil and their father is traced back to Cain. Read verse 47. The Jews could not hear God's Word because they were not a direct creation of God, they were the seed of the serpent. In John 10:26 Jesus Christ told the Jews: 'But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.' Why could the Jews not believe? Because they were not the genetic seed of God." (Dan Gayman, writing as "Charles Lee Mange," *The Two Seeds of Genesis 3:15,* Pamphlet, 1982 [1977]; https://ia801302.us.archive.org/0/items/2seedsgenesis315, accessed on Jan. 19, 2018).

Wesley Swift preached (and subsequently published) a series of white-supremacist sermons in the 1960s, not coincidentally during the Civil Rights movement. Against the liberal seminarians of his day, he says, "And they say that John was anti-Semitic. 'What a terrible biased prejudice. For he put in to the Gospel of John a lot of terrible things.' But remember, that everything that John put into his Gospel, Jesus said." ("Snake Nest," sermon, preached Nov. 13, 1962; https://swift.christogenea.org/articles/snake-nest-11-13-62, accessed Jan. 1, 2018).

are part of our cultural heritage—or even as gospels? It is when we name and confront the elements we reject, that they lose much of their power to shape us. If there are indeed harmful messages about race within the gospel of John, they are at their most powerful if left unnamed. We must confront and weigh what we find there, and even, in fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12) dare to "test the spirits" (1 Jn. 4:1) of its contents, in order to firmly claim what gives us "life, and life abundant" (Jn. 10:10), and to reject what leads to death.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND THEORY

"How is it that you, a Judean, ask a drink of me, a Samaritan woman?"

– John 4:9

Aspects of race and ethnicity make many appearances in the Fourth Gospel. Sometimes, this is simply a matter of identifying a character as a member of a particular race, such as a Samaritan (4:7), a Judean (4:9), or some "Greeks" (12:20).[8] Other times, ethnicity features in the gospel's rhetoric of challenge and riposte. Various characters use racializing rhetoric to buttress their own positions, defend their honor, or undercut an opponent. At its most blunt, this can amount to name-calling—simply hurling slurs at an opponent, as when Jesus is called a "Samaritan," (8:48). Other forms of racial rhetoric include appeals to ethnic ancestors (4:12, 6:31, 8:33), the devaluation of inhabitants of a particular racial/ethnic region (Nazareth in 1:46, Galilee in 7:42, 7:52b), or the marshaling of racial/ethnic group loyalty (11:50-52). The skepticism that a Galilean could possibly be the Christ, raised first by the crowds (7:40-44), and then by the Pharisees (7:45-53), is one vivid way in which racial polemic silences disagreement.

At other times, John's gospel raises the issue of which labels are appropriate to a given individual. Jesus problematizes some Judeans' claim to be "children of Abraham" (8:39), and flatly denies their further claim to be children of God (8:47). Jesus himself is a Galilean (7:52) from the town of Nazareth (1:45, 18:5, 19:19), who self-identifies as Judean (4:22). He is so identified by members of other races, such as Pontius Pilate (18:33; cf. 4:9, 19:3), who goes on

[8] In this last example, the "Ἕλληνες" who have come to the festival are most likely Hellenistic Judeans from the Diaspora, rather than Greeks with a Hellenic pedigree. Luke uses the word in a similar sense in Acts 6:1. We might say that these individuals possessed a "nested identity," belonging to two ethnicities whose relative importance could vary depending on the context. We will consider "nested identities" further below.

to ask: "*I* am not a Judean, am I?" (18:35). Pilate's rhetorical question is not, perhaps, as clear-cut as he intends it to be. Although it is obvious that this Roman governor is no Judean himself, the question does raise the issue of how, and under what circumstances, individuals can be identified as members of various races. It is a question that particularly interests the evangelist. After all, the gospel's hero can be called a Galilean (7:52, 1:45; 18:5), a Judean (4:22), or even, if the situation warrants, a Samaritan (8:48). Nicodemus, who seemingly resides in Jerusalem, becomes a "Galilean" when his sympathies stray beyond the pale (7:52); on the other hand, Jesus admiringly calls an *actual* Galilean, Nathanael, an "Israelite." What is the meaning of all of this attention to ethnic labels? When and why are they applied to various characters, and what is the significance of doing so?

Although Jesus *does* engage the subject of ethnicity in his dialogues (e.g., 4:21-22; 8:37), he does not ultimately promote any particular earthly ethnicity as superior, nor does he denigrate opponents on this basis. Rather, he reframes the concept of race itself in terms of cosmic lineage —the children of God, and the children of the devil. This has the effect of downplaying the significance of any (earthly) racial identity. Such reasoning undercuts the rationale for conventional racialization, but can—paradoxically—actually create new criteria for discrimination. Such a meta-racial logic also has the effect of deconstructing and devaluing earthly ethnicities, ethnicities whose actual members may view as integral parts of their identity.

This project will consider how John's gospel reflects the racialized ideas current in its milieu, challenging some and adapting others. What is John's gospel saying about race, racialization,[9] and the significance of peoplehood? In order to approach an answer, I will investigate how *race*—understood as a cultural construct, not as an essential given—functioned

[9] *Racialization* refers to discourse that constructs "race" as a category—that is, rhetoric that treats race as the "`natural' or self-evident product of certain ascribed physical or cultural characteristics. See Stephen Castles and M. J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (4th ed.. New York: The Guildford Press, 2009), 37. See also "racial formation" in Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (2nd ed.; NY: Routledge, 1994).

in Mediterranean antiquity. I will consider various understandings of race that circulated in John's time, as well as examine the representations of particular ethnic groups, such as Judeans and Samaritans. Methodologically, I shall aim to privilege the ancients' own articulations of race, rather than our own contemporary views.[10]

My overall thesis is twofold: 1) Firstly, John dismisses all conventional racial identities as valid grounds for prejudice or discrimination.[11] Gospel's rhetoric undermines the various criteria on which earthly race is based, and thus undermines the construct itself. The cumulative effect of this rhetoric is to "invisibilize" earthly race, rendering it irrelevant and illusory.[12] In this sense, John promotes an "anti-racializing" anthropology: no one should be discriminated against based on human ancestry, or land of origin. Although such a rhetoric invalidates race-discrimination, its anthropology creates many other problems, on an ethical level.[13] 2) However, John's anthropology is layered and looks beyond this unimportant "earthly" level. Above it, John constructs a "heavenly" level of racial identity based on one's descent from either God or the devil. As I shall argue, this "cosmic" racial identity *does* determine one's worth and one's character, as one resembles one's "father," whether God or the devil (8:42-47).

Race in the Field of Johannine Scholarship

Johannine scholarship has not focused its attention squarely on the problem of ethnicity, *as*

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[10] In this context, I employ "ancients" as shorthand for the residents of the Roman Empire in the first century CE and their cultural forebears.

[11] "Conventional" racial identities are those that most residents of the ancient Roman Empire would be likely to recognize as discrete peoples, such as Egyptians, Dacians, Syrians, etc.

[12] However, John recognizes that the category, even having been exposed as illusory, is still very much present and active in the arguments of characters who oppose Jesus.

[13] One is reminded of the so-called "Colorblind Society" touted in the during the Reagan administration in the U.S. The idea that we have now "moved past" race can lead to all manner of ethical problems, including devaluing others' identities, blinding the privileged to their own privilege, normalizing actual power differentials between race, and justifying cultural appropriation. "Colorblind" ideology can be used to fight taking affirmative steps to redress injustices, normativize majority (white) culture, and deny the disproportionate risk of violence or arrest minorities may experience – all while claiming to be "anti-racist."

understood by the ancients themselves. Nor has it seriously interrogated the rhetoric of John's gospel to inquire how it (re)constructs the category "race" for early Christ-followers. To be sure, such questions have been profitably applied to other areas of the New Testament. For instance, in the past twenty years, a number of scholars have applied a "race-conscious approach" to the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, and many of Paul's letters, to great effect.[14] A reading of John's gospel from this angle could be expected to yield similarly intriguing results.

Typically, when race has been in view in Johannine scholarship, it has taken the form of apologetics. For example, many scholars have attempted to blunt the seeming anti-Semitism of John, often by arguing that John's "Jews" (Ιουδαιοι) are generally a stand-in for the Jerusalem authorities.[15] This tendency has sometimes been linked to the question of whether John addresses a group that has experienced a traumatic expulsion from the synagogue, an idea central to the "two-level reading" of John proposed by the work of J. Louis Martyn and Raymond Brown. This reading posits that the Johannine community has been forcibly expelled from the synagogues after the *Birkat ha-Minim* (or "Blessing Against the Heretics") made it impossible for Jesus-believers to remain within; therefore, many scenes might be read on two distinct levels—on the narrative level of Jesus' actions, but also as an analogy for the conflicts of John's own day.[16]

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[14] For example, see Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons Then Heirs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Markus Cromhout, *Jesus and Ethnicity: Reconstructing Judeans Ethnicity in Q* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007); Davina Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008); Cynthia Baker, "From Every Nation Under Heaven" Pp. 79-99 in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009); Sze-Kar Wan's "To the Jew First and also to the Greek," in the same volume; Eric Barretto, *Ethnic Negotiations: The Function of Race and Ethnicity in Acts 16* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Love Sechrest, *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009) and "Enemies, Romans, Pigs, and Dogs: Loving the Other in the Gospel of Matthew" *Ex Auditu* 31 (2015):71-105; and Cavan Concannon, *"When You Were Gentiles": Specters of Race and Ethnicity in Roman Corinth and Paul's Corinthian Correspondence* (New York: Yale, 2014).

For an *ethnos*-critical eye toward early post-canonical Christians, see Denise Buell, *Why This New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia, 2005). Gay Byron is similarly focused on post-canonical Christians in her book *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Identity in Early Christian Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2002), although she *does* briefly examine the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8:26-40 (pp. 109-115).

[15] See some form or other of this position in Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979) 40-43; Raymond Brown, *Anchor Bible* vol. 29, lxxi; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 125-6, 130-1; for a more nuanced variant see Robert Kysar, *John, the Maverick Gospel* (Louisville: Westerminster John Knox, 1993 [1976]), 68-69.

[16] J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology of the Fourth Gospel,* 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003 [1968]); Raymond Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, (New York: Paulist, 1979).

This view of John remains incredibly influential in the field of Johannine studies, but has been successfully problematized by many scholars.[17] However, both adherents of the Martin-Brown "two-level drama" and its detractors, have primarily focused attention on the identity and significance of "the Jews" (for obvious reasons), rather than asking the larger question of how the gospel constructs and appraises the category of "race" itself.

In the context of this gap in the field, my hopes for this dissertation are twofold. Firstly, I wish to examine racializing rhetoric in John in light of ancient constructs of race, and consider how it might have functioned in that context. For example, the Samaritan woman's conversation with Jesus includes assumptions about how geography and culture "ought to" separate Judeans and Samaritans, even while acknowledging shared traditions and a (somewhat contested) claim to shared ancestors. Given the significance of descent and homeland to ancient understandings of race, what does it mean for a Samaritan woman to speak of "*our* father Jacob" (perhaps including herself and Jesus), "who gave *us* this well" (an "us" seemingly referring only to her own people, the nearby Samaritans who drink from it)?

My second hope is that this present work might widen scholarship on race in John beyond the consideration of the "Jewish/Judean" question alone. John's gospel displays an interest in race that includes, but goes far beyond, the identity of the Ιουδαιοι.[18] After all, the gospel includes a wider palette of peoples, including Galileans, Samaritans, Judeans, Israelites, Romans,

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[17] Some problems cited in the "two-level" theory include: the objection that the "early" version of the *Birkhat ha-Minim* cited by Martyn actually dates quite later; objection to the overly positivist application of Rabbinic sources to 1st century events; and the observation that an application of the "two-level" method to different passages yields a decidedly different picture of the Johannine context. See Wayne Meeks, "Breaking Away" in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us* (Chico: Scholar's Press, 1985); Adele Reinhartz, "The Johannine Community and its Jewish Neighbors: A Reappraisal," in *"What is John?" Volume II*, ed. Fernando Segovia (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1998). See also Carter, *John and Empire* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 23-26, and Francisco Lozada, Jr., "Teaching the New Testament," Toward an Expanded Contextual Approach," in *Soundings in Cultural Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 151-164.

[18] To be sure, the identity of John's οἱ Ιουδαιοι, the gospel's largely (but not exclusively!) negative assessment of them, and the anti-Semitic trajectories inspired by the Gospel are important areas of exploration, and will continue to be. These issues are simply not the central question of *this* study, except inasmuch as they exemplify John's larger assessment of racialized categories.

and "Greeks."[19] John repeatedly discusses several facets of what constituted peoplehood in the ancient world, most prominently descent, but also in connection with homeland, and way of life. John shows an interest in the way characters identify themselves and others according to race. John's dialogues abound with the rhetorical deployment of race, whether used to discredit others, or bolster one's own position. For instance, Jesus reconfigures two biblical metaphors for the people of Israel—the vine and the flock—positioning himself as the source and criterion for who belongs to this group. The appropriation of these images redraws the boundaries of God's own people. John's passion narrative graphically portrays the intersection of ethnicity and imperialism: the broken colonial body (the racial other) re-presents the subjugation of the colonized. These are just a few ways in which the gospel's exploration of race goes beyond the single question: "What does John mean by 'the Jews'?"

Before moving on to methodology, one clarification may be necessary. Among other things, this argument will examine John's portrait of Jesus' own racial identity. Accordingly, I will have much to say about Jesus *as a Galilean*. I am *not*, however, following in the footsteps of certain late 19th–early 20th century interpreters who emphasized this identity in order to distance Jesus from his Judean ethnicity. Among certain European interpreters, the presumption of a primarily Gentile population for Galilee came to be taken for granted, although based on scanty evidence.[20] In some circles, especially in Germany preceding and during the Third Reich, Galilean came to be synonymous with "Aryan." Jesus was thus stripped of his Jewishness, and made palatable to German nationalists—a reading which finds adherents even up to this day in the United States, among those who would "whiten" Jesus.[21] To be clear, my own investigation

[19] Obviously many of these labels partially overlap. This only highlights the complexity of ethnic identity. For example, most Galileans were Judeans, but not all Judeans were Galileans. Samaritans understood themselves to be descendants of Jacob (Israel), yet a Judean like Josephus might not acknowledge them as fellow-Israelites. And members of other *ethnē*, such as Romans or Judeans, might also be considered Ἕλληνες (Greeks) depending on the extent to which they have embraced Hellenistic culture.

[20] Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1899) was an enormously popular articulation of this position at the turn of the century, which enjoyed a resurgence in influence during World War II. See Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) 27, 41-3.

[21] Heschel., *The Aryan Jesus*, 32-33. Such an assessment of Jesus' Galileanness can be found among members of

of Jesus' "Galileanness" will by no means follow this line. On the contrary, John's gospel itself is relentlessly emphatic that Jesus was a Judean.[22] The fact that some of his opponents rhetorically undercut or devalued his Judeanness did not negate this. In denying his Judean heritage, anti-Semitic scholars of the early 20th century ironically aligned themselves with the gospel's antagonists—who, as I shall argue, also challenged his "Jewish credentials."

Approach and Method

This project will read John with an "*ethnos*-conscious approach." Such a reading regards the text with an informed eye toward race—informed as to how the category was understood in the text's own historical setting. This method is self-consciously mindful that "race" is a discursively constructed cultural artifact, and chooses to privilege those racializations which circulated in the world from which the text emerged. Therefore, it will differ from various types of cultural hermeneutics, in that modern definitions or experiences of race are not foregrounded.[23] Rather, the conversation partners for this approach will primarily be the ancients themselves, inasmuch as we can reconstruct their attitudes, and secondarily classicists who have studied the subject of

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the American "Christian Identity Movement," a group with roots in the equally-racist "Anglo-Israelite" movement in the U.K. Both groups also use Jesus' Galileanness to argue *against* his Jewishness.

In a reprehensible (and largely incoherent) sermon, one such minister claims, "But they [Jews] did not make up all the people that dwelt in Palestine. They were only a part of the people in Judea at that time. The book of John tells us that the people gathered in the marketplace, but no one dared speak openly of Jesus, for fear of the Jews. That should make it quite obvious that these were not Jews . . . The fact is that the Jews made a marked difference between the people of Galilee. And Jesus made it quite clear in the 6th chapter of John concerning the fact that He had chosen 12 disciples and one of them was a devil. . . I am going to make this statement flat tonight, that all Jews are devils by origin." (Wesley Swift, "The False Messiah – Where Will He Come From?" Sermon, May 6th 1962, https://archive.org/details/SermonsFrom1962PartB, accessed January 1, 2018).

[22] E.g, he makes regular pilgrimages to the Temple, reflects upon Judean scriptures, and is recognized as a Judean by non-Judeans (such as the Samaritan woman and Pilate)—an identification he accepts without objection.

[23] Of course, many types of hermeneutics (e.g., African-American Latino/Latina readings, Liberation theology, Womanist Interpretation, etc.) *do* foreground contemporary experiences of racialization, to great effect. These methodologies are just as profoundly informed by the social sciences, and thus also possess an appreciation of the artificial (constructed) nature of race. The major difference between cultural hermeneutics and my approach is the starting point. Whereas cultural hermeneutics foregrounds *modern* experiences of race, I will foreground the function of race in the gospel's original socio-historical period (insofar as these experiences can be reconstructed). These different starting points raise different, equally valid, questions.

race in antiquity.[24] Among our ancient sources, some, such as philosophers, physiognomists, and physicians, speculated on the nature of race itself—approaching what might be considered early "theories" of race. Other sources, such as historians, provide useful data on how particular races were viewed. I will also draw upon archaeology, while appreciating that material evidence must be interpreted cautiously.

An "*ethnos*-conscious approach" seeks to evaluate how a text's racializing rhetoric might have functioned in its original (constructed) context. As I read John for traces of racializing rhetoric, it is always the historical context which will set the parameters of what has "racial" significance. Methodologically, such a reading has two tasks. 1) Firstly, we must hazard a working definition of what "race" meant in antiquity. We can find clues as to how race was conceptualized, in literary, epigraphic, and archaeological sources, and incorporate the available data into a tentative model of "race."[25] 2) Secondly, this model can be applied to the text in question as a heuristic tool, a "lens" through which we can scrutinize the source for racialized thinking.

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[24] Studies that examine "race/ethnicity" in antiquity include: Jonathan Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1997) and *Hellencity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002); Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Denise Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia, 2005); Denise McCoskey, *Race: Antiquity and its Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); and Mary Boatwright, *Peoples of the Roman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Chapter 3 of Love Sechrest's *A Former Jew* contains a detailed lexical analysis of the terms γενος and εθνος, as used in turn-of-the-era sources (see esp. 61-109).

Other authors have written volumes that focus on specific ethnic groups: **1. On Judeans**, see Shaye Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California, 1999), and George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003). **2. On Samaritans**, see Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* (Boston: Brill, 2009), Jozsef Zsengeller, *Samaria, Samarians, and Samaritans: Studies on Bible, History, and Linguistics* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2011), Gary Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of their Early Relations* (New York: Oxford, 2013) and Reinhard Pummer, *The Samaritans: A Profile* (Grand Rapids: Cambridge, 2016). **3. On Galileans**, see the many studies by Seán Freyne, Richard Horsley, and Marc Chancey; see bibliography for titles. Further, Gay Byron writes on Ethiopians and Egyptians in *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[25] However, it would serve us well to remember that any such model is an "outsider's model," imposed upon the available data. It serves a *heuristic* purpose, but in its attempt to synthesize a workable model from many voices, runs the risk of simplifying much that was complex, and homogenizing much that was multivocal. Dennis Duling suggests that such models should not be seen as either "true" or "false," but rather as tools to be evaluated for their usefulness. Dennis C. Duling, "Ethnicity, Ethnocentrism, and the Matthean *Ethnos*," *BTB* 35 (2005): 127.

Chapter Outline

This work is divided into two main parts. Part One, "This World: Historical-Geographical Race in John," considers John's treatment of several actual, historically specific peoples we encounter in John. These represent commonly recognized identities (e.g., "Samaritans") grounded in particular homelands ("Samaria"). We might call this strata of racial identity "*historical-geographic race,*" because members of these groups understood themselves to be descendants of a common ancestor, heirs of a particular history, linked with a geographical territory, and recipients of a distinctive cultural heritage. Part Two, "From Above: Cosmological Race in John," will deal with the transcendent racial identities which John constructs—the two broad kindreds into which all humanity is divided: sons of God, and sons of the devil.

Chapter 1 lays the theoretical groundwork for the entire dissertation, proposing a model of how race was constructed in Mediterranean antiquity. Broadly speaking, race was a sense of common identity constructed upon the recognition of shared ancestry (whether it be putative or factual), shared sense of connection with a particular homeland, and shared distinctive cultural practices.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 collectively comprise the first division of the project: "This World: Earthly Race in John." These chapters consider the specific ethnicities represented in John, particularly Galileans, Samaritans, Judeans, and Romans, drawing on literary as well as archaeological sources. John depicts his characters' ethnicity with a high degree of verisimilitude, and displays a good awareness of how members of these groups might argue along racial lines. This includes "characteristic" arguments between these peoples, such as the discord between Judeans and Samaritans over cultic differences. John ultimately rejects such quarrels as valid grounds for animosity. This will lead me back to my thesis: John downplays the significance of "earthly" ethnicity, and instead constructs two "cosmological" races: the children

of God, and the children of the devil.

Chapters 5 and 6 make up the second half of the project: "From Above: Cosmological Race in John." These chapters explore the distinctive "two-layered" anthropology John constructs, and demonstrate that the "cosmic" layer of identity does, in fact, bear all the hallmarks of ethnicity. Chapter 5 will explore the conceptual background of John's two races. Some ancient sources postulated that humanity could be divided into two or three "types"—several authors even go so far as to describe these as "races" (εθνη or γενη). Therefore, John's concept of a "cosmic" race, which transcends earthly groupings, was not an utterly unprecedented novelty. Chapter 6 delves into the nature of John's two cosmic races—the children of God and children of the devil. John lays out divergent origins, characteristics, and destinies for each of these two kindreds.[26] As I will argue, John employs a deterministic rhetoric when speaking of these cosmic races. John also modifies two extremely common metaphors for Israel —the sheepfold and the vine—so that they now refer to those who believe in Jesus. These Judean symbols for God's people are co-opted for John's audience; in his estimation, it is Jesus-believers, not Judeans *qua* Judeans, who are the true "children of God."[27]

The Epilogue provides a sort of "test-case" for the ramifications of John's re-categorization of humankind into two irreconcilable "races," tracing the outworking of Johannine anthropology in two later authors. Two of the gospel's earliest interpreters, the author of 1 John and the gnostic writer Heracleon, both recognized the racial implications of the gospel—and developed them in their own work, albeit in divergent ways. The fact that these two early heirs of

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[26] John's new racial category "children of God" (τεκνα θεου, 1:12, see also ὁ ων εκ του θεου, 8:47) contains all three major elements of racial identity in antiquity: descent, association with a homeland, and a shared distinctive way of life. They are "born of God" (εκ θεου εγεννηθησαν 1:13, cf. ὁ γεγεννημενος εκ του πνευματος, 3:8), associated with a shared homeland ("above," ανωθεν in 3:3, 3:7, 3:31, εκ των ανω in 8:23; described negatively as "not of this world," 8:23), and share a common way of life (positive response to Jesus, 5:46, 8:56; imitation of his love 13:14-15, 13:34-35). In a case of classical oppositional thinking, this race is defined over and against "the children of the devil," who differ in descent (their father is Satan), homeland ("this world" or "below"), and way of life ("you are doing what you learned from your father.")

[27] At least, Judeans *qua* Judeans. Those who believe in Jesus share this identity, regardless of historical-geographical race, but non-believing Judeans would be not belong to the "sheepfold" (or "vine").

the Johannine tradition both recognized this racial system in John's gospel, reinforces that my thesis that these implications are latent within the gospel text itself.

Testing the Spirits

John's anthropology contains two widely divergent treatments of race: one that undermines the construct of (earthly race), and another that constructs a transcendent layer of racial identity. John's treatment of specific, historically-grounded races has both positive and negative moral implications. Negatively, it devalues people's racial identities—although the actual flesh-and-blood members of these groups might consider these identities a cherished part of their identity. Positively, no one in the gospel is excluded from Jesus' message of salvation based on their race, and Jesus is unimpressed by various characters' bids to discriminate based on race.

John's construction of two ontologically opposed “cosmic races” presents serious ethical problems as well. An ethics which incorporates such a view of humanity might have no problem dismissing over half of humanity as worthless, wicked, and wayward—that is, if this “satanic” division could be identified. An ethics based on such ideas might easily justify a caste-style society, apartheid, or even the attempted destruction of the offensive “satanic race.” To be clear, then: John’s reconfiguration of race still allows for hatred and rejection. Rather than a wholesale rejection of “weaponized” racializations, John only downplays the significance of earthly identities (e.g., Romans, Greeks), compared to cosmic ones.

Christians, for whom the gospel of John is the word of God, are in danger of internalizing these implications if they are left unexamined. But Christians are also exhorted to approach revelation with a critical mind, to “test the spirits” (1 John 4:1) in order to weigh whether the message is life-giving, or death-dealing. Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to “test all things” in order that they may “hold firmly to what is good” (1 Thess 5:20-21). Is John's equal acceptance

of all races consistent with Jesus' new commandment, “that you love one another, just as I have loved you” (John 13:34)? Does the commandment to “love your neighbor as you love yourself,” imply that we should love all *peoples* as we love our own? What, on the other hand, of John's two cosmological races? Is John's condemnation of over half of humanity as irredeemably wicked consistent with a Christ who was sent, “Not to judge the world, but so that the world might be saved” (3:17)? Is identifying so many as “children of the devil” consistent with his insistence that Jesus came not to destroy, but “that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (10:10)? Scripture's own invitation to “test the spirits” demands we sift through the possibilities in the word of God—celebrating some for their power to overturn hatred, and setting aside others for their tendency toward injustice. This present study cannot tell the reader where to draw those lines for herself, but can, it is hoped, lay out the latent possibilities of John's treatment of race, so that this spiritual task can be undertaken with greater clarity.

Theory: Theorizing Race in Antiquity

To anthropologists today, race is regarded as a socially-conditioned category.[28] Rather than representing a factual essence, race is “the self-conscious insistence on an image of the organic cohesion of a community, however it may be constructed.”[29] As a discursively-constructed category, race is not a matter of “what is,” but of “what is *said* to be.” This sociological view of race stands in sharp contrast to the “scientific” racism of the 19th and early 20th centuries, which regarded race as an objective biological fact in many western societies. Such a view allowed prejudice to shelter under the wing of science, and enabled terrible atrocities (death camps, apartheids, genocides) to masquerade under the banner of “progress” (conceptualized as hygeine,

[28] Hall, *Hellenicity*, 14.

[29] A definition put forward by David Konstan, although he prefers the term “ethnicity” in his own work: see Konstan, “Defining Ancient Greek Ethnicity,” *Diaspora* 6.1 (1997): 108; cf. Hodge, *If Sons Then Heirs*, 21.

cleansing, or eugenics).[30] In reaction to the horrors wrought by modernist racism, the social sciences have largely moved away from such a definition, and have called our attention to race's contingent and culturally-constructed nature.[31]

When we read John's gospel with an eye towards racialization, we may unconsciously bring our own understandings of race to the text. But the meaning of race shifts from time to time, and from place to place. Therefore, John's own understanding of race is unlikely to match ours perfectly. Just because the ancients did not have a category which precisely fits the modern notion of race, did not mean they had no notions of race whatsoever. The question becomes: How *was* race commonly understood in antiquity? It is only after we have considered this issue that we can begin to perceive how the gospel's own anthropology was influenced by some prevalent notions about race—and formed in opposition to others.

What, then, *were* the most salient features of ethnicity, in the ancient Mediterranean world? We might take the position of Jonathan Hall, a classicist who has written extensively on race in the ancient world, as a starting point. Hall proposes three key criteria of race in antiquity: 1) a myth of putative shared descent, 2) the association with a particular territory, and 3) a shared sense of history.[32] The first of these was the most significant; to a great degree, the boundaries of an *ethnos* could be determined by the answer to a yes or no question: "Can you, or can you not, claim descent from *x?*"[33]

It would be a mistake, however, to overemphasize ancestry to the point that other factors are ignored. Association with a homeland was a crucial factor in the identification of a people—thus the Dacians, Syrians, and Judeans were the people of Dacia, Syria, and Judea, respectively. Common culture was also a strong force in the production of ethnicity. Lately, a few scholars

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[30] Combining the Greek stems ευ and γενος, the word *eugenics* would literally bear the sense of "good + birth / breeding / race"—that is, the idea that one can selectively "improve" the race (*genos*) or "stock" of a people.
[31] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 19-25.
[32] Hall, *Hellenicity*, 9.
[33] Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity,* 25.

have objected to the way others privilege descent to the virtual exclusion of cultural factors—including religion.[34] At any rate, "ancestry" itself was far more negotiable prospect, in an era before paternity testing and mitochondrial DNA mapping. Putative descent, unlike genetic descent, is discursive and negotiable, a matter of argument and perception. An individual's genealogy could be creatively rewritten, such as the "blue-blooded" Judean genealogy invented for that half-Idumean Herod;[35] indeed, whole *peoples* could be shown to be "related" by the production of genealogies linking their ancestors.[36] Often, the real considerations behind genealogical revisions were *cultural* ones; someone who had adopted a people's way of life might stake a credible claim to one of their ancestors, or two races that had similar cultures might be "discovered" to be related.

Writers discussing ethnicity in Greco-Roman antiquity might feel the need to justify their use of modern words to discuss of ancient ideology, for which the authors had no exactly corresponding vocabulary. Neither would the modern concept of race, itself also a construct, correspond exactly to the ancient one. But the lack of 19th or 20th century race-theory in the ancient world did not mean there was no analogous concept at all! V.Y. Mudimbe insists that we distinguish between a purported "time before racism," and a "previous *history* of race-thinking," during which race took different forms.[37]

Modern Terminology: "Race" and "Ethnicity"

When Jesus claims that he has come to bear witness to the truth, Pilate derisively asks him, "What is truth?" (18:38). One can almost hear the quotation marks in Pilate's dismissive reply.

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[34] More on this below.
[35] On Nicolas of Damascus' claims that Herod's "family belonged to the leading Judeans who came to Judea from Bablyon," see *Ant*. 14.8-10; on Herod as "Half-Judean," see *Ant*. 14.403.
[36] Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, 41.
[37] McCoskey, *Race*, 5.

"Truth," Pilate seems to imply, is in the eye of the beholder, and this Roman governor sounds skeptical that he would find Jesus' *Judean* truth very convincing. If "truth" is a matter of rhetoric or persuasion only, with no external reality, then it belongs safely behind scare-quotes.

Of course, the evangelist doesn't share this view of truth; to John, Jesus *is* the Truth (14:6), and that truth is very real. But Pilate's implication is germane to the matter at hand: if "race" is a matter of discourse and perception only, with no external reality, does it not, too, belong in scare-quotes? And as it is a cultural construct, does it matter *what* we call it? The contemporary interpreter writing about ancient views on race faces the dilemma of what word to use to describe the phenomenon.

Whereas the ancients did not have a technical term for the concept, English has not one but *two,* i.e. "race" and "ethnicity." After modernist philosophies of race had been decisively discredited in the wake of the Holocaust, the term "race" was often replaced with "ethnicity" in academic discourse. However, this shift in jargon has not always clarified our communication. In many cases, the term "ethnicity" has acted as a smokescreen—a purely cosmetic change for a concept which was in large the same, a sort of covert synonym for race. Although "ethnicity" is generally perceived to carry stronger connotations of culture and lifestyle, it still largely anchored to descent and phenotpye. Conversely, "race" is still used in common speech with a variety of meanings, not all of which carry biological implications.[38]

Although Jonathan Hall points out the frequent "covert synonymy" between the two terms, he uses the term "ethnicity" in his own books. He doubts that "race" has yet shed enough of its toxic connotations to re-enter social-scientific discourse.[39] Denise Buell parses out several assumptions implicit in this insistence on using "ethnicity," namely: 1) the view that the two terms are sufficiently distinct, and that only "ethnicity" is appropriate for historical analysis; 2) the concern to avoid projecting anachronistic modern definitions into historical inquiry; and 3)

[38] Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity,* 19.
[39] Hall, *Hellenicity*, 14-5.

the objection to "race" as a noxious term due to its connection with racism. She then offers a rebuttal to each point.

Firstly, Buell points out the inexactness with which "race" and "ethnicity" are used, both in their contemporary context *and* in their application to antiquity. Secondly, she points out that *all* of our terms are anachronistic when applied to antiquity. If "race," when narrowly defined by its specifically modernist form, can be said to be only a few hundred years old, then "ethnicity" is an even newer category! Thirdly, Buell argues that the avoidance of "race" does *not* avoid the noxiousness of "rac*ism*." The fact that "ethnicity" is perfectly capable of carrying such connotations is demonstrated in the so-called "ethnic cleansing" in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. She argues that when classicists rely on the "less odious" term ethnicity, they may actually obscure racist aspects of relations between groups in antiquity.[40] Challenging Hall, she insists, "If we want to move beyond racism, we cannot wait for it to outgrow its troubled past on its own; rather we need to confront the elusive elasticity of race, since racism persists even when race has been exposed as a construct."[41] Therefore, she uses "race" in her own work.

Similarly, Denise McCoskey holds that the common use of "ethnicity" to refer to a less deterministic form of human identity (as opposed to a "biological" understanding) has the unintended side-effect of reifying the very concept it is avoiding; such a use implies "ethnicity" is different from "race" because the latter is, in fact, biologically determined.[42] Instead, she insists, *both* terms must be understood as social constructions.[43] In her own discussion of antiquity, McCoskey prefers to use "race" because the word forces us to foreground issues of

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40 Buell, *Why This New Race*, 14.

41 Ibid., 20.

42 McCoskey, *Race*, 28. Such an inflexible view of race (i.e., as *necessarily* identified with the pseudo-scientific racism of the 19th/20th centuries) seems to be behind Philip Esler's position, that it is anachronistic to speak of "race" in antiquity, but acceptable to speak of "ethnicity." See Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 9, 51-3. The implication is that although "ethnicity" is a socially-conditioned category flexible enough to admit different shades of meaning, "race" can only mean one thing. Buell agrees with McCoskey on this point: "The claim that ethnicity can be perceived as mutable while race can only be perceived as immutable does not hold up." *Why This New Race*, 18.

43 McCoskey, *Race*, 28.

power, rather than facilitating an all-too-common idealization of classical antiquity.[44]

I am convinced by these arguments that it is acceptable to use the word "race" in reference to antiquity. The objections to its use depend upon the assumption that it can *only* be understood in terms of 19th/20th century race-thinking—an assumption which contradicts the acknowledgment that it is a social construct, continually in the process of being (re)articulated and (re)evaluated. However, I do recognize that the *exclusive* use of this term could be misleading. After all, the ancients did not have one single, technical word for race, and the several words they did use (e.g. *ethnos*, *laos*, and *genos*) had a variety of meanings—none of which correspond exactly to the English word "race." Reliance on one word alone could unhelpfully imply a too-close correspondence with contemporary views. Instead, I will intentionally employ a variety of words (race, ethnicity, people, nation) to caution us against the over-identification of ancient *ethnos* with any single modern category. By using several words in rotation, I hope to avoid giving the impression that the ancient view of race corresponds exactly with any modern term—and to call attention to the *inexactitude* of the category. When used in this project, words like "race," "ethnicity," and "nation" are meant to refer to the general concept(s) of peoplehood behind ancient words like *ethnos* and *genos*.

Ancient Terminology: Εθνος, γενος, and λαος

Neither Greek nor Latin had a technical term that corresponds precisely to our word race—nor, for that matter, did Hebrew or Aramaic. However, such Greek words as γενος (*genos*), εθνος (*ethnos*), and λαος (*laos*) could carry meanings roughly equivalent to ethnicity; so too could the Latin words *gens*, *natio*, and *populus*. But these ancient terms were used with considerable imprecision.[45] For instance, Greek and Roman writers variously designated the Jews as an

[44] Ibid., 31.

[45] Love Sechrest offers a host of key synonyms for γενος or εθνος, including *populus* ("people"), *tribus* ("tribe"),

ethnos, a *genos*, or a *natio*.[46] Additionally, these terms bore other meanings, unrelated to race.

For example, consider the two most relevant words for our purposes, *ethnos* and *genos*.[47] In antiquity, these words had shifting meanings. They could be used as synonyms within the same discourse; alternatively, an author might employ the two with distinct connotations in mind for each.[48] Sometimes, the same word may recur later in the same text, bearing a different meaning—for example, indicating "race" here, "type" there, and "gender" in a third place. Let us consider their meanings in greater detail.

Ethnos (pl. *ethnē*) was variable in size and scope. It could denote the inhabitants of a city, the common people of several cities, or whole population groups; it could also simply refer to a class of beings with some common identification (such as the sexes).[49] Obviously some of these meanings do not neatly fit our category of ethnicity—we would not speak of "the male race," as the ancients could indeed refer to the male *ethnos*.[50]

Genos (pl. *genē*), on the other hand, is philologically related to the verb for begetting or bearing a child. It thus evokes birth or claims of descent.[51] It could be used for family, or for any larger group that recognizes its members at birth.[52] This would include tribes, but also such larger groups as races. *Sungenia,* built on the same stem*,* denotes kinship or ethnic consciousness, the sense of belonging to the same "stock," whether this was fictive or factual.[53] *Genē* were liable to "lineage fissure"—that is, people in far-flung areas might claim to belong to the same *genos* on the belief that related ancestors had settled in various areas.[54] The word could also indicate a

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natio ("birth, breed, kind, race"), *civis* ("citizen"), λαος ("people"), φυλη ("tribe"), and πολις ("city, government"). Sechrest, *A Former Jew*, 58; cf. Mary Boatwright, *Peoples of the Roman World,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 12.

46 Denise Eileen McCoskey, *Race: Antiquity and its Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 120.

47 We have a large number of words in English that derive from these two stems, many of which are related to race in some way, such as ethnicity, ethnology, *genus*, engender, gene, eugenics, and genealogy.

48 McCoskey, *Race*, 30; Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, 36.

49 Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, 34-5.

50 McCoskey, *Race*, 29.

51 Ibid., 29.

52 Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, 35.

53 Ibid., 37.

54 Ibid., 36.

taxonomical category—much like the modern scientific term, *genus*.[55]

The lack of a precise terminology certainly does not mean "race" did not exist in the ancient mind. Greeks were able to articulate the ideas underlying "race" even if they lacked the technical vocabulary.[56] So were the Romans after them. Even if the words available in their languages were frustratingly imprecise,[57] ancient thinkers could and did spend a great deal of time commenting upon, and theorizing, the differences between peoples.

Ιουδαιος, "Jew," and "Judean"

Another terminological matter must be addressed at this point. Any author dealing extensively with Jews/Judeans in antiquity must decide how to refer to them. The English words "Jew" and "Judean" certainly have different connotations in the contemporary ear. Some recent Johannine scholarship, for example, has shied away from translating John's οἱ Ιουδαιοι as "the Jews;" some suggest "the authorities," based on an awareness of how the term tends to refer to the Jerusalem leadership, while others favor "Judeans," often arguing that the John's usage particularly refers to resident of Judea.[58]

Shaye Cohen helpfully unpacks some of the issues surrounding the ancient terms. The Greek word Ιουδαιος, like the Latin *Iudaeus* and Hebrew *Yehudi*, was originally an ethnic-geographic term, which designated the eponymous inhabitants of Judea. In this sense, it stood alongside so many other *ethnē*, such as Egyptians, Edomites, Lydians, Thracians, etc. The translation choice which highlights this point would be "Judean," for its linguistic association

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55 McCoskey, *Race*, 29; Cromhout, *Jesus and Identity*, 97.
56 Hall, *Hellenicity*, 18.
57 Boatwright, *Peoples of the Roman World,* 12.
58 Malcolm Lowe supports the latter in "Who Were the Ιουδαιοι?" *NovT* 18 (1976): 101-124. He held that "the general picture for the New Testament period is that the primary meaning of Ιουδαιοι was geographical." (106). He argued that John's typical use of the term refers specifically to residents of Judea, and that "Judeans" is therefore the more appropriate translation (119-124).

with a land—Judea. However, after 150 BCE, *Ioudaios* began to be applied to non-ethnic/geographic "Jews," such as citizens merged with the growing Judean state, or people who are not geographically linked with Judea but have come to believe in the Jewish God. Cohen suggests that for such persons, "Jew" might be more appropriate, to convey a sense of religious identity not necessarily linked to ethnicity. Cohen, then, sets geography/ethnicity on one hand, and religious/cultural identity on the other; he holds that "Judean" is more appropriate to express the former, and "Jew" better suited to express the latter.[59] His translation choice implies two things: 1) while homeland and descent can function as criteria of ethnicity, distinctive culture *cannot*, and 2) "Judean" is an ethnic identity, whereas "Jew" is a religious one. As we shall see below, both assumptions are open to criticism.

In her earlier work, Caroline Johnson Hodge substituted "Judean" for "Jew," as a challenge to the bifurcation of the terms as "geographic" one the one hand, and "religious" on the other. She maintained that "Judean" preserved the connection between people and place, between *Ioudaioi* and *Ioudaia* (Judea), which was crucial in the first century. "The term 'Judean' seemed to better communicate the close relationship between religious observance, place, and peoplehood, even among a diverse collection of first-century Judaisms." She later changed her stance, and switched to the use of "Jew," swayed by A.J. Levine's proposal that avoidance of the term "Jew" denies the continuity between ancient and contemporary Jews. Hodge also resists the view that scholars are "morally bound" to differentiate between the *Ioudaioi* reviled in parts of the New Testament and modern Jews. She believes this is an ineffective capitulation, which actually serves to validate the insults of the New Testament. As a sort of compromise, Hodge uses the transliteration *Ioudaios,* leaving the term essentially untranslated.[60] If this solution does not fully resolve all of her concerns—how, for instance, does *Ioudaios* better show continuity with modern Jews than "Judean?"—her use of the transliteration at least illustrates the

[59] Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 69-70.
[60] Hodge, *If Sons Then Heirs*, 12-15.

complexity of the issues facing a thoughtful reference to "Jewishness" in antiquity.

Philip Esler suggests that in translating Ιουδαιος, we should consider the likely reaction of an ancient Greek or Roman to the term. They would have understood *Ioudaios* in connection with the territory, Judea. Two authors cited by Josephus explicitly connect the name of the Judeans with the land in which they live: Clearchus of Soli (c. 300 BCE) suggested, "the Ιουδαια take their name from the place, for the area which they inhabit is called Ιουδαια" (*C. Ap*. 1.179); similarly Apion (1st c. CE) thought that Judea was later named for the Ιουδαιοι who settled there *(C. Ap.* 1.305-10).[61] Furthermore, Judeans themselves had a strong attachment to their homeland, and especially the temple in Jerusalem. Contributions sent to Jerusalem, the orientation of many synagogues toward Jerusalem, pilgrimage, and literary sources all attest to the enduring attachment of Diaspora Judeans to the holy land.[62] Esler notes that Shaye Cohen relied on an older version of Anthony Smith's criteria of ethnicity, before he added territory. He questions Cohen's use of "religion," as if it were a category analogous to our modern concept, separable from its matrix of kinship, politics, and economics.[63] Markus Cromhout concurs, "To switch from 'Judean' to 'Jew' based on a so-called shift to a more 'religious' significance is arbitrary at best. . . Cohen's argument cannot be accepted since for first-century Judeans, ethnicity—here particularly ethno-geographic identity—was inseparable from religious identity."[64]

For this work, I will employ the translation "Judean." This dissertation aims to consider the races (εθνη) found in John, and this translation conveys their connection with a land (Judea), as well as the comparability of Judeans to other *ethnē,* all connected with a land (e.g. Galatians, Cretans, or Persians). However, I am not "downplaying" the cultural, or even religious, side of what it meant to be Judean. "Judean" preserves the semantic connection with a homeland—Judea

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61 Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 63-4.
62 Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans,* 65.
63 Ibid., 70-1.
64 Cromhout, *Jesus and Identity*, 2-3.

—but also preserves the semantic connection with a distinct way of life, Ιυδαισμος.[65] Judaism was subject to multiple interpretations by Judeans; however, all mainstream expressions of this lifestyle would have emphasized the covenant with YHWH, and the centrality of the Temple cult.

Criteria of Race in Antiquity

It has been noted that residents of the ancient Near East, Greeks, and Romans attached little prejudice to skin color.[66] This is not to claim that Greeks and Romans were "color-blind." Variations in skin-color were noted and remarked upon, but they were not the defining criteria of race.[67] Similarly, lack of emphasis on skin color does not mean that there was no perception of racial difference at all. Rather, it raises the question: What racial criteria *did* the ancient Greeks and Romans use to differentiate peoples?[68]

In truth, there was no single, authoritative view of "race" in the first-century Roman Empire. When Christ-believers first began conceptualizing themselves as a people, there was no definitive concept of race with which they could interact. Rather, authors chose from among a range of possibilities on how to construct what it means to be "Greek" (or any other race), and how to construct peoplehood in general.[69] However, several key features appear fairly consistently in ancient discussions of ethnicity. We will call these features the "criteria" of race.

Jonathan Hall distinguishes between ethnic *criteria* and *indicia*. Criteria are definitional attributes of a race. Indicia are attributes associated with a particular group, and commonly used

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[65] For the Judean's general culture and way of life (including religion), I will use "Judaism," a fairly straightforward translation of *Ioudaismos* (2 Macc 2:21; 8:1; 14:38). The term conveys a clear lexical connection to "Judea"—unlike the English terms "Jew" or "Jewishness." However, I do not not restrict the use of the term to religious matters, as if it were merely the name of a "religion" that can be extricated from a matrix of culture and ethnicity; rather, I use "Judaism" to refer to the whole way of life and various performances of identity that characterized the people. Nor does my use of the term mean to imply that there was only one authoritative (monolithic) expression of such an identity.

[66] Hall, *Hellenicity*, 12.

[67] McCoskey, *Race*, 23.

[68] McCoskey, *Race*, 10.

[69] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 37; cf. McCoskey, *Race*, 25.

to describe them—but only after the defining criteria have been established. The selection of which traits are considered *criteria* or *indicia* is culturally specified, not "natural." Lack of phenotypal difference between groups, for instance, can increase the likelihood of language or religion being perceived as "ethnic." In the context of the ancient world, Hall tends to view language as an *indicium* rather than a *criterion;* and likewise for religion and shared culture. However, he admits that different traits can assume greater significance in different contexts.[70]

Before we move into a discussion of classicists and biblical scholars who have proposed models of race in antiquity, it would behoove us to consider a few ancient sources. What traits seem to appear most frequently in ancient discourses that seem to have racial identity in view?

In his account from the Persian War, Herodotus describes the assurance of the Athenians to the Spartans, who are concerned because the Athenians have been invited to ally with the Medes. They reassure them:

> There were a great many reasons why we [Athenians] should not do this [betray Hellas (Ἑλλαδα) to the Persians], nor wish to. First and greatest, the burning and destruction of the ornaments and shrines of the gods . . . Secondly, the kinship of all Greeks: that is, the same blood (ὁμαιμον) and the same tongue (ὁμογλωσσον), both the shrines of the Gods and shared sacrifices, and the same way of life (ηθεα ὁμοτροπα). – *Histories* 8.144[71]

This dense statement seems to place several features under the general category of "Greekness" (Ἑλληνικον). *Hellenikon* is composed of 1) common blood, 2) common language, 3) common religion, and 4) common mode of life. If we admit mention of "Hellas" from the previous line, we may add a fifth feature: 5) common territory.[72]

A similar slate of features can be found in a passage from Strabo's *Geography*. Discussing several peoples thought to be related to the Arabians, Strabo discusses the "kinship of the races"

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[70] Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity,* 20-21; *Hellenicity,* 9-15.

[71] My translation.

[72] The Spartans' plea to the Athenians had been based almost entirely on the notion of co-territoriality: "We on our part are sent by the Lacedaemonians to entreat you to do nought hurtful to Hellas (Ἑλλαδα) and accept no offer from the foreigner (βαρβαρου). That were a thing unjust and dishonourable for any Greek (Ἑλληνων), but for you most of all, on many counts; it was you who stirred up this war, by no desire of ours, and your territory was first the stake of that battle, wherein all Hellas is now engaged" (Herod. *Histories* 8.142 [Godley: LCL]).

(της των εθνων συγγενειας) and their "common characteristics" (κοινοτητος). He writes:

> For the race (εθνος) of the Armenians and that of the Syrians and Arabians exhibit a great sameness of stock (ὁμοφυλιαν), not only in their language (διαλεκτον), but in their mode of life (βιους) and physical build (σωματων χαρακτηρας), and particularly wherever they are close neighbors (πλησιοχωροι).
>
> – *Geography* 1.2.34[73]

Here, we have several factors mentioned in connection with race (εθνος): 1) kinship and "common stock," 2) language, 3) mode of life, 4) physical features, and 5) territory. All of these factors seem to be among the "common characteristics" (κοινοτητος) that demonstrate the relatedness (συγγενειας) of these three peoples.

A similar array of ethnic features can be found in the Judean scriptures. In the Septuagint of Genesis 10, we encounter cluster of words familiar from the Greek sources above:

> These are the sons of Shem, by their tribes (φυλαις), according to their languages (γλωσσας), their lands (χωραις), and their races (εθνεσιν).
>
> — Gen 10:31 [LXX] cf. Gen 10:5,29[74]

Here we have several ethnic features side-by-side: ancestry (as represented by Shem, distant ancestor of the Israelites), kinship (φυλαις), language, and territory. The same list of features occurs at Gen 10:5 (regarding the descendants of Japheth) and 10:29 (the descendants of Ham).

In her book *A Former Jew,* Love Sechrest undertakes a lexical study of occurrences of γενος and εθνος in nine collections which use these words frequently, all written between 100 BCE and 100 CE: the Septuagint, Jewish Apocrypha, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius Halicarnassus, Josephus, Philo, and the New Testament. She categorizes the appearances of these terms—over 2,000 for each term—into several categories, and considers which appear with the greatest frequency. She concludes: "Across all authors studied, the most prominent ideas associated with ethnicity [εθνος] are war, territory, government, religion, and to a lesser degree, customs. Likewise, territory, religion, and kinship tended to be the most prominent associations with the

[73] My translation.
[74] My translation.

idea of race [γενος] aside from the group consciousness factor described above."[75] Arguing that a factor could best be described as a *criterion* of identity only if it functioned as a prominent element in both of these words' semantic fields, she identified *territory* as the most important criterion for both non-Judean and Judean Greek-speakers, and *religion* as an additional significant criterion among Judean ones.[76]

We will consider many other primary sources in the course of this project. For now, let us consider a few modern scholars who have offered a model of what constituted ethnicity in the ancient world.

Jonathan M. Hall (1997, 2002) and David Konstan (1997)

The publication of Jonathan Hall's *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* in 1997 brought the first full-length modern study of ethnicity in antiquity, and was, in the words of David Konstan, "an event in classical scholarship."[77] Hall explains the potential elasticity of ethnicity: the ethnic group is not static, but subject to processes of assimilation and differentiation. Ethnicity becomes more significant when threatened, and often emerges under situations of dramatic change, such as migration and conquest.[78] He also acknowledges that some ethnic markers (*indicia*) seem to act as "*criteria*" in different contexts. (We might call this a "polythetic" view of ethnicity, which sees various traits as jostling and competing for salience in the definition of the group.) Despite this acknowledgment, Hall insists upon a narrow definition of ethnicity. In his eyes, a polythetic

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75 Sechrest, *A Former Jew,* 61-92.

76 Ibid., 106. Noting the differences in the frequency with which various elements appear in *ethnos*-discourse between Judean and non-Judean authors, she argues that the common modern insistence on kinship as the *sine qua non* of ethnicity is somewhat accurate for non-Judeans (especially when they were describing *others*), and downright inaccurate for Greek-speaking Judeans: "When members of the dominant culture assume that biology and permanence characterize race, they promote a construct of identity similar to that articulated by Greek outsiders about often-marginalized Others. However, scholars move towards something closer akin to the Jewish models discussed here wherever they discuss group identity in terms of a sense of belonging based on shared experience and values, putting less emphasis on biology and kinship." Ibid., 107.

77 Konstan, "Defining Ancient Greek Ethnicity," 97.

78 Hall, *Hellenicity,* 9-10.

definition of the category becomes too vague to be useful—ethnicity must mean the same thing in all contexts or else valid comparisons become impossible.[79]

For Hall, then, ethnicity must have certain "core elements," without which we are not talking about ethnicity but something else.[80] In his estimation, these are: 1) putative shared descent, 2) association with a particular territory, and to a much lesser extent, 3) a shared sense of history.[81] As to the first point, he does note that it is the *perception* of shared ancestry that matters; Max Weber pioneered the notion of *putative* shared descent as early as 1922. In Hall's estimation, this notion of shared ancestry was the single most significant ingredient of race in antiquity: "The important point is that while ethnic identity revolves around notions of kinship, the genetic reality of this kinship is unimportant and not infrequently fictitious. What matters is that ethnic members act *as if* they are related."[82] In John, the Judeans' insistence that "We are the seed (σπερμα) of Abraham" (8:33; 8:39) resonates with Hall's assertion that in antiquity, race could be largely distilled to the question, "Can you, or can you not, claim descent from *X*?"[83]

Some questioned Hall's insistence upon (putative) descent, as *the* definitive criteria of ethnicity in the ancient world. In an article published in response to the book, David Konstan wonders, "what is gained by restricting the notion of ethnicity to the idea of shared descent?" While Konstan heaps strong praise upon many aspects of Hall's book, he muses,

> It would seem more useful to admit a latitudinarian conception of ethnicity, according to which an emphasis on genealogy was one strategy among many for asserting identity, whether local, such as Athenian, or global, such as Greekness as a whole. *Ethnicity might be construed, then, as the self-conscious insistence on an image of the organic cohesion of a community, however it may be constructed*.[84]

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79 Ibid., 12-3.

80 Dennis Duling directly challenges this view when he writes: "Not every analysis of ethnicity stresses every one of these cultural features [a common proper name, myths of ancestry, shared historical memories, phenotypical features, homeland, language, kinship, customs, and religion]. Furthermore, the Constructionist critique of Cultural Primordialism's 'objectivism' raises the important question whether any feature is so constitutive that there is no 'ethnicity' without it." (Duling, "Ethnicity, Ethnocentrism, and the Matthean *Ethnos*," 127).

81 Hall, *Hellenicity,* 9, 20-25.

82 Ibid., 15.

83 Hall, *Ethnic Identity*, 25.

84 Konstans, "Defining Ancient Greek Ethnicity," 108-109; emphasis added.

As we shall see, many other authors raised similar objections.

Denise Kimber Buell (2005) and Carolyn Johnson Hodge (2007)

Denise Kimber Buell argues for a broader view of what race meant in antiquity than Hall's. Her basic assertion is that racial *criteria* are emphasized as definitive in a particular historical moment, and to a particular purpose. Treatment of why this trait, but not that one, is important is always embedded in a particular context.[85] Buell finds it helpful to consider ethnicity not as "ascribed or fixed," but as a construct to which fixity is *attributed,* but which is nevertheless malleable. She argues that discourses about race always entail fluidity. The construct itself is unstable—variously defined in different contexts, and with "essential" qualities shifting or coming to the fore with historical changes. The logical corollary to this fluidity is that the qualities that "define" particular races (in Hall's terms, *criteria* as opposed to mere *indicia*) are also up for negotiation. This fluidity may be demonstrated in change over time, as the meaning of race shifts; it may also be demonstrated in the active competition between different definitions during the same historical moment.[86]

Against those who posit that descent is *the* necessary factor to qualify discourse as "racial," Buell argues that race's fluidity allows for a wider range of *criteria*. Appeals to kinship are indeed one highly significant ways in which "essence" (or fixity) is claimed for a group. The fluidity of this supposedly "fixed" symbol is demonstrated in the way kinship relations can shift, or be redrawn, to exclude or include certain people. But when kinship (even acknowledged as symbolic or negotiable) is privileged over other factors (language, religion, geography, customs), then these other attributes are downgraded to mere "markers" of race. She objects that the actual members of ethnic groups themselves might claim one of these other factors, such as religion, is

[85] Buell, *Why This New Race*, 39.
[86] Ibid., 6-7.

more definitive than shared descent.[87]

In Buell's estimation, racial discourses may be mapped on a continuum between fixity and fluidity. Factors like shared descent tend toward the "fixed" pole, constructing race in ways that present it as an essential "given."[88] Factors like religion, culture, and self-definition, by contrast, tend toward the "fluid" end of the spectrum.

> Although ethnicity and race are concepts frequently constructed through appeals to fixity (essences, including lineages and 'nature'), they can also be constructed through appeals to malleability. That is, definitions of ethnoracial membership can foreground 'achievement' (not merely 'ascription'). If seeking to portray ethnicity as attainable, one might stress the centrality of common purpose, common language or education (*paideia*), way of life, or religious practices."[89]

To take up this last example: Religion can feature as a marker of ethnoracial difference, which shores up group boundaries (or fixedness). But conversely, religion as an ethnic criteria also highlights the possibility of crossing racial boundaries—as for example in the case of conversions.[90] Buell agrees with Hall's discursive approach to ethnicity, but objects to Hall's limiting the scope of ethnicity to discussions of genealogy and territory. Buell wants to allow for a much broader range of criteria for "race" than Hall, including cultural factors.[91]

Like Denise Buell, Caroline Johnson Hodge also advocates a more flexible understanding of race. She brings up Gerd Baumann, who argues that the practice of ethnicity is constructed through twin cultural discourses—essentialist discourses, and processual discourses. Essentialist discourses construct the elements of ethnicity as inherent within individuals, whereas processual discourses acknowledge such identities as socially constructed. Baumann stresses that people are aware of both discourses, and have a "double discursive competence," which enables them to

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87 Ibid., 9.

88 Despite the fact that it is the *idea* of kinship, rather than its objective reality, which is important, and despite the fact that descent from an ancestor may be "changed" with the reworking of genealogies.

89 Buell, *Why This New Race*, 41.

90 Ibid, 42-44.

91 Buell believes these implications are buried in Hall's own discussion: "Hall limits the scope of ethnicity, singling out genealogies (and territory) as that which allows a scholar to identify a discourse as 'ethnic' rather than some other cultural discourse (such as religious discourse). Instead, I suggest we take seriously the broader implications of his approach, which allows for the flexibility of ethnicity." Buell, *Why This New Race*, 40.

utilize both types in a fluent manner. Ethnic actors themselves can value the imputed essential bond within the group, even while they recognize the malleability of that bond. The processual component of ethnicity becomes especially obvious when people manipulate or modify identities, or even create new ones.[92]

There are times when an absolute insistence on descent does not seem to fit ancient discussions of peoplehood, as we shall see. The environmental theory, for instance, links racial traits with one's ancestral land, its geography and climate. There was also a widespread notion that the political constitution of a race shaped its character over time; this might imply that long subjection under tyrants said more about a people than who their ancestors had been. The Romans placed comparatively little attention on ancestry in defining their own Romanness.[93] Similarly, Mary Boatwright notes that the *criteria* by which Romans constructed race were themselves contestable: "One can always learn a new language, for example; homeland, even alleged descent, can be changed and contested."[94]

Dennis C. Duling (2005) and Markus Cromhout (2007)

Dennis C. Duling proposes a model of ancient ethnicity that highlights nine constitutive features.[95] He is laudably tentative about the model, cautioning that it is "an outsider's model (etic model) that is 'imposed' on the available data," and that it is open to "criticism and modification—or even alternate reconstruction." Furthermore, Duling explains that such a model

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92 Hodge, *If Sons Then Heirs*, 21-22; cf. Baumann, *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic and Religious Identities* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 90-95.

93 Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 134-37.

94 Boatwright, *Peoples of the Roman World,* 12.

95 Duling's model is a refinement of that of Hutchinson & Smith, which is an expansion of Schermerhorn's, itself a refinement of that of Shil and Geertz. See E. Shils, "Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties," *British Journal of Sociology* 8 (1957): 130-145; C. Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution," pp. 108-13 in *Old Societies and New States* (edited by C. Geertz. New York: Free Press, 1963); R. A. Schermerhorn, "Marginal Man," pp. 406-407 in *Dictionary of the Social Sciences* (edited by J. Gould and W. L. Kolb. New York: Free Press, 1964); J. Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford, 1996).

"should not be seen as true or false, but rather heuristic"—that is, it should be evaluated for its ability to usefully shed light on ancient sources, not as a claim to perfectly define the meaning of ethnicity. Furthermore, demonstrating his appreciation for its constructed nature, Duling expresses doubt "whether *any* feature is so constitutive that there is no 'ethnicity' without it."[96]

After carefully laying out these *caveats*, Duling presents his criteria. He charts them in what he calls a "socio-cultural umbrella," under a canopy that represents time, to allow for the awareness that the "cultural stuff" underneath is socially organized over time. The various features he places within this umbrella are: 1) a name, 2) a myth of common ancestry, 3) shared "historical" memories, 4) phenotypical features, 5) (home)land, 6) language, 7) kinship, 8) customs, and 9) religion.[97] In the rest of his article, Duling examines Matthew under the lens of this model, interrogating the gospel for traces of ethnic thinking.

Markus Cromhout adapts Duling's basic model for his own work on Judean ethnicity. Combining this model with New Perspective insights about the symbolic universe of Judeans, he constructs a model of Judean ethnicity which incorporates Duling's criteria, branching up from the *habitus* of Israel's covenantal practices and situated under the "sacred canopy" of divine election.[98]

Synthesis: A Model of Ethnicity in Antiquity

We have now surveyed several authors' models of race/ethnicity in antiquity, and particularly which criteria were most consistently definitive of the category. I am now prepared to move forward with the model of ethnicity that I shall use during the course of this study. To reiterate the cautions laid out by Dennis Duling: this model makes no claim to be the definitive, end-all

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[96] Emphasis in original. Duling, "Ethnicity, Ethnocentrism, and the Matthean *Ethnos*," 127.
[97] Duling, "Ethnicity, Ethnocentrism, and the Matthean *Ethnos,*" 127-129; cf. Cromhout, *Jesus and Identity,* 93-96.
[98] Cromhout, *Jesus and Identity: Reconstructing Judean Ethnicity in Q* (Eugene: Cascade, 2007), 98-107.

articulation of what race meant in the ancient world; rather it is an "outsider's model" which is imposed upon the available data, employed as a heuristic tool to aid my reading of John.[99]

Bringing together Hall's observations with the modifications suggested by Buell, Hodge, and others, I would propose the following list of criteria of race in antiquity. Race was typically conceptualized as a matter of: 1) common ancestry, 2) common association with a specific land, 3) and common culture or distinctive way of life (πολιτεια).[100] To be clear, ancestry hinges on *putative shared descent*, not "factual" descent. Similarly, members of a race need not have been actually born in the racial homeland; it is their sense of connection with it that matters.[101]

This three-criteria model might be seen as an extreme distillation of Dennis Duling's model. All features in his model can be viewed as subsets of my criteria: kinship, for example, is implied by shared ancestry. His nine features could be redistributed in the following way:

1. Common Ancestry
Myths of common ancestry, Kinship, Phenotypical features, Name (e.g., Israelites from "Israel"), Shared "historical" memories
2. Common Homeland
Homeland, Phenotypical features (environmental influence), Name (e.g., Syrians are from Syria), Shared "historical" memories
3. Common Distinctive Culture
Language, Customs, Religion, Shared "historical" memories

Notice that several of Duling's features fall under more than one of my criteria. Take name, for instance: the name of an *ethnos* might be related to a homeland (e.g., Egyptian and Egypt), related to ancestry (e.g., Hellene and Hellen), or both (as with Judeans and Judah/Judea).[102]

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[99] Duling, "Ethnicity, Ethnocentrism, and the Matthean *Ethnos,*" 127.

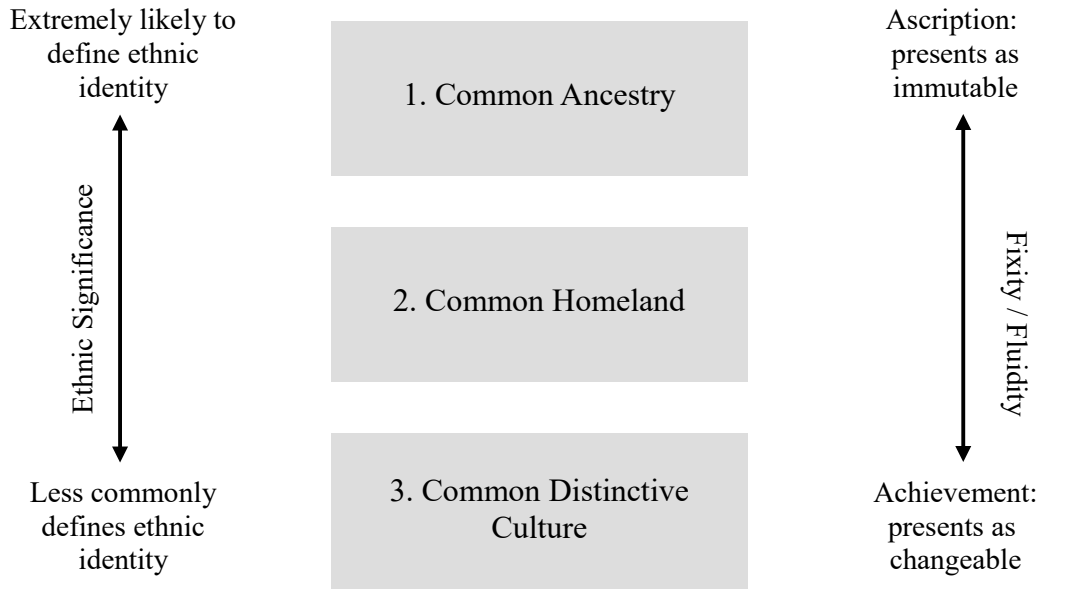
[100] This last point replaces and enlarges Hall's "common sense of shared history." To be sure, a particular view of history would be one facet of a distinctive common culture, but other phenomena could fall under this heading as well—possibly including religion, customs, laws, language, dress, and technology. Again, which facets of a shared way of life were considered distinctive (and thus, considered to be definitive of a people) could shift over time.

[101] e.g., a Judean born and raised in Italy remains a Judean, even if they never set foot in Judea.

[102] However, the features of Duling's model do not exhaust the possible sub-criteria of my model. For example, one important wrinkle to "Common Homeland" is the theory, prevalent in the ancient world, that one's environment shaped not only a race's physiology, but its collective *psychology*. While Duling's model allows for the former (as "Phenotypical Features"), it does not mention the latter. However, the assignment of a stereotypical character to

A model based upon the three criteria I propose—descent, homeland, and distinctive culture—usefully distills the features most commonly found in ancient discussions of race, and has a good deal of heuristic utility when applied to John. All three of these factors commonly appear as significant features in ancient discussions of race. They appear in order, ranked by general importance: appeals to ancestry were usually more significance (i.e., likely to bear ethnic significance) than appeals to homeland, which was in turn was more frequently determinative of race than appeals to shared culture.

Model of Race in Antiquity: Three Criteria



The criteria are also ranked along a scale from fixity to fluidity, from *ascription* to *achievement*. Ancestry was ascribed to an individual, and presented itself as a "fixed" fact—although in practice, genealogies were subject to revision, as we have seen. Association with a particular land was somewhat more fluid; people might live far from their ancestral homeland, and additionally it was believed that the environment in which individuals lived changed them over time. Therefore, a Roman living in Asia Minor must remain vigilant, lest his temperate surroundings render him "Asian," that is, soft and luxuriant. Lastly, one's way of life was the

each race was common in many forms of racialized discourse, both "high" (physiognomy, philosophy, and public speech) and "low" (novels, travelogues, and astrology).

most fluid of all; one might achieve identification with a different people by adopting their way of life. The Greek words παιδεια ("upbringing, culture"), πολιτεια ("constitution, way of living"), and εθος ("custom, tradition") speak to this admixture of attitudes and practices, which gave each people its own idiosyncratic way of living.

Thus far we have proposed several criteria for a model of understanding ethnicity in antiquity. But how did the ancients understand these criteria to actually *function*? They did not have a modern understanding of DNA, genetics, evolution, or progress, nor did they share the contemporary fixation on *appearance* as a near-obligatory component of race. How, then, did they understand the criteria of ancestry, territory, and culture to create an *ethnos*? By what strange alchemy did these factors shape the character of a people into a unique group, distinguishable from others?

There was no one *systematic* theory of race prevalent in antiquity. But thinkers did speculate on the various mechanisms by which races came to be. In the following sections, we will explore some of the more popular theories about race, by which the ancients sought to understand ethnicity, such as the environmental theory, and physiognomy. We will also consider some of the ways racial discourse was used for some rhetorical purpose, such as the creation of a relationship between different peoples, or the promotion of the imperial agendas.

Ancient Theories or Systems of Race

We will turn now to several ways in which ancient writers theorized the differences they observed between peoples. Some prominent theories of race, which merit consideration, were: 1) environmental theories of race, 2) the effect of cultural environment, 3) the heredity of acquired traits, 4) the theory of natural slavery, and 6) physiognomy. These ways of looking at race are found across many sources, and seem to have cast a wide shadow across Mediterranean cultures.

The Environmental Theories

The environmental theory of racial development held that the physical environment in which a people lived shaped their physical, mental, and moral characteristics. This theory enjoyed widespread popularity for a very long time; its supporters included Polybius *(His.* 4.21*),* Posidinus (qtd. in *Diodorus* 3.34.8), Diodorus, and Vitruvius *(De Arch.* 6.1.3-11).[103] The theory spawned a number of variations, including cultural environment, north-south or east-west mappings, and theories about temperature.

Some early elements of what developed into the environmental theory are found in Herodotus, who held that, "Soft countries give birth to soft men." By contrast, hard, rugged countryside gives birth to warriors (Herodotus 9.122). However, Herodotus' views on the subject may not have been as clear cut as these opinions, which he has placed in the mouths of the Persian king Cyrus.[104] Nevertheless, these opinions are a good expression of ideas current among 5th century Greeks.

The Pseudo-Hippocratic treatise *Airs, Waters, Places* (late 5th century BCE) did the most to develop and popularize this idea. This short treatise concerns the supposed link between *ethnē* and their physical environment. It is the first notable work in Greek to describe whole peoples according to broad stereotypes, which all members supposedly share, making it "a significant milestone in the rationalization of discriminatory thinking."[105] The work describes which climates produce which sort of peoples, and contrasts Asia and Europe as two geographical poles, whose extremes fostered certain characteristics in the people who lived there.[106]

According to *Airs,* Asia Minor's luxuriant fertility and clement weather nurtures races devoid of courage and energy. "For everything in Asia grows to far greater beauty and size; the

[103] Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 82-85.
[104] Ibid., 58-9.
[105] Ibid., 68-9.
[106] Ibid., 61.

one region is less wild than the other, the character of the inhabitants is milder and more gentle. The cause of this is the temperate climate, because it lies toward the east midway between the risings of the sun, and farther away than is Europe from the cold" (*Airs* 12.1-19).[107] Because of Asia's relative lack of violent weather, the peoples who inhabit the land are similarly peaceful:

> The chief reason why Asiatics are less warlike and more gentle in character than Europeans is the uniformity of the seasons, which show no violent changes either towards heat or cold, but are equable. For there occur no mental shocks nor violent physical change, which are more likely to steel the temper and impart to it a fierce passion than is a monotonous sameness. For it is changes of all things that rouse the temper of man and prevent its stagnation. For these reasons, I think, Asiatics (το γενος το Ασιηνον) are feeble. – *Airs, Waters, Places* 16.5-16[108]

In contrast to the luxurious climate of Asia, with its corresponding luxuriant Asians, the violent and variable weather of Europe produces spirited, brave people. Moreover, they are less homogeneous than Asians; the shifting weather of Europe has a direct bearing on the people conceived during these different conditions (*Airs* 23.2-25).

Both Plato's *Laws* and Aristotle's *Politics* also suggest the effects of environment explain the inferiority of certain peoples.[109] Aristotle considers the effects of heat versus cold—and concludes that both extremes are detrimental, and balance between them is best.[110] In his view, the Greeks in their "middle" location possess both Asiatic intelligence and European spirit. (By contrast, Asians are competent, but deficient in spirit, whereas Europeans are free and spirited, but lack intelligence). This makes Greeks the natural rulers of other peoples—and makes Aristotle one of the first to suggest that Greeks should achieve universal rule (*Pol*. 1327b).[111]

The North-South polarity, with Greece occupying the "just right" middle position, was an important feature in Greek expressions of this theory. Northerners, with their cold, rocky, inhospitable land, were naturally free, brave, and high-spirited—but lacking in intelligence and

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[107] Jones, LCL. The Loeb Classical Library includes Pseudo-Hippocrates within *Hippocrates,* vol. 1.
[108] Ibid.
[109] See Aristotle's *Laws* 747, and *Politics* 1327b; Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 69.
[110] Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 70.
[111] Ibid., 72.

guile. Southern peoples, living in their hot, fertile lands where they enjoyed great luxury, were naturally clever, capable, and artistic—but servile, luxurious, addicted to pleasure, and cowardly. Their locations were also thought to determine forms of government, which in turn reinforced environmentally-determined traits: the warlike bands of the North cultivated a bold, brave spirit, whereas the despotic monarchies of the south stamped out courage and fostered slavishness.[112] Specific races associated with the far North and South—Scythians and Ethiopians, respectively—became a common Hellenic illustration of the contrast between peoples of different climes.[113]

When the Romans adopted the environmental theory from Greek thought, they re-mapped it to suit their own perception of the world. Vitruvius turned the earlier east-west idea (with Greece as the ideal middle) on its axis, producing a north-south orientation with *Rome* as the ideal middle land (*De Arch.* 6.3-11).[114] In Nero's day, Lucan reflects Rome's changing geographical perceptions by bending the axis into a North-to-*East* contrast (*BC* 8.363-66).[115]

One interesting variant of the environmental/geographical theory was found in astrology. Astrology tended to associate particular parts of the world with astrological influences; thus these forces collectively shaped the people who lived there. For example, consider Ptolemy's description of several peoples of the east:

> Idumaea, Coele-Syria, Judaea, Phoenicia, Chaldaea, Orchinia, and Arabia Felix, which are situated toward the north-west of the whole quarter, have additional familiarity with the north-western triangle, Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius, and furthermore, have as co-rulers Jupiter, Mars, and Mercury. Therefore these peoples are, in comparison with the others, more gifted in trade and exchange; they are more unscrupulous, despicable cowards, treacherous, servile, and in general fickle, on account of the stars mentioned. — Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* 2.3.65[116]

We have already encountered the trope of clever, lazy, and servile races living in the east and

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[112] Ibid., 87. For examples, see Aristotle *Pol*. 1327B (Kennedy, 44); Vitruvius, On Arch. 6.1.3-5, 8-11 (Kennedy, 45-46).
[113] Byron, Gay. *Symbolic Blackness*, 33.
[114] Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 85.
[115] Ibid., 93.
[116] qtd. in Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 99; cf. Kennedy et al, *Race and Ethnicity,* 49-50. See also Manilius, *Astronomica* 4.711-30 (Kennedy, 47), Pliny, *NH* 2.79-80 (Kennedy, 48).

south. The stereotypes constructed for peoples of the Near East based on the *heavens* were remarkably similar to those based on the supposed influence of climate, or of society.

A side effect of the environmental theory was the concept that migration changes peoples. This is only logical: if geography produces certain traits in people, then races who move will begin to exhibit the traits fostered by their new environment. Livy says that the Gauls had been good fighters in Gaul, but were no longer good fighters in Asia Minor, which had softened them to the level of other Asiatics (38.17.12).[117] One important thing to note is that such change was almost always conceptualized as a *negative* process: ethnicities were not expected to improve, but certain factors could make them worse. Livy, concerned for Romans ruling in the provinces, warns that past conquerors have all degenerated in their new lands, amongst lesser peoples:

> The Macedonians who rule Alexandria in Egypt, who rule Seleucia and Babylon and other colonies spread all over the world, have degenerated into Syrians, Parthians and Egyptians; Massilia, situated among the Gauls, has taken over some of the characteristics of its neighbors; what have the Tarentines preserved of that hard and terrible Spartan discipline? Whatever grows in its own soil, prospers better; transplanted to an alien soil, it changes and it degenerates to conform to the soil which feeds it... You, by Heracles, being men of Mars, must take care and escape as quickly as possible the amenities of Asia: such power have these foreign pleasures to smother vigor of character, so powerful is the impact of contact with the way of life and customs of the natives. – Livy 38.17.12,16[118]

This passage illustrates how powerful and fast-acting the influence of the environment was thought to be. The deleterious effects of Asia had softened other once-great races, from the empire-building Macedonians to the Tarentines with their Spartan discipline. Therefore, the Romans, although they are the "men of Mars," must be on their guard, so that they do not "change and degenerate" now that they are "transplanted to an alien soil."

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[117] Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 90.
[118] qtd. in Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 307.

Cultural "Environment" and Race

We saw above that the environmental theory considered form of government, or way of life, as one factor in the effect of geography on ethnicity. This concept was already a minor theme of *Airs, Waters, Places*, whose 5th century author mentioned that *political* environment might reinforce the effects of physical environment. For example, after the author has explained the character of both Asians and Europeans in terms of climate, the author addends comments about their customs :

Craven Asians: Kings
For these reasons, I think, Asiatics (το γενος το Ασιηνον) are feeble. Their institutions (νομους) are a contributory cause, the greater part of Asia being governed by kings. Now, where men are not their own masters and independent, but are ruled by despots, they are not keen on military efficiency but on not appearing warlike. (*Airs* 16.16-21)
Brave Europeans: No Kings
Wherefore Europeans are more warlike, and also because of their institutions (νομους), not being under kings as are the Asiatics. For, as I said above, where there are kings, there must be the greatest cowards... So institutions contribute a great deal to the formation of courageousness. (*Airs* 23.30-35, 40-41)[119]

These passages claim that the Asian way of life (as governed by its laws, νομους) intensified the formative effect of Asia's climate.

Pseudo-Hippocrates, then, suggests that government and climate jointly influence race in an overlapping fashion. However, the reason that the two have a complementary effect, rather than interfering with each other, is never explored. Aristotle is more logically consistent than Pseudo-Hippocrates on this count: he held that political/social organization is *itself* a result of climate, giving the theory a greater internal logic. In his view, climate is directly responsible both for the character of peoples, and the characteristics of the governments that influence them.

Some later authors considered the determinative effect of cultural setting more-or-less independently from physical aspects of environment (such as weather, climate, or temperature).

[119] Jones, LCL.

Cicero's, for example, emphasizes *social* environment—that is, he has a more social, less material, sense of what constitutes "environment" (*De lege argr.* 2.95.5). Strabo, the most important geographer in the age of Augustus, explicitly rejected the environmental theory. In his thought, there was no material link between a land and its people's character. Instead, he proposed that customs and practice shape a people's nature (Strabo 2.3.7, 14.2.16). However, he elsewhere betrays marks of environmental thinking, and adds two significant elements: the notion of a "useful balance" between economically productive people (in fertile areas) and warlike peoples (in disagreeable country), and the notion of particular races (i.e., Romans and Greeks) who are meant to "lead the nations" in this balance.[120] Certain societies are in an ideal "cultural position" to rule the nations, being neither civilized to the point of weakness, nor wild to the point of barbarism.

The belief that culture influenced a race's fundamental character had other implications. Not only might movement to a new location corrupt a people, but a change in one's form of governance might. Domination under foreign rulers was often conceptualized as slavery, and this slavery was thought to warp the national character of subject peoples. One example might be the Roman impression that Greeks were no longer the noble race they had once been, but had become servile and luxurious through long enslavement under foreign empires. Similarly, exposure to another way of life could change one's nature, whether this exposure was the result of a sojourn through foreign land, or the emigration of foreigners into one's own. It was believed that Asiatic morals had been corrupted by wealth and luxury, and that these in turn had contaminated their Roman conquerors. These ideas are found in many authors, among them Florus, who wrote, "It was the conquest of Syria which first corrupted us, followed by the Asiatic inheritance… The resources and wealth thus acquired the morals of the age and ruined the State, which was engulfed in its own vices as in a common sewer" (Florus, *Epitoma* i 47.7).[121]

[120] Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 88-92.
[121] Ibid., 306.

The Heredity of Acquired Characteristics

Environmental determinism went hand-in-hand with the belief in the heredity of acquired characteristics. It was commonly assumed that traits acquired by parents could be passed along to their children. As one example, consider this passage from *Airs, Waters, Places,* which describes the "Longheads," a people who used to artificially elongate their children's heads as a sign of nobility:

> Custom (νομος) originally so acted that through force such a nature (φυσιν) came into being; but as time went on the process became natural (εν φυσει), so that custom no longer exercised compulsion. For the seed (γονος) comes from all parts of the body, healthy seed from the healthy parts, diseased seed from the diseased parts. If therefore, bald parents have for the most part bald children, grey-eyed parents grey-eyed children, squinting parents squinting children, and so on with other physical peculiarities, what prevents a long-headed parent having a long-headed child?
>
> – *Airs, Waters, Places* 13.14-26[122]

Medical treatises similarly expressed a belief in the inheritance of acquired traits. Sometimes it was explained, as above, in the idea that the "seed" which produces offspring derives from the whole body, specifically at the time of conception. So, for example, the Hippocratic treatise *De Semine* asserts that "Crippled parents usually have crippled children. However, in case of an illness, the four sorts of fluid from which the semen (σπερμα) derives, do not provide a complete semen (γονην), but that which comes from the crippled part is weaker. It seems therefore not surprising that the child is crippled like the parent" (*De Semine* 11.1).[123] This excerpt affirms the same principal as that which applied to the "Longheads," above, but with greater "scientific" detail. Change in any part of the body, at any point during life, produces a corresponding change within the seed.

Characteristics imposed by living in a certain climate were thought to become

[122] Jones, LCL.
[123] Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 79.

transmitted to children, in the course of generations produce exaggerated results. Therefore, the effects of a particular environment were thought to be passed on to children and become natural. Similarly, a population transplanted to a new land will be shaped, with each new generation, by the effects of that land—as we saw above in Livy's tirade about the "degeneration" of the Macedonians. Inherited change (whether due to acquired heredity or environmental influence) was usually conceived of as being for the worse—as degeneration. Notions of "evolution" or "progress" were not in view.[124] Also, such changes were thought to become permanent after one or two generations. Many authors also held the notion that a people who have been subjugated become "servile" in spirit—a trait that was then passed on to their children. Cicero (*Ad Quint.* 1.1.16), Josephus (*J.W.* 2.56-58), and Tacitus (*Agric*. 11.5) all suggest that such acquired racial slavishness is permanent.[125]

The environmental theory, and its constant companion, acquired heredity, are found in later thinkers, such as Pliny the Elder (*NH* 2.280, 7:50-52), Seneca (*De Ira* 2.15), and Favorinus.[126]

Physiognomy

Further ancient reflection on race can be found in the field of physiognomy. This pseudo-science sought to perceive the (inner) character of a person by the (outer) character of the body. Physiognomics "diagnoses" the character of a person by comparisons: to animals, to peoples (*ethnē*), and to "types." Mental and moral qualities are presumed to correspond to the outer physical traits identified for these points of comparison.[127] The pseudo-science of physiognomics rests upon a triple postulate: 1) the environment has a lasting and continuous impact on physical

[124] Ibid., 77-79.
[125] Ibid., 81-2; 189-90.
[126] Favorinus, as preserved in Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 12.1.20.
[127] Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 149-50.

features, 2) there is a direct connection between physical and mental traits, and 3) this link is stronger, and more determinative of character, than individual variation.[128] Physiognomy was popular not only among medical writers, but also orators and historians. Its presumption to scientific objectivity provided a strong rationalization of social prejudices.[129]

Pseudo-Hippocrates' *Physiognomonica*, the first extant treatise on physiognomy, dates to the 3rd century BCE. It includes remarkably detailed lists of features and character traits. Galen's treatment of physiognomy is more systematic; he explicitly links physiognomy with the environmental theory.[130]

Physiognomy was popular in Augustus' time, although skeptics existed, among them Pliny the Elder, who considered the pursuit frivolous. Physiognomy was at the apex of its popularity in the 1st to 2nd century CE, part of "the culture of inspection and moral evaluation," as Simon Swain puts it.[131] This "science" was especially useful for both encomium and invective, and the arrogant sophist Polemo marshaled it to great rhetorical effect.[132]

Polemo linked particular physical, and moral features with particular races. With a proper understanding of the science, one can pass accurate judgment on "the world and its peoples," because "you will know the description of the nations, their colors, and their hair."[133] In the midst of a discussion of eye movements, he relates that "Thracians have eyes so agitated they appear to spin, because they are inclined to evil-doing, but are restrained by powerful fear and timidity from actually doing wrong, although their natural propensity is always in that direction."[134] An anonymous 4th century Latin treatise, based on Polemo, also links "racial" features with that

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128 Ibid., 161.
129 Ibid., 153.
130 Ibid., 151-3.
131 Simon Swain, "Polemon's *Physiognomy*" in *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's* Physiognomy *from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam* (Edited by Simon Swain. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 125.
132 Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 155-7.
133 Hoyland, Robert. "A New Edition and Translation of the Leiden Polemon," in *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's* Physiognomy *from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam* (Edited by Simon Swain. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 423.
134 Maud Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), cf. Hoyland, "A New Edition of the Leiden Polemon," 343.

race's (presumed) "character." For example:

> They first take as model the characters of nations (*gentium,* from *gens*) or provinces and compare individuals with those, saying, 'Such and such resembles an Egyptian. Now the Egyptians are cunning, docile, fickle, rash, and voluptuous. Such and such resembles a Celt, or a German. Now the Celts are ignorant, courageous, and fierce. Such and such resembles a Thracian...'" – Anon. *De Physiognomica*[135]

It should be noted that Polemo, also includes skin color in these physiognomic types: people with black skins (such as the Ethiopians) are said to be cowardly, ambitious, and dejected; people with light skins are said to be courageous and bold, and so on.[136] By contrast, he praises the perfection of pure-blooded Greeks.[137] We learn that the Greek possesses various admirable features, both physical and psychological—but this only applies to "the Greeks whose forms are pure and nothing from the other races is mixed with them."[138]

Physiognomic ideas are found in Second-Temple Judean writings. The *Testament of Naphtali*, for example, contains an extended meditation on the connection between the form of the body, and the inward inclinations of the spirit; both are shaped by God's sovereign design, which makes for a rather deterministic psychophysiology.[139] Allusions to physiognomy continued to appear in Christian writings, not only during the height of its popularity, but well into the middle ages.[140]

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[135] qtd. in Isaac, *Invention*, 157; cf. Ian Repath, "Anonymus Latinus, *Book of Physiognomy,*" in *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's* Physiognomy *from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam* (Edited by Simon Swain. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 561.

[136] However, Polemo warns, "Whiteness of *surpassing* whiteness indicates weakness." See Hoyland, "A New Edition of the Leiden Polemon," 427.

[137] Isaac, *Invention Of Racism*, 158.

[138] Hoyland, "A New Edition and Translation of the Leiden Polemon," 427.

[139] [2]"For just as the potter knows the pot, how much it holds, and brings clay for it accordingly, so also the Lord forms the body in correspondence to the spirit, and instills the spirit corresponding to the power of the body. [3]And from one to the other there is no discrepancy, not so much as a third of a hair, for all the creation of the Most High was according to height, measure, and standard. [4]And just as the potter knows the use of each vessel and to what it is suited, so also the Lord knows the body to what extent it will persist in goodness, and when it will be dominated by evil . . . [6]As a person's strength, so also is his work; as is his mind, so also is his still. As is his plan, so also is his achievement; as is his heart, so is his sleep; as is his soul, so also is his thought, whether on the Law of the Lord or on the law of Beliar." (*T.Naph.* 2:2-4,6 [Charlesworth: OTP]).

[140] Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 159.

Theories of Natural Slavery and Bestial Nature

As developed in Aristotle's discussion of natural slavery, barbarians, slaves, and women all share the same slavish nature (φυσις). His conclusion is that among barbarians there are only two categories: male slaves and female slaves. As natural slaves, barbarians should be slaves of Greek (men). For Aristotle, it is clear that Greeks are by nature masters, and non-Greek are slaves by nature (*Pol*. 1252a,32–1252b,9).

Because these differences are natural, it follows that the forceful subjugation and enslavement of barbarians by Greeks (that is, by war) is part of the natural order. War is a form of acquisition, in which the superior procures what is his by nature—rather like hunting (*Pol*. 1256B 23-26). Natural slavery rationalizes inequality, permanently places the vanquished in an inferior category, and fits neatly into the ideology of empire. Aristotle reportedly advised his pupil Alexander to make a clear distinction between Greeks and other conquered peoples, who should be ruled "like plants and animals" after defeat (Plut. *Mor.* 329b-d).[141]

Closely related to natural slavery are views that certain races are more closely related to animals, that is, more "bestial." Aristotle held that some people were "irrational by nature and living solely by sensation," including barbarians, "who belong to the bestial class." Such bestiality included eating raw meat, cannibalism, and other 'unnatural' practices. Greeks conceived of bestiality as either the indication of individual pathology, or a collective racial quality of certain groups. A people were considered bestial if governed by passions rather than reason. But *why* were certain races bestial? One theory was proposed by Pseudo-Aristotle, who suggested that extremes of heat or cold disturbed the mind (Ps. Ar. *Probl.* 909a)—again linking inferiority with the geographic concepts.[142]

Such thinking conveniently labels the "other" as animal, lacking in the proper social

[141] Ibid., 177-79, 181.
[142] Ibid., 199-200.

organization. Germans were frequently described in this vein. During Tiberius' reign, Manilius scorned Germany as "fit only to breed wild beasts" (Manilus 4.794). Josephus described Germans as "having a temper fiercer than the wildest beasts" (*J.W.* 2.377), and Seneca likened them to lions and wolves, linking their ungovernable nature to climate (Sen. *De Ira* 2.15).[143]

In many cases, these animal-comparisons do not come across as metaphorical, but seem to be intended quite literally. Still, other Romans held out hope for "less-civilized" races. Strabo argues that Roman subjugation might turn such beasts into proper human beings, by civilizing them. As proof, he mentions the Celtiberians; once among the most brutish of all peoples, they were now fully adapted to the Roman way of life.[144]

Both the theory of natural slavery, and the comparison of certain races with animals, played an important part in the justification of empire. They naturalized the domination of the provinces by Romans. Because "slavish" or "brute" peoples benefit from the mastery of their superiors, such thinking even gave the Romans a sense of noble mission about their empire.

Ethnic Genealogies and Individual Genealogies

Drawing from the social sciences, we might distinguish between aggregative self-definition, and oppositional self-definition.[145] Oppositional strategies define the self in opposition to the other. For example, the Persian War (480-479 BCE) saw the construction of the "barbarian" as the antitype of "Hellene."[146] The stereotypical "barbarian" provided a photo-negative of Greekness, so that Greeks could understand themselves by gazing into the dark mirror of the other. By contrast, aggregative strategies seek to understand a race by its relation to other races. Many ancient thinkers were just as interested in how various races were related, as what set them apart.

[143] Ibid., 202, 205.
[144] Ibid., 213-14.
[145] Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, 47.
[146] Hall, *Hellenicity*, 175.

The differences between peoples could be noted without becoming a negative projection of the viewer's own identity. Similarities could be taken as proof that different peoples were somehow related.

Jonathan Hall explains that genealogical traditions can express relatedness between ethnic groups. These "ethnic genealogies" expressed the relationships between different groups of people, through their descent from common ancestors or similar founding figures. For example, the Greeks developed many variants of a "Hellenic Genealogy," stretching all the way back to the eponymous king Hellen, son of Deukalion.[147] Jonathan Hall calls these myths of origin "a discursive media of ethnic identity":

> Whereas family genealogies allowed individuals to trace their lineage back to three-dimensional characters such as Perseus, Keryx or Eumolpos, ethnic genealogies were the instrument by which whole societies could situate themselves in space and time, reaffirming their identity to appeals to eponymous ancestors such as Doros, Ion, or Dryops, who were at the same time the retrojected constructions of such identity.[148]

Such imaginative genealogies continued to inform ethnic thinking into the Common Era; during the New Sophistic of the second century, an emphasis on Greek classicism gave many Greeks and non-Greeks a kind of "imaginary biology" by which they could construe themselves as related, thanks to the convenient wanderings of many Greek mythological heroes—who could often be invoked as city founders when no appropriate historical agent existed.[149] These constructions, which fostered a sense of kinship, could galvanize a notion of ethnic *esprit de corps* among Hellenic races.[150]

Ethnic genealogies do not simply link peoples; they generally construct *ranked* relationships between them. Those races more closely related to the originating figure—such as Hellen—have a superior status. Variations of these myths show us stages of racial reasoning.[151]

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147 Ibid., 25-7.
148 Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, 41.
149 Swain, "Polemon's *Physiognomy,"* 197.
150 Hall, *Ethnic Identity*, 38.
151 Ibid., 42-43.

They could be reconfigured to reflect new realities between groups—the ascendancy of a people as more influential might prompt their "upgrading" to a closer relationship with a founding ancestor. Sometimes, new peoples could be "grafted in" to these family trees—existing eponymous ancestors were simply added to the genealogy.[152]

The Greeks did not have a monopoly on this practice. Abraham could serve this sort of function within Judaism. In Genesis, God promises Abraham, "In you, all the peoples (φυλαι) of the earth will be blessed" (Gen 12:3 LXX).[153] Some extrabiblical Abraham traditions, such as *1 Enoch* 90:33, portray Abraham as the ancestor of all nations. Much more modestly, 1 Macc 12:21 claims Abraham as the ancestor of the Spartans. Josephus asserts that colonies in Troglodytis, Arabia, and Libya were all founded through Abraham's sons through Keturah (*Ant*. 1.220-21, 238-41). Polyhistor, citing Cleodemus Malchus before him, claimed that Abraham's sons through Keturah were the ancestors of the Assyrians and Africans (*Praep. ev.* 9:20; 9:29). Josephus further relates that Ishmael's twelve sons gave their names to Arabian tribes (*Ant*. 12.225-26).[154]

Paul's rhetoric provides the Gentile Christ-believers with just such a rewritten genealogy in Romans: they are now descendants of Abraham, and brothers of Christ.[155] Like the Hellenic family trees, Paul's "olive tree" (Rom. 11:16-24) constructs ranked relationships between related peoples. Judeans occupy the privileged position, related "more closely" with Abraham, while gentiles occupy a subordinate position in his "family tree."[156]

Individual genealogies could also be used to connect individuals to particular races, or shore up their claims of prestige. Herod the Great belonged to the Idumaean segment of the Judaean polity; he was a *Ioudaios*, but Judeans from Jerusalem could sneer at this "half-Judaean"

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[152] Ibid., 48.

[153] Cf. the LXX of Gen 18:18, "all the *nations* (εθνη) of the world will be blessed in him"; or Gen 22:18, "In your descendants (*or* "seed," σπερματι) shall all the εθνη of the earth be blessed."

[154] Jae Won Lee, "Paul and Ethnic Difference in Romans," in *They Were All Together in One Place? Toward Minority Biblical Criticism* (edited by Randall C. Bailey, Tat-siong Benny Liew, and Fernando F. Segovia. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 151-2.

[155] Hodge, *If Sons Then Heirs*, 33.

[156] Ibid., 146-47.

nevertheless. Herod therefore had an elaborate, blue-blooded Judaean lineage invented for himself, drawn up by his court scribe Nicolas.[157] There were no "registers" of Judeans, and oral histories and genealogies were malleable and unreliable. If there were people who could claim to be Roman citizens, although they were not, how much easier would it have been to claim to be Judean![158]

Genealogies naturalize the phenomena of likeness within the biological process of descent. This extends to moral/mental likeness, as well as social position. Because these resemblances are "natural," they are perceived as unquestionable. In this way, relationships of power and hierarchy are also naturalized by such genealogies. Manipulations of genealogy do not, ironically, undermine the logic of immutability on which they depend.[159]

Because ancestries address current issues, genealogies tended to shift to meet current needs, emphasizing or de-emphasizing certain members, or adding new "ancestors," as the need arose. Originating ancestors were especially important, but in certain historical circumstances, other ancestors—for instance, those who fought bravely in an important battle—could also be salient.[160]

Ethno-cultural Umbrellas: Hellenism, Judaism, Romanitas

Anthony Smith distinguishes between *genealogical* and *ideological* myths of descent. He explains, "'Genealogical' myths of descent rest on direct and unbroken filiation from progenitors. 'Ideological' myths of descent simply provide a sense of 'spiritual kinship' with the ancestors, triggering the vague notion of consubstantiality."[161] Individuals might understand themselves to

[157] Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 23.
[158] Ibid., 50-2.
[159] Hodge, *If Sons Then Heirs*, 20-1.
[160] Ibid., 31-2.
[161] Hall, *Hellenicity*, 15.

be "related" not only biologically, but culturally. Those who shared common values, laws, observances, and way of life, might conceive of themselves as belonging to the same people—even if they did not share the same blood.

The notion that people were "related" based on a shared philosophy and way of life can be found in many sources in antiquity. Some scholars would not acknowledge these cultural means of aggregative self-definition as "ethnic" in character. Jonathan Hall, for instance, insists that the notion of shared descent must be in view. Benjamin Isaac's definition of "race" excludes cultural factors for a different reason: his definition requires the notion that the identity is permanent, and cannot be changed by individual agency. However, Denise Buell and Caroline Johnson Hodge have given compelling arguments for a wider view of the meaning of ethnicity in antiquity.[162]

With the rise of the Macedonian empire, perceptions of Hellenism came to de-emphasize common descent, and emphasize language, religion, and way of life. We have already considered Herodotus' dense statement from Histories (8.144), which constructed "Greekness" according to several factors: descent, language, religion, and "way of life." Around 380 BCE, the Athenian orator Isocrates noted that although "Hellenism" had once been a matter of blood and descent, nowadays those who shared their education (παιδεια) and "mental attitude" are called Greeks.[163] Increasingly, as Hellenism became a world culture, others could *become* Hellenes by adopting the Hellenistic way of life.[164] As cultural praxis gained priority in defining the Greek *ethnos*, tensions emerged. Did "Greek" practice itself define one as Greek? Or did practice confirm an underlying "Greekness" which already existed?[165]

Roman identity almost always included a sense of shared culture and governance, rather than (or in addition to) lineage. The Romans' own mythic origins were porous and heterogenous.

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[162] See above.
[163] Isocrates *Panegyricus* 50, cit. in McCoskey, *Race*, 63.
[164] Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 132.
[165] McCoskey, *Race*, 63.

This also reflected the historical situation prior to Roman hegemony over them, when over forty language groups existed in Italy. Earlier an ethnic term, "Latin" came to be used as a legal status granted to some allies. "Roman," too, was a legal status, denoting citizenship and shared law. But some sense of "innate" or racial Romanness existed. Quintilian drew a conceptual distinction between those who were Roman by birth and those who were Roman by citizenship (*Inst.Or.* 8.1.3).[166] Nevertheless, it is clear that the label could serve as a signifier, not only of those "born" to it, but those who adopted Rome's way of life and won citizenship.

A similar, but less pronounced, shift took place with the term "Judean." During the Hasmonean period, "Judea" was both a country and a district within that country. The residents of other districts of Judea—such as Idumaea, Galilee, and Peraea—could be described by the name *Ioudaioi*, but were also said to constitute *ethnē* of their own.[167] The Hasmoneans adopted a Greek view of *politeia* that gave them a model for naturalizing conquered peoples.[168] The Hasmoneans resisted assimilation to Hellenism by establishing Judaism as a counter-Hellenism, "a citizenship and way of life open to people of diverse origins."[169] Both Judean and Hellene became ethnic/racial categories that could serve as overarching "umbrellas," under which multiple races might be included. Multiple *ethnē* had already come to be Hellenes; now, "Judean" came to have similar resonance. Neither label precluded other ethnic self-understandings.[170] For example, under Hasmonean expansion, Idumeans and Itureans became Judean in a sense, but retain their own ethnicities.[171] *Ioudaismos* emerged as an umbrella-category explicitly in juxtaposition to Hellenism, and in the context of (Hasmonean) imperial expansion.[172]

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166 Ibid., 69-71.
167 Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 72-3.
168 Ibid., 127.
169 Ibid., 138.
170 Baker, "From Every Nation Under Heaven," in *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies (*edited by Laura Nasrallah and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 91.
171 Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness.* 1999. p. 18.
172 Baker, "From Every Nation Under Heaven," 98.

The questionable status of the "Half-Judean" Herod illustrates the complicated nature of conversion: Does conversion really entail a shift in *ethnos*? *Ioudaios* was a multivalent term in the first century. It could be an ethnic-geographic term, denote political identity, or religion. Apparently, Idumaeans, even though politically and religiously Judean, could have their credentials questioned.[173] Ptolemy, a biographer of Herod, writes that Idumeans are only *called* Judeans, because they have been conquered and forced to observe their customs, but Judeans "are so originally and naturally."[174]

People might be considered "Judean" for associating with Judeans, especially at meals. Judeans lived together in ethnic neighborhoods in many cities. But those associating with them were not necessarily actually Judean. In Ephesus (48 BCE), and Empire-wide after 70 CE, Judeans were legally defined by adherence to Judean laws and customs. At least to outsiders, Judaism was most distinctive and recognizable in the observance of Judean practices.[175] Cassius Dio shows some bafflement regarding some who are called Judeans, but not by birth: "I do not know how they obtained this appellation, but it applies also to other people, even if they are of alien descent, who adopt their customs." (Dio 37.17.1)[176] *Politeia,* as constitution, way of life, or citizenship, is a mutable facet of identity.[177] Both Philo and Josephus refer to outsiders who become insiders by adopting the *politeia* of the Judeans."[178]

When ethnic labels came to bear a widened applicability, expanding their range to include those who shared in the culture of the original *ethnos*, tensions arose over who really had a valid claim to the label. Blue blooded-Romans could look down on the so-called Julian Latins, who were enrolled as Romans but really had a different origin. Those who were Judeans by descent as

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[173] Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 24.
[174] Ibid., 60.
[175] Ibid., 53-9.
[176] qtd. in Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 460.
[177] Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 126.
[178] Shaye Cohen mentions the Idumeans' conversion to the Judean *politeia* (*Ant*. 12.142) and Philo's proselytes who have "come to a new and God-loving *politeia"* (*Spec.Laws* 1.9.51) as examples. Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 126.

well as *politeia* could sneer at a half-Idumean Herod. Similarly, an Athenian of noble birth would imagine that the term "Greek" applied to her in a very different sense than it applied to a Syrian who had adopted Hellenistic customs.

Race and the Logic of Empire

Ancient views of race played into the ideology of empire in many ways. For example, some racial theories supported the notion that the Romans superior to those they ruled—either because other races were innately inferior (natural slavery theory), or because subjection itself had caused these peoples to degenerate (social environmental theory). We will consider some races which were defined by law, and how individuals nevertheless attempted to negotiate which labels applied to them. And we shall see how the pervasive display of the brutalized barbarian (in art, everyday objects, and certain social rituals) widely advertised an idea central to Roman imperial ideology—the idea that it was "natural" for the Romans to rule over the other nations.

Superiority, Natural and Unnatural

The view that some races were superior to others could play an important role in justifying empire. The concept of natural slavery was important during the expansion of the Hellenistic empires, and remained influential in the Roman period. Natural slavery proposed that certain peoples were inferior by nature. By contrast, the social version of environmental theories suggested that certain races were inferior, not by nature, but by chance: in other words, the historical vicissitudes that placed them under an inferior system of government had caused their national character to degenerate. Some Romans who did not believe themselves to be inferior *by*

nature, nevertheless believed their empire was justified, so that they could spread civilization to such benighted nations.

Aristotle's theory of natural slavery was especially fitted to empire. Aristotle's theory of natural slavery rationalizes inequality, places the vanquished in an inferior category indefinitely, and fits neatly into the ideology of empire. As mentioned, Aristotle advised Alexander that non-Greeks should be ruled "like plants and animals" after defeat (Plutarch, *Mor.* 329 b-d).[179] For Aristotle, it is clear that Greeks are by nature masters, and non-Greek are slaves by nature. Since these differences exist in nature, it follows that the forceful subjugation and enslavement of barbarians by Greeks (that is, in war) is also part of the natural order:

> From this it follows that even warfare is by nature a form of acquisition—for the art of hunting is part of it—which is applied against wild animals and against those men who are not prepared to be ruled even though they were born for subjection, in so far as this war is just by nature" (*Pol*. 1256b 23-26).[180]

At the time it was developed, the theory legitimated Greek (and Macedonian) expansion. Later, the Romans would apply the same ideas to their own imperial endeavors. In Cicero's ideology, Rome's rule of foreign peoples benefits those ruled. Cicero feels that the existence of empire is justified not only because some people are naturally "masters," but also because such empire has genuine advantages for the inferior peoples conquered.[181] Then again, an alternate point of view proposed that slavery itself is what caused the inferiority of some peoples. Once a nation is enslaved, it becomes "slavish," and through the heredity of acquired characteristics, it remains so.[182]

In this vein, Cicero holds that Greeks have degenerated from their former greatness, "trained by a long course of servitude" (*ad Quintum fratrem* 1.1.16)[183] Josephus places this sort of argument on Agrippa's lips when he attempted to dissuade the Judeans from war:

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[179] Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 181.
[180] qtd. in ibid., 178-9
[181] Ibid., 184.
[182] Ibid., 187-8.
[183] Ibid., 189.

> "There was, to be sure, a time when you should have strained every nerve to keep out the Romans; that was when Pompey invaded this country. But our forefathers and kings, though in wealth and vigor of body and soul far your superiors, yet failed to withstand a small fraction of the Roman army; and will you, to whom thralldom is hereditary, you who in resources fall so short of those who first tendered their submission, will you, I say, defy the whole Roman empire?" (*J.W.* 2.356-58)[184]

Agrippa argues that the Judeans' forefathers were superior in strength and mind, before slavery has degenerated the race to its present state, in which "thralldom is hereditary." Similarly, Tacitus notes the Britons exhibit more spirit, because they have not yet been enervated by long subjugation, like the Gauls, who are now characterized by sloth and lack of courage. Tacitus puts it bluntly: the newly conquered Britons are what the Gauls once were.[185]

At the same time, the Romans were less likely to consider themselves categorically superior than the Greeks had been. They justified their empire more in terms of a (supposedly) mutually beneficial symbiosis. Other peoples were not naturally inferior—although long subjugation had caused degeneration of some to the point of slavishness. This change was thought of as an irreversible process.[186]

For Romans, "barbarians" were such not by nature, but by condition. They were not inherently inferior but lacked civilization to some degree. This allowed for a "scale" of barbarism. It also provided a rationale for empire: barbarians could, and should, come under the uplifting influence of the Roman civilizing mission.[187] This comes close to the modern concept of the "white man's burden;" the "Roman's burden" was an obligation to spread the salutary influence of civilization. The gods chose Italy to

> unite scattered empires, to soften their customs, to bring together the harsh and coarse tongues of so many nations (*populorum*) into contact by community of language, to give mankind civilization, and in a word, to become throughout the world the single fatherland of all peoples (*gentium*). – Pliny, *NH* 3:39[188]

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[184] qtd. in Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 189.
[185] Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 190.
[186] Ibid., 192-3.
[187] McCoskey, *Race*, 75.
[188] qtd. in Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 169.

However, Roman rule was also thought to have deleterious effects on the nations. Roman conquest was thought to soften and emasculate the conquered, and this softness could subsequently infect their rulers.[189] Caesar and Tacitus both recognized that wealth and luxury enslave; Tacitus describes what we might call Romanization as enslavement and corruption. In fact, it was recognized that new subject peoples were dangerous at first; one of the strategies to pacify them was to corrupt them into adopting a Roman (degenerate) lifestyle as quickly as possible.[190]

Governmentality: Ethnic Labels and Power

McCoskey examines race in terms of Foucalt's idea of "governmentality." Governmentality is the way that structures of power and authority discriminate against, favor, or redefine people. "In real terms, then, we might ask how governmental actions serve to set boundaries between groups, rewarding some and placing others at a disadvantage, and with what consequences or in aim of what sorts of changes among its population."[191] A contemporary example would be the debates on the use of English in the U.S., or the definitions of races laid out in the U.S. census.

Roman governmentality overturned generations of racial self-understanding in Egypt. Now, "Greeks" living outside of the four *poleis,* no matter how carefully they could trace their lineage, were legally designated as simply "Egyptians" in the eyes of the law. Policing these racial/legal statuses in Egypt became something of a Roman obsession. For instance, people "passing" as different races could receive a fine of a quarter of their estate. Emperor Caracalla's edict expelling most Egyptians from Alexandria (ca. 215) included methods for "spotting" Egyptians, including speech, manners, and rusticity. The real target of such expulsion was tax

[189] Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 170.
[190] Ibid., 191-2.
[191] McCoskey, *Race*, 96.

fugitives; Egyptians who are contributing to the economy of the city were exempted.[192]

Another example of racial governmentality in antiquity is discriminatory taxation. Some groups were exempted from, or subject to, certain taxes. In Egypt, Greeks were exempted from the obol tax. Similarly, the *Fiscus Iudaicus* necessitated the formal state identification of Jews. In both cases, "race" becomes more than just a personal or communal "feeling;" it becomes a legal status. Such "legal" Greekness might de-racialize the category to an extent.[193] Earlier an ethnic term, "Latin" came to be used as a legal status granted to some allies. "Roman," too, was a legal status, denoting citizenship and shared law.[194]

For purposes of expulsions and the Jewish Tax, governmentality required some sort of procedure to identify Judeans. Seutonius recalls that "the Jewish tax was aggressively levied, including on those who were conducting their lives as Jews without declaring it and on those who avoided the Jewish tax by concealing their origin." He remembers an incident from his youth, when a 90-year-old man was publicly inspected for circumcision to determine whether he was Jewish. His remarks makes clear that some Judeans were trying to "pass" as non-Judeans. Also, it demonstrates a tension between "practice" and "essence." Certain ancient authors tried to parse the distinction between "true Judeans" and those who "were called a Judean."[195]

For governmental purposes, anyone suspected of following Judean customs might be reckoned a "Judean." In 19 CE, the formerly-vegetarian Seneca remarked that he began to eat meat, so as not to be expelled during Tiberius' expulsion of Judeans from Rome. After 70 CE, Judeans were legally defined by adherence to Judean laws and customs.[196]

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[192] Ibid., 110-13.
[193] Ibid., 98-9.
[194] Ibid., 70.
[195] McCoskey, *Race*, 121-2.
[196] Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 58-9, 62.

Race in Antiquity: Chapter Conclusions

As this survey shows, ancient thinkers did indeed have a great deal to say about the perceived differences between peoples. Theories explaining these differences developed, and tended to reinforce the attitudes of superiority among the elites and the dominant races. The remarkable variety of such theories, and the variety of strategies for the creation of racial identity (oppositional strategies, appeals to ancestry, adoption of *politeia*, etc.) show that there was no one, authoritative view on what race was, or how it was constructed. I would side with those who argue for a fluid, or flexible, definition of race, to suit this multivalency in the ancient sources. No one definition (or criterion) seems to fit all discussions of difference between peoples, or all cases of racial rhetoric.

However, we must have some sense of what we are dealing with, so it is necessary to at least sketch out the rough contours of what race meant in antiquity. We will therefore proceed with the a model sketched out along the following lines: **1. A three-criteria model**: the ancients generally seemed to construct ethnicity in terms of descent from a common ancestor, association with a particular land, and a common way of life. **2. Mechanisms and theory:** the mechanisms by which these three criteria were understood to function included theories of environmental influence, social-political influence, astrology, acquired heredity, and natural slavery; and physiognomy offered a supposedly physiological means to evaluate ethnicity. **3. Functions and expressions:** Ancient ethnicity, thus constructed, could function to differentiate peoples (oppositional self-definition), link peoples via “ethnic genealogies” (aggregative self-definition), justify slavery, and express imperial ideology.

We will keep this basic model of race in mind, as we proceed to the next chapters, which investigate John's treatment of several specific races. We will find the three criteria listed above are significant in his understanding of these groups, and that the ancient theories and functions of

race outlined above play into the ways various characters attempt to deploy race rhetorically—to affirm superiority, attack an opponent, or bolster their position. Now, let us turn our attention to the specific races—e.g. Romans, Judeans, or Samaritans—encountered in John.

CHAPTER 2: GALILEANS

> When he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem during the festival, for they too had gone to the festival.
> – John 4:45

Galileans are a significant demographic in the Gospel of John. John relates that Jesus comes from Nazareth (1:45, 18:7), and his family still lives in Galilee as well (2:12, 7:1-9). Several prominent disciples hail from the region, including John, Andrew, and Peter, all from Bethsaida (1:44), and Nathanael (1:45, 21:2).[197] John depicts a Galilee invested in the same purity concerns as Judea, as illustrated by the use of "stone water jars for the Judean rites of purification" (2:6) in Cana. John especially emphasizes the Galilean orientation toward the Temple: throughout the gospel, it seems as if Galileans are always either going to Jerusalem, or returning to Galilee (4:45, 7:1-9; cf. 12:20). The very structure of the Gospel can be divided by Jesus' successive trips to and from Jerusalem for various festivals (2:13, 5:1, 7:10, 10:22-3, 12:1). When others argue about Jesus' identity, his Galilean origin is a significant factor (7:41, 7:52b).

In this chapter, I will first survey scholarship on Galilean ethnic identity in the first century. Recall that race is discursively-constituted, not objective; therefore we are not seeking some sort of "historical essence" about who the Galileans "really" were, but how Galileanness was constructed in discourse and and in practice. Then, I will move on to consider the Gospel's construction of Galileans, comparing its presentation with those seen in other sources.

Josephus occasionally uses the word *ethnos* to describe Galileans in *The Jewish War* (2:520, 3:34, 4:105), so they can, in some sense, be considered a "race" or ethnic group.

[197] Although Bethsaida was located on the East side of the Jordan and thus technically part of Gaulanitis, John treats the town as part of Galilee; see John 12:21.

Josephus frequently calls them by their own proper name Γαλιλαιοι, but sometimes refers to Galileans as Ιουδαιοι. Who exactly *were* these people, living just a few days' walk north of Judea? And how can this illuminate John's treatment of the group in his gospel?

Who Were the Galileans?

Three major theories have been put forward regarding the ethnic background of the Galileans. 1) Emil Schürer proposed that Galileans were originally gentile in makeup, possibly descended from the Itureans mentioned by Josephus (*Ant*. 13.318), who converted to Judaism during the Hasmonean period. 2) Albrecht Alt pioneered a second hypothesis, suggesting that the Galileans were descended, in good part, from the original Northern Israelites. According to this view, the biblical account greatly exaggerated the forced relocation of the Israelites by the Assyrians (2 Kgs 15:29, 17:6,23). Richard Horsley has been the most vocal and influential proponent of this thesis in recent years.[198] 3) Another position holds that the first-century Galileans were basically Judeans—either descendants of Judeans who lived on the land before the Hasmonean expansion, or descendants of Hasmonean settlers who moved into the area later.[199] This third view currently holds the greatest degree of support by scholars, and has the benefit of enjoying the greatest support by both literary and archaeological evidence. We will briefly consider each position.

Schürer, followed by Walter Bauer and others, held that pre-Hasmonean Galilee was essentially Gentile. In support of this construction, Schürer was able to cite 1 Macc. 5:14-23, which describes Simon Hyrcanus' rescue mission of some Judeans from Galilee, here described as "Galilee of the Gentiles." Schürer took this as evidence that the Judeans formed a minority

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[198] See, for example, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1992), 22-24; *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1995): 25-28; and "Jesus and the Politics of Roman Palestine," *Journal for the Studies of the Historical Jesus* 8 (2010): 117.

[199] Jonathan Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2000), 24-25.

among gentiles, and that Simon's evacuation of the Judeans left the area wholly gentile until the Hasmonean conquest, some 60 years later.[200] The gentiles in question are held to be the Itureans alluded to by Josephus (*Ant*. 13:318). Subsequently, the Hasmonean expansion into the area would have forced the Itureans to be circumcised and live according to the Judean ancestral laws, as had been done to the Idumeans and Peraeans.[201] Unfortunately for this reconstruction, archaeology does not indicate that the Itureans ever actually settled in Galilee. Neither does the evidence suggest an expulsion of a large number of Gentiles from Galilee.[202] Neither do the relevant sources describe a Hasmonean military campaign in Galilee, like the ones against the Idumeans and Samaritans.[203] Lastly, we have no evidence for Galileans being referred to as "half-Jews," unlike Idumeans.[204]

What, then, are we to make phrase "Galilee of the Gentiles" encountered in 1 Maccabees 5:15? A closer examination of relevant passages indicates that this name does *not* apply to the entire region known as Galilee. The account describes a Hasmonean "rescue mission" of some Judeans in Galilee (1 Macc 5:14-23). In it, Galileans send a message about the dangers they face: "They were saying that the people of Ptolemais and Tyre and Sidon, and all Galilee of the Gentiles (or 'foreigners,' πασαν Γαλιλαιαν αλλοφυλων), had gathered against them" (1 Macc 5:15). The Maccabean evacuation seems to have been near coastal cities like Tyre and Sidon—that is, "Galilee of the Gentiles/foreigners" (Γαλιλαιαν αλλοφυλων) is a specific coastal region only, not a name for the entirety of Galilee.[205] This interpretation is corroborated by LXX Joel 4:4: "And what are you to me, Tyre and Sidon and all Galilee of the Gentiles (πασα Γαλιλαια αλλυφυλων)?" Here, again, "Galilee of the Gentiles" is linked with the coastal regions of Tyre

[200] Mark A. Chancey, *The Myth of the Gentile Galilee* (New York: Cambridge, 2002), 36.
[201] Seán Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 BCE to 135 CE* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980), 43.
[202] Jonathan Reed, "Galileans, 'Israelite Village Communities,' and the Sayings Gospel Q," in *Galilee Through the Centuries: Confluence of Cultures* (edited by Eric Meyers. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenrauns, 1999), 103; Jonathan Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*, 39.
[203] Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian,* 43; cf. Reed, "Galileans and the Sayings Gospel Q," 103.
[204] Freyne. *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian,* 44.
[205] Mark A. Chancey, *The Myth of the Gentile Galilee* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2002), 37-9.

and Sidon. Here, the LXX phrasing is a mistranslation of the MT's גלילות פלשת ("region of the Philistines"). The Philistines lived along the coast. This rendering suggests that, at the time of Joel's translation into Greek, the stretch of Galilee along the coast (i.e., Philistine land) was known as "Galilee of the Gentiles."[206] We need not, then, take the term as a description of the entire area, nor as an assertion that the entirety of Galilee was Gentile in makeup.

Next we shall consider Horsley's thesis that the Galileans were descended from the original Israelites. In his view, Galileans were the Israelites who had remained on the land after the Assyrians deported the upper-class members of the society, leaving behind the peasants to work the land and produce tax revenue. As a result, Horsley interprets the Hasmonean expansion into Galilee as a military occupation of a continuously-occupied land, rather than a move into a largely unsettled area.[207]

Bradley Root identifies four major problems with this theory. 1) Horsley makes much of the fact that Josephus refers to the Galileans as an εθνος, and in some places Josephus seems to imply that they constitute a distinct people. However, the fact that they were an "ethnos" does not mean they weren't Judeans. This would limit the range of possible meanings behind εθνος too narrowly. 2) Horsley's argument restricts the meaning of *Ioudaios* (Ιουδαιος) to a strictly geographic sense, but this does not agree with ancient usage of *Ioudaios.* The term was often used without any reference to Judea. 3) We have no evidence of distinct cultural practices continuing among Galileans, handed down by generations Israelites who remained on the land. By contrast, the Samaritans and Idumeans *did* preserve unique traditions, even after annexation by the Hasmoneans. 4) As of yet, archaeology has uncovered no sign of these "continuing Israelites." In order to maintain his position in the face of material findings that *do* indicate

[206] Chancey, *The Myth of the Gentile Galilee,* 37-8.
[207] Horsley, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee*, 26-7; Horsley, "Jesus and Galilee," 60-1.

depopulation and lack of settlement, Horsley dismisses the archaeological evidence as inconclusive.[208]

However, archaeology related to Galilee's settlement patterns rules out Israelite continuity, painting a picture of total devastation.[209] For example, there is a lack of potshards that can be dated to the 7th century BCE, across settlement sites. For any one location, this absence could be chalked up to the site's preservation history or the negligence of surveyors—but such a lack at *every site* defies coincidence![210] In contrast to surrounding areas, Galilee just does not show enough material culture for this period to argue continuous habitation after the Assyrian deportation.[211] After being largely uninhabited for a time, Galilee experienced a sudden rise in settlement in the late Hellenistic era—which coincides with Hasmonean annexation of the area.[212] This brings us to the third theory about the ethnic background of the Galileans—that they were Judeans.

There is a growing consensus that the Galileans were descended from ethnic Judeans.[213] According to this view, Galilee was depopulated during Assyrian period. A small population of mixed Gentiles and Judeans lived there by the time of the Hasmoneans. After the Hasmonean expansion, the majority of Galileans were recent émigrés from Judea, while a minority were a mixture of the Judeans and Gentiles who had lived there prior to the expansion.[214] At this time, there was a dramatic increase in both the number of and population of inhabited sites. For our

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[208] Bradley W. Root, *First Century Galilee* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 148-9.

[209] Reed, "Galileans and the Sayings Gospel Q," 89-90; see also Markus Cromhout, "Were the Galileans 'Religious Jews' or 'Ethnic Judeans?'" *JQR* 82 (1991): 1282-83.

[210] Reed, "Galileans and the Sayings Gospel Q," 90; Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*, 29.

[211] Reed, "Galileans and the Sayings Gospel Q," 93; Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*, 32.

[212] Reed, "Galileans and the Sayings Gospel Q," 89.

[213] A position argued, for example, by Seán Freyne (1980, 1999, 2008, 2009), Jonathan Reed (2000), Mark Chancey (2002, 2005), Markus Cromhout (2007), and Mordechai Aviam (2013); see bibliography for full titles.

[214] Mordechai Aviam, "People, Land, Economy, and Belief in First-Century Galilee and its Origins: A Comprehensive Archaeological Synthesis," in *The Galilean Economy in the Time of Jesus* (edited by David Fiensy and Ralph Hawkins. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 15; Root, *First Century Galilee*, 16.

purposes, however, the issue of who the few Galileans *had been* is less important than who they were *after* the Hasmonean expansion.[215]

By the early Roman period, the inhabitants of Galilee can properly be called "Judeans." First-century authors consistently refer to Galileans as *Ioudaioi*.[216] Josephus, for example, seems to use οἱ Ιουδαιοι and οἱ Γαλιλαιοι more-or-less interchangeably,[217] and understands Galileans to be of similar ethnic stock to those living in Judea.[218] Such diverse voices as Josephus, the gospels, and the early rabbis agree on this point.[219] Therefore, it is more helpful to speak of "Galilean Judeans," rather than "Galileans *vs*. Judeans." Jonathan Reed says, "To speak of *Galilean* Judaism or *Galilean* Jews is to add an important qualifier, but to juxtapose Galileans with Judeans and stress their geographical differences skews their common heritage and obscures their historical connections."[220]

There are numerous markers in Galilee's material culture that indicate adherence to the Judean faith. Commonly cited among these are: 1) use of stone vessels, 2) *mikva'ot* or stepped baths, 3) characteristically Judean burial practices, 4) a diet without pork, and 5) artifacts and coins lacking depiction of humans or animals.[221] The stone vessels, also common in Judea, were possibly for religious use, as stone was not considered to transfer uncleanness. Both John and rabbinic sources link stone vessels with purity concerns.[222] First appearing with the Hasmonean

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[215] This same sentiment is expressed by both Reed and Cromhout. "Galileans and the Sayings Gospel Q," 95; Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*, 39; Cromhout, "Were the Galileans 'religious Jews' or 'ethnic Judeans?'" 1286.

We should remind ourselves at this point that we are considering the Galilean *race*, not Galilean *DNA*; what concerns us is not so much the "historical facts" about who the Galileans' ancestors were, but the discursive identity created by "historical memories" about the ancestors, and their professed belief to descend from them. The racial identity *built* upon these discourses would be just as true, even if the "facts" were not.

[216] Root, *First Century Galilee,* 146.

[217] Cromhout, "Were the Galileans 'Religious Jews' or 'Ethnic Judeans?'" 1293.

[218] Ibid., 1284-85.

[219] Chancey, "Archaeology, Ethnicity, and First-Century C.E. Galilee," in *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honor of Seán Freyne* (edited by Zuleika Rodgers, Margaret Daly-Denton, and Anne Fitzpatrick McKinley. Boston: Brill, 2009), 216.

[220] Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*, 55; Reed, "Galileans and the Sayings Gospel Q," 104.

[221] Reed, "Galileans and the Sayings Gospel Q," 89, 98, 102. For an extended discussion of the first four archaeological markers, cf. Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus,* 44-51.

[222] Chancey, "Archaeology, Ethnicity, and First-Century C.E. Galilee," 209.

annexation, *mikva'ot* are widely distributed across Galilee, found in cities, villages, and even small settlements. The presence of *mikva'ot* across Galilee also seems to suggest a characteristically Judean concern for purity. Some are located near olive presses, where olive oil was probably produced for Judeans who ate their food in daily purity.[223] In keeping with the prevailing Jewish sensibilities that equated depiction of images with idolatry, coins and lamps from Galilee typically do not contain representations of animals or the human form, unlike those from surrounding areas.[224] These distinctively Judean aspects of Galilee's material culture—stone vessels, mikva'ot, aniconic art, secondary burial, and avoidance of pork—contrast the material culture of the surrounding, gentile lands.[225]

The spiritual life of Galilee was oriented toward Jerusalem. Galileans were in the habit of attending festivals in Jerusalem (*Ant*. 20.118), although they had to pass through Samaria to do it, where on at least one occasion terrible fighting broke out between pilgrims and the Samaritans (*Ant*. 20.118-36, *J.W.* 2.234-46; Tacitus *Annals* 12.54). Galileans were among the Judeans from all over the ancient world, who flooded the city at festival-times. The Romans learned to watch such festivals closely, as crowds could become mobs, and the heightened fervor of a festival could lead to riots. The gospel of Luke mentions some "Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices" (13:1); the specific event alluded to here may have more to do with the Roman's undiscriminating handling of festival disturbances, than to any specifically revolutionary act by Galileans.[226] Artifacts also suggest this orientation toward Jerusalem, such as the popularity of lamps manufactured in Jerusalem.[227] For example, a high percentage of lamps in use during the first century CE from the cities of Gamla and Yodefat were manufactured in

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[223] Aviam, "People, Land, Economy, Beliefs," 32.
[224] Ibid., 45.
[225] Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*, 51; Mark T. Schuler, "Recent Archaeology of Galilee and the Interpretation of Texts from the Galilean Ministry of Jesus," *CTQ* 71 (2007): 108.
[226] Freyne notes that both the NT (Mark 14:2, Matt 26:5, Luke 23:25) and Josephus (*Ant*. 20.105-12; *J.W.* 2.224ff) attest the possibility of unrest during festivals, which made Roman and Jewish authorities cautious. *Galilee: From Alexander the Great to Hadrian,* 290.
[227] Aviam, "People, Land, Economy, Beliefs," 45.

Jerusalem, suggesting an emotional or spiritual connection with the city. The same habit of importing lamps from Jerusalem was also known in northern towns of Judea.[228]

Josephus, the gospels, and archaeology all attest to Galilean observance of the Judean religion.[229] From all of these sources, a picture of Galileans' religious practice emerges which strongly resembles that of the Judean countryside. Shared features included Sabbath observance, purity concerns, aniconic art, payment of the temple tax, acknowledgment of Judean religious authorities, adherence to the same scriptures, and pilgrimage.[230]

Galilean Distinctiveness

It seems, then, that the Galileans were ethnic Judeans, not only in terms of shared religion, but in terms of descent and homeland—that is, they were the descendants of Hasmonean settlers from Judea, who looked to Jerusalem as their religious and political mother-city. Does this mean, then, that the Galileans were "merely" Judean, with no distinguishing ethnic characteristics? In what sense, if any, can we say that the Galileans constituted a distinct "race," distinguishable from those living in Judea?

I will identify several dynamics that might have differentiated Galileans from other Judeans: 1) Theirs was a hybrid (or "nested") identity, as Galilean-Judeans. 2) Their northern homeland may have given them an enhanced sense of being the heirs of northern Israelite figures and traditions. 3) Galilee's political situation was different from that of Judea. 4) Related to this factor are center vs. periphery dynamics. Galileans were removed from their cultural and political center, Jerusalem, farther from the halls of power and processes of decision-making. As a younger economy, there was also less economic stratification in Galilee, and their elites were

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[228] Ibid., 34-5.
[229] Root, *First Century Galilee,* 146.
[230] Ibid., 167.

less wealthy than their (southern) Judean counterparts. 5) Galileans were somewhat less beholden to Judean religious authorities. 6) Lastly, Galilee was considerably less Hellenized than Judea.

The first three of these factors (hybridity, northern location, and political situation) have to do with homeland, one of the crucial factors in how the ancients commonly constructed race. In ancient "environmental theories" of race, the land in which a people lived was thought to gradually shape them over a few generations. The political constitution under which a people were governed was often a part of this "environment," so Galilee's unique political situation is relevant to the discussion. Hybrid (or nested) identity also touches upon the issue of descent, as we shall see. The last three factors listed above (periphery vs. center, lesser influence of Judean religious leaders, and extent of Hellenization) are primarily cultural factors; these would have given Judean elites the distinct impression that Galileans were rustic hayseeds, from a backwater.

We will now consider these six possible sources of Galilean distinctiveness in some detail. First, let us turn our attention to the nature of "Galilean-Judean" as a hybrid identity, in which *Galileanness* (to coin a rather unwieldy word) is nested within the larger category of *Judeanness*.

Nested Identity

Modern anthropology proposes that people can have more than one ethnic identity at the same time. Such a hybrid identity could be conceptualized as a "hierarchy of nested segments," in which an individual's identity can be divided into discrete parts, which are nevertheless "nested" within a larger sense of identity. Markus Cromhout points out, "A person living in Galilee can be identified as a Sepphorean, Galilean, Judean, with the more encompassing identity alternatively

being Judean and/or Israelite."[231] Therefore, the distinction between Galileans and *Ioudaioi* is best understood as an example of the "nesting" of ethnic identities, not as a distinction between mutually exclusive identities.[232]

Ancient sources themselves attest to what we might call nested ethnic identities. Authors spoke of various sorts of compounded Judean identities. In a well known example from Acts, Luke describes a group of "pious Judeans from every race under heaven" (απο παντος εθνος των ὑπο τον ουρανον), including "Parthians, Medes and Elamites, and the residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and also Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Crete, and visiting Romans (both Judeans and proselytes), Cretans and Arabs" (Acts 2:5,9-11), and to this list we surely ought to add Galileans (mentioned at 2:7). Any of these labels, by itself, would indicate a member of a specific *ethnos*, and indeed Luke uses the word in verse 5. But Luke is equally clear that all of these are *Ioudaioi*. Once he has specified they belong to this overarching identity, Luke can refer to these diaspora groups only by their secondary labels, such as "Parthians" or "Arabs." Rabbinic texts similarly employ secondary ethnic identifiers with regard to Judeans, without specifying the "main" (Judean) *ethnos*, which is implicit. Thus Medes, Arabs, or Alexandrians, can mean Mede-Judeans, Arab-Judeans, or Alexandrian-Judeans.[233]

Philo borrows the language of empire to describe populations of Judeans living in diaspora as "colonies" (αποικιαι), and takes great delight in describing the boundaries of the worldwide "map" of Judaism, which rivals even that of Hellenism (*Embassy*, 281-3; cf. *Vita Mos*. 2.232, *Flacc*. 45). Philo wishes to argue that such Judean "colonists" and their descendants enjoy a sort of "dual-enrollment" as Judeans, and members of their own (local) *ethnē*:

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[231] Cromhout, "Were the Galileans 'Religious Jews' or 'Ethnic Judeans?'" 1294. Cynthia Baker makes a similar point of Judeans more generally in "From Every Nation Under Heaven," 84-86.

[232] Mark A. Chancey, "Ethnicities of the Galileans," in *Galilee in the Late Second Temple and Mishnaic Period, v*ol. 1: *Life, Culture, and Society* (edited by David A. Fiensy and James Riley Strange. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 118.

[233] Baker, "From Every Nation Under Heaven," 84.

> So populous are the Jews that no one country can hold them, and therefore they settle in very many of the most prosperous countries in Europe and Asia both in the islands and on the mainland, and while they hold the Holy City where stands the sacred Temple of the most high God to be their mother city (μητροπολιν), yet those which are theirs by inheritance from their fathers, grandfathers, and ancestors even farther back, are in each count accounted by them to be their fatherland (πατριδας) in which they were born (εγεννηθησαν) and reared, while to some of them they have come at the time of their foundation as immigrants to the satisfaction of the founders. – *Flaccus* 46[234]

Diaspora Judeans have connections with their respective lands that are best understood as *racial* in nature. Ancestry and land are the two most prevalent components of racial construction in antiquity, and they are on full display here. For these Judeans, "fatherland" is not only the place where one was born (εγεννηθησαν)—the "native land" connotation of πατρις—but also literally the land of one's fathers. These lands are their inheritance "from their fathers (πατερων), grandfathers (παππων), great-grandfathers (προπαππων)[235], and ancestors (προγονων) even farther back," and so they are well-justified to consider them their "fatherlands" (πατριδας). These ancestors have dwelt in their countries a long time, often since "the time of their foundation"—and thus they have as much claim belong to their lands' respective peoples as anyone![236] Nevertheless, Judeans living in diaspora still consider Jerusalem their "mother-city."[237] Cynthia Baker further suggests that, in the gendered dual-parentage constructed by "fatherland" and "mother city," fatherland is primary.[238] In Philo's understanding, then, one's native land holds a place of considerable significance in one's racial identity. Judeans living in Alexandria or Corinth are rightfully understood as Alexandrian-Judeans, or Corinthian-Judeans, respectively, with the prefixed component no less important than "Judean."

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[234] Colson, LCL.

[235] "Great-grandfathers" (προπαππων) is oddly missing from F. H. Colson's translation (LCL).

[236] Interestingly, this same juxtaposition of πατρις and μητροπολις occurs in Josephus, in a passage in which the "foundation" of the tribes' homelands is described. Moses counsels the Israelites that once they have entered into the promised land and won their respective tribal fatherlands (πατριδων), they are to turn their attention to the mother-city (μητροπολιν) where the temple would stand (*Ant*. 3:245). The tribes, then, also have a claim to their lands because their ancestors were there since their foundation! Implicitly, they have the same sort of "dual-enrollment" which Philo describes: they are not merely Israelites, but Israelites *of a particular tribe*.

[237] This is no less true of Galileans. Josephus relates that John of Gischala, after being routed and driven to Jerusalem by the Romans, claimed it had really been strategic retreat: "It would have been senseless and useless to recklessly risk our lives for Gischala and such defenseless towns, when we ought to husband our arms and energies in order to come together and defend the mother city (μητροπολει)." *J.W.* 4.123

[238] Baker, "From Every Nation Under Heaven," 87.

Galilee derived its "composite" Judean identity from its geographic location, as well. Like Idumaea, Samaria, and Peraea, Galilee had been a district of the larger country of Judea, which had been cobbled together as the Hasmoneans annexed adjacent territories.[239] Whenever Hasmoneans added gentile populations, they required them to be circumcised and submit to their ancestral laws to be incorporated into their country.[240] Thereafter, residents of one of these districts, such as Perea, might be referred to as "Judeans." Whether this term applied merely to political standing, religious adherence, or included some "ethnic" sense, is murky, and probably difficult to answer definitively. Certainly, an ancient Idumean would not have been considered as "Judean" as someone of Judean ancestry. But when we recall that government was a significant factor in environmental theories of race, *and* that Judeans' ethnic self-construction was tied to their status as the "people of God," it becomes harder to pinpoint just how "Judean" Pereans or Idumeans were.

Whatever the exact sense behind the usage, there is no doubt that the inhabitants of these districts were sometimes called "*Ioudaioi"* (e.g. *Ant*. 13:50-54). This continues to be true even after the Hasmonean state collapsed and these lands lapsed from Judean control. In two parallel accounts of a festival disturbance, Josephus describes a mixed crowd in Jerusalem as "the Judeans," some of whom come from the surrounding districts:

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[239] Shaye Cohen, "*Ioudaiois to genos* and Related Expressions in Josephus," in *The Significance of Yavneh and Other Essays in Jewish Hellenism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 213.

[240] For accounts of this policy in Josephus, see: Idumeans (*Ant*. 13.257-8; *J.W.* 1.63), Pereans, some of the Itureans (*Ant*. 13.318). Ptolemy agrees that the incorporation of the Idumeans was compulsory. However, Strabo suggests that the Idumeans and Itureans willingly joined the Hasmonean state and took on their customs (*Geography* 16.2.34; compare *Ant*. 13.319). Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness,* 110-115.

a multitude...	
- of Galileans (Γαλιλαιων)	- from Galilee (εκ της Γαλιλαιας)
- of Idumeans (Ιδουμαιων)	- from Idumea (εκ της Ιδουμαιας)
- of Jerichoans (Ιεριχουντιων)	- from Jericho (Ιεριχουντος)
- those living in the Transjordan (όποσοι περασαντες Ιορδανην)	- from Peraea beyond the Jordan (της ὑπερ Ιορδανην Περαιας)
- those from Judea itself (αυτων Ιουδαιων)	- the actual people of Judea itself (ὁ γνησιος εξ αυτης Ιουδαιας λαος)
...are collectively called:	
The Judeans (τοις Ιουδαιοις)	The Judeans (τοις Ιουδαιοις)
– *Antiquities* 17.254, 257-58	– *J.W.* 2:43, 46-47

The mixed group, composed of Galileans, Idumeans, Pereans, and "the natural-born (γνησιος) people of Judea itself," is later simply called "the Judeans."[241] Again, it is hard to say whether they can be considered Judeans in the sense that they were once incorporated into the Hasmonean state, or because of religious practice (after all, they are in Jerusalem for a festival.)

There is some indication that Idumeans might consider themselves Judeans, or at least closely related to them. Like Philo's foreign-born Judeans, the Idumean chief Simon calls Jerusalem "the mother-city" (μητροπολεως) as well as "the city common to us all" (*J.W.* 4.273-75), according to Josephus. Further, when he berates those who have closed Jerusalem to the Idumeans, he claims kinship with the Judeans inside: "This city, which flings wide its gates to every foreigner (αλλοφυλοις) for worship, is now barricaded against your own people (τοις οικειοις)!" (*J.W.* 4.275) [242] This last term might be better translated "kinsman." Simon goes on to insist they are "fellow-tribesmen" (ὁμοφυλων), in contrast to the before-mentioned "foreigners" (αλλοφυλοις). Indeed, the Judeans had entreated Simon to hasten to Jerusalem to defend the 'mother-city' επι βαρβαρους, "against barbarians!" (*J.W.* 4.239). Although in Rome, both peoples would have been considered barbarians, here "barbarian" is used with a sense very close to "gentiles"—and it seems that Simon is expected to understand he does not belong to this

[241] γνησιος, from γενος, with either the sense of "belonging to a race," with a related connotation of the belonging to a state one was born into, or with the sense "really, truly." *Liddell-Scott*, 166.

[242] Thackeray, LCL.

category! Despite all this, there are plenty of indications that Josephus does not consider Idumeans to be real Judeans. For example, there is his famous remark that Herod is Idumean, "that is, a half-Jew (ἡμιουδαιῳ)" (*Ant.* 14.403).[243]

The Galileans also belonged to a land that had been a district of greater Judea. Alongside Idumeans and Pereans, they could be called Judeans, but remained identifiable under their own ethnic name (*Ant*. 13.50-54; *Ant*. 17.254-58). The continued reference to their "Galilean" identity, in many literary sources, implies that their regional identity remained a significant factor in the construction of their ethnic identity—even if they were also rightly called Judeans. Josephus refers to "those among us who are called Galileans" (*C. Ap.* 1.47). John, for his part, uses Γαλιλαιοι frequently, although Galileans can also be referred to as Judeans. It seems then, that merely calling them Judeans would obscure some facet of their ethnic identity, some authors consider relevant in certain contexts. Similar to Luke's or Philo's Judeans of many lands, the Galileans possessed a secondary level of their racial self which was significant to note.

Beginning in the Hasmonean period, "Judaism" begins to emerge as a phenomena comparable to Hellenism—an identity which people from diverse backgrounds can belong to.[244] *Ioudaios* becomes comparable in function to "Hellene," though on a smaller scale. Neither identity precluded other ethnic self-understandings.[245] Cohen notes, "One could be a Macedonian and a Hellene, a Syrian and a Hellene, a Cappadocian and a Hellene. Similarly, one could be a Macedonian and a Jew, a Syrian and a Jew, a Cappadocian and a Jew."[246] We can see this understanding of Judaism in the policies of the Hasmoneans, but also in Philo's aforementioned description of Judaism as a world-culture found throughout the lands. Judaism (or, better,

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[243] We might add the "blue-blooded" Judean genealogy which Nicolas of Damascus, Herod's pet scribe, drew up for his father's ancestry, *Ant*. 14.8-9. Presumably, his Idumean roots were not "Judean" enough for a King of Judea.
[244] Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness,* 127, 138.
[245] Baker, "From Every Nation Under Heaven," 91; Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness,* 134-35.
[246] Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness,* 135.

"Judeanness") was an overarching "umbrella" category, which could hold other identities "nested" within it.

Some Judeans, then, had a nested, compound ethnic identity: they were Judeans and something else as well. The conundrum of such an identity is that either facet of one's nested identity might render one as noticeably "other," depending on the context. So, the Alexandrians were able to revile Alexandrian Judeans as "foreigners and aliens" (ξενους και επηλυδας), for all Philo's protestations that diaspora Judeans have the most genuine claims on their respective fatherlands (*Flaccus* 54). However, if these same Alexandrian Judeans happened to be in Jerusalem for a festival, they would simply be called "Alexandrians," as seen in Acts 2:5-11 and rabbinical sources. In diaspora, they are "from Judea," in Judea they are "from somewhere else." Whichever side of a compound racial identity renders one most unique, most likely to stand out in one's current context, becomes highly noticeable.

We should regard Galileans, then, as Judeans of hybrid racial identity. Much like Philo's diaspora Judeans, they inhabit two ethnicities at once. Although they regarded themselves as Judeans, and indeed were regarded as such by other Judeans, they were certainly noticed as *Galilean*-Judeans (or simply "Galileans") by their cousins from the south.

Galilee as Spiritual Homeland

Galilee was the "fatherland" (πατρις) of Galileans. In the ancient world, one's race was heavily associated with one's homeland, and environmental theories held that one's *country* played an important role in racial formation. How might the Galileans' particular geographic location in Galilee have given them a unique identity? One possibility was that Galileans may have felt a sense of "spiritual kinship" with the Israelites who had once lived there, and also had a special affinity for biblical traditions addressed to, or which arose in, their homeland.

Hasmonean expansion into Galilee (and elsewhere) was conceptualized as merely reclaiming what rightfully belonged to Israel. Freyne identifies a biblical tradition of "the land remaining," that is, land which was never fully subdued and occupied by northern tribes (Josh 13:1-7, Josh 11:8, Judg 3:3), and Northern tribes come under criticism for failing to fully occupy their allotted lands, or not driving out the other inhabitants.[247] Hasmonean expansionism was conceptualized as retaking their rightful inheritance, as can be seen in Simon Hyrcanus' insistence that:

> [33] We have neither taken others' land, nor seized others' property, but rather the inheritance of our ancestors (των πατερων ἡμων), which our enemies had wrongfully seized for a time. [34] Now that we have an opportunity, we are laying claim to the inheritance of our fathers (των πατερων ἡμων)."
>
> – 1 Macc 15:33-34 (my trans.)

The conjunction of *ancestry* and *land* should alert us to the racial nature of the claim being made here. Galilee was part of the ancient kingdom of Israel, and the Hasmoneans were conscious of this fact, as were the Judean settlers who flooded the land under their rule. They would have seen themselves, not as pioneers of a new territory, but as heirs reclaiming the land of their people.

The north could act as the adopted or imagined "homeland" against which Galilean communities could map their self-understanding.[248] Many locations in Galilee were linked with significant events in Judean tradition. The Elijah and Elisha cycles, as well as the Northern prophets, might have been particularly important to Galileans.[249] In addition, several of the "blessings of the tribes" were addressed to tribes whose proper boundaries fell within Galilee (Deut 33:1-25, Gen 49:1-28).[250] Galileans may well have heard such blessings as if they were

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[247] Seán Freyne, *Jesus, A Jewish Galilean: A New Reading of the Jesus-Story (*New York: T&T Clark, 2004)*,* 71-4.
[248] Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus,* 60.
[249] Richard Horsley would add the Exodus narrative to this list; see "Jesus and Galilee," 61.
[250] Although these promises were recorded long before our period, these texts were living documents, rehearsed before the Palestinians of the first century in worship and in study, commented upon by both experts (i.e., Pharisees and scribes) as well as popular retellings (such as Pseudepigrapha). The antiquity of the source material should not lead us to underestimate its continuing power over the Judean imagination.

addressed to them, especially in cases where such a blessing made reference to features of the land itself— land in which the Galileans now lived.[251]

Isaiah's oracle for the salvation of the north (Isa 9:1-7) may have had special significance for Galileans. This passage originally referred to the accession of a king of Judah, but was later interpreted as predicting a messianic figure. It announces an end of gloom to those who were formerly in anguish, including the land of Naphtali and the Land of Zebulon (that is, Galilee). Addressed as it is toward the north, this passage may have had special resonance in Galilee. Matthew explicitly links this oracle to the beginning of Jesus' ministry there (Matt 4:12-17).[252]

Both Richard Horsley and Seán Freyne have suggested that the Elijah cycle of stories could have been particularly important in the religious imaginations of Galileans.[253] Elijah was active within the Northern Kingdom. In an act of prophetic showmanship, he defeated the prophets of Ba'al at Horeb, and symbolically reconstituted the tribes of Israel by setting up twelve stones for the altar (1 Kgs 18:20-40). Elijah was expected to "return before the great and terrible day of the Lord" (Mal 4:5-6), when he would cleanse and purify the descendants of Levi (Mal 3:1-5), which seemingly recalls his defeat of the Ba'als prophets. Sirach briefly rehearses Elijah's deeds, with particular emphasis on his career as a wonder-worker, adding that Elijah would come again to restore both family and 'the tribes of Jacob' (Sir 48:1-11). This tradition of Elijah's impending return is an important motif in the gospels, which testify that "Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things" (Mark 9:11; cf. 6:15, 8:28; 15:33-36). Expectation of Elijah's

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[251] Geographical references in the blessings of the tribes might seem, to later Galileans, as if the blessings were addressed to the land of Galilee itself, or to any Israelites who lived there. Naphtali is to take possession of the "south and west" (or possibly "sea" *yom*), which might refer to sea of Galilee (Deut 33:23). Zebulon and Issachar "call peoples to the mountain/ there they offer right sacrifices" and suck wealth from the seas, and treasure from the sand (33:18-19). Asher is the "favorite of his brothers" and "may he dip his head in oil" (33:24), implying fertile bounty. The versions of the blessings from Genesis also reference the land: "Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between the sheepfolds; he saw a resting place that was good, and a land that was pleasant" (49:14-5a). Zebulon's blessing linked to its territory "at the shore of the sea" / "and his border shall be at Sidon" (49:13); Zebulon's ideal territory is imagined to be be at, or near, the sea, with access to its riches. Similarly, Asher's blessing seems to allude to fertile coastland, and the provision of royal delicacies (49:20) may suggest sea trade.

[252] Freyne, "Galilean Jesus," 288; Freyne, *Galilee and Gospel*, 230-70.

[253] Freyne, *Galilee and Gospel,* 256-7; Horsley, "Jesus and Galilee," 61.

return continues in rabbinical sources (Mishnah *Eyodot* 8:7). Such traditions of may have had special resonance for Galileans; after all, Elijah was active in the north, and operated far from the centers of power.

Political Situation

Galilee's political situation was quite different than that of Judeans living in Judea proper. Galilee was a sort of "adjunct" to Judea for the first half of the first century, and politically separate for the other half.[254] When the Hasmoneans annexed it into greater Judea, Galilee was one district among many. Although it was settled, rather than conquered as other districts had been, it was still in quite a different position than Judea, the district from which the kingdom was ruled. After the Hasmonean state fell apart, Galilee was largely ignored under Herod, who did not invest any grand-scale building projects in the area. It is possible Herod harbored resentment for the Galileans' earlier support of the Hasmoneans against him.

Upon Herod's death, Augustus split the kingdom amongst his sons. Antipas and Philip each became the *tetrarch* ("ruler of a fourth") of particular areas: Antipas ruling Galilee and Perea, Philip ruling the Decapolis and parts of the transjordan. Archelaus was granted the larger territory of Samaria-Judea-Idumea (implicitly the other "two-fourths" left of Herod's kingdom), and given the title *ethnarch*, "ruler of a people."[255] Subsequently, when Judea came under direct Roman rule through procurators, Galilee continued under native client rulers.

Despite some attempts to describe Galileans as firebrand revolutionaries, on the whole Galilee seems to have been *less* revolutionary than Judea, not more. The land simply did not exhibit the same level of messianic/revolutionary fervor as Judea. Incidents of unrest there seem

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[254] Root, *First Century Galilee,* 180.
[255] Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus.* pp. 46-7.

episodic and local, and lack the broader perspective necessary to be called "insurrections."[256] Although some Galileans might get swept up in a riot while visiting Jerusalem, most would not have experienced firsthand the events that precipitated these outbreaks of violence. Galilee spent less time under direct Roman rule, and its largely rural population would have felt the effects of Roman rule less acutely than their southern cousins. [257] Galilee's political situation seems not to have fostered the right conditions for revolutionary movements to flourish.[258]

Even after Galilee was no longer technically under the control of Judea, there may have been ways in which the Galileans still regarded Judea with some degree of deference. The most powerful Judean elites, both in terms of religious and political influence, lived there. There stood the Temple—the only valid place where Judeans could offer sacrifices to their God—to which they paid annual taxes, and to which they made pilgrimage.[259]

In summary, the Galileans political fortunes differed from the Judeans in some significant ways. It had suffered fewer direct consequences of Roman rule than Judea. At the same time Galileans had less political agency than their southern counterparts. This is true even during the Roman period, when the oversight of an indigenous Sanhedrin and high priests could at least project the *illusion* of local rule—even though they served as the clients of Roman masters. Galileans would have been aware that Judea, only a few days south of them, was the "place" of the Judeans. Galilee had always existed in Judea's shadow, like a tiny moon in orbit around a large planet, and would have acutely felt the influence of its gravity. This brings us to a closely related factor, which differentiated the people of Galilee from the people of Judea.

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[256] Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian,* 246-7.
[257] Root, *First Century Galilee,* 177.
[258] Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian,* 246-7.
[259] Root, *First Century Galilee,* 181.

Periphery vs. Center

Although Judaism had grown into a multinational phenomenon, with communities spread across the Mediterranean world and beyond, Judea remained the center of the Judean world. It was the land of their origins, their ancestral homeland, and the Holy Land that God had left to his chosen people. No matter where they lived, Judeans felt an enduring connection the land of their ancient forefathers. Therefore, Galileans would have been well aware that the land of their origins lay to the south.

The Roman division of Herod's kingdom suggests that they, too, regarded Judea as the core land of the Judeans. Archelaus, whose portion included Judea, was given the title *ethnarch*, "ruler of a people."[260] Two things about this arrangement might be noted here. First, the largest division was Archelaus', with Judea in the geographic center, highlighting its importance. Second, this area has an *ethnarch* as opposed to a *tetrach*, reflecting the Roman sentiment that Judea is the real homeland of the Judean *ethnos*.

Jerusalem, which Josephus colorfully described as the "navel" of Judea (*J.W.* 3.52), was the unrivaled center of the Judean world. It was the "mother-city" of all Judeans, regardless of which country (πατρις) they hailed from (Philo, *Flacc*. 45-6, *Legatio* 281-2; Jos. *Ant*. 3.245), and exerted a sort of centripetal influence over the hearts and imaginations of Judeans, no matter where they lived. As Philo puts it,

> When men found a colony (αποικιαν), the land which receives them becomes their native land (πατρις) instead of the mother city (μητροπολεως), but [on the other hand] to the traveler abroad the land which sent him forth is still the mother to whom also he yearns to return. – *Conf*. 78[261]

Despite Philo's insistence that Judeans have a legitimate status in their respective countries, the metropolis commands the affection of their hearts.

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[260] Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus,* 46-7.
[261] Colson-Whitaker, LCL.

Philo is aware that the demand to sacrifice in only in Jerusalem posed a considerable challenge for Judeans who must "leave country (πατριδα) and friends and kinfolk (συγγενεις) and sojourn in a strange land" in order to sacrifice there (*Spec*. 1.68), but he nevertheless feels that the trip is well worth it. Despite the difficulties of travel, "Countless multitudes from countless cities come, some over land, others over sea, from east and west and north and south at every feast," where, he says, they experience emotional heights, form new friendships, and feel a solidarity of mind (ὁμονοιος) with Judeans from all over the world (*Spec*. 1.69). Jerusalem was the place where diaspora Judeans were able to powerfully experience themselves as a world-culture, rather than a small minority among gentiles. Galileans, when they came, would be able feel that they were a part of a world-spanning people who hailed from many nations. Lee Levine explains,

> Only Jerusalem could provide the most complete worship experience to the God of Israel, and the centripetal pull of the city was a bonding factor for Jews everywhere, perhaps the most significant for some. Much as Rome functioned as the *Urbs par excellence* of the entire empire, so, too, did Jerusalem serve as a magnet for the far-flung Jewish communities of Judaea and the Diaspora.[262]

Much of Galilee's material culture implies an emotional attachment to Jerusalem. For example, petrographic analysis shows that *over half* of the oil lamps recovered in excavations of Yodefat and Gamla were made in Jerusalem! This use of imported lamps was widespread throughout Galilee. The use of imported products, when those of local manufacture would be cheaper and more practical, suggests the items had symbolic, as well as utilitarian, value. The same habit of importing lamps from Jerusalem was also common in the towns of northern Judea.[263] Some may have been souvenirs from pilgrimages, and as such may embody a sense of spiritual connection with the worship conducted there.

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[262] Lee I. Levine, "Jewish Identities in Antiquity: An Introductory Essay," in *Jewish Identities in Antiquity: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern* (Edited by Randall C. Bailey, Tat-siong Benny Liew, and Fernando F. Segovia. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 29.

[263] Aviam, "People, Land, Economy and Belief," 34-5.

Much of Jerusalem's importance for all Judeans derived from the presence of the temple, and the temple's power derived from its *singularity*. It was unique in all the world—the only place where God had commanded his people to offer sacrifice. For both Philo and Josephus, this singularity is a corollary of the singular nature of God. Philo reasons, "Since God is one, there should be only one temple" (*Special Laws* 1.67). Josephus sees a link between a single temple as a powerful unifier of the Hebrew race (το Ἑβραιων γενος): "In no other city let there be either altar or temple, for God is one and the Hebrew race is one."[264] Galileans lived nearer to the temple than any non-geographic Judeans, but they were peripheral to the temple establishment, at least in the sense that the most powerful priestly families who oversaw its function lived in Judea.

Galileans were more firmly under Judea's cultural shadow than Judeans living in distant countries with strong cultures of their own. They lived just to the north, close enough feel the tug of Judea's gravity keenly. Although Philo could re-interpret diaspora communities as "colonies" of Judeans, Galilee's Judeans were a literal colony of the Hasmonean kingdom, annexed and settled by Judeans. This (relatively young!) country was a quite literal annex of Judea, and to the extent that they had a sense of having a history as a people, it would be a recent political memory of emigration from the south.

We could add to these center-versus-periphery dynamics three additional factors. Firstly, as we have already mentioned, Galilean elites were significantly less wealthy and influential than those who lived in Judea. Secondly, Galilee was less urbanized than Judea, and so may have come across as "hayseeds" to more cosmopolitan Judeans. Lastly, as we shall discuss shortly, the area had undergone less Hellenization than Judea.

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[264] Levine, "Jewish Identities in Antiquity," 28-29.

Hellenization in Galilee

Despite some scholars' efforts to describe a "gentile" Galilee, Greco-Roman culture made relatively few footholds there. Galilee was less Hellenized than Judea, or neighboring Syria or Gaulanitis, for that matter.[265] There was very little Hellenization during Jesus' lifetime. Much of the evidence that has been marshaled to argue for a "Hellenized Galilee" during the *first century* really properly belongs to the second and third centuries.[266]

When Herod undertook ambitious building projects across his kingdom, including entire cities, he largely neglected the territory of Galilee.[267] This neglect may have been due Galilee's earlier support of the Hasmoneans against him.[268] Whatever the reason, the result was that Galilee lacked the visible hallmarks of Hellenism that could be found in Judea. This continued to be the case in the first century. With the notable exception of Sepphoris and Tiberias, Galilee had less Greek-style architecture than Judea, little pictorial representation in art, little penetration of Greco-Roman religions, and little visible representation of imperial ideology.[269]

This last point is hardly surprising, given that Galilee had little direct Roman contact. There were few, if any, Roman administrators there, and the same goes for Roman soldiers.[270] Much of Galilee's comparative lack of Hellenization may simply be a function of its relative lack of foreigners. Judea, by contrast, had foreign administrators and soldiers in residence. Its principal city, Jerusalem, attracted pilgrims from many nations. Galilee, by contrast, had less to draw foreigners. As a result, Galileans simply had less exposure to Greco-Roman culture.

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[265] Root, *First Century Galilee*, 174.
[266] Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus*, 229.
[267] Freyne, *Galilee: From Alexander the Great to Hadrian,* 69.
[268] Aviam, "People, Land, Economy, and Belief," 16.
[269] Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus,* 223.
[270] Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus,* 69.

Galilean elites were less wealthy than their Judean counterparts. Thus, they had fewer resources as potential "consumers" of the trappings of foreign culture.[271]

We are unsure how widespread use of the Greek language was in Galilee. There is little to demonstrate that it was commonly spoken. Of course, it is possible that its use was more widespread than we have evidence for.[272] Greek *was* the administrative language, as both Josephus and epigraphy attest. However, literary sources (although *written* in Greek) imply that region's common language was Aramaic (cf. Mark, John, *Vita*).[273] Of course, use of the Greek language does not always indicate the extent of Hellenization.

It is possible that a slow pace of acculturation to outside influences *might* be a sign of resistance to Rome. The material record presents data that could be interpreted as markers of resistance adaptation. These include aniconic coinage, inscriptions in local languages, lamps with Judean (rather than pagan) motifs, and the "iconographic silence" of early Galilean synagogues. But is is difficult to know what exactly to make of these features. While it is true that they might be markers of resistance to Rome, they could as easily be interpreted as signs of fidelity to Jerusalem, or efforts to affirm a local ethnic or religious identity.[274] Likely, there is some truth to all these possibilities.

Judaism in Galilee

As a survey of literary and archaeological evidence shows, Galilee followed the Judean religion, and showed an interest in some of the same concerns as those living in Judea, such as purity, pilgrimage, Temple sacrifice, shunning of idolatrous images, and the avoidance of pork. This

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[271] David Fiensy, "Assessing the Economy of Galilee in the Late Second Temple Period: Five Considerations," in *The Galilean Economy in the Time of Jesus* (Edited by David Fiensy and Ralph Hawkins. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 169-70.
[272] Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus*, 165.
[273] Root, *First Century Galilee*, 174.
[274] Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus,* 227-28.

does not mean that the way Galileans practiced this religion was exactly identical to the way it was practiced in Judea. Galilee had its own distinctive piety and religious expression, without necessarily being "deficient." However, the scribes and the priesthood (as well as the early rabbis) were less influential there.[275] Therefore, Galilee's religious expression might well have *appeared* deficient to Judea's religious elites.

Galilee seems to have been somewhat less influenced by the religious authorities of Judea than those who lived to the south. Indeed, to call them "religious" authorities may give the wrong impression, given that Josephus relates that they were also the *rulers* of Judea.[276] The wealthy priestly families who oversaw the temple establishment resided in Judea, as their work centered on Jerusalem—indeed, so far as we can tell, Galilee did not even have many *lower*-class priests before the Jewish War.[277] Pharasaic presence in Galilee prior to 70 could be characterized as sporadic and unsuccessful.[278] This need not, however, be taken as evidence that Galileans rejected the temple establishment, or the authority of religious figures such as Pharisees. It may have been a matter of distance from Jerusalem, and a lower concentration of these religious authorities among them.

It has been suggested by some scholars that Galileans rejected the halakhah (oral law) of the Pharisees. Even setting aside the problematic nature of drawing conclusions from later sources, Tannaitic sources themselves do not conclusively support the proposition that Galileans had a more lax (or even substantially different) interpretation of the law.[279] Some do hint that Galileans may have been somewhat lax in observing tithing regulations. Although one might be

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[275] Saldarini, *Pharisees and Scribes in Palestinian Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 294.

[276] "After the death of these kings [Herod and Archelaus], the constitution became an aristocracy (αριστοκρατια), and the high priests were entrusted with the leadership (προστασιαν) of the nation." (*Ant.* 20:251).

[277] Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian,* 284.

[278] Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian,* 319. However, Bradley Root suggests that this assertion, common in Galilean scholarship, this has been overstated. He believes the position relies too much on an anachronistic use of rabbinic traditions. Indeed, Root notes that before 70 C.E., the Pharisees' influence in Judea was limited by the priestly authorities there; he wonders whether they might have actually had *more* success in Galilee, due to their distance from the priestly establishment (Root, *First Century Galilee*, 169-70).

[279] Lawrence Schiffman, "Was there a Galilean Halakhah?" in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (edited by Lee I. Levine. New York: Harvard University Press, 1992), 156. cf. Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus*, 57.

tempted to infer a more relaxed attitude towards halakhah more generally, neglect in tithing could just as easily have been motivated by social or economic tensions, such as those between between city and country, or between rich and poor.[280]

Some later sources do imply that Galileans were religiously ignorant. For example, the second-century Rabbi Judah said that Galileans are ignorant of matters related to the temple, and things devoted to priests. Because of this, if Galileans made vows upon these items they were not binding, because they did not know what they were talking about—but if someone living in Judea made such a vow, it was binding (*M. Ned* 2:4).[281] Were Galileans actually less informed about the Temple cult? Although this is a fourth-century document preserving a (purportedly) second-century attitude, it is possible that the stereotype existed even in the first century. It certainly fits Galilee's general situation: first century Galileans were farther from the temple, and had fewer religious teachers living among them, so it would be quite natural for them to know less about things devoted to priests or dedicated as offerings.

Who Were the Galileans: Summary

The residents of Galilee were Judeans, but they were nevertheless distinct enough to be called their own "ethnos" on occasion, and were commonly referred to under their own regional name, "Galileans." The implications of the term ranged from simple regional identification to derogatory disdain. According to Matthew (26:73), Galileans spoke with a distinct accent that is readily identifiable by Jerusalemites—certainly provincial, perhaps even laughable.[282] Some Judeans could characterize the distinctiveness of Galileans as "deficient" Judaism. From the time of the re-establishment of the Temple, there had been significant divisions within Judean society;

[280] Freyne, *Galilee: From Alexander the Great to Hadrian,* 283,293.
[281] Ibid., 277.
[282] See also the synoptic parallels, Mark 14:17 and Luke 22:59. In all three passages, Peter is easily (and correctly) identified as a Galilean; only Matthew specifies that it is Peter's *speech* which gives him away.

those returning from Exile conceived of themselves as the "true Judeans" as opposed to the *am ha'aretz* ("people of the land") who had remained during the exile.[283] Thus, the trope of fellow-Yahwists, even closely related ones, being "less than" was already a part of Judean thought. This trope could easily be aimed at Galileans, those less "civilized" hayseeds (i.e., less Romanized), distant from the religious and political center.

Galileans in the Gospel of John

Galileans are a prominent *ethnos* in the Gospel of John. John's portrayal of Galilee and its people fits well with the general contours outlined above. Galilee is oriented toward the temple, and its inhabitants share Judean religious concerns. Jesus finds "stone water jars for the Judean rites of purification" in a house in Cana (2:6), illustrating an interest in purity shared by some Judeans who question John's disciples (1:25). The pilgrimage to Jerusalem was frequently undertaken by Galileans—both by Jesus (2:13, 5:1, 7:10, 10:22-3, 12:1) and others (4:45, 7:1-9, 12:20).

In agreement with the data surveyed above, the gospel depicts Galileans as Judeans. Jesus, a Galilean, self-identifies as a Judean (4:45), and he is identified as such by non-Judeans (4:9, 18:35). However, in John, Galileans are subject to stereotyping and discrimination by the Judeans of Judea itself—whom Josephus called "ὁ γνησιος εξ αυτης Ιουδαιας λαος" (*J.W.* 2:43). For some, the negative associations of "Galilean" preclude the possibility that Jesus might be the messiah, or provide a convenient means to discredit him.

[283] Horsley. "Jesus and the Politics of Roman Palestine," 114.

Galilee, Patris *of Jesus: John 4:43-45*

According to the Gospel of John, Jesus hails from Nazareth in Galilee (1:45, 18:5-7, 19:19). It is implied that his family now resides in Capernaum (2:12), and the people of Capernaum remark that they know both him and his family (6:42; cf. 7:1-9). When those from Judea talk about Jesus, his Galilean origin is a significant factor (7:41, 7:52b). For John, Galilee is the land of Jesus' birth, upbringing, family ties, and reputation.

In a brief travelogue at the end of chapter 4, John makes reference to the "patris" of Jesus. The evangelist reworks a saying found in all three synoptic gospels, and expands its reference:

> [43] And after two days he set out from there toward Galilee; [44] for Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own native land (τῃ ιδιᾳ πατριδι). [45]Then when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, because they had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem during the festival, for they themselves had also gone to the festival. – John 4:43-45

But what exactly is the πατρις of Jesus? With a root meaning "of one's father(s)," the word can denote "home town," or more broadly "native land," "country," or "fatherland."[284] The term can be further abstracted to mean something like an ideal, spiritual homeland, but this figurative use is less common.[285] Which of these shades of meaning seems to fit the use of πατρις here? And what is the specific referent of the word—Nazareth, Galilee, Judea, or somewhere else?

It might help to compare the logion at 4:44 with its parallels in the other gospels. The proverbial saying is found in all four gospels:

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[284] *BDAG*, 642; *Liddell-Scott,* 613.

[285] For example, Philo: "In reality a wise man's soul ever finds heaven to be his fatherland (πατριδα) and earth a foreign country, and regards as his own (ιδιον) the dwelling-place the of wisdom, and that of the body as outlandish, and looks on himself as a stranger and sojourner in it" (*De Agricultura* 65; cf. *Conf*. 77-78). This use is also attested in the New Testament: "These … acknowledged that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a fatherland (πατριδα). And if they had been thinking of that place from which they had set out, they would have had the chance to return; but rather, they desire a better one, that is, a heavenly one" (Heb 11:13b-16). In both examples, a heavenly "fatherland" is preferred to any earthly, geographic setting.

"A Prophet in his *Patris*" *logia*

Mk. 6:4	"A prophet is not without honor, except in his πατριδι and among his kin and in his house."
Mt. 13:57	"A prophet is not without honor, except in his πατριδι and in his house."
Lk. 4:24	"No prophet is acceptable in his πατριδι."
Jn. 4:44	"A prophet has no honor in his own πατριδι."

In each of the synoptic versions, the narrative context makes it clear that word πατρις bears its most local sense— that is, "home town." In all three, the saying is delivered in Nazareth, where Jesus' family lives, and it refers to his rejection there. This is made even more explicit in Luke's version: the crowd wants him to do in his "home town" (πατρις) what he already did in Capernaum, which rules out Galilee as a broader referent for the word (Luke 4:23). There were several traditions, then, linking the saying with Nazareth, and thus using the word "*patris*" in its most restrictive sense (i.e., homeland as home *town*).

In John's gospel, by contrast, nothing links the saying with Nazareth. The travel report of 4:43,45 (which the logion interrupts) mentions only departure for, and arrival in, *Galilee*. In the synoptics, Jesus' rejection at Nazareth is connected to the fact that his family is known there; but in this passage, there is no mention of his family (contrast Mark 6:6, Matt 13:55, and Luke 4:22b). We can reasonably rule out Nazareth as the specific referent of "fatherland" in John 4:44.

What, then, is Jesus' *patris*? Gail O'Day points out that the conjunction γαρ ("for/because") complicates the issue. "For" would usually imply a causative link between the movement into Galilee, and the truth of the proverb. However, Jesus is *welcomed* in Galilee (4:45). Instead, she suggests *patris* refers to Judea, where Jesus is rejected more emphatically.[286]

However, I do not find Judea to be a compelling proposal. Using πατρις for Judea, *instead of the land where a foreign Judean was born*, is too wide a departure from the usage of Josephus and Philo. Recall that they both employed the term to describe the land of a Judean's

[286] Gail O'Day, *John* (NIB 9. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 574.
Origen remarked upon the obscurity of the verse many centuries earlier, in the first-known full-length commentary on the Gospel. He observes, "this text appears very inconsistent," speculating that the verse is confusing because the evangelist was "unskilled in language" (*Commentary on John* 13:364,67).

birth—sometimes in direct contrast with Judea or Jerusalem. Describing Judea as a Galilean's *patris* would attenuate the term's connection with father(s), and surrender the sense of being "indigenous" to a place. John Pryor remarks that there is no indication that John intends to deprive *patris* of its "natural meaning," i.e., the place of Jesus' upbringing.[287] I also find the "Judea" reading unlikely based on the narrative flow itself. If the movement into Galilee is done "because" a prophet has no honor in his own homeland (Judea)—taking γαρ in a causative sense —then we would expect the previous location to have been Judea. However, the preceding 39 verses recounted several days spent in Samaria. If Judea were the *patris* in which Jesus had no honor, we would have expected the logion to be connected directly to Jesus' departure from Jerusalem at 4:3, rather than his departure from Samaria.

Galilee is a more likely candidate for Jesus' "fatherland." The immediate context of the saying concerns Galilee; indeed, the region's name occurs five times in five verses! This reading preserves the connection between *patris* and *patēr*—it is in Galilee that Jesus is known as a native son, "Jesus the son of Joseph" (6:42). By contrast, Judeans in Jerusalem ask him, "Who is your father?" (8:19). It is to Galilee that Jesus is rooted by kinship ties and social networks (2:1-2; 7:3-5). Capernaum is the closest thing Jesus has to a "forwarding address"— after he evades crowds on the far side of the Sea of Galilee, they know he can likely be found there (7:24).

What then, are we to make of the problematic "γαρ" of 4:44? Rather than illustrating the truth of the saying that "a prophet has no honor in his fatherland," the events of 4:45-54 describe Jesus as being welcomed, and even greeted as "Sir" by a royal official—both events which would seem to bestow honor upon him! Various proposals have been made to reconcile a causal sense of "for" with the "Galilee" reading. One method is to view Jesus' reception in Galilee as less honorable than it appears on the surface. For example, Ernst Haenchen suggests that Jesus encounters only "signs faith" there, in contrast to the "true faith" encountered in Samaria; the

[287] John W. Pryor, "John 4:44 and the 'Patris' of Jesus," *CBQ* 49.2 (1987), 262.

Galileans' deficient faith is based on signs he did at the festival (4:45, cf. 4:48).[288] Another method of reconciling the conjunction to a Galilean referent is to push the "lack of honor" into the future. Alan Culpepper sees the logion as a proleptic reference to *later* rejection; it meant they would *eventually* dishonor him, not that they already had.[289] In a similar vein, Pryor wonders whether Jesus is deliberately *courting* rejection.[290] I would tentatively suggest that the saying—a proverb known from other contexts—was rather awkwardly inserted into a travel narrative at some point in the formation of the gospel, and that the conjunction γαρ was employed for its connective force, rather than to imply reason or cause.[291] Whatever way in which the particle was intended to connect to the surrounding narrative, the saying was inserted into a travelogue about Galilee—not a passage about Nazareth. Galilee is the *patris* of Jesus.

Jesus was widely known to be from Galilee, and this was evidently a significant factor in how other people thought about him. His identity as a Galilean was an important feature of his public persona. This did not always work to his advantage; some evidently have trouble taking him seriously as a religious figure because of his country of origin (7:27, 7:41, 7:52, cf. 1:46). It is especially striking that even though John relates a popular expectation that the messiah must come from Bethlehem (7:52), he never incorporates traditions about Jesus being born there (e.g. Matt 2:1-5, Luke 2:1-7).[292]

We cannot say for sure *why* such a tradition is lacking in John: Was it because John does not know of such an account, or because he chooses not to include it? The objection about the

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[288] Ernst Haenchen, *John* vol. 2 (Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 234. See also Pyror, "John 4:44 and the 'Patris' of Jesus, 262.

[289] Alan R. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 91.

[290] Pryor, "John 4:44 and the 'Patris' of Jesus," 262.

[291] γαρ can sometimes be used to express continuation or connection, without reference to cause or reason. These cases may have an inferential sense "certainly, indeed," or may even shade into the slightly concessive "to be sure," or even "but." For examples of this latter sense, see *Ant*. 11:8, Rom 5:7, Matt 1:20. John Pryor attributes a concessive force to γαρ, when he restates the connection between 4:43 and 4:44 with phrases like "in spite of" and "though." See Pryor, "Galilee and the 'Patris' of Jesus," 263.

[292] Readers of the Gospel can recognize the irony in this insistence upon earthly origins, because they know that Jesus was "with God in the beginning" (John 1:2). But when "the word became flesh" (1:14), where did this happen? Nothing in John supports Bethlehem as the location of this incarnation.

messiah's presumed origin at John 7:52 alludes to Micah 5:2. It seems unlikely that John would know of such an expectation, without having also heard the traditions that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. But if he intentionally chose to leave them out of his gospel, what is the intent behind 7:52? Of course, this could be an example of Johannine irony: people object that he cannot be the messiah because he was not born in Galilee, but John's audience knows that Jesus actually *was.* However, John's irony is typically a matter of mis-perception, not a simple *mistake* which depends upon the reader's outside knowledge to catch. John equips his readers to recognize the mistake that renders such objections ironic. Nothing in the Fourth Gospel itself suggests that Jesus was born anywhere other than Nazareth. Whereas Luke and Matthew locate Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, and have him move to Nazareth later, John insists that Jesus was a Galilean, born and bred.

It is more likely that John wishes to make the point that such objections place entirely too much importance on earthly origins, rather than one's spiritual origin. The same misguided emphasis on earthly geography is evident in Nathanael's sarcastic question: “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (1:46). For John, Jesus is undeniably from Nazareth in Galilee, but the significance of this is dwarfed by his cosmic origin “from God.” The accidents of Jesus' earthly biography cannot invalidate his identity as the Son of God, and to suggest that they *can* places too much emphasis on worldly things.

Galilee as Refuge and Retreat

John portrays Galilee as a land removed from the influence of the Judean religious authorities—an influence John considers harmful. The Pharisees in Jerusalem dispatched priests and Levites with questions for John the Baptist, but emissaries are not sent all the way to Galilee to question Jesus the same way (1:19-28). Priests and Pharisees are not encountered in John's Galilee at all.

In fact, the gospel mentions no explicitly Galilean religious leader other than Jesus himself.[293] This relative lack of pharisaic presence can likely be linked with two other features of Galilee: Jesus' deeds are well-received there, and Jesus encounters relatively little resistance there. Additionally, Jesus seems to feel that Galilee is a safe place to withdraw, when he feels threatened by the Pharisees.

Jesus engenders a fairly positive response in Galilee. There is a strong contrast between "the Galileans received him" (4:45) and the rejection he experiences in Judea.[294] Jesus' "signs," especially his early miracles, are concentrated in Galilee, where they typically elicit belief. In Judea, by contrast, Jesus' miracles lead to ever-escalating conflict. Compare:

Outcomes of Signs in Galilee

Water into Wine (2:1-10)	"And his disciples believed in him" (2:11)
Healing an Official's Son (4:46-52)	"He and his whole household believed" (4:53-4)
Feeding of Five Thousand (6:1-13)	Proclaim him "the prophet," wish to make him king (6:14-15)
Walking on Water (6:16-21)	the disciples were terrified (6:19)
Miraculous Catch of Fish (21:1-6)	disciples recognize Jesus (21:7-14)

Outcomes of Signs in Judea

Healing a Man on the Sabbath (5:1-9)	resistance, controversy, Judeans "seek to kill him" (5:10-18)
Healing a Blind Man (9:1-7)	controversy, Pharisees cast him *aposynagōgos* (9:4-41)
Raising of Lazarus (11:1-44)	many believe; Pharisees & priests plan to kill Jesus (11:45-53)

Galileans respond quite positively to his "signs," miraculous deeds that "revealed his glory" (2:11). To the list above, we might add Nathanael's reaction to Jesus' foreknowledge of him (1:48-50), and the esteem many Galileans have for Jesus based on undisclosed signs they had seen him do in Jerusalem (4:45, alluding to 2:23). However, this sort of faith based on signs is held in suspicion by the gospel (2:24-5, 1:50a, 6:26). The Galileans' demand for a sign so that they may believe in him is understood as a failure on their part (6:30-31).

[293] Root, *First Century Galilee,* 87.
[294] Freyne, *Galilee and Gospel,* 293.

However, the native Judeans' reactions to Jesus signs are arguably worse. The healing of a lame man spurs a controversy about Sabbath regulations, and leads the “Judeans” to seek to kill Jesus (5:10-18ff). Although the healing of a blind man elicits a faithful response (i.e. “he is a prophet,” 9:17), it proves a source of controversy and consternation for “the Judeans” and the Pharisees, and ends with the man being put “out of the synagogue” (9:34), a fate his parents only narrowly avoid by fearfully refusing to testify on his behalf (9:22). The raising of Lazarus does cause many Judeans to believe in him, but leads some to report back to the Pharisees, who take counsel and resolve to kill both Jesus *and* Lazarus (11:45-53, 12:9-11). In sum, the results of Jesus' miracles in Judea include a heightened danger of violence and rejection—both for Jesus himself *and* the beneficiaries of those miracles!

John characterizes Galilee as comparatively free of the Pharisees' influence. As a result, Galilee is often a place of refuge and relative safety from the threat they pose, in contrast to Judea. For example,

> [1]When Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John – [2]although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples – [3]he left Judea and set out again for Galilee. (4:1-3)

> [1]After this Jesus went about in Galilee; for he did no wish to go about in Judea, because the Judeans were seeking to kill him. (7:1)

As opposed to the relative safety of Galilee, Judea is characterized by increased scrutiny and outright danger from the religious authorities. Some mistakenly believe Jesus intends to flee into the diaspora among the “Greeks”—here likely a reference to Hellenistic Judeans—in order to escape them (7:35). He departs from Judea two other times to escape arrest by the authorities—once to the Transjordan (10:39-40), and once to “a town called Ephraim”—i.e., a town of Samaria, most likely (11:54). Additionally, it is implied that Jesus' brothers attempt to convince him to go to Judea out of malice—seemingly aware that he would be in danger there (7:5). Like

these other locations, Galilee serves Jesus as a refuge from the Pharisees' grasp, where he can retreat and regroup, until his next foray into the oft-hostile territory of Judea.

And return he must. Jesus cannot simply remain in Galilee. As with Judeans generally, Jerusalem is the symbolic center of his world. He makes pilgrimages to Jerusalem, as do many other Galileans in John, and these periodic visits illustrate the sort of "centripetal pull" the metropolis exerted on Judeans who lived in other lands. In the gospel, Galilee is depicted as somewhat peripheral to the Judean world. Jesus' brothers argue that the signs he has performed in Galilee will only win him local attention, but if he "seeks to be known openly," he must go to Judea. They liken his Galilean ministry to "working in secret," but performing the same works in Judea would be "showing yourself to the world" (7:3-4). It is not as if they do not have a point. In John, it is only in Judea that one encounters such a variety of people—Pharisees, chief priests, Galileans on pilgrimage, Hellenistic Judeans (presumably on pilgrimage from other countries), and Romans. For good or for ill, it is indeed there that Jesus attracts the most attention —attention that eventually leads to his death.

The Christ does not come from Galilee: John 7:40-44

During Jesus' pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Festival of Booths, arguments break out over Jesus' identity. The crowds disagree about whether he is a "good man" or a deceiver (7:12). Some of the people of Jerusalem are divided as to whether he might even be the Messiah (7:25-27). By verse 40, this divisive speculation reaches a crescendo:

> [40]When they had heard these words, some of the crowd said, "This is truly the Prophet." [41]Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "The Christ doesn't come from Galilee, does he? [42]Doesn't the scripture say that the Christ is of the line of David (εκ του σπερματος Δαυιδ), and from Bethlehem, the town where David was?" [43]Therefore a division arose in the crowd regarding him; [44]and some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands upon him. – John 7:40-44

When some in the crowds positively identify Jesus as either "the Prophet" or the Messiah, the naysayers raise two objections: 1) *Surely* the Messiah cannot be from Galilee, and 2) the Messiah must be descended from David. As we will see, both of these objections have a racial dimensions: one based on connection to a homeland, another based on descent from an ancestor.

The first objection is that Jesus is from the wrong *homeland*. Jesus is from Galilee, a land geographically separated from the land of Judeans (Judea) by Samaria. Galileans are distant from religious and political center of their people, Jerusalem. Connection with a homeland was an integral aspect of how race was constructed in the ancient world. As a Judean, Jesus' *ethnos* is linked with Judea, but as a *Galilean* Judean, part of his ethnic identity is connected to the land of his upbringing. Despite Jesus' habitual visits to Judea and the temple, his native country (πατρις) is *Galilee,* not Judea (John 4:44). No amount of pilgrimage can change the location of his birth and upbringing. To some in the crowd, Jesus is a Galilean first, and so cannot be as "truly Judean" as the expected Messiah.

Their second objection denies the idea that Jesus could be a *descendant of David*. The operative assumption seems to be that it would be ridiculous to claim that any Galilean might descend from the seed of David (εκ του σπερματος Δαυιδ). Galileans might be "Judean" enough, in their way—they do revere the Lord and worship him in Jerusalem—but they are not the same "stock" as us proper Judeans. Recall that there seem to have been fewer elites in Galilee, and those they *did* have were poorer than elites in Judea. Surely, as the objection goes, we would not expect to find the descendants of David there—Galileans cannot claim David as their ancestor. They are not the "blue blooded" Judeans from whom the Messiah will come. They are Judean in a broad sense, but the most honorable bloodlines are not found among them. This assumption cuts off Galileans (and Jesus) from much of the Judeans' common myth of descent.

The two-part objection of 7:41b-42 marries regional-ethnic prejudice to a supposed scriptural proof. It is possible that this objection was raised by partisans of the Pharisees, who

express a similar opinion about Jesus in the very next scene. At 7:52, they "prove" Jesus is not a prophet by implying that scripture denies any prophet comes from Galilee. Since the remark at 7:41b-42 follows the same general pattern, it seems likely that the earlier remarks made by some in the crowd were a parroting of the position of the Pharisees.

"Galilean" as Racial Slur: John 7:45-52

In the following verses, the scene shifts from the public dissent of the crowds to the inner counsels of the Pharisees and chief priests. Here, there is much more unanimity over Jesus' identity (as a fraud). In this scene, dissenting opinions sympathetic to Jesus are crushed more emphatically, and racializing rhetoric is part of this polemic.

The chief priests and Pharisees berate the temple police for their failure to arrest Jesus. When the police dare to remark that Jesus speaks in an extraordinary way, the authorities rebut: "Surely you have have not been deceived too, have you?" Later in the same passage, when Nicodemus dares speak up for Jesus (however indirectly), he is shot down in a similar manner:

> [45]Then the officers came to the high priests and Pharisees, and these ones said to them, "Why didn't you bring him?" [46]The officers answered, "Never before has any man spoken like this!" [47]Then the Pharisees replied, "You haven't been led astray too, have you? [48]Has anyone from among the high priests or Pharisees believed in him? [49]But this crowd, which doesn't know the law, is accursed."
>
> [50]Nicodemus, who had gone to him at first, and who was one of them, said to them, [51]"Our law doesn't judge a man without first hearing from him, and learning what he is doing, does it?" [52]They answered and said to him, "You aren't from Galilee too, are you? Investigate [the scripture] and see that no prophet comes out of Galilee."
> – John 7:45-52

There is considerable similarity between the polemic aimed at the temple police, and that aimed at Nicodemus. Firstly, there is the obvious symmetry between the questions "Surely you have not been deceived too, have you?" and "Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you?" But the similarities run deeper: the structure of both exchanges contain the same ingredients:

A^1 Non-hostile view of Jesus (tentative)
  B^1 Hostile *ad-hominem* reply against the interlocutor (personal)
  B^2 Chance for interlocutor to distance himself from Jesus (othering)
A^2 Hostile view of Jesus (firm)

A potentially sympathetic view of Jesus is only found in the first lines, but the rebuttal dominates each exchange, effectively silencing the original speakers by putting them on the defensive. The authorities' responses to the police/Nicodemus offer the initial speakers a chance to distance themselves from the target of the attack. This distancing is accomplished by aligning themselves with the Pharisees against some "other," who is the proper recipient of such disdain. This is no rational argument: it is a polemical tactic meant to wrong-foot one's opponent by attacking them, while simultaneously offering them a way out. Let us examine how this general structure plays out in the two exchanges:

	The Officers (7:46-49)	**Nicodemus (7:50-52)**
A^1	46 'Never has anyone spoken like this!'	51 'Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?'
B^1	47 Then the Pharisees replied, 'Don't tell us *you've* been deceived, too?' (μη και ύμεις πεπλανησθε;)	52a They replied, 'Don't tell us *you're* from Galilee, too?' (μη και συ εκ της Γαλιλαιας ει;)
B^2, A^2	48 'Have any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? 49But this crowd, which does not know the law— they are accursed.'	52b Search [the scriptures] and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee.'

In making this comparison, I do not mean to suggest that John is intentionally composing a chiastic structure.[295] The purpose of juxtaposing these two conversations is to show that *similar rhetoric is being deployed in both cases*.

In both dialogues, authorities answer a tentatively favorable view of Jesus (A^1) with a curt personal jab (B^1), then offer their opponents a way to dodge the attack by aligning themselves with their own position. The attack itself contains the hint of a way out. The negative formulation

[295] It is not a perfect parallel, after all; rhetorical elements appear in different order. In the attack on the temple guards, the emphatically negative view of Jesus *precedes* the rhetoric asking the guards to psychologically distance themselves from an undesirable other ("this crowd"). In the second exchange, the two elements basically appear in the same sentence, 7:52b, and are intertwined.

of both attacks—"*Surely* you haven't... have you?"—slyly invites the interlocutor to retreat from the implications of their initial remark. Phrasing the rejoinder as a question renders the attack *hypothetical* even as it is being deployed. Only if the speaker *continues* with such nonsense is the insult truly activated. But, the authorities charitably suggest, "Surely you didn't mean to say something as stupid as that?" With this remark, the police/Nicodemus are put on the defensive. To agree that, indeed, they are *not* "deceived" or "from Galilee," they need only agree with the *rest* of what the Pharisees are saying.[296]

In verse 7:48, the authorities offer the police a "way out" of the charge leveled against them. They can deflect the charge of having been fooled onto to a third party—in this case, "this crowd." The crowd "does not know the law" and "is accursed." The officers are implicitly asked to concur with the authorities' assessment of the crowds. By doing so, they can redirect the charge made against them: It is the crowd, not they, who have been deceived. (The insistence that "none of the Pharisees" have believed in Jesus appeals to authority to decide the issue: surely the crowd doesn't know better than the Pharisees!)

When Nicodemus appeals to the Law to at least procure a fair hearing for Jesus, this discredits the impression of Pharisaical consensus. It also challenges them on their "home turf," Torah expertise. It implies that they, not the crowds, are "ignorant of the law." Nicodemus is hitting them where it hurts. When they feel *personally* threatened, racial polemic is the weapon they reach for.

Nicodemus is hypothetically re-raced, just as the guards are hypothetically fools. He, too, is invited to "deflect" their judgment to a third party. Here, Galileans themselves are the third party. They are structurally parallel to "being deceived," as well as "not knowing the law" and

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[296] Dean and Marshall VanDruff call this sort of cheap ploy *The Saleman's Close:* "This technique asks an obvious question and, by playing on a sense of guilt, demands a predetermined response driven by common sense or decency. The yes or no response is then implied to mean a *complete agreement* with the asker's point of view. (VanDruff & Vandruff, "Conversational Terrorism: How Not to Talk," (1995). http://www.vandruff.com/art_converse.html. Accessed 1995). In this passage, the kneejerk answer is driven not by "common sense" but by the desire to deny a slanderous charge (either foolishness or Galileanness).

being "accursed."[297] Nicodemus can join in, or at least fail to protest, these negative judgments of Galileans, and avoid being called "Galilean" himself. Nicodemus plays along. He remains silent, and so the slur stands. That is the insidiousness of such re-racing polemic: to deny it is to accept it. If Nicodemus protests that he is no Galilean, he will have explicitly agreed that Galileanness is something to be shunned. If he remains silent, he has implicitly agreed, and their racist slur goes unchallenged. (Claiming that he might go silent but *not* agree is a cop-out, because the motivation for remaining silent *would be to avoid the slur*—thus, again, paradoxically agreeing with it.) Perhaps, the only way to counter such a slur may be to *identify with* the race one is being threatened with—to counter that Galileans are *not* deceived, are *not* ignorant of the law, and are *not* accursed, and there is nothing at all shameful in being called a Galilean. Of course, such a reply could be seen as evidence that Nicodemus really is "from Galilee," after all! But Nicodemus shuts up. In modern parlance, we might call this "unmarked racial discourse," because the first speaker's remarks *assume* a shared negative view.

> The introduction of racializing discourses as unmarked in conversation makes it more difficult to call racialization into question and reinforces its deniability in such a case. Consequently, people may coparticipate in doing racism as part of upholding face, or simply to maintain the conversation and the relationship independently of personal beliefs.[298]

Not wanting to make lose face or "make something out of nothing," Nicodemus says nothing. Silence implicates him in their negative racialization.

Notice the parallel between being "deceived" and being "Galilean." Anyone might naturally resist the charge that they have been fooled—but they seem to expect Nicodemus respond to the suggestion of being "from Galilee" just as negatively. Here, Galilean is obviously

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[297] I do not share Horsley's conclusion that the crowd in question is actually *composed* of Galileans. I am pointing out that the expression "from Galilee" is structurally parallel to being deceived, unlearned, and accursed. Significantly, while all of these deprecations are brought to bear in the response to the temple police, the phrase "from Galilee" is stands all by itself for Nicodemus. One racial slur is meant to be as disparaging as all three insults combined.

[298] Valentina Pagliai, "Unmarked Racializing Discourse, Facework, and Identity in Talk about Immigrants in Italy," *The Journal of Linguistic Anthropology,* Supplementary Issue (August 2011): E95.

not a neutral description of geographical origins; it is a racializing slur. It is comparable to "being duped," like an accursed crowd ignorant of the law. And in this case, it is an *effective* racial slur —Nicodemus shuts up, rather than be associated with whatever negative connotations are attached to "Galilean." The Pharisees and priests employ re-racializing rhetoric against Nicodemus, implying that it is pretty "Galilean" of him to support Jesus. Even though *his actual origins are not being called into question*, just the threat of being re-raced as Galilean is enough to silence Nicodemus.

Similar hateful rhetoric[299] has been deployed in the U.S. to silence or discredit people in racial terms. Re-racing polemic identifies someone with another race—even if their "actual" race is not being called into question. (So, with Nicodemus, the baseless charge of his Galileanness nevertheless seems to work; *its veracity is beside the point*). That such name-calling ever proves effective demonstrates that the victim herself, or third parties overhearing the slur, agrees to some extent with the name-caller. This agreement may be a shared negative view of the racial "other," or a negative view of "acting too much like another race."[300]

When someone is misidentified as belonging to another race, generally both that person and the other race are being insulted. When Jesus is called a "Samaritan," both he and Samaritans are being attacked. Examples of racial misidentification abound in the ancient world, as well. Again, such polemic relies upon a shared disdain of the wrongly-identified race. Ezra-Nehemiah describes the Samaritan Tobiah as an "Ammonite" (Neh. 2:19, 4:3,7), an insult predicated on the knowledge of Judean traditions reviling the Ammonites—traditions which the

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[299] Such odious terms as "N---er lover," "Race-traitor," or "Oreo" are meant to de-race their targets as somehow "not fully" members of their own race, and simultaneously re-race them as somehow associated with another race. Both the entertainment media and news media are full of examples of "re-racing" based on someone's failure to live up to whatever is popularly considered normative for their race, or their too-close mimesis of another race. Such slur functions to either silence/correct the victim, or failing that, to discredit her. Sometimes such rhetoric is baldly vicious, while often it is intended as a sort of "humor."

[300] Mockery of racial mimesis could be aimed at the *Judeans* ethnos, as well. For negative views of those who associate too closely with Judean ways, see Juvenal, *Sat.* 6.542-547, *Sat.* 14.96-106, and Tacitus *Hist.* 5.5.1, *Annals* 13.32.2; such views may be implied in Cassius Dio 37.17.1 and Seneca, *Epist. Mor.* 108.22.

author helpfully cites (Neh. 13:1-2, 23-25).[301] Josephus' misidentification of the Samaritans as "Cutheans" only stings if one shares a negative view of Cutheans (*Ant*. 9.279). Or, to turn the tables, Judeans could be derisively described as the descendants of low-class Egyptians (Tacitus *Hist*. 5.4; Manetho *Frag*. 51; *C. Ap.* 1.277-287).

Ironically, the Pharisees never even acknowledge Nicodemus' Torah-based call for a fair hearing. Even more ironically, they assert: "Investigate [the matter] and see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee," a conclusion hard to prove from scripture. (Are they suggesting an argument from *lack* of evidence? An argument that there is no clear prediction of a prophet from Galilee is not the same thing as the surety that no prophet *could* arise from there). The claim seems ignorant of Jonah's having come from Galilee (2 Kgs 14:25), or the popular expectation of the return of Elijah-who-is-to-come. Freyne opines that Isaiah 9:1-7 would make a perfect rejoinder to anyone who claims that neither a prophet nor the Messiah could come from Galilee.[302] \

In John 7:40-52, the suggestion that Jesus might be the messiah is met by derogatory remarks about Galileans. Bradley Root notes that these remarks may be based in a characterization of the Galileans' religious observance as less scrupulous than that of their counterparts in Judea.[303] Indeed, John does depict Galilee as less influenced by the Jerusalem religious authorities. Pharisees and priests are only encountered in Judea, never in Galilee. Although some Galileans follow Pharisaical advice about the purity of stone vessels (2:6) and make pilgrimages to the Temple (7:2-10), the area is depicted as somewhat removed from their sphere of control. From the point of view of the Pharisees, the Galileans might indeed be stereotyped as religiously inferior. Other Jerusalemites might well have shared a stereotyped view of Galileans as ignorant in religious matters (*M. Ned* 2:4). When Jesus begins teaching in

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[301] i.e. they must not enter the assembly of God (Deut 23:3), Balaam's intended curse (Num 22–24), prohibition of marriage with Ammonites (Deut 23:3-8), and the tradition of Solomon's wives (including Ammonite women) with their foreign gods (1 Kgs 11:1-8).

[302] Freyne, *Galilee and Gospel,* 297.

[303] Root, *First Century Galilee,* 91.

the Temple, some assume that as a Galilean, he has never studied, and they marvel that he knows his letters (γραμματα) (7:15). In 7:40-52, Jesus' opponents are able to parlay these stereotypes—as well as some questionable assertions purportedly drawn from scripture—into a fairly effective attack on Jesus' authority.

Galileans: Chapter Conclusions

Consistent with the picture of Galilean identity which emerges from other sources, the Fourth Gospel depicts Jesus as a Galilean who is thoroughly rooted in a Judean identity. He (and other Galileans) make pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and his frequent visits illustrate the sort of "centripetal pull" the metropolis exerted on Judeans who lived in other lands. In the nested racial identity of a Judean living away from Judea, the "local" facet of identity may come to the fore when it makes one noticeably different than others, and achieves greater visibility at an event such a festival. When residents of Judea look at him, they see a Galilean first, rather than a fellow-Judean. In this same way, Hellenistic Judeans who have come to worship become merely "Greeks" (12:20; cf. 7:35). The Galilean facet of Jesus' ethnic identity makes him suspect to some, who have a hard time believing that someone like him could be a prophet.

The text of John reflects the reality that perceptions of race are sometimes used to discriminate, but the gospel does not *subscribe* to such thinking. It places these remarks on the lips of Jesus' enemies. In John, conventional racialized thinking leads to wrong conclusions. It also misses the point, attributing exaggerated importance to such trivial matters as earthly geography and physical descent. In the logic of John, one's historical-geographic race is simply not that important, compared to one's spiritual identity. Jesus' opponents take an inordinate interest in his factual origins in a particular town in the land of Galilee—and in so doing, they completely miss the truth of his spiritual origins "from God" (1:1-14, etc.). The sort of racial

discrimination which prevents many from believing in Jesus is a sign of a too-worldly mindset, and attributes disproportionate importance to the things of this world.

CHAPTER 3: SAMARITANS

"How is it that you, a Judean, ask to drink with me, a woman of Samaria?" - John 4:9

The Samaritans are an important ethnic group in the gospel of John. No other gospel has as much to say about the people, nor demonstrates such familiarity with them. Indeed, John's gospel frequently appears in scholarly discussions of Samaritans in the first century. John 4:1-42 features Samaritans at some length, and at 8:48 the term "Samaritan" shows up as a racial slur.

An *ethnos*-conscious reading must consider not only a generalized model of race in antiquity, but also the specific *ethnē* which show up in the text. In this chapter, we will first survey what we know about Samaritan racial identity from archaeology and literary sources.[304] After this, we will use this information as an optic to illuminate how this race is constructed in the Fourth Gospel. As we shall see, John was aware of how the Samaritans understood themselves, and presents them fairly and sympathetically.

The Samaritans: Ethnic Identity, Attitudes, Stereotypes

The Samaritans were described as a "race" (εθνος) by Josephus (*Ant*. 10:184, 17:20, 18:85).[305] They shared many cultural features in common with Judeans, including linguistic, religious, and historical elements. Both groups wrote and spoke in Aramaic, and also employed Hebrew in

[304] As we did with the Galileans, we are considering "race," not some presumed historical essence or a collection of genetic data. Because races are continually being constructed in discourse and practice, we are not asking about "what is" (i.e., the presumed "essence" or "truth" about the Samaritans) but rather "what is said to be" (i.e., how did Samaritans and their neighbors *articulate* "Samaritanness?")

[305] Analyzing his Josephus' of *ethnos*, Louis Feldman concludes that Josephus was describing the Samaritans as an ethnic group, not merely as a religious "sect." See "Josephus' Attitude toward the Samaritans: A Study in Ambivalence," in *Jewish Sects, Religious Movements, and Political Parties* (edited by Menachem Mor. Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1992), 25.

sacred contexts, with little difference in their scripts.[306] Both shared similar beliefs and rituals. Significantly, they both looked to the Pentateuch as the authoritative law handed down by Moses. As Gary Knoppers writes, "The fact that the laws in the Pentateuch contain hundreds of ritual, moral, familial, political, economic, and administrative stipulations meant that Judeans and Samaritans shared a foundational constitution that each group considered normative for their societies."[307] Both accepted the Pentateuchal imperative that Yahweh's cult be centralized—although whereas Judeans favored Jerusalem, Samaritans viewed Mount Gerizim the proper location of worship. And both peoples viewed themselves as the descendants of the Israelites, and heirs of the covenant of Abraham.

As a result, the two peoples shared similar naming conventions. The names in the fourth century Samaria papyri are comparable to Judean names, tending towards Yahwistic or other Hebrew names. Yahwistic names are also common on 4th century Samaritan coins.[308] Hellenistic-era votive inscriptions at Gerizim—indistinguishable from Judean names of the period—feature many biblical names. Some of these are characteristically northern biblical names, such as Ephraim, Jacob, and Joseph, but Judah is also represented. There are also several biblical names from *outside* of the Samaritan canon, including Elnathan Delaiah, and Zabdi. [309] Notably, the name "Jeroboam" continued to enjoy currency among Samaritans, as attested by the name's appearance on inscriptions, coins, seals, and jar fragments. The popularity of the name of Israel's founding king suggests that many Samaritans valued not only traditions shared with Yehud, but distinctively northern (Israelite) traditions. Here we move beyond the similarities between the two peoples into their differences.

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306 Gary N. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of their Early Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 110.
307 Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans,* 178
308 Ibid., 113-115.
309 Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans,* 126-7; Reinhard Pummer, *The Samaritans: A Profile* (Grand Rapids: Cambridge, 2016), 24; Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* (Boston: Brill, 2009),209.

Although the Samaritans adhered to the Mosaic Torah, there were major differences in their scripture. Most obviously, the Samaritan canon excluded the Prophets and the Writings. But even within the Pentateuch itself, there were significant differences. The most obvious of these is the Samaritan Pentateuch's emphasis on Mount Gerizim, as the place God chose ahead of time for the cult—even before the Israelites had entered the promised land. Several passages in the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) either incorporate minor changes, or import material from other passages, to make this point. For example, where the Masoretic text has the Deuteronomistic phrase "the place that Yahweh your God will choose," the SP reads "the place that Yahweh your God *has chosen."* The phrase no longer looks to the future selection of Mt. Zion, but refers to Mt. Gerizim, the mount of blessing.[310] The Samaritan Pentateuch also has an idiosyncratic tenth commandment. In both Exodus and Deuteronomy, the SP stitches together a catena of other Pentateuchal material to create a unique tenth commandment, ordering the Israelites to worship God on Gerizim. The Exodus version reads, in part:

> [17a] When the Lord has brought you into the land of the Canaanites that you are entering to occupy, [17b]you shall set up large stones and cover them with plaster. You shall write on the stones all the words of this law. [17c] So when you have crossed over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones, about which I am commanding you today, on Mount Gerizim. [17d] And you shall build an altar there to the Lord your God, an altar of stones on which you have not used an iron tool. [17e] You must build the altar of the Lord your God with unhewn stones. [17f] Then offer up burnt offerings to the Lord your God... – Exodus 20:17a-f (SP)[311]

This unique commandment is also attested in four inscriptions—three from Shechem, and one from Sychar.[312] In the early third century, Origen was familiar with a version of the Samaritan tenth commandment that closely resembles that of the SP.[313]

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[310] Gary Knoppers gives the relevant verses as: Deut 12:5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; 14:23, 24, 25; 15:20; 16:2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16; 17:18, 10; 18:16; 26:2; 31:11. *Jews and Samaritans*, 184-5.

[311] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 205. See also John Bowman, *Samaritan Documents: Relating to their History, Religion and Life* (Pittsburg: Pickwick, 1977), 21-2.

[312] Bowman, *Samaritan Documents*, 9-10, see 13-14 for translation.

[313] Ibid., 13.

This brings us to one of the bitterest disagreements between Samaritans and Judeans: the proper place of worship. Both peoples agreed that worship must be centralized, based on instructions given to Moses. However, their disagreement over where this cultic center should be was a longstanding source of conflict. According to the Samaritan Pentateuch, the worship of Yahweh must be centralized on Mount Gerizim.

Yitzhah Magen, staff officer in charge of the excavation of Gerizim, originally held that there never was a temple on the mountain; he later revised his interpretation as new finds were unearthed. Based on inscriptions, coins, pottery, and Carbon-14 testing, Magen dates the construction of the temple to the Persian period.[314] This first phase of the temple was built by Sanballat, governor of Samaria, in the late 5th century. The temple was later rebuilt and expanded, during the Hellenistic period.[315] Thus, contrary to Josephus' account, the temple's original date of construction was the fifth century BCE, not late fourth century. Josephus also seems to have dated the destruction of temple on Gerizim earlier than it occurred, dating it to 130 BCE rather than 110 BCE, the date suggested by other evidence.[316] His motive may have been to discredit the Samaritan devotion to Gerizim by exaggerating how short-lived its temple was.

At the time the Gerizim temple was built, there was probably a Yahweh temple in the city of Samaria as well.[317] During the Hellenistic period, a city grew up around the sacred *temenos* on Gerizim, and continued to exist after Alexander's destruction of Samaria. Gerizim may have been the cultural and religious capital of Samaritans during the Hellenistic period.[318]

The cult on Gerizim was a fully-functional religious center. Inscriptions found on Gerizim, written in paleo-Hebrew and lapidary Aramaic, mention the sacred name YHWH,

[314] Menahem Mor, "The Building of the Samaritan Temple and the Samaritan Governors – Again," in *Samaria, Samarians, and Samaritans: Studies on their Bible, History, and Linguistics* (edited by József Zsengellér. Boston: DeGruyter, 2011), 90-91; Karveit, *Origin of the Samaritans,* 207-8. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 125; Pummer, *Samaritans*, 81.

[315] Jan Dušek, "Administration of Samaria in the Hellenistic Period," in *Samaria, Samarians, and Samaritans: Studies on their Bible, History, and Linguistics* (edited by József Zsengellér. Boston: DeGruyter, 2011), 83.

[316] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 86.

[317] Kartveit, *Origin of the Samaritans,* 357.

[318] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 84-5.

priests, and sacrifice.[319] A "house of ashes" was found adjacent to an altar for burning sacrifices.[320] There, excavators found a large number of burned bones (sheep, goats, cattle, doves), and ashes.[321] One fragmentary inscription on Gerizim mentions such sacrificial animals:

…] ופרינ כל º[…	…]º and bulls in all […]
…] ח בבית דבחא דב[…	…sacrific]ed in the "house of sacrifice" […]
…] א/זנה מהו/רדא […]	…]'*/znh mhw/rd*' […]

The same term, "house of sacrifice," was sometimes used to refer to other Yahwistic temples. The same Aramaic phrase (בית מדבחא) was used for the Yahwist temple in Elephantine, and the Hebrew equivalent (בית זבח) could refer to the Jerusalem temple (2 Chr 7:12).[322] Pilgrims came to Gerizim from the surrounding area, and left the sort of votive inscriptions common to many ancient temples.

The priesthoods in Mt. Zion and Mt. Gerizim both appealed to Aaronic pedigree as the basis of their sacerdotal authority. Several priests had archaizing names drawn from Israel's classical past—this suggests that these elite priestly families constructed their identity, in part, from traditions about Israel's past.[323] Even Josephus, no fan of the Gerizim cult, acknowledges that its first high priest was of worthy lineage (*Ant.* 11.301-324).[324]

As another Yahwistic sanctuary within Palestine, the temple on Gerizim stood in direct competition with Jerusalem. The challenge posed by Gerizim hit closer to home than the far-away temples at Leontopolis or Elephantine (Jeb), and Gerizim possessed a biblical warrant (at least according to the Samaritan Pentateuch) which other competing temples lacked. In fact, if the SP's claims were credited, the cult on Gerizim possessed *more* antiquity and authority than Jerusalem's temple—as a founding figure, Moses would certainly "outrank" David![325]

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[319] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 82-84; Kartveit, *Origin of the Samaritans*, 353.
[320] Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 124-5.
[321] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 80-1.
[322] Pummer, Samaritan, 83-4; Knoppers, Jews and Samaritans, 123.
[323] Knoppers, *Jews and Samartians,*128-30.
[324] Ibid., 190-91.
[325] Kartveit, *Origin of the Samaritans*, 355.

Given that both cults were presides over by Aaronide priests following Pentateuchal instructions, both could claim valid worship. During a disputation between Judeans and Samaritans in Alexandria, regarding whether it is best to send offerings to the temple in Gerizim or Jerusalem, no argument was based upon differences in worship (*Ant*. 12.10; 13.74-79). There was seemingly enough similarity in their sacrificial rites—both based on the Pentateuch and led by a Zadokite priesthood—that worship alone did not significantly distinguish the two.[326] The appearance of the two temples was likely similar, as well. Josephus reports that the Gerizim temple was built to be similar to the one in Jerusalem (*Ant*. 11.310). Indeed, Samaritan oil-lamps depicting the Gerizim temple show a structure that looked very much like the Jerusalem temple, as it appeared on coins.[327]

This competition for the cultic allegiance of Yahwists was not limited to those living within Palestine. As with Judeans, there were communities of Samaritans living in other lands. Like the Judeans in diaspora, these Samaritans looked to their homeland as the epicenter of their religion. However, unlike the Judeans, they looked toward Gerizim rather than Jerusalem. For example, let us consider two inscriptions from Delos, dated to the 3rd to 2nd centuries BCE on paleographic grounds, that were made by the "Israelites (in Delos) who make offerings to the sanctuary *Argarizein* [=Mt. Gerizim]"[328] One of them reads:

Οἱ εν Δηλῳ Ισραελεται οἱ απαρχομενοι εις ιἐρον Αργα- ριζειν στεφανουσιν χρυσῳ στεφανῳ Σαραπιωνα Ιασο- νος Κνωσιον ευεργεσιας ἑνεκεν της εις ἑαυτους	The Israelites on Delos who make offerings to the temple *Arga-* *rizein* crown, with a gold crown, Sarapion [son] of Jas- on of Knossos, for [his] benefactions toward them.[329]

Another of these Delos inscriptions honors a benefactor who built and dedicated the Samaritans' "prayer house" (προσευχῃ), a word that can indicate a synagogue. In both inscriptions, the group

[326] Alan D. Crown, "Redating the Schism Between the Judaeans and the Samaritans," *JQR* 82 (1991): 33-4.
[327] Crown, "Redating the Schism," 35-6.
[328] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 92-4. On how the inscriptions were tentatively dated based on paleography and orthography, see Karveit, *Origin of the Samaritans*, 216-8.
[329] My translation; Greek text from Pummer, *Samaritans*, 93.

identifies itself as Israelites, and identifies Gerizim as the holy place which commands their loyalty—and their offerings. Such a public dedication to a sanctuary in one's ancestral land does not come about overnight, but implies long attachment.[330] These inscriptions call to mind Josephus' account of the Egyptian disputation about which Temple one ought to send offerings to (*Ant*. 12.10). Both in Palestine and in diaspora, the two temples stood in direct competition for where those who revered God sent their offerings. Such loyalty not only spoke to the question, "Which temple is more holy?" but also "Which one will survive?"[331]

The temple on Gerizim was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 111/110 BCE, as part of his larger campaign against the Syrian cities (*Ant*. 13.254-6; *J.W.* 1.62-3).[332] Samaria (by now a Macedonian colony) and Shechem fell in this campaign.[333] A Hasmonean garrison remained stationed on Mt. Gerizim until at least the time of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BCE). Possibly, the Hasmoneans hoped that in the absence of the Gerizim shrine, the Samaritans would observe the Judean form of Yahwism. The Samaritans were still forbidden to rebuild the sanctuary in Herodian times.[334] The violent annihilation of Samaria's religious shrine marked the "low point" in relations between the two peoples, and marks a decisive shift in relations between them.[335] According to Reinhard Pummer, it was not the temple's *erection*, but its *destruction*, which caused the deepest rift between the Judeans and Samaritans.[336]

In the first century CE, Gerizim was still very much the religious epicenter of the Samaritans. After all, the (supposed) Mosaic warrant for the site could not be destroyed as easily the building itself. The Samaritans had not been fully "Judaized" during the Hasmonean campaign of reform, and they retained their distinctive practices.[337] Pilgrimage to Gerizim, as

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330 Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 172; Karveit, *Origin of the Samaritans*, 353.
331 Kartveit, *Origin of the Samaritans*, 223.
332 Pummer, *Samaritans*, 88. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 173.
333 Dušek, "Administration of Samaria," 72.
334 Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 213.
335 Pummer, *Samaritans*, 24.
336 Ibid., 89.
337 Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 224.

well as sacrifices, likely continued on Gerizim well after the destruction of the temple.[338] Samaritans were in the habit of praying facing Gerizim;[339] indeed, later Samaritan synagogues were orientated toward the mountain.[340] The mountain seemed to be the focus-point for eschatological expectations, as illustrated by a disturbance during the governorship of Pontius Pilate, when a man led a large group of Samaritans to Gerizim, "which in their belief is the most sacred of mountains," claiming to have prophetic knowledge of where Moses had deposited the holy vessels (*Ant*. 18.85-7).[341] In 67 CE, during heightened conflict between Judeans and Romans, a group of Samaritans mustered on Mt. Gerizim and "did not move from the spot," provoking the Romans to besiege, and eventually slaughter, the city (*J.W.* 3:307-315). At times of heightened eschatological fervor, national crisis, or merely times of prayer, Samaritans apparently looked to this "most sacred of mountain" as their people's center of gravity.

The Samaritans' rejection of the (Jerusalem) temple continued to be a source of conflict, even after the Gerizim temple ceased to exist. One year at Passover, a group of Samaritans reportedly sneaked into the temple and scattered human bones, presumably to render the temple unclean (*Ant*. 18.29-30). Of course, Josephus' undisguised dislike of the Samaritans casts some doubt upon this tale. But then again, it *does* resembles a story in the much-later Samaritan Chronicle, which tells that some Samaritans once substituted rats for sacrificial doves in the temple.[342] Even if neither story is based in fact, both provide a witness—one Judean, and one Samaritan—to a sense of Samaritan animosity toward the Jerusalem temple-cult. One source from Qumran accuses the Samaritans of "blaspheming the tent of Zion," which certainly sounds like the verbal equivalent of defiling the temple (4Q371). And Luke corroborates the animosity

[338] Crown, "Redating the Schism," 30,37
[339] Crown, "Redating the Schism," 39. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 224.
[340] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 92.
[341] Reinhard Pummer notes that this is a somewhat confusing claim, given that Moses himself never entered the promised land! *Samaritans*, 63.
[342] Crown, "Redating the Schism," 40.

of Samaritans toward Zion, when he reports that some Samaritans rejected Jesus "because his face was set toward Jerusalem" (Luke 9:53). [343]

Sometimes, hostility toward Judean pilgrims could lead to violence. Josephus narrates an incident of unrest between Judeans and Samaritans precipitated by the murder of Galilean pilgrims crossing Samaria.[344] This occurred in 52 CE, during a high point of brigandage and insurrection. Depending on which of Josephus' versions one is reading, Samaritans either murdered one (*J.W.* 2.232,246) or many (*Ant*. 20.124) Judean pilgrims on their way to a festival. The event sparked an escalating cycle of retaliatory brigandage and ever-more-devastating Roman involvement, which left many massacred (*J.W.* 2.232-246; *Ant*. 20.118-136). Such violence towards pilgrims could not have been a constant threat, but local and occasional; otherwise, it could not have been the "custom (εθος) of the Galileans at the time of a festival to pass through the Samaritan territory on their way to the Holy City" (*Ant*. 20.118).[345] But it seems likely that some degree of tension existed, even at the best of times. Commenting on the flare-up of violence in 52, the Roman historian Tacitus remarks that the Galileans and Samaritans "had long been at feud with each other" (*Annals* 12.54).[346]

The Samaritans expected a messianic figure, based on Moses' promise, "The Lord will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people" (Dt. 18:15). This eschatological prophet was called the *Taheb* (תהב), that is, the returning one. This figure was closely identified with Moses, and quite distinct from the messiah as understood by Judeans. Consider this passage from the Samaritan *Memar Marqeh*:

> When the great prophet Moses informed Israel of the Day of Vengeance, he gave them good news of their deliverance from it . . . Where is there a prophet like Moses with whom God spoke mouth to mouth? Where is there a prophet like Moses who fasted forty days and forty nights; he neither ate nor drank. And he came down bearing two tables of stone written with the finger of God. And besides he said other words, all of them good tidings to those who do

[343] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 38.
[344] Ibid.
[345] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 38, 63-4; Crown, "Redating the Schism," 28.
[346] Ramsay, *Annals of Tacitus,* 101.

good. May the Taheb come in peace, who rules the city of the perfect and reveals the Truth.[347]

The question "Where is the prophet like Moses. . . " is not merely rhetorical: its answer will be revealed on the day the Taheb comes. We do not have evidence of the term itself (*taheb*) from before 4th century,[348] but indications of messianic expectations among the Samaritans are found much earlier. For example, the aforementioned trek of large crowds up Mt. Gerizim in 36 CE had several hallmarks of Samaritan messianism: a special figure, claiming to possess prophetic insight, as well as a tie to Moses, who drew crowds large enough to alarm the Roman authorities. The gospel of John is another early piece of evidence: the Samaritan woman tells Jesus, "I know that Messiah is coming, who is called 'Christ'" (4:25, cf. 4:29). During Luke's account of missionary activity in Samaria (Acts 8:4-25), Philip preaches the messiah to them; this may suggest that he addresses an audience who expected such a figure.[349]

There has been a good deal of scholarly argument over whether or not the Samaritans were "really" Israelites or not. Usually such discussion is concerned with their biological descent from Israel. Luckily for our purposes, we need not get mired in such a question. We are interested in race, not biology, and race is a social construct, not something that lurks mysteriously in the genes. What matters for our discussion is not so much whether they were *actually* descended from Jacob, *but that they believed they were*.[350] They felt a sense of kinship with the ancestors of Israel, drew a sense of their place in the world from the connection with them, and revered traditions inherited from them. Race is an ongoing process of social discourse, and as such, their genealogical traditions were racially "true," regardless of whether they were biologically "factual." However, like all social discourse, these traditions could be contested.

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[347] Bowman, "Samaritan Documents," 257-58; see also Meeks, *The Prophet King,* 248-9.

[348] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 63; Knoppers, 222-223

[349] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 40-1. Similarly in Acts, Stephen, one of the Seven like Philip, explicitly connects Jesus with the promised "prophet like Moses," citing Deut 18:15 (Acts 7:37).

[350] Recall Max Weber's notion of *putative* shared descent: it is the shared perception of common ancestry that shapes ethnicity, rather than genes. Hall, *Hellenicity*, 15.

Not all Judeans were prepared to accept the Samaritan's self-definition as the descendants of Israel. Their claim to be related to the Judeans was met with a variety of responses, ranging from full acceptance of them as fellow-Judeans, to full denial that they were related to the ancient Israelites in any way. This range of responses is found within the Judean scriptures themselves—sometimes even containing traces of multiple positions within a single book! 2 Kings 17 paints a sweeping picture of total depopulation of Israel by the Assyrians, but betrays hints that the demographic devastation was not so complete, after all. For example, 2 Kings 17:34 criticizes the inhabitants of the land for failure to follow "the law or the commandment that the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel"—an accusation only comprehensible if Samaritans are still, in some sense, "the children of Jacob" and therefore answerable to the covenant![351] On the whole, however, 2 Kings relates that the current inhabitants of the North are by no means Israelites. By contrast, the Chronicler describes the inhabitants of the north as "Israel." Such tribal units as Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulon are still intact (2 Chr 30:11, 34:9), and northern Israel has its own "assembly" (30:25) just as Judah does (30:2, 4, 25).[352] A Pan-Israelite unity is in view, with all Israelites coming and worshiping in the Jerusalem Temple. As opposed to the Chronicler's expansive view of Israel, Ezra-Nehemiah defines "Israel" narrowly—specifically, as the returning Yehudites. These Israelites are constructed against the foil of the surrounding peoples; from this point of view the Samaritans are, almost by definition, non-Israelites.[353] The author of 2 Maccabees several times seems to include Samaritans as belonging to the same race as Judeans. For example, Antiochus IV sends officers to oppress "the people" (το γενος), meaning the Judeans; this "people" includes both those "in Jerusalem" and those "in Gerizim" (2 Macc 5:22-23; cf. 6:1-3).[354] From four

[351] Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans,* 55-63.
[352] Ibid., 85-9.
[353] Ibid., 136-38, 166.
[354] Etienne Nodet, "Israelites, Samaritans, Temples, Jews," in *Samaria, Samarians, and Samaritans* (edited by József Zsengellér. Boston: DeGruyter), 121; Pummer, *Samaritans*, 50.

Judean scriptures, then, we have four views of the Samaritans, ranging from near-identification with them, to utter loathing.

Josephus is remarkably hostile toward the Samaritans, and for the most part he treats them as unrelated to Judeans. Josephus repeatedly emphasizes the foreignness of the Samaritans,[355] and uses the word "foreigner" (αλλοφυλοι) to describe them (*Ant*. 11.306).[356] He mocks their claimed descent from the Israelites as pure fabrication:

> When the Jews are in difficulties, they [i.e., the Samaritans] deny that they have any kinship (συγγενεις) with them, thereby indeed admitting the truth, but whenever they see some splendid bit of good fortune come to them, they suddenly grasp at the connection with them, saying that they are related to them and tracing their line back to Ephraim and Manasseh, descendants of Joseph. – *Antiquities* 11.341[357]

In various passages, Josephus presents an inconsistent mix of origin stories for the Samaritans: they are "Cutheans," or apostate Judeans from Jerusalem, or "Sidonians."[358] In the first account, modeled after 2 Kings 17:24-41, Josephus asserts that the Samaritans are relocated "Cutheans" settled on the land after the original Israelites of the area had been removed (*Ant*. 9.288-291; *Ant*. 10.183-184). His second account of their origin, based loosely on Nehemiah 13:28, describes them as descended from a variety of religious nonconformists from Jerusalem (*Ant*. 11.292-347). The depiction of them as a breakaway group, partially descended from renegade Judeans, might serve to help explain the similarity between Samaritan and Judean practice to outsiders. Lastly, Josephus tells us that the Samaritans sometimes claim they are Sidonians. In this mode, they beg Antiochus: "We petition you. . . not to molest us in any way by attaching to us the charges of which the Jews are guilty, since we are distinct from them both in race (τῳ γενει) and in customs (τοις εθεσιν)" (*Ant*. 12.257-64).[359]

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[355] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 58.
[356] Feldman, "Josephus' Attitude," 27.
[357] Marcus, LCL.
[358] Kartveit, "Josephus on the Samaritans," 118.
[359] Marcus, LCL.

However, Josephus betrays hints that Samaritans are not as distinct as he might wish. Josephus admits that many Judeans emigrated northward, including priests who defected to the Gerizim cult (*Ant*. 11.297-347); many of these "renegade Judeans" came to live in Shechem (*Ant*. 11.340). He also describes Shechem as a haven for Jerusalemites who violated the covenant; they would flee there and claim they had been unjustly banished (*Ant*. 11.346-47). Such movement suggests strong ties between the Judeans and Samaritans. The Samarian governor Sanballat reportedly convinced Alexander the Great that the creation of a temple on Gerizim would divide the power of the Judeans—the underlying logic being that both groups belonged to the same race (*Ant*. 11.323).[360] At one point, Josephus condemns the Samaritans for no longer "admitting" (ὁμωλογεω) that they are related (συγγενεις) to the Jews, which seems to imply that they in fact *are* related (*Ant*. 12.257).[361] Lastly, Josephus tells of a debate held in Alexandria over which temple was built in accordance with the law of Moses—the one in Jerusalem or the one in Gerizim (*Ant*. 12:7-10; 13:74-79). This implicitly classifies both peoples as Israelites, for whom the laws of Moses are authoritative.[362]

Conflicting Judean attitudes concerning the Samaritans' identity continued, even into the Tannaitic era. Earlier Tannaitic rabbis could consider Samaritans to be Jews or at least semi-Jews; to later rabbis they can be considered unquestionably gentiles.[363] The disagreement between Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel and his son illustrates this split in opinion. Simeon held that, "A Samaritan is [treated] like an Israelite," but his son said, "A Samaritan is [treated] like a gentile."[364] The first-century Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus regarded Samaritans as being of "doubtful status" for purposes of marriage, similar to a foreigner.[365] 2nd century Judean polemics

[360] Knoppers, Jews and Samaritans, 175-6.
[361] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 61. The verb ὁμολογεω has the sense of "confess, admit, acknowledge" that is, own up to the truth of something. Neither the *BDAG* nor the Liddell-Scott give it a sense of falsely claiming something known to be untrue (*BDAG*, 571; *L-S,* 557). Josephus' choice of words seems to run counter to his general thesis that Samaritans are unrelated to Judeans.
[362] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 61.
[363] Crown, "Redating the Schism," 20; Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans,* 225; Pummer, *Samaritans*, 69.
[364] *t. Terumot* 4:12 // 4:14; Pummer, *Samaritans*, 68.
[365] *Mishnah, Qiddushin* 4:3; Feldman, "Josephus' Attitude," 32.

typically describe the Samaritans as of dubious origin, and occasionally endorse violence against them.[366]

Josephus accused the Samaritans of being ethnic opportunists. When the Judeans prosper, they claim descent from Joseph, and kinship with the Judeans. However, when the Judeans suffer misfortune, the Samaritans say they are unrelated to them (*Ant*. 9.288-292; *Ant*. 11.341,343). To win approval for the temple on Gerizim, Sanballat argues that

> It was also advantageous to the king [Alexander], he said, that the power of the Jews should be divided in two, in order that the nation (το εθνος) might not, in the event of revolution, be of one mind and stand together. – *Antiquities* 11.323

Here, a Samaritan tells Alexander they are the same *ethnos* as the Judeans, whereas Samaritans will flatly deny the same thing to Antiochus a few centuries later. Josephus depicts the Samaritans as cunning opportunists, who shed identities like snake skins to suit their circumstances.[367] Etienne Nodet accepts the authenticity of Josephus' "Samaritan documents," but disagrees with Josephus' interpretation of them. Instead, he argues that the Samaritans are trying to distinguish themselves diplomatically from the "party" of Judeans associated with the return from exile—who had themselves already denied their kinship with the people whom they found on the land at the time of their return.[368]

Josephus is hardly the only Judean to express a hatred of the Samaritans. For example, a fragmentary document from Qumran about Jacob turns its ire toward them:

> [10]Moreover, Joseph was carried off into lands he had not kn[own . . .] [11]among a foreign nation, dispersed into all the world. All their mountains were desolate of them, [. . .] and fools [were liv]ing [in their land,] [12]fashioning for themselves a high place upon the high mountain, so as to arouse Israel's jealousy. They spoke [insulting] wor[ds against] [13]the sons of Jacob, saying horrifying things, even blaspheming the tent of Zion. They told lies against them, [14]spoke every sort of untruth, intending to enrage Levi, Judah, and Benjamin with their words.[369] – 4Q371

The passage makes it clear that the Israelites (personified as "Joseph") are no longer in the land –

[366] Kartveit, *Origin of the Samaritans*, 360.
[367] Kartveit, "Josephus on the Samaritans," 110-111; Pummer, Samaritans, 56, 60-61
[368] Nodet, "Israelites, Samaritans, Temples, Jews," 144.
[369] Wise, Abegg, and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 423.

thus the latter-day Samaritans who claim to descend from Joseph are liars. The current inhabitants are "fools" who built themselves a "high place upon the high mountain"—a clear reference to Gerizim. Notice that the Samaritan rejection of the "tent of Zion," and their adherence to their own cultic place, informs this author's hatred of them.

The Samaritans are again called "fools" in Sirach 50:25-26. The Hebrew text, from ca. 180 BCE, reads, "My soul detests two peoples (גוים), and the third is not even a people (עם): Those who live in Seir, and the Philistines, and the foolish people (גו) that live in Shechem." The residents of Shechem, who were Samaritans, are called fools—and they are not even worth being called a "people" (עם). By the time of the Greek translation, ca. 128 BCE, "Those who live in Seir"—that is, the Idumeans—had already been forcibly converted to Judaism, and so were no longer pagans.[370] Now, the text reads, "My soul was offended by two peoples (εθνεσιν), and the third is not even a people (εθνος): Those who settled on Mount Samaria and Philistiim, and the foolish people (λαος) who live in Shechem." The group who lived in Seir have been replaced with "Those who live on Mount Samaria." It is tempting to see this as a reference to the city on Mt. Gerizim, to which so many Samaritans looked for a sense of religious identity. If this is the case, then Samaritans now appear not once, but twice, in the Greek version.

It might be helpful to summarize several points about how the Samaritans understood themselves, and how the Judeans understood them. We must remain somewhat tentative about our conclusions, because our literary testimony about them comes from Judeans, who were often hostile witnesses. With that in mind, we might offer the following summary. 1) Samaritans understood themselves as the descendants of the original Israelites, although Judeans were divided on this issue. 2) The Samaritans shared many religious features in common with the Judeans, including the use of the Pentateuch, and belief that the cult of YHWH must be centralized. 3) The Samaritans *differed* with them on many religious points, such as the

[370] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 49.

differences in their Pentateuch, the limitation of canon to the five books of Moses[371], the difference in cultic site, and the expectation of a Mosaic "*Taheb*" rather than a Davidic messiah. 4) The Samaritans had a long, checkered past with their southern neighbors, punctuated by many painful rejections and outright violence. 5) Despite this, there were indications of sustained contact, and the relationship cannot be expressed as one of unmitigated enmity.

Samaritans in the Gospel of John

John's gospel reflects an awareness of these general contours of Samaritan self-understanding, as well as the range of attitudes Judeans held toward them. John portrays the Samaritan woman of chapter 4 as someone who values these markers of ethnic identity, and draws upon them in the face of a foreigner (Jesus) who might wish to challenge her beliefs. In the gospel, the Pharisees disparage Samaritans, Jesus accepts the woman's ethnic self-identification, and the text represents Jesus himself in a way that often resembles the Mosaic *Taheb.* We now turn to consideration of specific passages to examine John's construction of Samaritans in depth.

The Samaritan Woman: John 4:1-29

A brief travelogue explains that Jesus "had to pass through Samaria" on his way home from a festival—taking what Josephus tells us was a common route among Galileans (*Ant*. 20.118).[372] The sort of violence against Galilean pilgrims which broke out in 52 CE (*J.W.* 2.232; *Ant*. 20.124)

[371] This last trait (a truncated canon, composed of only the Pentateuch) *may* have been shared by the Sadducees. The relevant passage from Josephus is unclear. "The Pharisees had passed on to the people certain regulations handed down by former generations (εκ πατερων) and not recorded in the Laws of Moses (τοις Μωυσεος νομοις), for which reason they are rejected by the Sadducaean group, who wrote that only those regulations should be considered valid which had been written down (τα γεγραμμενα), and that those which had been handed down by former generations need not be observed." (*Ant*. 13:297). Clearly they rejected the Oral Torah of the Pharisees, but which "things written" (τα γεγραμμενα) were authoritative to them? Was this only the "Laws of Moses," or also the wider Judean scriptures?

[372] Pummer, *Samaritans*, 64.

was the exception, not the rule. Clearly the disciples feel comfortable enough to enter the town to buy food, as pilgrims must have from time to time, and they feel sure enough of their master's safety to leave him alone. However, such a narrative setting is not without some tension. The episode takes place under the very shadow of Mt. Gerizim, site of the Yahwist sanctuary once in direct competition with Jerusalem, from which Jesus just came. As John presents the scene, the woman and Jesus can look up and see it as they converse. Of all the villages in Samaria, here is where tensions would be most acutely felt between Samaritans and Judeans.

The travel notes evoke Israel's classical past, identifying the area as the field mentioned in Genesis 48:22 and Joshua 24:32.[373] The narrative could have mentioned this tradition without linking it in any positive way with the current inhabitants of the area. This practice is common in "historical tourism" even today; many visitors fetishize the history of a land while paying little or no attention to its current residents—dismissing them as either a completely different population, or as a pale shadow of a once-great people. Similar thinking is sometimes found among ancient writers, too. Romans who admired Greek civilization might nevertheless opine that, these days, there were "very few, if any, who are worthy of the ancient Greeks."[374] And, although the Romans admired the history and colossal monuments of Egypt, they expressed a variety of negative evaluations of contemporary Egyptians.[375] If the detail were merely included to lend color to a scene, the text could have mentioned this bit of religious geography, without

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[373] "The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem, in the portion of ground that Jacob had bought from the children of Hamor, for one hundred pieces of money; it became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph." Joshua 24:32.

[374] "Very few, if such are to be found, are worthy of ancient Greece. As things now stand, indeed, too many of them are untrustworthy, false, and schooled by long servitude in the arts of extravagant adulation" (Cicero*, ad Quintum fratrem* 1.1.16). See also a remarkable speech Tacitus attributes to one Gaius Piso, who remarks that the Athenians to whom Germanicus has shown such courtesy are "not the people of Athens, who indeed have been exterminated by repeated disasters, but a miserable medley of tribes" (*Annals*, 2.88.3). These two authors' explanations of *why* latter day "Greeklings" (*graeculi*) are inferior differs: Cicero speaks of degeneration, while Tacitus claims the current residents of Athens are altogether unrelated to the ancients. Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 395, 397. Cf. also Susan Alcock, *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece,* New York: Cambridge, 1993.

[375] Although Tacitus described the ancient monuments of Egypt's past with great admiration (*Annals* 2.59-61), he could nevertheless characterize the province's present-day population as fanatical, superstitious, and ignorant (*Histories* 1.11). Boatwright, *Peoples*, 122; Isaac, *Invention,* 361-2.

acknowledging the Samaritan's own belief *they* were the "descendants of Joseph" (Josh 24:32) to whom the field had been left. But the evangelist does not choose this approach. Instead, as we shall see shortly, he narrates an encounter with a Samaritan woman who possesses a lively sense of connection with her homeland.

The Samaritan woman is surprised to be spoken to by Jesus, and asks "How is it that you, a Judean (Ιουδαιος), ask a drink of me, although I am a Samaritan woman (γυναικος Σαμαριτιδος)?" (4:9a). The highlighting of ethnicity suggests that such a request is unexpected between members of their peoples.[376] Obviously, gender taboos are in play here as well; much of the surprise is that Jesus (a strange man), asks a drink of her, an unknown woman. However, the subsequent editorial remark draws our attention to the racial dynamics of the exchange. The narrator adds an explanatory parenthesis: "For Judeans do not have dealings with Samaritans," or perhaps ". . . do not share the use of things with Samaritans" (4:9b).[377] Even if this remark is a later addition, it shows that a very early editor understood ethnic dynamics to be the most relevant factor in the woman's surprise. In any case, the explanation makes explicit what her question already took for granted: a degree of distance between the two peoples is the norm. She

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[376] Gender is obviously a factor in this exchange, as well; after all, she identifies herself as a Samaritan *woman*. However, the racial aspect of the exchange is the focus here. Further, I would argue that the phrasing of 4:9a suggests that ethnicity *is* the primary dynamic in play, not gender. The woman asks, "How is it that you, a Judean (Ιουδαιος), ask a drink of water of me, a Samaritan woman (γυναικος Σαμαριτιδος)?" John explicitly juxtaposes two ethnic markers: Ιουδαιος and Σαμαριτις (the feminized form of Σαμαριτης). But whereas she is called a woman (γυναικος), Jesus is only identified by his ethnic label. If gender were the foremost dynamic in play, we would expect Jesus to be referred to as an *ανηρ* Ιουδαιος ("Judean *man*") to contrast the "woman of Samaria." The editorial note (4:9b), which focuses on race and fails to mention gender, supports this impression.

For studies which foreground gender in this passage, see Sandra Marie Schneider, "A Case Study: A Feminist Interpretation of John 4:1-42," pp. 235-59 in *The Interpretation of John,* 2d ed. (Edited by John Ashton. Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1997); Jean K. Kim, "A Korean Feminist Reading of John 4:1-42," Semeia 78 (1997): 109-119; Raj Irudaya, *Misssion to the Marginalized: A Subaltern, Feminist, and Interreligious Reading of John 4:1-42* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2007); Rehka M. Chennattu, "Les femmes dans la mission de l'Église: Interprétation de Jean 4," Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique 108.3 (2007): 381-396; Rose Nyirimana Mukansengimana and Jonathan A. Draper, "The Peacemaking Role of the Samaritan Woman in John 4:1-24: A Mirror and Challenge to Rwandan Women," *Neotestimentica* 46.2 (2012): 299-318.

[377] The verb in question, συγχραομαι, here means either: 1) *to use together* [i.e., vessels for food and drink], *to make joint use of,* or 2) *to have dealings with*. It combines συν ("with") and the verb χραομαι, which can mean *to use* or in social contexts, *to treat in a certain way, associate with,* or *to have dealings with.* See *BDAG* 787, 892, *Liddell-Scott* 756, 892.

would not expect a Judean to associate with, let alone share a drinking-vessel with, a Samaritan like herself.

Jesus counters that she could have asked him for ὑδωρ ζων*,* living or flowing water (4:10). Incredulous, she asks Jesus whether he thinks he is greater than "our father Jacob," who left them the well. Several ethnic claims are embedded in this brief question:

1) our father Jacob,	→	Claim 1: descent from Jacob
2) who gave us this well,	→	Claim 2: inheritance from Jacob, descent from Joseph
3) and drank from it himself, and also his sons and his cattle?	→	Claim 3: we derive our sustenance from the land which also provided Jacob's everyday needs

This question is densely packed with racial elements. It affirms descent from Jacob, the common ancestor of Israel. It also affirms that the Samaritans who live there now are the rightful heirs of Jacob. Because "Jacob's field" was left to Joseph, this may even imply a particular tribal identity, from one of the Josephite tribes, Ephraim or Manasseh.[378] Indeed, Josephus mentions that Samaritans claim to descend from these two, although he does not believe it himself (*Ant*. 11.341; cf. 9.291). At any rate, the reference to "his sons," who are after all the fathers of the tribes of Israel, affirms her sense of herself as an Israelite. The emphatic pronoun αυτου—"he *himself* drank from it"—underscores her sense of connection with the Patriarch. Even the daily chores from which she derives her sustenance—like coming to draw water—draw her closer to Jacob. (After all, he also used to come here for his own day-to-day chores, such as watering cattle!) As Jesus asks to co-share (συγχραομαι) a drink with her, she regularly shares a drink with the Patriarch himself.

The "our" of 4:12 is most likely meant to include Jesus, as a Galilean Judean. After all, the Samaritans did acknowledge the Judeans as fellow Israelites, all descended from their shared father Israel (Jacob). The *next* first-person pronoun, however, tightens the frame of reference:

[378] Jacob leaves the plot of land to Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's sons, in Gn. 48:20-22. Joshua 24:32 adds that the land became "an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph, " that is, these two tribes. The land lays near the old tribal boundary between the two.

Are you greater than ***our*** (shared) father Jacob,	→	"our" = Samaritans + Judeans
who gave ***us*** (not you) this well?	→	"us" = Samaritans only

The "us" of the relative clause can only refer to the Samaritans of the town, who live at the "field of Jacob," and who drink from his well—not also to Judeans. Although the first clause affirms their common descent from Jacob, the second clause implies that the Samaritans have a more thorough connection to the Patriarch—they are, after all, both his descendants *and* his heirs.

The woman has now claimed Jacob as ancestor, and implied that she and Jesus belong to closely related peoples. This is an example of aggregative self-definition; she understands her own people, in part, by reference to their relatedness to another people who share the same ancestor. Some Judeans might have been willing to accept an ethnic genealogy tracing both races to Jacob, but others—such as Josephus or the author of Nehemiah—would have rejected it out of hand.[379] For that matter, the author of Matthew would be unlikely to acknowledge her as an Israelite, either (Matt 10:5). Some Judeans would have emphatically rejected the notion that Samaritans descended from Joseph.[380] It is noteworthy, then, that *John's* Jesus does nothing to challenge either of her claims; he merely answers her question, albeit indirectly. When asked whether he is greater than Jacob, Jesus explains that the water he offers is vastly superior to that of Jacob's well.

Jesus explains that he could, upon request, provide "living/flowing" water (4:10). The woman remarks that the well is deep, and Jesus appears to have no way of drawing such water. But this water is extraordinary, and is procured by extraordinary means. Jesus elaborates, "The water which I will give will become a spring of water bursting up inside him to eternal life" (4:14b). This offer of miraculous water calls to mind the shared Pentateuchal tradition of water of Meribah (Exod 17:1-7; Num 20:1-13). The Israelites demanded a drink of Moses, who strikes

[379] e.g., Jaddus' Samaritan wife is a "foreigner" (αλλοφυλος) of the sort which the law forbids Judeans to marry (*Ant*. 11.306-307); Samaritans "indeed admit the truth" when they deny being related to the Jews (*Ant*. 11.341), calling themselves "aliens of another race" (μετοικους αλλοεθνεις; *Ant*. 9:291). The author of Ezra-Nehemiah insultingly misidentifies Sanballat as a "Horonite" (Neh 2:10,19). Cf. 4Q371.

[380] Hakola, *Identity Matters: John, Jews, and Jewishness* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 100.

a rock with his staff and gives them water. Their request, “Give us water to drink” (Exod 17:2), is echoed by Jesus' request for water (John 4:7). The Samaritan woman asserts that “Jacob, and his sons and his livestock” drank from the well, which recalls the Israelites' complaint that Moses has brought “us, and our children, and our livestock” into the desert to die of thirst (Exod 17:3; cf. Num 20:4). Then, Moses performed a miracle, and water flowed from the rock abundantly (Num 20:11; cf. Ps 78:15,20); now, Jesus promises miraculous water that will become “a spring of water gushing up to eternal life” (John 14). The water from the rock flowed “like rivers” (Ps 78:16), just like Jesus' “running” (ζων) water. The Israelites' demand for water was consistently interpreted as a lack of faith in Moses and the Lord (Exod 17:3; Num 20:12-13; Deut 6:26, 33:8; Ps 95:8-11). Similarly, this woman is doubtful about Jesus' ability to follow through on his offer (John 4:11-12). We might expect a Samaritan to pick up on even a subtle nod to the Meribah tradition. The allusion has the added benefit of depicting Jesus in a Mosaic light.

Jesus' leading remarks about the woman's many husbands, *could* be an acknowledgment of shared legal traditions regarding remarriage (Deut 22:30, 24:1-4, 25:5-10), adultery (Exod 20:14, Deut 5:18), or sexual misconduct (Deut 22:22-29, 27:23; Lev 18:6-20). As such, this exchange could be an acknowledgment that, as members of their respective peoples, they shared a common body of Mosaic laws. However, we need not assume that the woman has done something wrong. Jesus does not accuse her of any specific infraction, nor does this exchange lead the woman to any sort of repentance. Indeed, the narrative effect of this exchange is not to plunge the woman into self-reflection, but to deepen her interest in Jesus.

Alternatively, to the extent that Jesus' approaching her signals the coming of salvation to the Samaritan people, she may serve as a sort of “Lady Samaria,” a feminine personification of the whole *ethnos* consistent with both the use of female personifications in Greco-Roman culture (e.g. coins, the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias) and with the “Lady Zion” traditions in the Hebrew scripture. In this reading, her “husbands” could represent the various empires who have been

Samaria's "husband" over the centuries: 1) Assyria, 2) Bablyonia, 3) Persia, 4) Greeks, 5) Hasmoneans/Judeans, and finally 6) Rome, her current "man" who is not even her husband.[381] This reading would also fit the "nation-as-straying-woman" motif found in the prophets—as for example in Hosea, where *alliances* with nations become *dalliances* with strange men.[382]

Jesus' insight into *her* life leads her to an insight about *him*. She remarks, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet" (4:19). The identification underscores their shared religious traditions—both acknowledge the existence of prophets. However, based on what we know about the Samaritans, it could imply some difference as well. The Samaritans' canon was limited to the Pentateuch, and so their understanding of the office was less colored by the so-called "latter prophets," and more informed by the image of Moses. Indeed, the Samaritans expected the arrival of a "prophet like Moses," called the *Taheb*. This figure, who possessed messianic qualities, was in many ways different from the general profile of the Davidic messiah, as understood by many Judeans. At any rate, the woman's recognition of Jesus as a prophet falls short of an identification of him as a messiah, although the woman will move closer to such an identification in just a few verses (4:30).

After identifying Jesus as a prophet (an office their religions recognize in common), she puts a religious issue before him over which their peoples profoundly disagree: the place of worship. "Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but *you* (ὑμεις) say that the place where one ought to worship is in Jerusalem" (4:20). Now that this issue is in view, the woman's rhetoric

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[381] A variant of this reading would be to identify the "five husbands" as the "people from Bablyon, Cuthah, Avva, and Hamath" who are brought in to populate Samaria after 722 B.C.E. (2 Kgs 17:24), and the "one who is not even your husband" as the foreigners settled in Samaria by Herod the Great. I find this possibility less satisfactory, as makes a hash of the metaphor, requiring her to have had five "husbands" at the same time. See Craig Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 49; Steven A. Hunt, "The Men of the Samaritan Woman: Six of Sychar," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Approaches in the Fourth Gospel* (Edited by Steven Hunt, et al. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 288-89.

[382] Although not found in all manuscripts, the adulterous woman (John 8:1-11) follows the same basic pattern. The Pharisees and scribes present an accused adulterer to Jesus, and demand, "Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such a woman. What do *you* say?" (8:5) Jesus declines to pass judgment on the woman—just as he does here. But notice that Jesus does not tell the *Samaritan* woman to "sin no more," neither does the narrator call *her* an adulterer.

becomes more distancing. The religious practice of "our ancestors" stands in opposition to that of "you people," here referring to the Judeans. The emphatic nominative pronoun ὑμεις underscores this opposition.

The Samaritan woman invokes ancestry again, as she did in at 4:12. Remember that descent from a common ancestor was the most definitive criteria of race in antiquity. Racial dynamics again play a significant role in this exchange. We might fruitfully compare this second deployment of ancestry with that of a few verses ago:

Are you greater than our ancestor (του πατρος ὑμων) Jacob, who gave us this well, and drank from it himself, and also his sons and his cattle? (4:12)	Our ancestors (οἱ πατερες ὑμων) worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where one ought to worship is in Jerusalem. (4:20)

In both verses, ancestors are deployed within a challenge toward Jesus. And both times, the woman links the ancestors with a local site. Faced with the challenge of an outsider's point of view, race (implicit in references to both ancestry and territory) plays an important part in how the woman affirms her traditions.

However, there *may* be a difference in the two "our ancestor/s" verses. Verse 4:12 had an inclusive "our," which referred to a shared ancestor, Jacob. Determining how to interpret the ὑμων of 4:20 is not as simple. It could be an *expansive* "our" meant to include Jesus, or it could be an *exclusive* "our" which leaves him out. Both readings are viable. The rhetorical effect of the sentence is quite different, depending on how one interprets this pronoun:

expansive reading of ὑμων	**exclusive reading of ὑμων**
"Our (shared) ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but (in defiance of their traditions) you say that the place where one ought to worship is in Jerusalem."	Our (Samaritan) ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but (like *your* ancestors) you say that the place where one ought to worship is in Jerusalem."
ὑμων = Samaritans and Judeans	ὑμων = we Samaritans only
πατερες = All Israelites	πατερες = Northern Israel, Samaritans
rhetorical effect: Accusatory.	*rhetorical effect:* Distancing.

In an inclusive reading, the example of their shared ancestors gives warrant to Samaritan practice, and convicts the Judeans of abandoning the religious traditions of their ancestors. The ancestors of both groups "worshiped on this mountain." After all, Moses commanded *all* of the Israelites to erect an altar of unhewn stones on Mt. Gerizim, and offer sacrifices there, according to the Samaritan Pentateuch (Deut 27:2-8 SP).[383] Even before that, Jacob had erected an altar in the Shechem valley (Gen 33:18-20 SP). If "our ancestors" includes all Israelites, they comprise an example which the Judeans, too, ought to follow. By contrast, worship in Jerusalem is as an unwarranted novelty. Jesus, as a stand-in for all Judeans, is invited to account for this break with ancient tradition.

On the other hand, if we prefer an exclusive reading, "our" refers only to *Samaritan* ancestors. In this case, ancestry has a somewhat different function. At 4:12, the woman had appealed to ancestry in a way that encouraged *aggregative* self-definition: her race was related to Jesus' race. But if we choose this reading of 4:20, here ancestry serves a more *oppositional* function: her ancestors worshiped one way, but Jesus' ancestors worshipped another. Each race is defined, in part, by its incompatible religious traditions, handed down by their forebears. As a "prophet," Jesus is invited to comment on this longstanding disagreement over how to worship the same God. Whichever interpretation of the verse we find more convincing—an inclusive reading or an exclusive one—both possibilities use ancestry to justify Samaritan beliefs. Both readings also place a certain amount of distance between Jesus and the woman, based on race.

Rather unexpectedly for a Judean, especially one returning from a festival, Jesus refuses to take sides in the Gerizim versus Jerusalem debate (4:20-21). Instead, he affirms that those who

[383] The Samaritan Pentateuch gives the location of the altar as Mt. Gerizim, the mountain of blessing (Deut 27:2-8 SP), but the MT gives the location as Mt. Ebal. Reinhard Pummer argues that it is unlikely that Ebal was the original reading, because it was the mountain of *cursing;* furthermore, other early witnesses do not support the "Ebal" reading. As a result, he concludes that we cannot necessarily dismiss the "Gerizim" reading as a Samaritan sectarian change (*Samaritans*, 204-5). The command to build an altar on Gerizim is repeated as the tenth commandment, in both Samaritan versions (Deut 5:21 SP; Exod 20:17 SP).

worship the Father "will worship in spirit and in truth" (23-24). The woman cited the ancients as the warrant from her people's religious heritage, seemingly ready to defend their practice in the face of a rival sanctuary. Instead, Jesus shifts attention away from such geographical loyalties.

Verse 22 seems to interrupt this train of thought, with a remark about the Samaritans and Judeans: "*You* worship what you do not know; *we* worship what we know, because salvation is from the Judeans." Again, John uses emphatic pronouns to highlight the contrast between what the plural "you" (Samaritans) know, and what "we" (Judeans) know. At first this seems like another instance of a common Judean attitude towards the Samaritans: they are religiously inferior. However, the *logion* is not really a condemnation of Samaritans, *per se*. It is a statement about the origins of the salvation of the world, that is, Jesus, who came in order to save (σωζειν) the world (3:17; 12:47). Salvation (σωτηρια) is from (εκ) the Judeans, both in the sense that Jesus is "from" (εκ) and "descended from" (εκ) them.[384] Jesus is not criticizing the Samaritans for not being Judeans, any more than he criticizes Romans or Greeks for the same. Instead, he is pointing out that, since he comes from (εκ) them, (some of) the Judeans "know" him, which as of yet the Samaritans do not.[385] Their ignorance is situational, not intrinsic. Since to know Jesus is to know God (7:19, 14:9), the Samaritans do not yet truly know God—but they soon will.[386]

Reacting to the suggestion that Samaritans do not "know" (οιδατε) what they worship, the woman firmly asserts what she *does* know: "I know (οιδα) that Messiah is coming, who is called Christ; whenever he comes, he will tell us all things" (4:25). Of course, a Samaritan would not be expected to hold identical notions about the messiah as a Judean. The Samaritan canon,

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[384] On the use of εκ + genitive as what we might call the "genitive of descent," see Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans,* 226-26, 238-39. Stowers notes that Greek commonly employs εκ + the genitive "in expressions concerning descent and paternity," as well as kinship; he cites LXX 1 Chr 5:2, John 1:13, and *Ant*. 12:228-29 as examples. See also Hodge, *If Sons Then Heirs*, 80-82.

[385] Heracleon, author of the earliest full commentary on the gospel, also identified geographic/racial origin as the sense in which salvation is "of" the Judeans. He comments, "The word 'salvation is of the Jews' 'are said because he was born in Judea', he asserts, 'but not among them (for he was not pleased with all of them) and because from that race salvation and the word (Logos) came forth into the world'" (Or. *CJ* 13.19). Werner Foerster, *Gnosis: A Selection of Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 171-72.

[386] By the end of the pericope, however, Samaritans will be able to proclaim: "We know (οιδαμεν) that this one is truly the savior of the world" (4:42).

comprised of only the Pentateuch, lacks the Davidic elements (e.g., 2 Sam 7:11-15; Ps 2; Isa 11:1-5) that influenced the messianism of Second Temple Judaism (e.g., *Pss.Sol*. 17:21-32; 11Q14, 4Q521; *4 Ezra* 12:31-4; *T.Jud*. 24; *T.Naph*. 8:2). Rather than the Davidic messiah based in Jerusalem that some Judeans expected, the Samaritan *Taheb* would be a "prophet like Moses" (Deut 18:15-19). Later, as the Samaritan woman invites those from her village to meet Jesus, she wonders aloud, "Can this man be the Christ?" (4:20). Given the shared Israelite hope of a messianic savior-figure, despite some differences in the details between the two peoples' versions, the villagers might reasonably expect that such a figure could come from either branch of the family tree—that is, Samaritans or Judeans. Jesus' remark that "salvation is from the Judeans" specifies that the messiah comes from the Judean side of the family.[387]

In this entire section, John portrays the Samaritan woman as deeply invested in matters of ancestry, homeland, and her people's religion—all ethnic matters. We might observe that the woman appears to expect a certain amount of tension, perhaps even animosity, between a Judean and a Samaritan like herself (4:9). This may explain the character's repeated insistence on ethnic matters—in repeatedly alluding to her race's antiquity, ties to the patriarchs, and claim to the land, she is rhetorically "circling the wagons" against any possible criticism by this Judean. Her utilization of race during this conversation certainly comes across as somewhat defensive. Jesus, however, never questions her affirmation of descent from Jacob or claim to the land—although some Judeans would have. His very willingness to converse with her has already defied her expectations. The woman expected race to keep them apart, and she deploys it in a defensive manner to forestall his expected negativity. However, Jesus does not allow race to get in the way of conversation, nor does he declare one side to be "in the wrong" about religious matters. Instead, he offers her living water (4:10,14), and announces the imminent end of cultic differences between their races (4:23).

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[387] Hakola, *Identity Matters: John, the Jews, and Jewishness*, 103.

Samaritans as Ripe Mission Field: John 4:27-43

The gospel of John has a positive outlook on Samaritans as a potential mission field. John presents the Samaritans as a legitimate audience for the good news of Jesus, and depicts them as quite receptive to his gospel. This is also implicit in the gospel's portrait of Jesus: Jesus is favorably compared with Moses—an appealing allusion for Samaritans expecting the *Taheb*, or "prophet like Moses." It is seen in the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-26)—which, despite passing through some thorny subjects, remains amicable and ends on a positive note (see 4:29). As we shall see, the response of the villagers is just as positive, if not more so. Meanwhile, Jesus he gives his disciples a symbolic saying about the "harvest," describing the Samaritans as a rich mission field, worthy of their attention. In all of these points, John shows no blanket condemnation of the Samaritan race, and envisions them as an important audience for the gospel message.

The saying about the harvest is sandwiched between interactions with Samaritans. After the woman is gone, his disciples urge Jesus to eat something. Jesus responds that his food is to accomplish the work (το εργον) of the one who sent him. This is the launching point for a discussion about mission, couched in metaphorical terms: the time for harvest is here, the fields are ready to be reaped, and all that remains is for the disciples (and other Christians) to enter into the labor which others started (John 4:35-38). Although this saying can be applied to all mission, in its immediate narrative context it refers first and foremost to the Samaritans.

The image portrays the Samaritans extremely positively. Their towns are like "fields ripe for harvest" (John 4:35). Samaria is fruitful and productive, and the Samaritans stand in readiness for the gospel: "Already the one who reaps receives wages and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper rejoice together" (4:36). The Samaritans are compared with

the sort of rich goodness that is a cause for celebration at harvest-time. In likening them to a carefully tended field, ripe for the gathering, Jesus confirms the Samaritans' perception of themselves. The Samaritans are a people whom God has cultivated for a long time. Moreover, "others have labored" in this field (4:38), which may refer to the Northern prophets, generations of the faithful, and even Moses himself. All these have long labored over the Northern Israelites. The extended efforts of God and his "sowers" have come to fruition in the present generation of Samaritans. Jesus adds that the disciples have already been sent to reap this harvest (4:38), a somewhat cryptic remark considering that he never actually sends disciples on a such a mission in John.[388] We must conclude that the remark is chronologically displaced, and seems to reflect a sense of mission from a later period—including mission to the Samaritans.

This *logion* about the harvest (ὁ θερισμος) may be fruitfully compared with similar *logia* from the synoptics and Paul. The association of harvest and mission seems to have been fairly common among early Christians. Mark relates a parable of the kingdom of God, which is like a man who scatters seeds on the ground, and later "sends out" (αποστελλει) the sickle when the harvest comes (Mark 4:29). This implies two parties, as in John: one who sows, and one who reaps. Paul compares his evangelizing "among the rest of the peoples (εθνεσιν)" to a harvest (Rom 1:13). Matthew gives his version of a harvest/mission saying just before the sending of the twelve (Matt 9:37-8). Luke repeats this *logion* verbatim, at the sending of the seventy-two (Luke 10:2)—not long after a Samaritan town turned Jesus away (9:51-56). Both Matthew and Luke place this saying immediately before a missionary discourse. If we compare it with John's "harvest" saying, we find several some points in common:

[388] The closest Jesus comes to sending out the disciples comes at the very end of the gospel (John 20:21-23); it is a general commission, rather than a mission with a limited duration to a particular area: "Just as the Father has sent me, so I send you."

John 4:35-38	**Matthew 9:37-8 // Luke 10:2**
[35]Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to do his work (εργον). [35]Don't you say, 'Four months yet, and then the harvest (ὁ θερισμος) comes?' Look, I say to you, lift up your eyes and see the fields – they are white for the harvest!… [37]For in this matter, the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' [38]I sent you out (απεστειλα) to reap what you have not labored for. Other have labored (κεκοπιακασιν), and you have entered into their labor."	*After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent (απεστειλεν) them out... And he said, (Luke 10:1a-2a)* "The harvest (ὁ θερισμος) is plentiful, but the laborers (εργαται) are few. therefore ask the lord of the harvest to send out (εκβαλῃ) laborers into his harvest. *...These twelve Jesus sent out (απεστειλεν), instructing them... (Matthew 10:5)*

John 4:35-38, shares reference to harvest (θερισμος), work (εργον), and sending (αποσταλλειν) with its closest synoptic parallel. It seems clear that this logion refers to mission—as does the synoptic "harvest" saying. But unlike the metaphor's use in Matthew (where Jesus *forbids* a mission to the Samaritans) or Luke (where recent events make such mission unlikely), here the image applies specifically to work *among the Samaritans*.

After this aside with his disciples, the stage is set for the arrival of the Samaritans on the scene. As he predicted, the Samaritans prove quite receptive to Jesus. In fact, many had already believed in him, sight unseen, on account of the woman's testimony (4:39). They offer him hospitality for two days (4:40), and during this time, many more come to believe (4:41-42a).

John's account of Jesus lodging and preaching with the Samaritans is noteworthy. In Matthew's "Missionary Discourse," Jesus expressly forbids the disciples to go to the Samaritans (Matt 10:5). Similarly, although Luke's attitude towards Samaritans cannot be characterized as uniformly hostile,[389] he does attest to a certain amount of friction between them and Judeans.[390] For example, when Jesus' disciples enter a Samaritan village to find lodgings for Jesus, the

[389] Luke shows a positive, or at least neutral, view of the Samaritans in several places. From the Gospel, these include: the merciful Samaritan (Luke 10:29-36), the Samaritan who returned to thank Jesus after being healed (17:11-19), and Jesus' rebuke when the disciples desire to "rain fire" upon the inhospitable Samaritans (Luke 9:55). Additionally, in Acts, the ascending Christ says that the disciples will be his witnesses Samaria (Acts 1:8), which begins with Philip's mission to the Samaritans (8:4-8) and continues with Peter and John's preaching in "many villages of the Samaritans" (8:14-25).

[390] In Luke, we might cite: their unwillingness to show Judean pilgrims hospitality (Luke 8:53), the disciples' desire to call down fire upon them (8:54), and Jesus' calling the healed Samaritan an αλλογενης or "foreigner" (17:18). From Acts, we might add the Samaritan enthusiasm for Simon Magus (8:9-11), as well as the conflict between Simon and Peter (8:18-24).

residents refuse to welcome him "because his face was set toward Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51-56). Among the gospels, only John reports that Jesus found hospitality and missionary success among the Samaritans during his lifetime. Contrast:

Rejection *by* the Samaritans	**Rejection *of* the Samaritans**	**Samaritan Hospitality and Mission**
Luke 9:52-53	Matthew 10:5-6	John 4
[52]And he sent (απεστειλεν) messengers ahead of him, and after traveling they entered (εισηλθον) a town of the Samaritans (εις κωμην Σαμαριτων), in order to prepare (lodgings) for him. [53]But they would not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem.	[5]Jesus sent out (απεστειλ-εν) these twelve, instructing them saying, "Don't go along any way of the Gentiles, and do not enter (εισελθητε) any town of the Samaritans, (εις πολιν Σαμαριτων) [6]but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."	[5]Then he came to a town of Samaria (εις πολιν της Σαμαρειας)... [28]The woman went away into the town (εις την πολιν) and said, "Come see..." [39]Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him... [40]So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he remained there two days.

John's tale of a remarkably successful visit "to a town of Samaria," stands in striking contrast with Luke's account of rejection *by* a village of Samaritans, and Matthew's account of Jesus' rejection *of* them as a people. Although Luke recounts later success among Samaritans,[391] John is the only evangelist to place such a mission in Jesus' own day.

Samaritans looked forward to the *Taheb*, a "prophet like Moses," based on the prediction in Deuteronomy 18:15-19.[392] In John, the repeated speculation that Jesus is "the prophet" may resonate with this expectation.[393] Some connections with Moses are more explicit. Moses himself foretold the arrival of Jesus (John 1:45, 5:45-46). Like Moses, Jesus is a shepherd (10:11) who is

[391] Acts 8:1-25.

[392] Luke also interprets Jesus in light of this prediction. In a speech delivered in the Temple, Peter cites Deuteronomy: "Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers; and you shall listen to everything which he tells you. And every soul who does not listen to this prophet shall be eradicated from the people'" (Acts 3:22-23, citing Deuteronomy 18:18-19; cf. Acts 3:37). On the whole, this speech beginning "O Israelites..." would go over just as well in Samaria as in Jerusalem—despite a couple of Judean elements, such as reference to a suffering messiah (3:18) and to "all the prophets" (3:18,24). Interestingly, Peter *does* later evangelist there (8:14-17,25).

[393] For example, the provision of bread in the wilderness, echoing the miracle of the manna vouchsafed to Moses, causes people to cry, "This is truly the prophet who is coming into the world!" (John 6:14). For more on Jesus as a Mosaic figure, see Bowman, *The Samaritan Problem: Studies in the Relationships of Samaritanism, Judaism, and Early Christianity* (Pittsburg:Pickwick, 1975),60.

able to provide miraculous water (4:11)[394] and give bread in the wilderness (6:1-15).[395] Just like the brass serpent Moses lifted in the wilderness (Num 21:8-9), Jesus must be lifted up (John 3:14). Perhaps John wished to depict Jesus as the fulfillment of the hopes of *all* Israelites—both Judeans and Samaritans—and thus portrays Jesus in such a way that any Samaritans hearing the gospel could see Jesus as "one of them," or be attracted by his preaching.[396]

It is not altogether incongruous, then, that the Samaritans from the village might perceive Jesus as the "messiah" (4:29b) or "savior of the world" (4:42). John has taken great pains to compare his protagonist to Moses; all that is left is for Samaritans to notice the likeness, and draw the obvious conclusions. This need not imply the wholesale adoption of Judean categories, but the "translation" of their own expectations into a mutually intelligible word. After all, the woman told Jesus "I know that Messiah is coming, *who is called Christ* / Μεσσιας ερχεται ὁ λεγομενος χριστος" (4:25). The provision of a linguistic "translation" between Aramaic and Greek could imply a further (cultural) "translation"—the "messianic" figure expected by the Samaritans can be understood as the "Christ" of John's gospel.

Coloring one's message to appeal to another culture necessitates a certain level of *knowledge* about that group; it also implies a certain level of acceptance. But there are limits to acculturation; an evangelist must weigh the extent to which the gospel may be made palatable to a prospective audience without diluting the core message. In his portrait of Jesus, John is willing shade his brush with Mosaic pigments. However, he never goes so far as to say that Jesus *is* Moses returned, nor does he ever abandon the idea that Jesus is the *Judean* messiah (cf. 4:22).

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394 See discussion above. See also John 7:37-38.

395 The feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1-15) takes place near Passover, which had become associated the manna. Andrew wonders how their provisions can feed so many (6:9), just as Moses asks God where he will get food enough to feed so many (Num 11:13). After they have eaten, Jesus tells those present to gather (συναγω) the leftovers (περισσευσαντα), so that nothing is lost (John 6:12), just as Moses commanded the Israelites to gather (συναγω) more on the sixth day, and set aside what is left over (το πλεοναζα) for the Sabbath (Exod 16:23-6). This feeding in the wilderness is later connected with Moses' provision of the manna (John 6:22-34).

396 Bowman, *Samaritan Problem*, 62,8.

The gradually increasing *knowledge* of Samaritans shows how ideal they are as a missionary audience. By tracing verbs related to knowing and seeing, we find that what Samaritans already *do* know helps them perceive the truth about Jesus readily:

- I *perceive* (θεωρω) that you are a prophet. (4:19)
- You worship what you do not *know* (οιδατε). (4:22)
- I *know* (οιδα) that Messiah is coming. (4:25)
- We *know* (οιδαμεν) that this one is the savior of the world. (4:42)

The Samaritans' knowledge of such categories as "prophet" and "messiah" allows them to perceive Jesus' significance more readily. The woman identifies Jesus as a prophet, and later speculates that he could be the Christ. Earlier, Jesus was able to say to the woman, "You [Samaritans] worship what you do not know (οιδατε)," based on the Johannine principle that God is only known through Jesus.[397] This ignorance is not a permanent characteristic of the race, but only describes the situation of not yet knowing Jesus. Once the Samaritans have spent some time with him, they can proclaim "We know (οιδατε) this one is savior of the world" (4:42).

John's depiction of the Samaritans as a valid (and valuable) mission field for Jesus and the disciples is significant. More subtly, the evangelist portrays his messiah in ways that would resonate with Samaritan expectations about the Taheb. John's esteem of the Samaritans goes against both common Judean prejudices, and even the evaluation of other early Christ-believers, who could occasionally characterize this *ethnos* as secondary in importance to Judeans. But to John, although salvation might be *from* the Judeans, it is no less *for* the Samaritans.

"Samaritan" as Racial Slur: John 8:48-9

In the midst of a heated argument between Jesus and the "Judeans who had believed in him," the latter rather unexpectedly call Jesus a Samaritan, saying, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a

[397] "No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know (εγνωκατε) me, you also know the Father. And from now on you do know (γινωσκετε) him and have seen (ἑωρακατε) him" (John 14:6-7).

Samaritan (Σαμαριτης) and have a demon?" (John 8:48). Hurling this name at a Judean has the feeling of a racial slur. Calling him "Samaritan" seems to 1) deny his Judeanness in the most offensive terms possible, 2) deny his orientation towards the Jerusalem temple, and 3) deny his authority to speak on religious matters. It is also particularly objectionable in light of the fact that Galileans were able to worship in the Temple only by crossing Samaria, where they might face hostility from Samaritans. We see also that, in the eyes of those speaking, it is about as bad to be Samaritan as to have a demon! Jesus ignores the racial name-calling altogether, and only addresses the charge that he is demon-possessed (8:49).

What led to such an accusation? The preceding verses may give a clue. In 8:39-47, Jesus had refuted the identity claims of the "Judeans who had believed in him." Jesus argued that they are 1) not children of Abraham, as shown by their actions, and 2) not children of God, for then they would have loved him, but are rather 3) children of the Devil, as proven their affinity for lies and murder. Perhaps their name-calling is simple turnabout: Jesus deracinated *them* by saying they were no children of Abraham (and therefore not Judeans), so now they deracinate *him* by calling him a Samaritan (and therefore not a Judean). In this reading, they would be calling him "demon-possessed" for the same reason—in simple retaliation for being called "children of the devil."

Another possibility is that something about Jesus' speech strikes them as characteristically "Samaritan." Thus, their insult would mean, "You sound just like a Samaritan." Bowman speculates that it may not have been that unusual for a Samaritan to call Judeans "sons of the devil."[398] Pummer suggests that Jesus' claim that they are no true heirs of Abraham represented a Samaritan position.[399]

Perhaps the "Samaritan" behavior encompasses all of Jesus' recent teaching. During the Mosaically-instituted Feast of Booths (7:10-8:59), Jesus argues with Judeans over whether they

[398] Bowman, *Samaritan Problem*, 68.
[399] Pummer, *Samaritans,* 43-4.

actually keep the law of Moses (7:19-24), and invokes the Law during an argument with the Pharisees (8:12-20). At stake is the issue of who is the authoritative interpreter of Moses. According to Jesus, it is certainly not his opponents; they judge matters of the law by "appearances" (7:24) or "human standards" (7:15). The Samaritans, with their own idiosyncratic version of the Torah and traditions about its interpretation, posed a hermeneutical challenge to the interpretive authority of the Pharisees and scribes. To the religious authorities of Jerusalem, this out-of-towner from the north, who claimed to teach "with authority" and to have the proper interpretation of Moses, may have seemed a lot like a Samaritan. Moreover, he arouses speculation that he is "the prophet" (7:40).

There are several verbal parallels between one of these earlier arguments, and the one in which Jesus is called a Samaritan. While defending his teaching authority, Jesus suddenly accuses his listeners of murderous intent, provoking their retort, "You have a demon!" (7:14-18). Perhaps what these two bouts of name-calling have in common will give us a clue as to what his opponents find so "Samaritan" about him.

[19]"Hasn't Moses given you the law?
Yet none of you performs (ποιει) the law!
Why do you seek to kill me?"
(με ζητειτε αποκτειναι)

[20]The crowd answered,
"You have a demon! (δαιμονιον εχεις)
Who is seeking to kill you?"

– John 7:19-20

[39]"If you were Abraham's children, you would
perform (εποιειτε) the works of Abraham!
[40]But now you seek to kill me
(ζητειτε με αποκτειναι),
a man who has told you the truth which I heard
from God – Abraham didn't do this."

[48]The Jews answered him and said,
"Aren't we right in saying that you are a
Samaritan and have a demon (δαιμονιον εχεις)?"

– John 8:39-40, 48

Both of these exchanges share the following features: 1) Jesus disparages his opponents' link to one of the founding figures of the Israelites, 2) saying they do not follow the Law or example of this figure; moreover, 3) he accuses them of murderous intent. The last element probably has more to do with narrative thrust of the gospel than anything particularly "Samaritan"—although

in all fairness, history did afford the Samaritans reasons to view Judeans as violent.[400] But the first two points would fit nicely. Samaritans *did* claim to descend from the same foundational figures as the Judeans, and they did appeal to their own connection with these ancestors to justify their own religious customs. We might consider the Samaritan woman's invocation of Jacob (4:11-12) and "our fathers" (4:20) as part of such a strategy. She essentially tells Jesus, "What was good enough for Jacob is good enough for me!" In their version of the Pentateuch, Moses himself authorizes their favored cultic center, Gerizim. It is obvious that the religious elites of Jerusalem would resent another group of Yahwists, with its own priestly families and (now-defunct) sanctuary, whose scribes insisted that *their* interpretation of the Law of Moses was the authoritative one.

Because Jesus also claims *his* teaching is more authoritative than theirs (7:16,24; 8:40), and because he has the impudence to subpoena Abraham and Moses for his case against them, he may have seemed to be engaging in a characteristically *Samaritan* form of speech. His opponents call him a "Samaritan," using it as a racial slur to encapsulate all that was (supposedly) wrong-headed about them. They expect it to have the rhetorical effect of a slap in the face. Yet Jesus completely ignores it. Apparently, he does share his opponents' knee-jerk revulsion towards the Samaritans. In refusing to take their slur as an insult, he denies their position that Samaritans are worse than Judeans.

Respite in a City Called Ephraim: John 11:54

There may be one last reference to the Samaritans, in the travel report at 11:54. It reads, "Therefore Jesus no longer walked about openly among the Judeans, but went away from there

[400] Examples of such violence range from the ancient (the destruction of Northern shrines by Josiah and Hezekiah, the vitriol toward Samaritans in Ezra-Nehemiah), the fairly recent (the destruction of the Gerizim temple and city under the Hasmoneans), to the contemporary (the outbreak of feuding in 52 C.E., and the Jewish precipitation of the war with Rome).

[Jerusalem] to the region near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim (Εφραιμ λεγομενην πολιν), and he remained there with the disciples."

This trip takes place after the raising of Lazarus, which precipitated a meeting of the Sanhedrin (11:45-53). At this meeting, Caiaphus counseled the assembled Pharisees and chief priests that Jesus ought to die for the sake of "the whole race" (όλον το εθνος). The narrator mentions an earlier prophesy made by Caiaphus, that Jesus' death would "gather into one the children of God who were scattered abroad" (11:49-52). Based on the use of "Samaritan" as a slur earlier (8:48), it seems unlikely that the assembled elites would classify Samaritans as members of "the whole race" to be saved, nor number diaspora Samaritans among the "children of God who are scattered abroad." Jesus, on the other hand, did not object to a Samaritan's claim to be descended from Jacob (4:12), and discussed religious matters with her. He then stayed to preach among the Samaritans—because, as he explained to his disciples, "the fields are ripe for harvest" (4:35).

After the Pharisees form this plan to kill Jesus, "he therefore no longer walked about openly among the Judeans, but went away from there to the region near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there he remained with the disciples" (John 11:54). The word "therefore" (ουν) makes it clear that the locale was considered safer than Jerusalem, where the Pharisees' influence was greatest. The precise identity of the "village of Ephraim" is uncertain. One possibility is the village of Aphairema, mentioned in 1 Macc 11:34 as being one of the Samaritan regions transferred to Yehud's jurisdiction; another suggestion is Ephrathah, near Bethel.[401] Either case would indicate that Jesus has withdrawn to a town once controlled by the northern kingdom. Whatever the town's precise location, Jesus will not be "among the Judeans" there—suggesting a location in Samaria. Even the town's name "Ephraim," once synonymous with the entire northern

[401] Haenchen, *John II,* 76.

kingdom of Israel, conveys the sense that this town is outside of the Jerusalem elite's influence. One is reminded of a passage from Josephus:

> Whenever anyone was accused by the people of Jerusalem of eating unclean food or violating the Sabbath or committing any other such sin, he could flee to the Shechemites, saying that he had been unjustly expelled. – *Antiquities* 11.7

Josephus claims that Judeans would periodically flee north from Jerusalem, having been condemned by the religious authorities in Jerusalem. Faced with such condemnation, Jesus also withdraws from Jerusalem to a "town called Ephraim."[402] It would be fitting that after being condemned *in absentia* by the elites of Jerusalem, Jesus would find a temporary haven among the Samaritans.

Samaritans: Chapter Conclusions

John shows signs of knowing many of the reasons why some Judeans looked upon Samaritans as inferior, and refrained from associating with them. The Samaritan woman seems to anticipate that Jesus, as a Judean, might share these attitudes. In her estimation, even her conversation with Jesus is an unlikely occurrence, and the possibility that members of these two peoples might come to some sort of rapport over a religious topic is even more remote.

However, Jesus does not share the view that Judeans and Samaritans ought not to "share things in common" (συνχραομαι), whether conversation, water (literal or spiritual), or even worship. In fact, the Samaritan village is a ripe mission field, very much worth laboring over. John here shows that, in his view, the racial differences which too often separated Judeans and Samaritans are meaningless, when compared with their shared identity as those whom "God seeks to worship him, in spirit and in truth" (4:23).

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[402] A similar transition precedes an earlier trip through Samaria: "So when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing disciples than John – [2] although Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples – [3] he left Judea and went away again toward Galilee. And he had to pass through Samaria" (John 4:1-4). In both passages, Jesus travels northward, after becoming aware of hostility from the Pharisees.

Mission and evangelism are positive insofar as they acknowledge their intended target as worthy of inclusion. However, Postcolonialism has taught us that *"inclusion"* itself has problematic implications. The system into which the other is "included" is imposed from without, an act of colonizing. Indeed, Rome had its own compelling vision of reality into which the nations were to be "included." Romans brought others to this new order by military force, but they also attempted to win over the hearts and minds of colonial peoples (or at least, colonial elites) by "evangelizing" them into the Good News (ευαγγελιον) of Rome's world-spanning οικονομος, as advertised in propaganda, monuments, civic rituals, inscriptions, and countless other ways. John's hope to "win over" Samaritans to the ευαγγελιον of Jesus is itself a colonial ambition.

A significant difference, however, is that the gospel does not attempt to impose the ways of one earthly race upon another.[403] It does not, for example, say that the Samaritans are acceptable as long as they become just like Judeans.[404] As we shall see in the following chapter, John is just as capable of condemning *Judeans* who fail to receive his message! Rather, as John understands it, the Truth conveyed by his gospel comes not from human beings (of *any* race or nation), but from God.

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[403] Another significant difference is that, unlike the Romans, John's "colonizing" of the Samaritans is not accomplished and upheld by physical violence.

[404] Or as, conversely, Antiochus Epiphanes IV attempted to impose Hellenistic customs on both the Samaritans (*Ant*. 12:263; 2 Macc 2) *and* the Judeans (2 Macc 6:1-9, 4:10-15; Tac. *Hist*. 5.8).

CHAPTER 4: JUDEANS AND ROMANS

> So Pilate entered the Praetorium and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are *you* the king of the Judeans?" Jesus answered, "Do *you* say this on your own, or did others tell you this about me?" Pilate answered, "*I* am not a Judean, am I? Your own people (το εθνος το σον) and high priests handed you over to me."
>
> – John 18:33-35[405]

When Jesus stands before Pilate, the two most influential *ethnē* of the province of Judea come face to face. Judeans are the native people of the land, with their own history of (modest) empire, and a local elite who not only help administer the region on Rome's behalf, but oversee religious traditions that command the devotion of Judeans across the empire. The Romans, for their part, now hold Judea and its people in subjection, and their domination over manifold nations affords them the pretension of controlling the entire "civilized world" (οικουμενη).[406] When the gospel's Judean protagonist finally faces Judea's *Roman* ruler, the dynamics of friction between their respective races will overshadow the next two chapters.

Unlike the two ethnicities we have considered thus far (Galileans and Samaritans), Judeans and Romans were extraordinarily broad, overarching categories, which could encompass individuals who also possessed additional racial identities. The Galileans themselves were Judeans; at least some early rabbis were willing to contemplate the possibility that Samaritans were as well (e.g. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel, *t.Terumot* 4:12). These wider identities might have more or less of a "racial" sense, depending on the situation. The term "Roman" applies to a senator in Rome in a different sense than it does to a Syrian ex-soldier who has earned his

[405] Emphatic nominative pronouns italicized for emphasis.

[406] Romans had succeeded in "subjecting nearly the whole inhabited world (οικουμενη) to their sole government (Polybius 1:1.5); this made them "lords of the world" (κυριοι της οικουμενης) according to Plutarch (*Ti. Gracch.* 9.6). Judeans were well aware of these claims, as well: Josephus reports, "Almost every nation under the sun does homage to Roman arms" (*J.W.* 2:380); one might even say that "all the people in the inhabited world (της οικουμενης) are Roman" (*J.W.* 2:388). Philo says that Rome's empire extends "from the rising to the setting sun both within the ocean and beyond it" (*Legat*. 10). See Gilbert, "The List of Nations in Acts 2," 511-13.

citizenship. Likewise, the term "Judean" applies differently to an Idumean, a member of the diaspora born in Athens, or simply those who "have and observe Judean sacred things."[407] In this sense, the categories Roman and Judean were much like "Greek" (Ἑλληνη), which by this time referred not only to groups who claimed actual descent from the eponymous ancestor Hellas, but also to those who adopted a Hellenistic way of life. These layers of identity could overlap in complex ways, so that John can describe Hellenistic Judeans on pilgrimage as "Greeks" (12:20; cf. 7:35), or refer to Galileans as "Judeans" (6:41,52). In like manner, Luke can label Judeans as either "Greeks" or "Hebrews" (Acts 6:1), and even a Judean "educated at the feet of Gamaliel" may be "a Roman by birth" (Acts 22:27-28).

For the following discussion, I will not attempt to offer anything like a "summary" of Judean or Roman identity, as was presented for Galileans and Samaritans in the previous two chapters. Such a project reaches far beyond the scope of this book.[408] Nor will I attempt to offer a systematic study of John's use of the word Ιουδαιος, or to decipher shades of meaning in his often-idiosyncratic usage. Such an investigation goes beyond the aims of this project, and has been capably undertaken in myriad other studies. Instead, this chapter will focus on two much more modest questions: 1) How do John's Judeans use ethnic factors to describe themselves? 2) In John, how is "Judean" constructed (and contested) in a Roman world?

This chapter will be broken up into two parts. The first will deal at length with Jesus' dispute with "the Judeans who had believed in Jesus," John 8:31-59. The second will consider passages related to Judean identity in the context of the Roman empire, particularly the Sanhedrin's decision to kill Jesus, and the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. In the unfolding argument, I will argue the following points: 1) In several scenes, Judeans marshal ethnic

[407] The latter were legally defined as Judeans by the proconsul L. Lentulus in 49-48 B.C.E.; Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 58.

[408] "Judean" and "Roman" identity was less local, and more plural, that of Galileans or Samaritans, thus the issue of their racial identity is more complex by several orders of magnitude. Happily, there is also proportionately more scholarship already written on these *ethnē*, and the reader can be presumed to bring a greater background familiarity with them to the discussion here than could be assumed for Samaritans or Galileans.

arguments to bolster their own position—arguments that are, in John's construction, unimpressive. 2) The gospel downplays the significance of earthly ethnicity (e.g., Judean) in favor of the "cosmic" racial categories it constructs. 3) Similarly, John's gospel is unsympathetic to the deformed views of ethnicity that emerge under empire. The Judeans' desire to maintain the honor of their *ethnos* (vis-a-vis Rome) contributes to the arrest of Jesus, and the Romans' desire to put provincials in their place contributes to his death. 4) The torture, public mockery, and crucifixion of Jesus can be seen as just one instance of the Romans' habit of portraying the subjugation of an *ethnos* in the person of one humiliated representative.

Race and Descent: John 8:31–59

In John 8:31-59, the "Judeans who had believed in Jesus" appeal to race to bolster themselves and their position. This passage offers us a sampling of ways in which Judeans might leverage their ethnic identity to affirm their honorable identity, just as 4:1-43 does for the Samaritans. Faced with increasingly harsh charges—they are slaves, they are evildoers, they seek to kill Jesus—these Judeans invoke their ancestry, as well as their standing with God, to insist on a positive self-identity.[409]

Their allusion to their people's chosenness is framed in descent language as well, and so we have the twin claims: We are children of Abraham, and we are children of God. Even if one paternity claim is meant physically and the other spiritually, these are both claims about group consubstantiality based upon descent language—in other words, racial claims. First, their

[409] It is crucial to specify that, in the discussion which follows, any reference to these characters as "the Judeans" is not a blanket statement about *all* Judeans, but refers to the ones in this pericope. The tendency of some interpreters to conflate "the Judeans who had [formerly/falsely] believed in him" with *all* Judeans has led to the disastrous consequences. Such conflation may lead to the idea that John's harsh language properly applies not only to a group of characters in a literary narrative, but to flesh-and-blood Jews, This (mis)identification is unjustified. Even in the narrative world of the gospel, not all Judeans are vilified; John is clear that Jesus himself, as well as the disciples, are Judeans.

Abrahamic ancestry is offered as a rebuttal to Jesus' implication that they are enslaved. Secondly, they describe themselves as children of both Abraham *and* God, to affirm a positive identity in the face of Jesus' many attacks. During the unfolding argument, these dual descent claims are contested by Jesus, who eventually suggests they are children of a far more ignoble father.

Abraham's seed, nobody's slaves: John 8:31-36

> [31]Then Jesus said to the Judeans who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, [32]and you will know the truth, and the truth will free you. [33]They answered him, "We are the seed of Abraham (σπερμα Αβραμ) and have never been slaves to anyone! How is it that you say, 'You will be freed?'" [34]Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever performs sin is a slave to sin. [35]And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does. [36]So if the son frees you, you really will be free. – John 8:31-35

The themes of slavery and freedom dominate the early verses of this discussion. Jesus tells "the Judeans who had believed in him" about the freedom available to those who remain in his word. They respond by objecting that they are the descendants of Abraham (σπερμα Αβραμ), and have never served anyone as slaves.

What do these Judeans hope to gain by mentioning Abraham in this context? What does their identity as the *sperma* of Abraham have to do with slavery or freedom? The word *sperma,* which literally denotes the reproductive "seed" of plants or animals, can also be used to mean offspring, or more broadly descendants, and so can have a sense close to "race."[410] By invoking ancestry, the Judeans are offering a *racial* response to Jesus' implicit accusation that they are slaves. What about the current charge might inspire them to frame their response in racial terms?

Jesus told them, "If you (ὑμεις) remain in my word . . . the truth will free you (ελευθερωσει ὑμας)." The pronouns clearly indicate that "you" (plural) are currently not free.

[410] *Liddell-Scott*, 740.

However, these Judeans know that they, personally, are not legal slaves. Jesus must be using the concept of freedom in some other sense. In antiquity, the image of slavery could figuratively describe a lack of moral "freedom" (from the passions, from sin, etc.), or a lack of political "freedom." The Judeans seem to interpret Jesus' remarks as the latter. They do not respond that they, as a cluster of individuals, are not slaves in a legal sense. Instead, they assert their *collective* identity as the offspring of Abraham, their racial forefather. Their response has a nationalistic ring to it: they affirm that *as a people*, they are free.[411]

The conceptual linkage of entire races with slavery had a long history, and enjoyed widespread currency in John's day. Environmental theories of race held that certain climates made their inhabitants inferior, and ill-suited for freedom. Cultural variants explained that a people's *political* environment made them slavish in nature. Back in the fourth century BCE, Aristotle had said, "Monarchy possesses an authority similar to that of despotism. . . The reason for this is that the barbarians are more servile (δουλικωτεροι) than the Greeks, and the Asians more so than the Europeans. They tolerate despotic rule (δεσποτικην) without complaining" (*Politics* 1285a). Tacitus echoes the sentiment, centuries later: "Let Syria, Asia and the Orient, used to kings as it is, be slaves (*servirent*)" (Tac. *Hist.* 4.17).[412] As these quotes demonstrate, environmental theories of the races did not only make *general* remarks about types of lands; these generalities were usually mapped onto *specific* lands. Unsurprisingly, authors generally concluded that their own land yielded the freest, most capable races—and conversely, that other lands bred inferior peoples. Certain types of government made people slavish, and the peoples of the east, long used to the rule of kings, had become servile in nature. It is likely that elite Judeans would be familiar with the prejudices commonly held against Eastern *ethnē* by Greeks or Romans, and it is almost unthinkable to suppose that John had never encountered such attitudes.

[411] It would make no sense to invoke Abraham to illustrate that they were not, as a collection of individual Judeans, slaves. After all, many Judeans, every one of them children of Abraham, were slaves. The invocation of Abraham indicates that the charge itself—slavery—is interpreted at the collective level.

[412] Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 72, 318

Subjugation under empire was also conceptualized as slavery. The verb δουλευω, "to be a slave" or "to serve as a slave," was applied to entire nations.[413] Subjection supposedly enervated subject peoples, so that once-spirited nations became slavish after long rule by others. This was no temporary shift in character, because acquired characteristics were thought to be inherited by subsequent generations. Cicero, Josephus, and Tacitus all agreed that, once acquired, slavishness became a permanent feature of a race.[414] Subject peoples might have some chance of reclaiming their freedom at first, but each successive generation born under slavery will be more servile than the one before.[415]

We can see many of these attitudes reflected in Josephus. In one scene, he relates a speech of Agrippa II, the last Judean client ruler, who is desperate to prevent the war with Rome. King Agrippa tries to reason with his fellow Judeans, explaining that they have served foreign rulers too long to successfully win back their freedom (ελευθεριᾳ):

> The time is past when you ought to have striven never to lose it. For servitude (δουλειας) is a painful experience, and a struggle to avoid it once for all is just; but the man who having once accepted the yoke then tries to cast it off is a contumacious slave (δουλος), not a lover of liberty (φιλελευθερος). There was, to be sure, a time when you should have strained every nerve to keep out the Romans; that was when Pompey invaded our country. But our forefathers (προγονοι) and their kings, though in wealth and in vigor of body and soul far your superiors, yet failed to withstand a small fraction of the Roman army; and will you, to whom thralldom is hereditary, you who in resources fall so far short of those who first tendered their submission, will you, I say, defy the whole Roman empire? – *J.W.* 2.356-7[416]

While Josephus might not necessarily agree with every word he puts in Agrippa's mouth, he clearly expects his audience to find Agrippa's argument familiar enough to be comprehensible. After long years of servitude, the Judean people are no longer what they were, and do not measure up to their forefathers (προγονοι). What hope could latter-day Judeans have, when even their greater forefathers—who surpassed them not only in resources but also in "body and soul"— failed to hold back Rome?

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[413] e.g., *Thucydides* 1.98.4, 1.141.1; Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 171.
[414] Isaac, *Invention of Slavery,* 189-90.
[415] Josephus, *J.W.* 2.356-57; Cassius Dio 62.4.3. Cited in Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 192.
[416] Thackeray, LCL.

King Agrippa goes on to list other *ethnē* who are resigned to their lot of servitude to Rome. The Athenians now serve (δουλευουσιν) the Romans, and the Lacedaemonians regard them as their masters (δεσποτας) (2.358-59). “Myriads of other nations (εθνη μυρια), swelling with greater pride in the assertion of their liberty (ελευθεριαν), have yielded. And will you alone disdain to serve (δουλευειν) those to whom the whole universe is subject?” (2.361) Among the peoples who have learned “It is hard to serve (δουλευειν),” are the Greeks, Macedonians, the 500 cities of Asia Minor, the Thracians, Illyrians, Dalmatians, Gauls, Spanish, many Germans, Britons, Parthians, as well as many peoples of Africa, including the Carthaginians and Egyptians (2.361-387). In sum, “All the peoples of the earth either have, or dread the thought of having, the Romans for their masters” (2.397). It is clear, then, that a Judean like Josephus was familiar with the concept that subject peoples were, in a sense, “slave peoples,” and in his narrative this trope is expected to be rhetorically convincing to other Judeans. He applies the verb *douleuō* to both individual slaves and subject nations, and describes the Roman *ethnos* as masters (δεσποτας).

This widespread description of certain races as “slavish” is a plausible context for the Judeans' reaction to Jesus words. Taking his remark about “freedom” as a comment on their collective situation, the Judeans offer a collective rebuttal: “We are the descendants of Abraham, and have never been slaves to anyone” (John 8:33). But why bring up *Abraham* in particular? In some ways, mentioning Moses would have been more understandable. Moses, after all, led the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt, so it might make more sense to affirm that thanks to him, all Israelites are free people. Instead, they appeal to Abraham, an association that actually presents some difficulties. The appeal to *Abraham* reinforces the impression that their claim hinges on *racial* factors: They wanted a figure all Judeans could claim to descend from. Moses might have served better to emphasize freedom from slavery, but whereas all Judeans could describe themselves as “*disciples* of Moses” (9:28), not all Judeans were his *descendants* (σπερμα).

The "σπερμα of Abraham" became a common designation for the collective race of Israelites (e.g. *L.A.B.* 23:5, 3 Macc 6:2, Sir 44:21, *Pss.Sol.* 9:9). The language of Abraham's "seed" was inspired by Genesis 15, where Abram tells God, "You have given me no offspring (σπερμα), and so my house-born slave will inherit after me" (Gen 15:3). Here, Abraham's *sperma* is contrasted with a slave, just as Isaac is later contrasted with the slave-born Ishmael. However, the term reappears just ten verses later, this time *itself* associated with slavery: "Know that your offspring (σπερμα) will be foreigners in a land not their own, and they will enslave (δουλωσουσιν) them, and do harm to them, and humble them four hundred years" (15:13). Here, at the first mention of the σπερμα Αβρααμ, they are already associated with slavery in Egypt.

In truth, the Judeans' claim to "never" have been slaves seems less *based on* Judean history, than made *despite* it. Even setting aside the account of slavery in Egypt, the Judahites/Judeans had been subject to several ancient empires, including the Babylonians, Persians, Seleucids, Ptolemies, and now the Romans. Judeans themselves conceptualized these as periods of slavery, often using δουλευειν or its equivalent. Jeremiah prophesied that the Judahites would "serve" (עבד) the king of Bablyon for 70 years, which the Septuagint renders with δουλευσουσιν (Jer 25:11). Jeremiah further prophesied that *all* the peoples (εθνη) of the land—Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, *and* Judahites—must put on the king's yoke and serve him (עבד/δουλευειν), or else they would perish (Jer 27:1-15 [34:2-15 LXX]).[417] Second Isaiah could describe Israel in exile as "the slave of rulers" (Isa 49:7). In 1 Maccabees, a group of Judean collaborators informed the new Seleucid king that they had been happy to serve (δουλευειν) his father, Antiochus IV (1 Macc 6:23). Such language of "slaving away" for empires continues in post-biblical materials as well. Israel's years of exile was a time of "slavery" (*Ant*. 11.1, *Sib.Or.* 3:269, *T.Naph*. 4:2), and today Judea endures δουλεια under a new δεσποτης, Rome (*J.W.* 2.256-7). The Judeans' insistence, "we have never been slaves to anyone,"

[417] Portions of Jeremiah are found in different positions in the LXX, differing the discrepancy in chapter-verse citation between the LXX and MT.

is a prime example of Johannine irony: the remark either suggests either an implausible ignorance of their own history, or an intentional rejection of the commonplace description of certain periods as times of "slavery."

In all, Judeans' insistence on staking their claim to perpetual freedom on their identity as "descendants of Abraham" remains a bit of singularly unconvincing rhetoric. Is the assertion meant to appeal to common wisdom—that is, does "everyone know" that the descendants of Abraham are a freeborn people?[418] Some early rabbinic traditions make this connection. Mishnah Baba Kama (ca. 190-250 CE) insists that even the poorest Israelites should be considered freedmen, as sons of Abraham (*Baba Kama* 8.6). Similarly, even menial laborers should be treated with as much honor as Solomon, if they are the sons of Abraham (*Mishnah Baba Mezia* 7.1).[419] Might these traditions preserve an earlier connection between Abraham and freedom, known in John's day?

Perhaps the mere invocation of Abraham was meant to attribute the patriarch's virtues—including his freedom to obey God—to his descendants. Perhaps there is an element of "moral freedom" at work here after all, so that Abraham's children are affirmed to be free toward God regardless of their political (or legal) situation. Philo certainly drew this kind of distinction between physical and moral freedom (*Every Good Man is Free* 17), asserting that the good man cannot be compelled to act contrary to the virtues, and therefore he is free even if ill fortune brings him to sale at the slave-auction (60-61, 123-126). This same contrast between moral freedom and earthly slavery is made in *4 Maccabbees*, where it is explicitly linked with the "seed of Abraham." In this first century encomium of Judean martyrs, the audience is addressed as "offspring of the descendants of Abraham (των Αβραμιαιων σπερματων απογονοι), Israelite children"—then exhorted to live and die by their convictions (4 Macc 18:1). The defiant priest

[418] Bruce J. Malina and Richard L Rohrbaugh, *Social Scientific Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 166.

[419] Hakola, *Identity Matters*, 118; Roy A. Harrisville III, *The Figure of Abraham in the Epistles of St. Paul (*San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 197.

Eleazar, who refuses to forswear God even in the face of torture, exhorts others to embody the moral freedom he does:

> [17] 'Never may we, the children of Abraham (οἱ Αβρααμ παιδες), think so basely that out of cowardice we feign a role unbecoming to us! … [20] It would be shameful if we should survive a little while and during that time be a laughing-stock to all for our cowardice, [21]and be despised by the tyrant as unmanly by not contending even to death for our divine law. [22]Therefore, O children of Abraham (ω Αβρααμ παιδες), die nobly for your religion!'
>
> – 4 Macc 6:17,20-22 (NSRV)

The narrator later observes that "if they had been slaves to their emotions," these martyrs would have recanted and eaten pork as demanded (13:2). But instead, they become super-athletes of their religion, enduring torturous deaths in the sure hopes that "If we die, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob will welcome us, and the fathers will praise us" (13:17). Perhaps John's "Judeans who had believed in Jesus" attribute to themselves the heroic freedom of spirit that Abraham had possessed, the sort of spirit that allowed him to defy the idolatry of his father, as some traditions held (*Jub.* 12:1-14; *Apoc.Ab*. chs. 1–8).[420]

Whatever the intended connection between Abraham and freedom, their insistence that they are the free σπερμα of Abraham is clearly a claim for an entire group based on collective ancestry—that is, a racial claim. Seemingly taking Jesus' words about freedom as a reference to their current domination by Rome—a domination widely understood as "slavery," both by Judeans and others—they respond by affirming a collective identity in which they take pride.

Contested Paternity: Abraham, God, Satan: John 8:37-59

As we have seen, "the Judeans" have already based their claim to freedom on their descent from Abraham. In the rest of chapter eight, Jesus and the Judeans argue over the issue of just *who* their

[420] A different tale of Abraham's heroic resistance is told in *L.A.B.* 6:1-18, wherein he and three others refuse to take part in a ceremony to bake the bricks for the Tower of Babel, here understood as a form of idolatry. They insist, "We know the LORD, and him we worship. Even if you throw us into the fire, with the bricks, we will not join your scheme" (*L.A.B.* 6:4 [Harrington: OTP]).

father really is. The Judeans make two assertions to this effect: Abraham is their father (8:39), and moreover, "We have one Father: God" (8:41). Both times, these statements of paternity are given as answers to Jesus' insinuation that their *real* father is not the one they have named:

	Abraham as father (8:38-39)	**God as father (8:40-41)**
Jesus' insinuation of illegitimacy:	"*I* speak of what I have seen with my father, and *you* do what you have heard with your father."	"This is not what Abraham did. *You* are doing the works your father did."
Judeans' response:	"Abraham is our father."	"*We* were not born of adultery. We have one father: God."[421]

Twice, Jesus implies that the Judeans are somehow illegitimate. In answer to these insults to their paternity, the Judeans affirm first Abraham, then God, as their father. The emphatic nominative pronouns in 8:38, translated above in italics, stress the difference between what *Jesus* does, and what the *Judeans* do—and by extension, the difference in their fathers. The same effect is achieved in 8:40b-41a, where the contrast is between Abraham and "your father." Jesus' words imply that they are somehow unworthy of the father they have claimed for themselves, or even illegitimate—an implication they address explicitly in 8:41b, where they insist "We were not born εκ πορνειας."[422]

These two affirmations, framed in terms of who their "fathers/ancestors" are, are ethnic claims. In the ancient world, race was largely defined by common ancestry. The Judeans knew themselves to be the σπερμα of Abraham. They also conceptualized themselves as the people of God, chosen and beloved by him, by virtue of being heirs to the promises made to Abraham. Thus, the language of paternity was also applied to their chosenness. Hebrew scriptures often describe God as the Israelites' "Father" (πατηρ in the Septuagint), sometimes coupled with a

[421] Emphatic nominative pronouns italicized for effect.

[422] Jeffrey Trumbower even identifies the denial of being "born εκ πορνεια" as a reference to traditions about the race of Cain. There was some speculation in early Judaism that Cain was begotten by some physical entity other than Adam. cf. *Born from Above*, 91. I will consider these traditions further in Chapter 5.

description of the people as his children (υἱοι/τεκνα in the LXX).[423] Even in exile, they could affirm:

> For you are our father,
> though Abraham does not know us
> and Israel does not acknowledge us;
> you, O LORD, are our father. – Isaiah 63:16[424]

Even when far from their homeland, with their sense of peoplehood in crisis, the prophet could stake his sense of self on God. Judeans continued to speak of God as their collective "father" in the Second Temple period.[425] *Jubilees* has God promise, "I shall be a father to them [the Israelites], and they will be sons to me. And they will all be called 'sons of the living God.' And every angel and spirit will know that they are my sons and I am their father" (*Jub*. 1:25; cf. 1:28).[426] This sense of being God's children, then, provided a layer of self-definition that supplemented physical descent from Abraham.

Jesus offers harsh criticism of these two assertions of the Judeans' paternity. Both of his rebuttals follow the same general pattern:

A^1	Claim ("____ is our father")
B^1	Refutation ("If so, you would behave like it...")
B^2	Rationale ("...but you don't, so...")
A^2	Counterclaim ("...you are from a different father.")

To each of the Judeans' "father" claims, Jesus replies with a conditional sentence in which he refutes them. The protasis of these conditionals is a reformulation of the Judeans' original claim, and the apodasis contains the condition which *should* follow if the protasis were actually true—conditions which the Judeans have failed to fulfill. Jesus then suggests that they are actually

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[423] e.g. Mal 2:10a, "Don't you all have one Father? Did not one God create you?" Cf. also Deut 32:6; Exod 4:22-23; Ps 103:13 [102:13 LXX]; Isa 63:16-18, 64:8-9; Jer 3:14-19, 31:9 [38:9 LXX]; Hos 11:11-4; Mal 1:6.

[424] NRSV.

[425] e.g. Wis 2:16-18; Tob 13:4; Sir 23:1-6, *Jub*. 1:25, 19:29; 3 Macc 6:4-8. Philo also frequently describes God as Father, although he widens the scope of God's fatherhood: he is "father of all" (*De Opficio* 2.7, *Cher.* 13.44, *Spec.Laws* I 10.58) or "father of the universe" (*On Dreams* I.7.37, I.13.73, *Abr.* 12.58, *Mos*. II.43.238, *Dec*. 22.107).

[426] Wintermute: *OTP.*

children of a different father. Later, Jesus elaborates further on the example set by their claimed fathers, and their inability to follow that example, exposing them as no true children of theirs.

	1. <u>Nothing Like Abraham</u>	**2. <u>Nothing Like God</u>**
Paternity claim:	[39] They answered him, "Abraham is our father."	[41] They said to him, "We have one father – God."
Protasis: claim restated	Jesus said to them, "If Abraham is your father,	[42] Jesus said to them, "If God were your father,
Apodasis:	you would be doing the works Abraham did,	you would love me,
Expansion linked by conjunction:	[40] but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham didn't do this!	for I came from God, and I am here; for neither have I come on my own accord, but he sent me... [43] [But] you are unable to hear my word.
Counterclaim with emphatic pronoun:	[41] *You* are doing the works of your father.	[44] *You* are of your father the devil, and you want to perform the will of your father.
Elaboration on their lack of resemblance:	[56] Your father Abraham was glad that he would see my day, and he saw it and rejoiced." (8:39-41a, 56)	[49] *You* insult me.... [54] My father glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.'" (8:41-4, 49b, 54)

The first conditional sentence (about Abraham) is an awkward, mixed-form conditional, whereas the one pertaining to God is textbook contrary-to-fact conditional. However, even in the former, Jesus is clear that the Judeans do *not* fulfill the conditions laid out in the apodasis. They do not perform (ποιεω) the works (εργα) of Abraham, and their current actions (i.e., "you seek to kill me") are quite the opposite of what Abraham would do. But their emotional disposition toward Jesus is just as telling: Abraham rejoiced and was glad about Jesus' day, but they have murder in their hearts (cf. 7:7).

It is almost fitting that Jesus does not use a pure contrary-to-fact conditional about their relationship to Abraham, because Jesus never refutes the *biological* factuality of their descent from Abraham; indeed, he concedes it twice (8:37, 56). Instead, he refutes their implicit claim to derive any standing from this biological fact.[427] In the ancient world, one's birth and paternity

[427] Siker attempts to distinguish fine shades of meaning between the σπερμα and τεκνα of Abraham. He argues that in John's usage of the two terms throughout the gospel, σπερμα refers only to "genetic" or physical descent, as in the phrase εκ του σπερματος Δαυιδ (7:41), while τεκνα refers to one's true identity. Jesus accepts them as

were thought to reveal one's fundamental identity, derived from the father's seed (σπερμα).[428] But Jesus rejects this commonplace wisdom. He never proposes an alternate biological ancestor for them, because it is a mistake to believe physical descent informs one's character. So, he shifts the focus from *descent* as a sign of identity, to *comportment* as a sign of identity. They do not *behave* like Abraham, and are no legitimate heirs of his. They may "come from" Abraham, but they have no claim on him.

Both actions and attitudes give the lie to their claim of God as their father, as well. The conditional sentence, "If God *were* your father. . . " is a pure contrary-to-fact conditional; the grammatical formulation of the phrase plainly conveys that these Judeans are not children of God. According to John's logic, there are several "proofs" of this observation. Their outward acts differ from God's: they dishonor Jesus, but God glorifies him. Their inner thoughts differ as well: they do not love Jesus, but God does. Lastly, Jesus insists, "Whoever is from God hears the words of God" (8:47). These Judeans' lack of resemblance to both of their purported "fathers" is evident in both works and character—at least, in the novel terms by which John has defined resemblance to God.

Jesus' argument is "objective," then, in the sense that it is based on the observation of the Judeans' speech and comportment, which are presumed to reveal some deeper truth about them. This logic is reminiscent of the ancient pseudo-science of physiognomy. Physiognomy relied upon the intense scrutiny of various outward characteristics—i.e., physical features, facial expressions, voice, gestures, and posture—to diagnose inner character. As one practitioner explained it, this science attempted "to inquire into the characters and dispositions of men by an inference drawn from their facial appearance and expression, and from the form and bearing of

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Abraham's *sperma,* but denies they are his *children.* Hakola is doubtful of this approach, arguing that the words are not used frequently enough in the gospel to merit such a fine distinction. Rather, "The point of the earlier discussion was not to deprive the Jews of the privilege of being Abraham's children, but rather to show that they are not acting worthy of this privilege." Jeffrey Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Church Controversy* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 135-39; cf. Hakola, *Identity Matters,* 190-91, esp. n. 52.

[428] Malina & Rohrbaugh, *Social Scientific Commentary on John* 158; Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, 135.

their whole body" (Aulus Gellius, *NA* 1.9.2).[429] Jesus' keen observation of the "evidence" contained in the Judeans' own self-presentation catches them out, and "disproves" their claim to Abraham and God. Much like the famed physiognomer Polemo, John's Jesus is something of a diagnostic savant; able to spot wicked people immediately from the barest of clues; this is how "Jesus knew from the beginning which ones would not believe in him, and which one would betray him" (John 6:64b).[430]

Ideas related to physiognomy were widespread, both at a formal and informal level. A "physiognomic consciousness" can be found in many everyday descriptions of people's gestures and expressions, even in writers who never explicitly mention physiognomy.[431] The technique was quite popular by Augustus' time: a professional *metascopos* (a sort of physiognomic diagnostician) was hired to examine Claudius' son Brittanicus.[432] Pliny the Elder wished fewer people paid heed to the so-called science; however, he lamented, physiognomic observations were "discussed everywhere." (*NH* 11:273-74) Maud Gleason writes,

> To follow the thought-patterns of the physiognomist is to enter the forest of eyes that made up what we lightly call today "the face-to-face society" of the ancient Mediterranean city. This was a world in which the scrutiny of faces was not an idle pastime but an essential survival skill. . . Everyone who had to choose a son-in-law or a traveling companion, deposit valuables before a journey, buy slaves, or make a business loan became perforce an amateur physiognomist: he made risky inferences from human surfaces to human depths.[433]

The science reached the height of its popularity during the Second Sophistic, in the 1st and 2nd centuries of the Common Era.[434]

Physiognomy often had strong racial overtones. The Pseudo-Aristotelean treatise *Physiognomica* presents three main methodologies physiognomists employ: Basing the science

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[429] cit. in Isaac, 149.

[430] Grammatically, both of the clauses describing those whom Jesus "knew from the beginning" are composed of the interrogative 1) pronoun τις, 2) ειμι, and 3) a nominative participle. If we can translate the second participial phrase with an eye toward the future (in reference to Judas), there is no reason we cannot translate the first clause the same way.

[431] Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 150-1.

[432] Seutonius, *Titus* 2:1; Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 155.

[433] Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men:Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton, 1995), 55.

[434] Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 156.

upon observation of various species (γενων) of animals, or observation of the *genus* (γενους) of humanity itself with its various races (εθνη), or on the observation of individual traits.[435] These three categories can be seen in the second-century Sophist Polemo, who devotes the first third of his own treatise to eyes (an exterior trait), another third to observations drawn from the zoology, and the last third to ethnographic types.[436] In physiognomic systems, the outward appearances of various peoples (εθνη) were described, as well as the presumed mental and moral characteristics of each race. Those who are observed to share the outward appearance of the races were assumed to share their character, as well.[437] Therefore a physiognomic diagnosis could be, in a sense, an *ethnic* diagnosis. A physiognomer might scrutinize a stranger's behavioral clues and diagnose her as "Egyptian" in nature. In a similar manner, Jesus reads the Judeans' outward signs to discern the underlying truth about them—they are the devil's children, and share his nature.

The logic of this dramatic revelation follows the logic of physiognomy quite closely. In the latter, an ethnic profile was constructed of certain stereotyped physical and behavioral traits, and the supposed inner character of a race. So, Pseudo-Aristotle informs his readers that those who are swarthy are also cowardly, as can be seen in Egyptians and Ethiopians,[438] and individuals who are small-faced like Leucadians share their small-mindedness.[439] Polemo relates that "Thracians have eyes so agitated they appear to spin, because they are inclined to evil-doing, but are restrained by powerful fear and timidity from actually doing wrong, although their natural propensity is always in that direction."[440] In a similar manner, John provides a "profile" of the devil's nature: "You are from your father the devil, and you want to do his wishes. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

[435] *Physiognomica* 805a:25
[436] Gleason, *Making Men,* 32.
[437] Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 150.
[438] Ps.Arist. *Physiognomica* 812a:12-3 (Hett: LCL). The Ethiopians' cowardice is also shared by those with woolly hair (see 812b:36-7).
[439] Ibid., 808a:30-3 (Hett: LCL).
[440] Gleason, *Making Men*, 57; cf. Robert Hoyland, "A New Edition and Translation of the Leiden Polemon," in *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon's* Physiognomy *from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam* (edited by Simon Swain. Oxford: Oxford, 2007), 343.

Whenever he tells lies, he speaks out of his own character, because he is a liar the father of lies" (8:44). If we also assign the devil the *opposite* of traits that are attributed to God (love of Jesus, and honor of Jesus), then we may add hatred of Jesus and desire to dishonor him to the list. If we compare this profile to "the Judeans" of chapters 7-8, we find that they possess all of these qualities:

Traits of the Devil (8:44)	**Corresponding Traits of the Judeans** in Ch. 7—8:
a murderer from the beginning	"you seek to kill me" (8:37, 40, 59; cf. 7:1, 19, 25)
the truth is not in him	"my word finds no place in you" (8:37; cf. 8:40,43,45, 7:28)
he is a liar	"a liar like you" (8:55)
opposite of "seeks my glory"	"you dishonor me" (8:49; cf. 8:48,52; 7:20)
opposite of "love me"	"the world hates me" (7:7), "much muttering" (7:12)

These correspondences can be concisely summed up Jesus' word, "You do the works your father did" (8:41). By comparing their behavior to a profile of the devil's qualities, Jesus is able to "objectively" identity them as the children of the devil. The assumption that progeny will resemble their father was a commonplace in antiquity. John deviates from this common knowledge when he concedes that Abraham's biological descendants may not resemble him; John adheres to this concept, however, when it comes to one's cosmic father, whether God or the devil. What Jesus says of himself can be applied to all children of God: "the son can do nothing on his own, except what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, the son does the same" (5:19).

For Jesus, these Judeans' cosmic father (the devil) trumps all earthly ancestry, and renders them "unable to hear" him (ου δυνασθε ακουειν, 8:43). That is, just as physiognomy assumed that each person possessed a particular "nature," which manifested itself in certain physical and behavioral signs, John assumes that the children of the devil are constitutionally unable to hear Jesus, and will perforce behave in certain identifiable ways. These Judeans have not *chosen* not to listen; rather, "their incapacity to hear him arises from the very core of his being."[441]

[441] Jeffrey Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, 134; cf. Karl-Josef Kuschel, *Abraham: Sign of Hope for Jews,*

The Judeans of this scene initially affirmed their worldly race, traceable to Abraham, as evidence of their freedom. In response, Jesus dismisses worldly race as utterly insignificant, compared with the ultimate importance of one's cosmic "parent," whether God or the devil. The two "races" derived from them—the children of God and the children of the devil—are seemingly destined to share the "works" and "desires" of their fathers. One's "cosmic race," then, determines one's choices—*not* the other way around. By careful scrutiny of a person's behavior, her divine "parent" can be determined, but it cannot be changed.

In John 8:31-59, the evangelist *simultaneously* dismisses race as irrelevant, and vaults it to as high a form of determinism as anything found in any ancient treatise on physiognomy, astrology, or natural slavery. To John, one's historical-geographical race, based on human descent and linked with an earthly homeland, means nothing. At the same time, one's cosmic race determines what one desires, and how one behaves—including how one responds to Jesus.

One final observation must be made about John's new meta-racial category, "Children of the Devil." Although Judeans do *not* automatically belong to this group (for Jesus' disciples, as well as Jesus himself, are Judeans), John unveils the category during a heated argument with "the Judeans who had believed in him." Further, those who share the devil's traits are often simply called "the Judeans," as we have shown. The relentless repetition of this label (68 times in John, compared to a Mark's six uses)[442] leaves the reader with the distinct impression that the Judeans are altogether more "devilish" a group than, say, the Samaritans. In the final chapter, we will consider the implications of this impression, and its effect upon the development of Christian anti-Semitism.

Christians,and Muslims (New York: Contimuum, 1995), 114-15.

[442] Motyer, "The Fourth Gospel and the Salvation of Israel: An Appear for a New Start," in *Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel* (edited by Reimund Bieringer et al., Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 93; Bieringer, et al., "Wrestling with Johannine Anti-Judeaism" (in the same volume), 15; and Hakola, *Identity Matters: John, the Jews, and Jewishness* (Boston: Brill, 2005), 1.

Judeans in a Romans' World

Jesus' most identifiable opponents in John, other than the poorly defined group(s) referred to as "the Judeans," are the Pharisees and chief priests. Indeed, the gospel often employs the term "ὁι Ιουδαιοι" as a euphemism for this very group.[443] The Pharisees and chief priests can often be found together, working hand-in-hand as they attempt to curtail Jesus' influence (7:32, 7:45,48). But their resistance to Jesus is more than a difference in religious opinion. As the elites of Rome-occupied Judea, they are concerned to navigate a course for their people that promotes an honorable self-identity, but also satisfies the demands of their Roman overlords.

The high priests, in particular, were Roman client rulers. They were subject to Roman oversight and could be deposed at will.[444] Caiaphas managed to remain high priest for 18 years (18-36 CE), which shows that he was adept at satisfying Roman expectations from his position as spiritual leader of the Judeans.[445] Displeasing the Romans, of course, could lead not only to their own political downfall, but the gruesome deaths of many of their fellow countrymen. Thus, it is fruitless to attempt to disentangle their motivations—keeping the Romans happy was both better for them personally, and (as they might well tell themselves) better for all Judeans. Better to suppress the kinds of local movements that risked imperial retaliation, before they happened.

This does not mean that the life of every local elite was one of cringing, self-serving cowardice. Local elites throughout the empire sought to express local pride in their own races, while at the same time adopting policies and cultural trappings which afforded them some degree

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[443] Ὁι Ιουδαιοι indicates the religious authorities in many places, including 1:19, 2:18-20, 9:22, 12:46, and 16:2. The term functions as a synonym for "high priests and phrarisees" at 18:12, referring back to 18:3. The "Pharisees" of 9:40 are later simply called "the Judeans" at 10:19. See Lars Kierspel, *The Jews and the World in the Fourth Gospel: Parallelism, Function, and Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 14-16.

[444] Richard Horsley, "Jesus and the Politics of Roman Palestine," *JSHJ* 8 (2010): 113.

[445] By contrast, Josephus reports that the previous three high priests each lasted less than a year: Ishmael son of Phabi (ca. 15-16 C.E.), Eleazar son of Ananus (16-17), and Simon son of Camith (17-18). During a turbulent period, when high priests were frequently deposed and replaced by the Roman authorities, Pilate was able to hold on to the office considerably longer than most (*Ant*. 18.33-35). See Helen Bond, *Pontius Pilate,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 18; and Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 293.

of respectability in the wider context of the empire. This led to hybrid expressions of cultural identity, selectively blending elements of one's own culture and those of the empire. In addition, the successful negotiation of Roman expectations allowed provincial peoples to maintain some degree of local rule. This afforded provincial elites the sense that they were *participating* in Rome's empire, rather than utterly subjugated to it. In this way, provincials could perceive themselves as "free peoples," subject but not enslaved to Rome.

Of course, elite constructions of race were not the only option available, for members of provincial peoples. Many did not have the cultural (and financial) capital to selectively adopt aspects of Greek or Roman culture. Others might have the *means* to do so, but choose to embrace a more "pure" form of their own culture, purportedly less polluted by foreign customs or ideas. For example, the Maccabean revolution may be seen, in part, as a reaction against the attempted forced imposition of Hellenistic culture on the Judeans—a culture that, it must be remembered, not all Judeans rejected (1 Macc 1:11-15, 2 Macc 4:7-15). However, postcolonial theory tells us that within the context of imperialism, even a resistant stance is influenced or deformed by the very culture it reacts against. After the Maccabees achieved a measure of self-governance, the resulting Hasmonean dynasty adopted aspects of the Hellenism it set out to resist. The version of Judean identity constructed by the Hellenizers who had worn the "Greek hat" and practiced wrestling (2. Macc 4:12-14) certainly differed from the version of Judean identity espoused by those who resisted Epiphanius' cultural reforms—but even the latter were colored by Hellenization. Still, it is a valid point that the "adaptive" ethnic identity adopted by provincial elites, probably differed from commoners of the same race. Depending on the situation, well-to-do elite Jerusalemites would likely find the enthusiastic but less-educated Judaism of peasants backward, laughable, or even embarrassing.

The "honorable" portraits of their race which local elites were eager to present were constructed in opposition to the image of the "humiliated" *ethnē* often presented in imperial

ideology. In various media expressing imperial ideology, including sculpture, painting, coinage, and literature, subject peoples were often depicted as humiliated, feminine, or barbaric. Often, races would be personified as individuals. Such portraits of the *ethnē* were created both for Roman consumption as well as for the edification of the provincial people themselves.[446]

Faced with such depictions of the peoples, provincial elites were anxious to properly situate themselves as among the honorable, civilized, and free peoples, rather than the utterly dishonored, barbaric, slavish peoples whom the Roman world held in such disdain.[447] Elites in Aphodisias constructed a Sebasteion whose artistic schema depicted a sharp divide between already-pacified peoples and those in the process of being conquered—presumably hoping to portray themselves as willing participants in the empire. Elite Judeans like Philo, Josephus, and Aristeas described Judaism as a venerable philosophy, which actually contributed to the best ideas of the ancient Greeks. These ethnic "spin doctors" constructed versions of themselves tailored to appeal to the Romans, and intended to raise their esteem among other subject peoples.

The way race was constructed, at least for subject peoples, was highly contested, and racializing discourse from diverse sources could present radically different portraits of the same *ethnos*. In defiance of unfavorable representations of themselves, provincial elites worked hard to present their own people in a flattering light. The esteem of their race by others was crucial, not only to their own sense of honor, but also to the favorable treatment of their nation by Rome. In this highly contested atmosphere, the Judean elites of John's narrative scramble to manage the "brand" of Judaism.

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[446] e.g., the various "Capta" coin issues of the first century, the more extensive "Province" coin series of Trajan, Antoninus Pius, and Hadrian, or the *simulacra gentium* at the Aphrodisian Sebasteion, or those in Herod's amphitheater (which he was able to argue were not really "images" but merely "trophies," to accommodate local religious sensibilities).

[447] R.R.R. Smith notes that "All the *ethne* seem to have one of three qualifications in Augustan imperial thinking. They have been either simply defeated, or defeated and added to the empire, or brought back into the empire after unwilling succession. The empire counted a spectrum of constituents, from near-equal partners to conquered subjects and neighbors" (Smith, "Simulacra Gentium," *JRS* 78 [1988], 59). Josephus organizes the *ethne* into similar groups in the speech of Agrippa II (*J.W.* 2:345-402), which suggests that members of other races were aware of the range of possibilities in how the Romans assessed various *ethnē* (Kaden, "Flavius Josephus and the *Gentes Devictae* in Roman Imperial Discourse," *JSJPHRP* 42 [2011]: 493-495).

For the Sake of the Ethnos: *John 11:47-53*

> [47]Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council (συνεδριον) and said, "What are we going to do? Because this man performs many signs. [48]If we let him him go on like this, everyone is going to believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away us, and our place, and our people (εθνος)." [49]But one of them, Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, told them, "You don't know anything at all, [50]nor do you realize that it is more advantageous for you that a single man should die for the sake of the whole people (ὁλον το εθνος). [51][But he did not say this on his own authority (απ' ἑαυτου), but being high-priest that year, he prophesied (επροφητευσεν) that Jesus was going to die for the people (του εθνους) — [52]and not only for the people, but in order that the scattered children of God might be gathered into one.] [53]So from that day they made plans to kill him.
>
> – John 11:47-53

Shortly after Jesus raised Lazarus, the chief priests and Pharisees convene a meeting of the Sanhedrin to discuss what should be done about him. The assembled elites represent the local leadership of the Judeans—chief priests, Pharisees, other principal citizens. They collectively constitute the "rulers" (αρχοντες) of Judea. Local rulers of Roman provinces only served at the sufferance of the Emperor—an Emperor who himself enjoyed the distinction "Ruler of the World" (Seut. *Lives* 2.94.5).[448] The high priest, for instance, could be removed from office at the whim of the Roman prefect.[449] Among their other responsibilities, the Judean authorities were responsible for ensuring that the Judean people behaved according to Roman expectations.

Just as their historical counterparts would have been, John's chief priests and Pharisees are acutely aware that rogue populist figures, unaffiliated with the established authorities of Judea, might draw enough popular support to become a concern to Roman officials—with

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[448] Similarly, an inscription from Myra hails Augustus as "Ruler of land and sea" (IGR 3.719). See Naphtali Lewis and Meyer Reinhold, *Roman Civilization* vol. 2 (New York: Columbia, 1955), 295-296.

[449] Helen Bond, *Pontius Pilate,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 18; and Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 293.

Indeed, the Roman governor kept the high priest's vestments, restoring them to the high priest only seven days before each festival. This continued the earlier policy of the Herodians (*Ant*. 19.297,316; 20.15,103-4); the vestments were not restored to Judean control until 37 C.E., after an appeal to the Syrian legate Vitellius, who interceded with Tiberius (*Ant*. 15.405, 18.90-95). See Bond, *Pontius Pilate,* 18-19.

disastrous consequences. They say, “What are we going to do? Because this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone is going to believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away us, and our place, and our people (το εθνος)” (11:47-48). These three concerns are interrelated, and hard to untangle. Their first concern is self-preservation—the empire might remove, imprison, or even kill them for failure to contain the situation. Secondly, as priests and experts in the Law of Moses, they see themselves as the ones best qualified to take counsel for the good of “our place,” the Temple. And lastly, to their way of thinking, the people would be lost without their leadership.

It is not at all unreasonable to fear that the Romans might take away or destroy the Temple. John's author and audience are all too well aware of the level of destruction that resulted from defying the empire. Josephus, also writing after the war's end, similarly attributed a concern for the possible destruction of the Temple to an elite Judean *before* the war. He reports that Agrippa II implored the Judeans not to go to war: “Spare the temple and preserve for yourselves the sanctuary with its holy places” (*J.W.* 2.400).[450] But the concern of the Sanhedrin, or Agrippa II, makes sense in the chronological setting of their respective narratives as well. It was well known that Rome had destroyed entire cities before, such as Carthage and Corinth (both in 146 BCE). The prospect of losing the Temple would be doubly troubling for high priests on the Sanhedrin—it was, after all, the symbolic and physical seat of their authority. In this sense they had extra reason to think of it as “our” place—that is, not just common to all Judeans, but theirs especially.

The last concern named is that the Romans might take away “the people” (το εθνος). The consequences likely to befall a people who angered Rome were made visible in monuments across the empire. Romans removed and made slaves of subjugated peoples, often in staggering numbers. Large numbers of Judeans who suffered this fate are depicted on the Arch of Titus. In

[450] cf. *War* 2.397-399.

addition to enslavement, peoples who defied Rome might face mass slaughter. The *Res Gestae* reported that Augustus preferred to save rather than destroy those peoples (*gentes*, and εθνη in the Greek) whom it was safe to pardon (*Res Gestae* 3.2). The clear implication is that some peoples were *not* worthy of this "mercy," and were fit only for destruction. Another example of this imperial taxonomy of races (into those-who-must-be-destroyed vs. those-who-may-be-pardoned) is found in Tacitus' *Annals*. Germanicus urges his soldiers to thoroughly slaughter the Cheruscans because "Prisoners were needless: nothing but the extermination of the race (*gentis*) would end the war" (*Ann*. 2.21). Soon after this massacre, Caesar orders his troops to slaughter another people, the Agrivarii, "unless they forestalled him by surrender. And they did, in fact, come to their knees, refusing nothing, and were forgiven all" (*Ann* 2.22).[451] Roman ideology was capable of classifying entire races as belonging to two types—those fit only for genocide, and those able to submit to Rome's yoke. The Sanhedrin are understandably anxious to make sure their Roman rulers classify their people as the latter, and not the former! It was not enough for Judeans to esteem their own *ethnos*; it was imperative that the *Romans* look favorably upon them as well. The alternative might be exile, slavery, or even extermination.

The dual concern for "our people" and "our place" can be found in the speech of Agrippa II, as he pleads with the Judeans not to engage in suicidal war with the Romans. Josephus reports that Agrippa warned, "To make you an example to the rest of the nations (των αλλων εθνων), they will burn the holy city to the ground *and exterminate your race* (το φυλον)," including Judeans in diaspora who will also be butchered, "and through a folly of a handful of men every city will be drenched in Jewish blood" (*J.W.* 2.397-99).[452] Of course, both Josephus and John were writing well after the destruction of the temple, so they were able to project their knowledge of later events into their accounts. However, the fears expressed by Judeans in both

[451] Jackson, LCL.
[452] Thackeray, LCL.

passages would already have made perfect sense *before* the war. Both passages convey an awareness of the sort of reprisal that Rome promised to *any* people who dared to rebel.

A concern for the good of "the entire race" (ὁλον το εθνος) dominates the rest of the discussion. Caiaphas, "who was high priest that year," is willing to connect the dots between their worries, and a suggested course of action: "You know nothing, nor do you understand that better for you that one man should die for the sake of the people (του λαου) than that the entire race (ὁλον το εθνος) be destroyed" (11:49-50). We can see here that the issue of what "is advantageous for" or "better for" (συμφερω) the elites is again bound up with what is good for the "entire race." The good of the λαος/εθνος is given the most weight; it is phrased both in the positive ("for the sake of the people"), and the negative ("rather than the entire people be destroyed").[453] John further relates that Caiaphas did not merely present this idea as his own opinion; rather, speaking from his position as high priest, he *prophesied* (επροφητευσεν) that "Jesus was going to die for the people (του εθνους)—and not only for the people, but in order that the scattered children of God might be gathered into one (11:51-52)." The recommended course of action—killing Jesus—is thus presented as counsel not from Caiaphas himself, but from God, and plays into religious-nationalist hopes that "all the children of God" (in this context, *all* scattered Israelites) might be reunited.[454] This plays upon the nationalist trope of the return of Israelites to Judea and Jerusalem, an image found in many biblical prophesies. The irony, then, is that a provincial ruler, whose position depends on the continued good graces of the

[453] Again, recall that in Roman imperial ideology threatened the destruction of races who defied Rome (e.g., *Res Gestae* 3.2).

[454] But would members of the Sanhedrin recognize the *Samaritans*, in particular, as belonging to the "scattered children of God," the Israelites? Josephus acknowledges that some Judean priests were willing to mingle with the Samaritans, and even intermarry as did Manassēs and Nikaso, the daughter Sanballatēs (*Ant*. 11.302-303); moreover, "many priests and Israelites were involved in such marriages" (11.312). This suggests some degree of intercourse and mutual recognition between these groups. But Josephus, for his part, would not classify the Samaritans as Israelites, and seemingly neither did the "elders of Jerusalem" who disapproved of such a marriages (11.306-308).

Roman government, can frame his suggested course of imperial collaboration as a divine oracle —and a "patriotic" one, at that![455]

We see, then, that although it may not have been their most pressing concern, the Judean authorities in John 11:47-53 were concerned for the welfare of their race. The Judeans of the Sanhedrin wished to promote a good image of their people, and to keep them firmly in Rome's good books. The historical authorities, on which John's characters are based, would have been all-too-aware that the Romans were willing to crush provincial peoples who did not cooperate with them—and *also* acutely aware that from the Roman perspective, it was their job to secure this cooperation! If their own interests lined up with the best interests of their people, well, the right course of action was doubly clear. In order to preserve the safety of their people, and in order to portray Judeans as among the "good" εθνη who cooperated with Rome, rather than the "bad" εθνη who must be crushed (*Res Gestae* 3.1-2), they resolve to have Jesus arrested and killed.

The Judean "King" in the Thrall of Rome – John 18—19

Throughout the trial and execution of Jesus, Pontius Pilate and the Judean elites maneuver to promote their own vision of the relationship of the Judean people to Rome. The contentious issue is one of *messaging*: both sides attempt to "spin" events to portray Judea in either a favorable, or unfavorable, light.[456] Of course, the practical matter at hand was the disposition of a particular criminal, Jesus of Nazareth. But each side—Pilate and the Judean elites—attempts to finesse how the unfolding events of his trial and crucifixion reflect upon the Judean people as a whole.

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[455] This is not the only irony at play in this passage. The evangelist means a very different thing by "the children of God" than what Caiaphas intends (an ethnically specific group of peoples who descend from Israel). We will explore this issue further in Part Two, especially Chapter 6.

[456] Racialization is a discursive practice, and thus different portrayals of the same race can jostle and compete with each other at the same time.

Continuing the same policies we saw at work during the meeting of the Sanhedrin (John 11:47-53), the Judean authorities attempt to portray themselves as loyal allies of Rome, guarding Caesar's interests while also upholding their own proud cultural traditions. They hoped to contain Jesus quickly and quietly, framing their own role in the incident as an active partnership with Pilate in Judea's governance. They demand that he do what *they* want, and even give him a rudely evasive reply, when he asks for the formal charge against Jesus (18:30).[457] From their own point of view, they are working alongside Rome to suppress a possible threat to Roman rule; from Pilate's perspective, however, they have forgotten their place and overstepped themselves.

For his part, Pilate must ensure that the Judean *ethnos* maintains the proper deference vis-a-vis its Roman overlords. And Pilate is no pushover; Helen Bond and Warren Carter have convincingly argued for a "strong" Pilate, in full control of the situation.[458] Given the dynamics of power, if Pilate has any cause to be fearful of the Judean authorities, they certainly have more cause to be fearful of him![459] Although it is commonplace for interpreters to see Pilate as a weak figure, a "reluctant crucifier," many elements of John's narrative make little sense unless we see Pilate as strong and in charge.[460] Therefore, the following interpretation presupposes that Pilate in full command of the authority vested in him by Rome. And there is much that must be addressed.

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[457] It is clear from Pilate's later interrogation of Jesus (at 9:33) that he already knew the charge against Jesus—reputedly, claims to be the "king of the Judeans." If the assembled elites had hoped to avoid articulating this embarrassing charge (i.e., this peasant claims to be the king of the *ethnos*), they would have done better to pronounce the charge and beg Pilate's intervention. A little bowing and scraping at this point might have saved them a heap of embarrassment down the line.

[458] See Helen K. Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Warren Carter points out that readings of a "weak, squeamish" Pilate are rendered implausible, when one takes into account the portfolio of a Roman governor's authority, which include the power to settle disputes, collect taxes, command troops, capture bandits, administer justice, and inflict capital punishment; see "Governors and the Roman Imperial System," chapter 3 of *Pontius Pilate: Portraits of a Roman Governor* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 35-54; and *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 289-299.

[459] Wright, "What is Truth? The Complicated Characterization of Pontius Pilate in the Fourth Gospel," *Sage* 114.2 (2017): 214.

[460] David Rensberger points out several difficulties with the "virtually universal" reading of John's Pilate as a "weak" character who is fearful and vacillating: 1) His repeated references to Jesus as the "king of the Judeans" seems like an intentional attempt to mock and humiliate the Judeans. 2) A "weak" Pilate's motives for whipping Jesus in the middle of proceedings are opaque. 3) Somehow the supposedly "weak" Pilate wrests the ultimate articulation of abject loyalty from the Judean elites: "We have no king but Caesar" (19:15). Rensberger argues that John made use of pre-existing traditions describing Pilate as a "reluctant crucifier," but made this characterization ironic and sarcastic (Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community,* 92).

During this Passover, Jesus has inspired Judeans to assume unacceptable stances regarding themselves, in three distinct social spheres: public, private, and military.

1) *In public*, a large crowd (οχλος πολυς) of Judeans has lauded Jesus as "King of Israel" as he entered the city (12:12-19).[461] There is no way the governor could have been unaware of this mass demonstration, right before Passover.[462] While a Roman governor might not have been able to appreciate this demonstration's resonance with scriptural hopes for a redeeming king,[463] he certainly would have been able to perceive its resemblance to a Roman triumph, or better still, its resemblance to the παρουσια (*adventus*) of an emperor to an important city.[464] Pilate's interrogation of Jesus himself turned up no concrete royal ambitions (18:33-38),[465] but this did not change the fact that *the masses* had hailed him as their "king." Such a treasonous uproar had to be answered, brutally and decisively.

2) *The Judean elites* have failed to treat Pilate deferentially (as good clients should), and they give him a strangely petulant reply when asked for the formal change against Jesus (18:30).[466] We have already examined their desire to characterize their race as honorable allies of

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[461] Like another great crowd (πληθος) which got out of hand at festival-time, this crowd of Judeans would have been composed of Galileans, Idumeans, Pereans, as well as "the actual residents of Judea itself" (ὁ γνησιος εξ αυτης Ιουδαιας λαος), not to mention Diaspora Jews on pilgrimage (Jos., *J.W.* 2.43; cf. *Ant.* 17.254).

That particular upheaval led to a pitched battle in the Temple, the burning of the portico, and a prolonged siege (*J.W.* 2.43-54), after which the residents of Jerusalem (ὁι κατα την πολιν) attempted to mollify the Romans by claiming it was not *they* who had rebelled, but rather the crowd (το πληθος) admitted for the festival (*J.W.* 2.72-73; *Ant*. 17:293).

[462] The Roman governor had to keep a watchful eye on the multitudes who flocked to Jerusalem during festivals, for "it is on these festive occasions that sedition is most apt to break out" (*J.W.* 1:88). The local Roman authorities were therefore on high alert at this time: "A Roman cohort was permanently quartered there [the Antonia fortress], and at the festivals took up positions in arms around the porticoes to watch the people and repress any insurrectionary movements" (*J.W.* 5:244; cf. 2:224, *Ant*. 20:106). Carter, *John and Empire,* 300.

[463] Zeph 3:15, Zech 9:9, Ps 118:25; Isa 40:9;1 Macc 13:51, 2 Macc 10:7

[464] Brent Kinman, "Jesus' Royal Entry into Jerusalem," *BBR* 15.2 (2005): 231.

[465] The questions about Jesus' alleged "kingship" do, however, serve as a launching point for John's elaboration on the difference between Jesus' kingdom, and earthly kingdoms. Jesus does, indeed, claim a kingdom, although it neither "of this world" (εκ του κοσμου τουτου) nor "from here" (εντευθεν). Neither does his reign operate according to the logic of earthly kings, who rely upon their underling's violence to carry out their wishes (18:36). Rome, which *is* "of this world," does operate according to these rules—as Pilate, the underling (ὑπηρετης) of Caesar, will demonstrate shortly. Jesus has come into the world not to reign, at least in the world's terms, but "to bear witness to the truth" (18:37). Uninterested in such sophistry, Pilate dismissively replies, "What is truth?"

[466] They rudely answer Pilate, "If this man were not doing evil (κακον ποιων, or "an evildoer" [κακοποιος] in some MSS), we would not have brought him to you!"

Rome with an active part to play in Judea's governance, but they seem to come across as "uppity barbarians" who presume too much, and must be reminded of their place.

3) *The soldiers* witness the elites' rude speech, they are present to overhear Jesus' disrespectful replies to Pilate, and they surely know about the demonstration just days before. These "Roman" soldiers, themselves probably provincials from neighboring peoples,[467] cannot be allowed to see such unacceptable behavior from provincial barbarians to go uncorrected.

Events surrounding Jesus, then, present Pilate with a complex of problems related to the *racialization* of the Judean people. Pilate therefore arranges the trial and execution of Jesus as a "corrective," which constructs the Judean *ethnos* in the proper way:[468]

Racialization in the Trial / Execution of Jesus

	The "Problem"	**Corrective Needed**	**The Solution**
Public sphere (the crowds)	Judean crowds have acclaimed Jesus as "King of Israel" (12:13); reminiscent of an *advent*, or Judean hopes for a delivering king. [Constructs Judeans as free, and possessing independent sovereignty.]	The Judean people must be reminded of who their true king is (Caesar), and reminded of what happens to provincial barbarians who presume to set up their own "king."	Jesus' kingship mocked; he is publicly displayed as a defeated, rebellious "king." [Constructs Judeans as subjects pacified after rebellion, now abjectly devoted to their master, Caesar (cf. 19:12-15).]
Elite sphere (the authorities)	Judean elites fail to express appropriate deference to Pilate, display an inflated sense of their importance. [Constructs Judeans as equals, who have the right to speak this way.]	The Judean elites must be reminded of their political powerless-ness, and put back in their place (as "clients" of Rome, not partners).	Pilate repeatedly tells them to see to the matter themselves, which they have no authority to do so (18:31, 19:6). This forces them to beg for his aid. [Constructs Judeans as powerless subordinates.]
Military sphere (soldiers)	This has been done in front of Roman soldiers. [Potentially challenges construction of Roman superiority and barbarian inferiority.]	The Roman soldiers must be shown Roman superiority in action, both by example, and by their own participation.	Pilate's mockery of Judeans privately (in the praetorium) and outside. They rehearse their own "Roman" super-iority upon Jesus, privately (19:3) and publicly (19:18).

It is unlikely that John wishes us to imagine that Pilate is completely ignorant of the

[467] According to Josephus, the soldiers a governor of Judea had at his command would have been auxiliaries drawn from non-Judean provincials only, largely from Caesarea and Sebaste (*Ant*. 14:204, 13:251-2, *Ant*. 19:365, *J.W.* 2:41-52). Helen Bond suggests that when hostilities broke out between gentiles and Judeans, these troops could easily show partiality to their own people, and could be over-brutal toward Judeans. Bond, *Pontius Pilate,* 13-15.

[468] "Proper," that is, from a Roman perspective.

charges, given that Pilate himself must have authorized the use of Roman soldiers in Jesus' arrest![469] Pilate's initial question to the authorities, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" (18:29), has a formal ring to it: he seems to expect them to articulate a precise formulation of the charges against him, perhaps as a result of their preliminary interrogation. Rather than respectfully answering, and justifying the trust he has placed in them by lending them the soldiers for the operation, the elites are petulant in reply: "If this man were not doing evil, we would not have handed him over" (18:30). Pilate, it is likely, does not appreciate their tone. He tells them "*You* take him and judge him by your own law" (18:31).[470] This forces them to acknowledge their powerlessness: although Judean law prescribes death for blasphemy (19:7), they have no authority to inflict capital punishment (18:31b). Pilate thus forces them to articulate their inability to carry out their own law, and reinforces who has the real power in Judea (the Romans).[471] Thus it is not *Judean* law that matters, but *Roman* law—which gives the local authorities no power to execute anyone. And thus is is crucifixion (a *Roman* punishment) which is in view, not stoning (the traditional *Judean* punishment for blasphemy; cf. 19:7). Pilate later tells them, "*You* take him and crucify him" (19:6), again forcing them to admit that they lack that authority, and forcing them again to beg for Pilate's help.

However, it is primarily the Judean crowds' identification of Jesus as "king" that Pilate must address. The gospel contains several indications that the title "king" dogged Jesus' career, even if he did not seek it himself: Nathanael calls him "King of Israel" (1:49), a "large crowd" (οχλος πολυς) in Galilee wishes to "make him king by force" (6:2,15), and another "large crowd" (οχλος πολυς) hails him as king outside the very gates of Jerusalem (12:12-19).[472] The term properly belongs to Caesar; the emperor is "βασιλευς" in Greek, and the unsanctioned bestowal

[469] Bond, *Pontius Pilate,* 175-76; cf. Carter, *John and Empire*, 301.
[470] Italicizing the emphatic pronoun ὑμεις.
[471] Bond, *Pontius Pilate,* 186-7; Carter, *John and Empire,* 301, 306; Wright "What is Truth?" 215.
[472] These examples also imply that his "royal" reputation began and grew primarily in *Galilee*, and only followed him to Judea after the healing of Lazarus enhanced his reputation there (cf. 12:17-18).

of this title on provincials is seen as a direct challenge to Caesar's authority.[473] Rome quashed such unsanctioned "kings" of the Judeans, who had assumed the trappings of royalty, decisively:

Unsanctioned Judean "kings," their royal garments, and their ends

Simon, a slave of Herod. Placed the diadem (διαδημα) on his head, was proclaimed king by a mob in their "madness" (μανια). Beheaded. –*Ant*. 17:273-277; *J.W.* 2:57-59

Athronges, a shepherd. "Donned the diadem" (διαδημα) and acted "just like a king" (καθαπερ βασιλευς), appointing his brothers as generals and "satraps" (σατραπαις). Eventually captured/surrendered; the brothers were killed. –*J.W.* 2:60-65; *Ant*. 278-284.

Simon ben Gioras, a general of the Jewish revolt. Rose from the Temple's rubble dressed in "white tunics" (λευκους χιτωνισκους) and a purple mantle (χλανιδα πορφυραν).[474] Paraded in triumph, scourged (αικιζω), and killed at the Forum. –*J.W.* 7:25-36, 153-157

Arthur Wright rightly points out that these figures differed from Jesus in that they led *violent* anti-imperial movements. Still, perceived as another popular kingly figure, Jesus merited similar handling.[475] Therefore, to the four listed above, we may add Jesus of Nazareth, who was dressed in crown of thorns and a purple robe (ἱματιον πορφυρουν), flogged (εμαστιγωσεν) and struck (ῥαπισματα), and crucified (19:1-5, 18).

Roman citizens were themselves legally immune to physical attacks; even a slap was an affront to one's *dignitas*, and could result in a lawsuit. Barbarians, however, enjoyed no such protections. What could be more natural than a Roman striking a barbarian? John relates that Jesus is beaten *inside* the Praetorium; this reminds us that ostentatious violence against provincials was not exclusively done for "public" display. It also served to reinforce the Romans' own sense of superiority, whether it was seen by the public or not. The soldiers perform a mock coronation for this "king," shoving a crown of thorns onto his head and wrapping him in a robe of royal purple. This satirical ceremony calls to mind the Romans' love of ceremonies humiliating foreign kings.[476] Their sarcastic acclamations ("Hail, King of the Judeans!") are

[473] e.g. Acts 17:7b: "They [Christ-believers] are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, by saying that there is another king (βασιλεα), Jesus."

[474] Or, in one textual variant, a purple χλαμυδα – a word for a military cloak, or possibly a general's cloak (Latin *Paludamentum*).

[475] Wright, "What is Truth?" 216 FN 31.

[476] For the humiliation of kings see: Plut. *Aem*. 34:12 (humiliation of a king during a triumph), Horace *Carmen* 1:37.31, *Res Gestae* 4:3 (Augustus boasts of nine kings or children of kings led before him in triumphs. Athony J. Marshall, "Symbols and Showmanship in Roman Public Life: The Fasces," *Phoenix* 38.2 (1984): 124.

accompanied by slaps and blows, and lampoon the acclaim given to Jesus on his way into Jerusalem (i.e. "King of Israel," 12:13). The crown and robe may also call to mind the emperor's laurel wreath and purple robe.[477] Such "Roman" soldiers, it should be emphasized, do not necessarily come from Rome; these soldiers are far more likely to hail from nearby Syria than Italy![478] However, the Roman army was a valuable "school" in Roman culture, and soldiers could look forward to citizenship after retirement. No matter their origins, these soldiers are being steeped in Roman ideology, and they enact the trope of the broken barbarian upon flesh-and-blood subjects. As they beat Jesus, they are rehearse their own *Romanitas* upon him with every blow.

However instructive Jesus' coronation may be for the Roman troops themselves, Pilate is not one to miss an opportunity for broader spectacle. He coyly announces "See, am I bringing him out so that you may know that I find no guilt in him," before producing the royally adorned Jesus with a flourish: "Behold the man!" (9:4-5). This choreographed moment, the theatrical display of Jesus dressed as a humiliated king, is calculated to dishonor not only Jesus, but the Judeans themselves: in effect, saying "this pathetic specimen is your king." This mock "royal appearance" is steeped in Johannine irony—to believers, Jesus deserves the kingly title and garments, but from a Roman point of view, this farcical "ceremony" shows Jesus' pretensions to the kingship (and more generally, Judean hopes for sovereignty) to be laughable.[479]

The Judeans' final confession regarding "King Jesus" ("We have no king but Caesar") is precisely what Pilate has been driving the Judeans toward all along (19:15).[480] Declarations of loyalty were a crucial part of local elites' handling of empire. By emphatically insisting on their

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[477] Carter, *John and Empire,* 305.

[478] According to Josephus, the soldiers a governor of Judea had at his command would have been auxiliaries drawn from non-Judean provincials only, largely from Caesarea and Sebaste (*Ant*. 14:204, 13:251-2, *Ant*. 19:365, *J.W.* 2:41-52). Helen Bond suggests that when hostilities broke out between gentiles and Judeans, these troops could easily show partiality to their own people, and could be over-brutal toward Judeans. Bond, *Pontius Pilate,* 13-15.

[479] Carter, *John and Empire*, 305.

[480] Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community,* 95.

nation's loyalty to the emperor, provincial elites attempted to negotiate a favorable position for themselves and their race—hopefully buttressing their own authority in the process. At the same time, this strategy was an exercise in racial construction: they constructed an image of themselves as suitably pacified, integrated into the "family" of the empire. Judeans were no amateurs, having already honed their skills under several other empires. For example, the motif of appealing to the sensibilities of a great empire to win favor for one's race is well-attested in scripture.[481] Turn-of-the-era Judean elites such as Philo and Josephus learned well from their predecessors how to present a portrait of their race that was agreeable to Rome, while also affirming their antiquity and honor. In these examples and many others, Judeans attempted to manipulate empires in order to secure themselves some measure of self-determination—and are well aware of the "face" they must wear in order to please their masters.

In racial terms, the affirmation "We have no king but Caesar" (19:15) signals their acceptance of their subjection under a foreign ruler—a state of subjection widely conceptualized as the "slavery" (δουλεια) of provincial races. Notice that in the similar passage from Philo's *Legatio*, the Judean nobles call Tiberius their "master" (*despotēs*), implicitly assuming the role of its polar complement, "slaves." In denying all kings but Caesar, the Judean authorities have seemingly accepted their place in the ancient classification of subjugated peoples as "enslaved"—a characterization that "the Judeans" had rejected earlier in the gospel (8:33). Pilate could hardly wish for a more satisfactory conclusion to the trial, and he straightaway hands Jesus over for crucifixion.

Pilate is not tone-deaf to the ways in which violent spectacle broadcasts a message. He stages Jesus' crucifixion with great showmanship, using the event as an opportunity to deride the very concept of a Judean king, and to show all Judeans what can be done to them at any time. He

[481] As, for example, in the motif of the "court Judean," which personified strategies of cooperation with empire in such characters as Joseph, Daniel, and Mordecai. Ezra-Nehemiah is a veritable scrapbook of obsequious appeals to emperors (Ezra 4:3b, 4:11-16, 5:11-17, Neh 2:1-8), and self-serving protestations of loyalty (Ezra 4:3b, 5:3-5, 5:17, 7:1-6, 7:27-28, Neh 2:19, 6:6-8), employed by both Judeans *and* the surrounding groups who oppose them.

intends to display Jesus as a living symbol of the degradation of the race, and the illustrate the futility of attempts at self-rule. Crucifixion offers a perfect "visual medium" for this statement. It is one example of the Romans' "calculated employment of the spectacular in public administration. . . a public 'production' with an effect based on calculated exhibition."[482]

Joel Marcus argues that crucifixion itself contains an element of "parodic exaltation." The ancients made a symbolic (albeit ironic) connection between crucifixion and elevation in status. For example, in Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica,* a dream about crucifixion, in which a person is lifted high (ὑψηλος), betokens *social* elevation.[483] Jesus tells his listeners that he will be raised high (ὑψηλος) on the cross (3:14, 8:23, 12:32), which in the gospel has positive connotations, as the hour of his glorification. For the Romans, the "elevation" of crucifixion was intended as a horrible parody of the self-elevation of transgressors who had "gotten above themselves," overstepping their proper place in society—especially those who had not shown proper deference to the emperor. Marcus says, "Crucifixion was intended to unmask, in a deliberately grotesque manner, the pretension and arrogance of those who exalted themselves above their station; the authorities were bent on demonstrating through the graphic tableau of the cross what such self-promotion meant and whither it led."[484] The small seat on a cross for a victim's buttocks was called the *sedile*, a word used in other contexts for a royal chair.[485] Jesus' "enthronement" upon the *sedile* of his cross is the culmination of Pilate's mockery of "King Jesus," following the interrogation about Jesus' kingship (18:33-38), and the satirical "coronation" ceremony (19:1-3). Pilate makes sure that the irony of this "royal elevation" is evident to all, by affixing a kingly title to his cross.

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[482] Marshall, "Symbols and Showmanship in Roman Public Life: The Fasces." 127.
[483] Joel Marcus, "Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation," *JBL* 125.l (2006): 75.
[484] Marcus, "Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation," 78-79.
[485] Marcus, "Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation," 84. This sort of grisly humor can be seen in *The Alexander Romance*, in which Alexander promises to make Darius' killers "visible all around and notable before everyone"—a promise he kept by crucifying them. Ibid, 80.

Unlike the synoptic gospels, John specifies that Pilate *himself* writes down the mocking title (τιτλον) "King of the Jews," and attaches it to the cross (19:19, 19:22; contrast Mark 15:26, Matt 27:37). In John's gospel, the words are not some soldier's whim, but part of Pilate's intentional staging of the event. Only John mentions that the words are written in "Hebrew, Latin, and Greek," emphasizing the desire to broadcast the insult to as many people as possible. Give that he is about kill Jesus in a very theatrical manner, in a location near the city with heavy foot-traffic (19:20a), this title is clearly meant to mock the Judeans publicly. Only John describes this notice as a "*titlon"* (τιτλον), a word often used—along with its Latin cognate *titulus*—to describe the humiliating signs displayed alongside barbarian captives in triumphs, and upon which the names of races might be written in a series of *simulacra gentium.* It is as if Jesus were an exhibit at a triumph, illustrating Roman superiority over a barbarian *ethnos*. Pilate's *titlon* "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Judeans" constructs the Judeans as a rebellious *ethnos* who have been (re)conquered and brutally chastised by the empire.

To exhibit a crucified criminal as if he were actually the king of a conquered (rebellious) people is insulting and humiliating.[486] The Judean elites are understandably upset by the inscription. They have attempted to portray themselves as active partners with Rome, exercising their own agency in Jesus' arrest, initial interrogation, delivery to Pilate, and demand for execution. They have explicitly denied they have *any* other king then Caesar—and certainly not this no-one from Galilee. By calling Jesus "The King of the Judeans," Pilate has belittled their participation, impugned their loyalty, ignored their disavowal of Jesus, and turned Jesus' death into an insult to all Judeans. They understandably object to this public shame, and they ask Pilate to alter the sign, to specify that Jesus merely *claimed* to be the king of the Judeans. To them, this distinction is crucial: Jesus is a nobody who does *not* speak for people, and whom they have handled at their own initiative. Pilate, however, chooses to identify Jesus with the entire *ethnos.*

[486] Wright, "What is Truth?" 216.

When they ask him to reword the title above Jesus, Pilate bluntly refuses to soften his message, saying, “What I've written, I've written” (19:22). Jesus remains the satirical “King of the Judeans,” and therefore his “elevation” satirizes Judeans as a whole.

After raising Jesus on the cross, soldiers gamble for his “royal” garments. This calls to mind an artistic trope that many resident of the Roman empire would have been familiar with: in many visual representations of imperial ideology, a Roman figure, often a soldier, stands in close proximity to a defeated ethnic figure. Often, this Roman is already looking beyond the barbarian to something else, as if to suggest their expansive future, contrasted with the barbarian's end. Consider the Roman soldier who appears on many *Capta* coins: He stands near the defeated *ethnos* (whether a defeated Judea or Germania, the iconography is the same), looking proud and composed, his attention already fixed on other matters, as the *ethnos* sits defeated nearby.[487] The fallen arms of the now-subdued *ethnos* may lie discarded on the ground, or hung up as a trophy —at the disposal of the heroic Roman, should he deign to claim them.[488] In a similar manner, the soldiers' attention has moved on to Jesus' clothes, even as he hangs dying above them. Jesus already belongs to the past, but they are creatures of the future, and will still need to wear something tomorrow. They can be casual about the death going on behind them, which is, after all, business as usual. The same chilling nonchalance can be see on the face of Tiberius, as he pins down a terrified Britannia, in a relief from the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias. In so many expressions of imperial ideology, the carefully portrayed brokenness of ethnic bodies is “no big deal” to a nearby Roman—*their* dejection is only the background to *his* ascendancy. Since Golgotha is described as a public location with numerous passersby (19:20a), this gambling scene is itself a kind of public exhibit: one more tableau of Roman superiority in the spectacle of Jesus' death.

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[487] e.g., the *Judea Capta* coins of Vespasian, and the *Armenia* and *Mesopotamia* coins of Trajan. Toynbee, *The Hadrianic School*, Plates IX, XVII; Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered*, 35-38.

[488] This motif is by no means limited to coins, but is to be found in reliefs and paintings.

John's presentation of the trial and death of Jesus emphasizes themes of kingship, and corporate honor and dishonor. Pilate turns the trial into a drawn-out affair designed to tease (or threaten?) the authorities with the disingenuous offer of Jesus' release. He secures the perfect articulation of Judean subjection ("We have no king but Caesar") before proceeding to the execution. Pilate then turns the crucifixion into a spectacle of Judean defeat, displaying Jesus before all the world as the defeated Judean king, as if he were the star exhibit in a Roman triumph. As Romans often did, Pilate has turned one man's execution into the spectacle of collective subjection, and had exhibited the Judeans' *corporate* shame upon the *corpus* of one man.

Judeans and Romans: Chapter Conclusions

In this chapter, we have considered how some Judeans in John's gospel marshal aspects of their ethnic identity to defend their honor, and how, within the imperial context of 1st-century Judea, local elites and Romans jockey in their presentation of the relative honor, or dishonor, of the subject nation. A summary of important observations might be helpful at this point:

1. Subjugation by other peoples was often conceptualized as "slavery" in the ancient world—both in Judean traditions, and in the Roman empire generally. The Judeans of 8:31-59 could have understood Jesus' words about "slavery" and "freedom" in this light, and their initial invocation of Abraham may be intended to affirm their free status based on ethnicity. **2.** The various facets of earthly-ethnicity that these Judeans cite in order to defend themselves against Jesus' claims are dismissed as unimportant, in light of the more important layer of identity that John constructs. **3.** One's cosmic-racial identity is based on whether one has God, or the devil, as a father. John 8:31-59 strongly implies that this origin precedes, and determines, one's moral behavior. **4.** Not all Judeans are Children of the Devil (consider the disciples), nor are all

Children of the Devil necessarily Judeans (consider Pilate). Nevertheless, in concentrating all explicit remarks about this diabolical race in one argument against "Judeans," the gospel may foster the impression that this earthly race is especially suspect—an impression with dire consequences for subsequent anti-Semitism.[489]

5. John is aware of how imperial dynamics foster the (ab)use of political authority, and deforms race relations. **6.** In John 11:45-53, the Judean authorities' struggle to navigate a safe course for their race contributes directly to the decision to kill Jesus. Although these elites desire to maintain the honor (and security) of their people in the context of foreign rule, their self-presentation of their nation is warped to conform to Roman expectations. **7.** Although John considers Jesus' crucifixion to be, in one sense, his glorification (8:28; 17:5), he does not remove the culpability of those who perpetrate it for their own blameworthy reasons. Pilate seizes upon the execution of one man as an opportunity to broadcast Roman superiority and barbarian dejection—a racializing performance that naturalizes the construct of the inferior barbarian (Judean), brutalized, degraded, and abject before Roman might.

These observations are consistent with our previous conclusions about John's assessment of historical-geographical race. Consistently, the gospel downplays the importance of earthly ethnicity. Those who insist on the significance of this category have made a grave error—an error that, in some cases, makes it harder to accept Jesus, or even leads to active resistance of his gospel. The text does not consider ethnicity, as commonly understood, a worthwhile basis for separation, prejudice, or rejection. *However*, John does construct an alternative sort of race,

[489] The white supremacist "Christian Identity" movement reads John 8 in support of their profoundly disturbing vision of a primordial, irreconcilable chasm between whites and all other races—especially Jews. John verse 8:44 alone is cited no fewer than seven times in the influential tract "The Two Seeds of Genesis," which counsels, "Read all of John 8:38–59. This entire chapter is a continuation of the enmity that was to exist between the seed of the serpent and the Seed of the Woman. In John 8:44 Jesus Christ told the Jews (and the Word of God is telling you) that the Jews are of their father the devil and their father is traced back to Cain. Read verse 47. The Jews could not hear God's Word because they were not a direct creation of God, they were the seed of the serpent. In John 10:26 Jesus Christ told the Jews: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." Why could the Jews not believe? Because they were not the genetic seed of God." See Dan Gayman, writing as "Charles Lee Mange," *The Two Seeds of Genesis 3:15,* Pamphlet, 1982 [1977]; https://ia801302.us.archive.org/0/items/2seedsgenesis315, accessed on January 19, 2018.

which we might call “cosmic race,” based on one's descent from God or the devil. It is to this layer of identity that we now turn our attention.

CHAPTER 5: COSMOLOGICAL RACE IN ANTIQUITY

John's gospel constructs a new racial category, "the children of God" (τεκνα θεου), for those who respond positively to Jesus. The phrase occurs twice in the gospel: once in the prologue (1:12) and a second time with an ironic double meaning (11:52). A similar label, "sons of light" (ὑιοι φωτος), also applies to Jesus' followers (12:36). Other ways of describing such a "cosmic race" are also found throughout the gospel; they are "born/begotten of God" (1:13), and "born/begotten of the Spirit" (3:6, 3:8). Elsewhere, they are described as "of/from God" (8:47); in this passage, Jesus is addressing his enemies' claim to have God for a father, giving the phrase εκ του θεου the force of "born of God" (8:47).[490] Jesus engages in an extended discussion of whether his opponents can truly claim God as their father, and then reveals what true children of God do: love him (8:41-42ff).

This new race is constructed in opposition to another, equally broad category: the children of the devil. They have a different "father" than Jesus (8:19, 38), and consequently have no claim to God as their own father (8:42, 54). They are not "from God" (8:47), a phrase that, as already mentioned, can bear the sense of "descended from God." Like the children of God, they have their own distinct ancestor (the devil), their own homeland (the world), and a shared moral character—characterized by lies (8:44-45), murder (8:40; 5:18; 7:1; 11:53; 12:10), wickedness (5:29; 3:19-20), and rejection of Jesus (5:38; 10:26).

John defines these two primal "races" in opposition to each other. Two observations about John's constructed cosmic races are relevant at this point. Firstly, they represent a form of "oppositional self-definition," to borrow a term from the social sciences. Secondly, John's gospel

[490] This phrase (i.e., εκ του θεου) is an example of the genitive of descent. On the use of εκ + genitive to convey descent and kinship, see Hodge, *If Sons Then Heirs*, 80-82; and Stanley Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, & Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale, 1994), 237-39.

hints that these two categories represent a level of racial identity more fundamental, and more significant, than "mere" geographic-ancestral race.

I will call these two distinct strata of racial identity *cosmological race*, and *historical-geographical race*. By cosmological race, I mean to refer to one's membership in one of the two broad kindreds into which all humanity is divided—sons of God, and sons of the devil.[491] By historical-geographical race, I mean the conventionally-acknowledged εθνη into which specific historical peoples actually divided themselves—such as Egyptians, Macedonians, Judeans, and the like. This level of identity is anchored in particular earthly geography: a Judean is associated with Judea, for example, even if she has never set foot there. This level of race is also tied to human genealogy: a Thracian is born of Thracians, a Gaul of Gauls. As we have seen, John assigns little real significance to this category. One's earthly race is a mere accident of birth, and matters very little.

One's cosmological race, however, is of supreme importance. It is "cosmological" in the sense that the two races are part of how the whole created order is structured. One race has its homeland and origins "above," while the other's natural home is "the world." The races each have their own ontological essence, fundamentally antithetical to each other. This reflects the diametrically opposed nature of their divine/diabolical fathers. Unlike one's historical-geographical race, which is only of parochial significance, *this* level of racial identity does inform the members' natures.

Before we delve too deeply into John's construction of these two "races," let us pause to contextualize such thinking in the general setting of Mediterranean antiquity. We might first mention types of "oppositional self-definition"[492] employed in antiquity, such as the polarity

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[491] Another suitable term for this transcendent level of identity might be "mythical race." The sons of the Devil and sons of God each have a different supernatural "father," God or the devil. Thus, these identities resonate on the mythical level. These categories imply a truth-bearing story (an account of two sorts of descent), and as all myth must, offer an account of how the created world is structured, and who we are as human beings.

[492] The social sciences distinguish between *aggregative* strategies of self-definition (e.g., ethnic genealogies), which define peoples in terms of their relatedness to others, and oppositional strategies, which define the racial self in

"barbarian"–Greek (and sometimes, –Roman), and the polarity "gentile"–Israelite.[493] The two-race schema we can perceive in John is obviously an extreme form of oppositional self-definition; the "children of God" only come clearly into focus when compared with their opposite number, the "children of the devil."

But in order to posit a "conceptual context" of John's two races, we would be best served if we could identify something that approximates the all-encompassing, cosmic scope of his categories. One might be tempted to see John's two cosmic races as a relatively unprecedented phenomenon; after all, the views of race in antiquity surveyed in Chapter One did not include such sweeping divisions. However, that survey was largely driven by the scholarship of classicists, not religious studies. We will find that if we broaden our parameters a bit, we might identify a few anthropological constructions broadly analogous to John's.

"Ontological" Divisions of Humanity in Antiquity

John is not the only ancient text to divide humanity into two or more types, each possessing its own proper nature. It might be more useful to call these types "ontological races," rather than the term "cosmological races," which I use for John's categories. Not all of the examples surveyed here are grounded in myth, or the structure of the cosmos, and so might not properly be labeled "cosmological." But they *do* all imply a fundamentally distinct being (οντα) for different types of

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opposition to the other. Hall, *Ethnic Identity,* 47. Opposition to another can create a strong sense of group identity. Jonathan Hall goes so far as to describe, in one place, the ethnic group as "a self-nominating category constructed in opposition to other groups." Alterity can be crucial in the construction of an ethnicity: the *criteria* of ethnicity are set with reference to ascriptive boundaries that define "who's in" and "who's out." Ethnic identity can rarely achieve salience without an 'outgroup' of some sort. Hall, *Hellenicity*, 9.

[493] Note that both of these oppositional ethnic pairings (Greek-barbarian, Judea-gentile) implied a *religious* element. Recall that in Herodotus' much-quoted articulation of common Hellenicity, the Athenians cited "a great many reasons why we should not [side with the Persians], nor wish to. *First and greatest, the burning and destruction of the ornaments and shrines of the god*s . . . Secondly, the kinship of all Greeks: that is, the same blood and the same tongue, *both the shrines of the gods and shared sacrifices*, and the same way of life" (*Histories* 8.144, emphasis added). The veneration of the same gods was a not insignificant part of what made them all "Greeks," and the Persians' desecration of their shrines is a large part of what defines them as *barbaroi.*

humanity.[494] Ancient discourses that imply such "ontological" divisions of humanity might include: 1) two allegorical passages from Plato, 2) natural slavery thinking, 3) Jewish-milieu Seth/Cain speculation, and 4) "sons of light/ darkness" traditions, found in both Second-Temple Jewish and early gnostic sources.

Plato: The Four Metals, and the Children of the Sun/Moon/Earth

Plato serves up one or two examples of such notions. To be sure, Plato's thought as a whole is antithetical to the concept of universal "races," into which all humanity could be divided. However, a couple of individual passages *do* contain hints of this sort of anthropology.

In the *Symposium*, each of four friends at a dinner party delivers a speech about love. When it is Agathon's turn, he offers a short myth as an explanation of why there are two sexes, and a variety of objects of sexual attraction (i.e., same-sex attraction vs. other-sex attraction). In his tale, these differences arose from the first primordial humans: "Our original nature (φυσις) was not as it is now. For at first there were three kinds (γενη) of human beings, not two as there are now, male and female" (*Symposium* 189). Note Plato's use of γενος for the three types. While the immediate context might suggest "sex" as the preferred sense of the word, there are reasons to keep the term's wider semantic range in view. In the prior sentence, Agathon spoke of "the

[494] In his monograph *Born from Above*, Jeffery Trumbower attempts to find traces of what he calls "fixed origins" thinking in antiquity. By fixed origins, he means ontological differences between individuals, fixed at (or before) birth, which cannot be changed. He considers various bodies of literature as possible sources of fixed origins, but is forced to dismiss several, in turn: neither the Hebrew Bible, Plato, later Platonists, Aristotle, nor the Stoics promoted a system of thought which was in keeping with the sort of deterministic fixed origins he perceives in John and later Valentinian Gnosticism. He finds some traction with astrology and physiognomy, seeing in them a hint of the conceptual context of deterministic origins. (Trumbower further notes that Jews could also subscribe to the idea of physiognomic or astrological influences over human beings.) My angle of approach differs from Trumbower's in foregrounding "race," and so I am more concerned with finding systems that divide human beings into fundamentally different *peoples.* Therefore, the fixedness of *individuals'* traits does not concern me, as much as systems which differentiated between entire *categories* of humans. See Trumbower, *Born from Above*, 39-41.

human race" (τῳ ανθρωπειῳ γενει) using the same word. And later, Agathon specifically explains the existence and appearance of the three *genē* in terms of their *gene*ration:

> And there were three kinds (γενη) such as these for this reason: because the male was born (εκγονον) of the sun, the female of the earth, and that which had a share in both was born of the moon, because the moon also shares in both. And they were spherical, both in shape and movement, for they resembled their parents (τοις γονευσιν).
> – *Symposium* 190[495]

Here we have three unique breeds (γενη) of humans, each with its own cosmic parent (γονευς): children of the sun, of the earth, and of the moon. The linking of these "three kinds" with the sort of parental reproduction implied by the γον- stem, reminds us that the root sense of γεν- also concerns birth and begetting. Agathon's three *genē*, then, are not merely "sexes," but may rightly be called "races," each descending from a mythological parent—earth, sun, or moon—and each bearing a family resemblance to its progenitor. According to Agathon, the gods have long since split these primordial humans in half, but contemporary humans can still conceivably be classified as belonging to the three types (i.e., men attracted to men, woman attracted to women, and those attracted to the opposite sex) based on which type of primeval human they descend from. In this passage, then, Plato relates one short example of a "cosmological" division of humanity into three fundamentally different types.

The "Myth of the Metals" from Plato's *Republic* offers another such "mythological" account of several distinct types of humans. In Plato's ideal state, the populace would be taught this propagandistic tale—what Plato calls an "opportune falsehood"—in order to help them accept their fixed place in society. Citizens of his republic would be taught that the various types of humans were originally drawn from the earth, where each type had been formed by a unique admixture of metals:

> When God was fashioning those of you who are capable of ruling, he commingled gold in their generation [*or* race, γενεσει], on account of which they are the most

[495] My translation.

> precious; but in the helpers, he mixed silver, and iron and brass in the farmers and craftsmen." - *Republic* III.415 A[496]

According to this myth, there are proportions of gold, silver, iron, and bronze, mixed within human beings, which correspond to the castes of citizens in the Republic. These metals are transferred from parent to child in a biological fashion: "Mostly you will breed (γεννῳτε) after your own kinds" (*Rep*. III.415A).[497] Note also the use of the γεν- stem in reference to these several types of humans; γενεσις refers to origin or manner of birth, and so can figuratively stand for descent or race.[498] Plato's several castes of citizens are given "mythical" origins, told they will breed true, and assigned a distinct character corresponding to the metals within them. Although the whole story is presented as an intentional fabrication, the myth's purpose is to convince the republic's citizens that the various castes were, in fact, ontologically distinct. For the imaginary citizens raised believing this myth, the castes would have an unmistakably *racial* quality.[499]

Before we leave Plato behind, we must add a *caveat*. It must be acknowledged that both passages are presented as myths, and that Plato never aligns himself with the ideas presented in the tales. Neither does his mouthpiece, Socrates, subscribe to these views. In the first instance, Socrates goes on to propose a better account of love; in the second, Socrates introduces the story as "a sort of Phoenician tale" that he is almost embarrassed to tell his companions (*Rep*. III.414 B-D). Moreoever, Plato's thought as a whole does not advocate any such fundamental division of humanity. Trumbower's point is well taken: "No Platonist, be he from the Old Academy, Middle Platonist, or Neo-Platonist would have advocated fixed origins for human beings which necessarily determined behavior."[500] However, the philosopher is certainly able to articulate, and toy with, such concepts.

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[496] My translation.
[497] See further *Rep*. 414B-415D; Trumbower, *Born from Above*, 34.
[498] *Liddell-Scott*, 162.
[499] Isaac, 126.
[500] Trumbower, *Born from Above*, 33.

Aristotle: Natural Slavery and Bestial Nature

The concept of "natural slavery" posits another division of all human beings into two types: those who are naturally free, and those who are naturally slaves. Aristotle offers the fullest articulation of this line of thinking, although elements can be found in other sources, continuing into the Common Era and later taken up by Christian writers. In his *Politics,* Aristotle ponders the issue of whether slavery is, as some hold, "contrary to nature (παρα φυσιν)" (*Pol.* 1254a 22). Aristotle determines that it is not, because some people are "marked from birth (εκ γενετης) to be ruled" (1254a 22-24). Slaves have their own slavish nature (φυσις) that is marked by deficiencies in both virtue (1255b 1-4) and in reason:

> He is by nature (φυσει) a slave who is capable of belonging to another (and that is why he does so belong), and who participates in reason so far as to apprehend it but not to possess it; for the animals other than man are not subservient to reason, by apprehending it, but to their feelings. And the usefulness of slaves diverges little from that of animals; bodily service for the necessities of life is forthcoming from both, from slaves and from domestic animals alike.
> – *Politics* 1255a 21-28[501]

The master-to-slave relationship is likened to the "natural" hierarchy between humans and domestic animals (1255a:12-28), and that between the soul and the body (1255a:10-16; 1254b:17). Like animals, natural slaves are not equipped for thinking. They *are* well equipped for physical work, such as domestic animals provide (1254b:13-28). Nature has made these two types because she creates nothing "in a stingy fashion, like the Delphic knife," but a separate thing for each purpose (1252b 1-3). Therefore, "one that can foresee with his mind is naturally (φυσει) ruler and naturally master, and one that can do these things [i.e., labor] is naturally a slave" (1252a 32-35).[502]

Here we have two essentially dissimilar types of human being—slave and free. One's birth seems to determine to which category one belongs. Nowhere does Aristotle suggest that one

[501] Rackham, LCL.
[502] Ibid.

might change from being a natural slave to a naturally free person. Rather, “There exist certain persons who are essentially slaves everywhere and certain others who are so nowhere” (*Pol.* 1255a 29).

Moreover, the two are not distributed indiscriminately among the nations; it seems that Greeks are naturally free, and that barbarians are naturally slaves.[503] One illustration of this “fact” is found in marriage:

> Among barbarians the female and the slave have the same rank; and the cause of this is that barbarians have no class of natural rulers, but with them a conjugal partnership is a partnership of female slave and male slave. Hence the saying of the poets— 'Tis meet that Greek should rule barbarians [Eurip. *IA* 1400]—implying that barbarian and slave are the same in nature (φυσει). – *Politics* I.1252b 5-9[504]

As we have seen, slaves have a unique slavish nature (φυσις); it turns out that barbarians are characterized by this very same nature. For Aristotle, "common sense" upholds the idea that some are naturally slaves (such as barbarians), while others (such as captured Greeks) are only made slaves by the vicissitudes of war (1255a 28-38). Greeks can only become slaves by legal convention, not by nature.

Another implication of this theory deals directly with war. Making war against barbarians, even for the express purpose of acquiring slaves, is as acceptable as capturing wild animals: “Hence even the art of war will by nature be in a manner an art of acquisition (for the art of hunting is a part of it) that is properly employed both against wild animals and against such of mankind as are designed by nature for subjection” (*Pol*. 1256b 23-26). War, when waged against barbarians, is simply “hunting.” Such thinking obviously meshes well with imperial ideology. Aristotle allegedly advised Alexander to draw a sharp distinction between the Greeks and his eastern conquests, who were to be treated “like plants and animals” after being

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[503] Peter Garnsey writes, “This was a crucial distinction, for otherwise the category of natural slaves might be thought of as entirely academic.” Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1996), 126.

[504] Rackham: LCL.

conquered (Plut. *Mor.* 329 B-D).[505] Imperial expansion could be cast in a benevolent light, since natural slaves are not suited to live free, and actually live best under a "symbiotic relationship" with fully human masters.[506]

Natural slavery can be found in many other sources. Plato attests the existence of such thinking in his own day; he had the character Callicles say, “Nature itself reveals it, that. . . this is what is judged just: the superior is to rule the inferior and to have more” (*Gorgias* 483 c-3).[507] Callicles' argument likely represents a popular opinion in Plato's time. Thucydides said it was a “necessary law of nature” among both Gods and human beings, that the stronger rule the weaker (Thucydides 5.89, 5.105). In fragments of *de Republica* preserved by Augustine, Cicero argues: "Servitude may be advantageous to the provincials, and is so when it is rightly administered—that is, when lawless men are prevented from doing harm. And further, as they became worse and worse so long as they were free, they will improve by subjection" (quoted in *City of God* 19:21).[508] Dionysius of Halicarnassus counsels Greeks of his day that their subjugation to the Romans is grounded in reason, “For by a universal law of nature, which time cannot destroy, it is ordained that superiors shall ever govern their inferiors” (1.5.2).[509]

Philo's discussion of Jacob and Esau echoes natural slavery ideas (*Alleg.Int.* 3.88). He ponders why, even in the womb, God declared Jacob a master (δεσποτην) and Esau a slave (δουλον). The reason is that God knows the different qualities of his creatures even before he has fully “chiseled and consummated them.” This seems to imply a rather deterministic view: Esau was destined to be a slave even before he was born, because his character was destined to be slavish. Philo proceeds to a statement that resonates with Aristotle's discussion of natural slavery: “In God's judgment that which is base and irrational is by nature (φυσει) a slave, but that which

[505] Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 181.
[506] Ibid., 171.
[507] Plato himself does himself support to this view, and has his usual mouthpiece Socrates dispute it.
[508] Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 181-2.
[509] qtd. in Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 185.

is of a fine character and endowed with reason and better is princely and free" (*Alleg.Interp.* 3.88).[510]

From the very beginning, the concept of natural slavery had its fair share of critics. Strabo, writing during the reign of Tiberius, mentions a treatise by the 3rd-century Eratosthenes, which criticized "those who advised Alexander to treat the Greeks as friends but the barbarians as enemies"—probably a reference to Aristotle himself.[511] This anecdote not only bears witness that there was disagreement about natural slavery in the third century BCE, but also that the debate was still going strong centuries later when Strabo's account was written. Natural slavery continues to show up in the thought of Late Antique writers, including Christians.[512] It seems likely, therefore, that the idea was part of the conceptual context in which John was written.

One enormously popular trope in antiquity was the attribution of animalistic characteristics to the barbarian. Aristotle asserted, "a bestial character is rare among human beings; it is found most frequently among barbarians, and some cases also occurs (among Greeks) as a result of disease or arrested development" (*Nic.Eth.* 1145a 29-33). Here, a "bestial" nature is explained as the result of individual pathology for Greeks, whereas it is natural for barbarians: "People irrational by nature and living solely by sensation, like certain remote tribes of barbarians, belong to the bestial class; others, who lose their reason because of a disease or insanity, belong to the diseased" (1149a). The pseudo-scientific treatise *Physiognomica* attempts to explain the predominance of beast-like habits and appearance, common among foreigners, in terms of environmental factors; excesses of heat or cold produce these characteristics. Later, Roman authors compared wandering peoples, such as the Nomads or certain Africans, with

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[510] Although Peter Garnsey includes this passage in a series of writings which presuppose an awareness of natural slavery thinking (*Ideas of Slavery,* 43), I must emphasize that, Philo does not actually *subscribe* to this view of slavery, as can be seen in his treatise *Every Good Man is Free.* However, this passage is *suggestive* of the theory; Philo is able to employ the concept of natural slavery figuratively, when thinking about chosenness. The translation cited here that of Colson and Whitaker, LCL.

[511] *Strabo* 1.4.9, qtd. in Isaac, *Invention of Racism,*185.

[512] Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 186.

animals; this fits the age-old Greek notion that one of the essential differences between humanity and animals is social organization and settlement. Tacitus conveys reports, without vouching for their veracity, that the furthest German tribes have the faces and limbs of wild animals; Manilius likewise opines that Germany was "fit only to breed wild beasts." Seneca describes both Germans and Scythians as living "in the manner of lions and wolves who can neither serve nor command, for they do not have the power of a human intellect but a wild and unmanageable one" (*De Ira* 2.15).[513] This is very much in keeping with Aristotle's characterization of the "bestial class" of humans: they lack the capacity to reason.

The attribution of a bestial nature to barbarians was linked, as we have seen, to the theory that they were congenitally deficient in two human traits: intelligence and civilization. "Civilized" people, on the other hand—Greeks and Romans—possess these capacities. Any individual Greeks who lacked these traits were diseased, and so were *like* animals, although by nature they should posses a more human nature. For barbarians, however, the bestial classification seems more literal than metaphorical.

We will now leave behind anthropologies drawn from the Greek milieu. To recap, we saw a handful of thought-systems which imagined that humanity could be divided into just a few groups, which might be loosely called "races" (based on their possessing unique descent, homelands, way of life, and supposed consubstantiality amongst members). Since these groups were imagined to have their own nature (φυσις) or essence (οντα), we might call these divisions "ontological races." It seems that notions somewhat like the "cosmological race" constructed by John were not unheard of in the Hellenistic world.

We saw that Judeans could sometimes express similar ideas to the concepts surveyed above. However, the ideas surveyed thus far were most exhaustively explored by Greek or Roman authors. Now, we will move on to broad divisions of humanity that were particularly at

[513] Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 199-204.

home within the Judean milieu.

Judean Ontological Divisions

The book of *Jubilees* includes one passage (15:25-34), which implies two "spiritual" divisions of humanity. The "sons of the covenant" are Israelites; the "children of destruction" are gentiles and uncircumcised Israelite males. The latter are also called "sons of Beliar;" it is unclear whether this appellation also applies to gentiles. The two peoples have different spiritual "father figures." The sons of the covenant are under God alone, while the sons of destruction are ruled over by a host of spirits:

> And he sanctified them [Israel] and gathered them from all the sons of man because (there are) many nations and many people, and they belong to him, but over them he caused spirits to rule so that they might lead them astray from following him. But over Israel he did not cause any angel or spirit to rule because he alone is their ruler, so that … they might be his and he might be theirs henceforth and forever. – *Jubilees* 15:31-32[514]

At first blush, the fact that uncircumcised Israelites belong to the "children of destruction" seems to hint that there is some fluidity to this category. However, their lack of circumcision is explained by God's having *already* destined them for destruction, beforehand (*Jub.*15:26). This emphasis on God's election, prior to human behavior, effectively rules out fluidity between the categories. This is why the Lord did not "elect" Esau and his brothers, although they were also sons of Abraham, "for he knew them" (15:30). Recall that we saw similar contemplation about God's election, foreordaining which group one belongs to, in Philo's discussion of Jacob and Esau. At any rate, there is no indication that gentiles can join the favored "sons of the covenant."

For a tradition with wider attestation, we might cite the Jewish tradition of speculation about Seth, the son of Adam. Seth speculation tended to center around his special place as an ancestor, or as Seth as a source of special knowledge.[515] His line was supposed to be distinct in

[514] Wintermute, *OTP* v.2.
[515] Michael A. Williams, "Sethianism," in *Companion to Second Century Christian Heretics* (edited by Antii

some way. For example, in the "Animal Apocalypse" of *1 Enoch*, Seth is depicted as a white bull, just like Adam; Cain and Abel are instead red and black, respectively. It is through Seth, then, that the image of true humanity continues among Adam's descendants. The angels who descend to earth associate only with the black bulls, which suggest that they have intercourse with only Cain's descendants, not Seth's.[516] Although the generation of Cain perished in the flood, they seem to have survived and propagated through the figure of Ham; he was also born as a black bull, and is regarded as Cain's successor.[517] Josephus relates that Seth was exceedingly virtuous, and that his progeny were "all virtuous in character." They were later corrupted, seemingly around the same time that some angels began marrying human women (*Ant*. 1.68-74) . In contrast, Philo's use of Sethite/Cainite ancestry is characteristically allegorical: they represent two classes of humanity.[518] The impious are assigned to the race (γενει) of Cain; while the virtuous are enrolled under Seth (*Post. Caini* 42). It is clear that Philo employs the two "races" as evaluative categories, not fixed identities. After all, God can translate those who please him "from perishable to immortal races" (εκ φθαρτων εις αθανατα γενη), illustrating their fluidity (*Post. Caini* 43). In some Judean traditions, it seems, Seth's line can be distinguished from Cain's, not only before but also *after* the flood.[519] Here, we appear to have the division of humanity into constitutionally dissimilar races of mythical origin: the descendants of Seth and those of Cain (and also, in some articulations of the tradition, those of Abel). Trumbower opines that, in light of the "Seth" speculation found in ancient Judaism, it is hardly surprising to find categories like the children of God / children of the devil emerging in the gospel of John.[520]

Perhaps the closest parallel to John's anthropology comes from Qumran. Several of these

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Marjanen and Petri Luomanen. Boston: Brill, 2005), 34; A. F. J. Klijn, *Seth in Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 23.

[516] Klijn, *Seth,* 21.

[517] Ibid., *Seth,* 22, 27.

[518] Philo, *Post. Caini* 40-48. See Williams, "Sethianism," 35; and Dylan M. Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God: Platonism and the Exile of Sethian Gnosticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennslyvania, 2014), 211 n. 16.

[519] Klijn, *Seth*, 23.

[520] Trumbower, *Born from Above,* 44.

works sketch out an anthropology in which humanity is cleft into polar camps: The Sons of Darkness and the Sons of Light. Although, of course, different texts discuss these groups with different nuances, the general outlines are: The Sons of Darkness (also called the sons of Belial) are the eternal antagonists of the Sons of Light. These two primal divisions are under the control of different spirits (1QS 3:18; 4:26); individuals are "sorted and appointed" to one or the other by God, who knows everything in advance (1QS 4:25). Because evil humanity is characterized as "sons" of Darkness (or Belial), they might be said to have a different ancestor than good humanity, the "sons" of Light (or God). Each descends, as it were, from a different spirit (or god, or shade of light)—and so, the two divisions of humanity might be characterized as descent groups, or "races." James Charlesworth suggests that the "Sons of light" (ὑιοι φωτος) who appear in John's gospel (12:36) may be inspired by the use of "Sons of Light" (בני אור) as a self-designation for community members in many Qumran scrolls.[521]

The *Rule of the Community* lays out the general expectations for those entering the community, and describes the character of its members. It lays out "the history of all the sons of man, concerning all the ranks of their spirits" (1QS 3:13-14). In this account, we learn that

> [17]God created man to rule [18]the world and placed within him two spirits so that he would walk with them until the moment of his visitation: they are the spirits of truth and deceit. [20]In the hand of the Prince of Lights is dominion over all the sons of justice; they walk on paths of light. And in the hand of the Angel [21]of Darkness is total domination over the sons of deceit; they walk on paths of darkness. – 1QS 3:17-21[522]

This passage divides all human beings ("all the sons of man"), and places them under the thrall of two ruling influences. This dualism is not only anthropological, but cosmological and eschatological as well.[523] These teachings provide the Qumran initiate with a particular view of history—one which constructs them as the people of light, constructed in opposition to the

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[521] The "Sons of Light" appear in many Qumran sources: 1QS 3:13,24,25; 1QM 1:1,3,9,11,13; 4Q510 11:7; 4Qcat 12 + 1:7 and 1:11; 4QFlor 1 + 1:9. James H. Charlesworth, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel According to John," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (Edited by R. Alan Culpepper and C.Clifton Black. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 73-74.

[522] Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated,* 6.

[523] For list of rhetorical oppositions in chapters 3 and 4, see Maxwell Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1992), 145-6.

people of darkness. By divine intention, and because of opposed mindsets, they are locked in eternal conflict: "God has sorted them into equal parts until the last day and has put an everlasting loathing between their divisions. Deeds of deceit are an abhorrence to truth and all the paths of truth are an abhorrence to deceit" (1QS 4:16-17).

The creation of this sense of antagonism is an explicit purpose of the *Rule*. Community members are exhorted "to love all the sons of light, each one according to his lot in God's plan, and to detest all the sons of darkness" (1QS 1:9-10). This ordering of affections aligns the community members with God's own loves and hates (1QS 1:3-4). There exists, then, a "race" of beings who are hated by God, and who *ought* to be hated by all the sons of light.[524]

The logic of eternal antagonism between peoples easily leads to fantasies of violence, or preparations for actual violence. This consequence of the two-fold anthropology is made explicit in the *War Scroll.* It describes the war that will take place between the two camps:

> [1:1]The first attack by the sons of light will be launched against the lot of the sons of darkness, against the army of Belial, against the company of Edom and of Moab and of the sons of Ammon [2]and of the comp[any of … and of] Philistia, and against the companies of the Kittim of Ashur and [those who assist them from among the wicked] of the covenant. The sons of Levi, the sons of Judah and the sons of Benjamin, the exiled of the desert, will wage war against them. [3][…] against all their companies, when the exiled sons of light return from the desert of the peoples to camp in the desert of Jerusalem. And after that war, they shall go up from there [4][…] of the Kittim of Egypt. – 1QM 1:1-4[525]

It significant that the overarching races (sons of light/darkness) are explicitly linked with actual, geographic-historical races. "God has summoned the sword against all all the nations" (such as the explicitly-mentioned Edomites and Moabites), but he will fight with his people (1QM 16:1). From the *War Scroll*, we may extract a fuller catalog of holy and wicked races:

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[524] Charlesworth further observes that the Qumranite exhortation to love only members of the in-group is present in John's gospel as well (unlike the Synoptics, with their surprising command to love one's enemies), and is in "full bloom" in the Johannine epistles. Charlesworth, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel According to John," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (edited by R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 86.

[525] Martínez, Florentino García, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 95.

Sons of light (1:1-8) *aka* "Sons of justice"	**Sons of darkness**, *aka* "Kittim," *first list* (1:1-8)	*second list* (2:10-14)
Sons of Levi	Edomites	Naharaimites, Luddites, Arameans, Assyrians, Persians, Elamites, Ishmaelites, Keturahites
Sons of Judah	Moabites	
Sons of Benjamin	Ammonites	
	Philistines	"the Eastern peoples"
	Assyrians	"all the sons of Ham"
	Egyptians	"all the sons of Japhet"

The two peoples, then, are not merely abstract categories of humanity, but correspond to specific ethnic groups. These include not only traditional foes like Edom and Moab[526] but such broad groups as "all the sons of Ham" and "all the sons of Japhet"—an extensive group of races indeed![527] The sons of light, by contrast, only include three tribes of Israel—and only those members who belong to the spirit of truth.[528] *All* human beings, then, are "sons of darkness" except for a vanishingly small subset of Judeans.

There is some scholarly disagreement about how deterministic the categories outlined in various Qumran sources really are. For examples, Von Wahlde argues that 1QS really only represents a "modified dualism" (which he also calls an "apocalyptic dualism"), rather than an ontological dualism, because an individual's lot can improve or deteriorate, and community members must therefore be assessed at given intervals.[529]

Philo is also able to describe human beings as belonging to two overarching divisions, allegorically described in the two accounts of the creation of man (Gen 1:27, 2:7). He writes, "The race (ειδος)[530] of mankind also is twofold, the one being the race of those who live by the divine Spirit and reason; the other of those who exist according to blood and the pleasure of the flesh. This species (ειδος) is formed of the earth, but that other is an accurate copy of the divine

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[526] Davidson, *Angels at Qumran,* 220.
[527] cf. Gen 10:2-20
[528] Davidson, *Angels at Qumran,* 220.
[529] Urban C. Von Wahlde, *Gnosticism, Docetism, and the Judaisms of the First Century: The Search for the Wider Context of the Johannine Literature and Why it Matters* (New York: T&T Clark, 2015)*,* 157.
[530] ειδος: species, genus, particular sort; Liddell-Scott, 226.

image" (*Heir* 22:57).[531] For Philo, these two types of human beings are not fixed. Rather, individuals more or less influenced by the two natures of which all human beings partake: the breath of God (reason), or "the mass of the body, filled with blood" (passions, and the outward senses). Presumably, people can switch which "race" (ειδος) they belong to, by aligning themselves either with God or with the flesh.[532] Philo adds a gendered quality to these races, as well: "The soul depending on blood, by means of which the brute animals live, is akin properly to the female race (γενους); the race of his mother, and has no share in the male race." (*Heir*, 22:61). However, he concedes that especially pious women (such as Sarah), might actually belong to the more "masculine" of these two groups. Here, then, we have a layer of "spiritual race" that does not depend upon flesh-and-blood race, as well a layer of "spiritual gender," which does not always depend upon flesh-and-blood gender! Philo postulates an additional, "transcendent" level of these two fundamental facets of human identity, which are not determined by their "real" physical counterparts. We see a similar construction in John, for whom one's historical-geographical race (e.g., Samaritan, Roman) has no bearing whatsoever on one's cosmological race (i.e. Child of God, or Child of the Devil).

We have seen, then, that Judean sources could sometimes speak of all human beings as belonging two or three general types, with their own distinct being and origin. Sometimes, these were described using categories that employed descent-language, but in ways which were abstracted from actual claims of ancestry (i.e., "sons of light" / "sons of the covenant" vs. "sons of darkness" / "sons of destruction"). At other times, they were conceptualized in terms of genealogical descent from the earliest primordial humans (i.e., descent from Cain, Seth, and sometimes Abel).

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[531] Yonge translation.

[532] This idea belongs loosely to the "Two Ways" school of thought, classifying human beings by the extent to which they follow a good or evil path – or the extent to which they are influenced by either a good or evil spirit. For another example see *Testament of Asher* 1:3-9.

Gnostic Ontological Divisions

Many gnostic sources also divide human beings into two or three quintessentially different types. Of course, the available evidence for Gnosticism postdates the composition of John. However, these sources may incorporate traditions that informed the conceptual background of John. For example, much of the gnostic speculation related to the "race of Seth" bears considerable resemblance to Judean traditions on the same subject. Therefore, it seems likely that gnostics have inherited and reworked earlier traditions. The second century offers numerous examples of gnostics who traced the existence of three human natures to Seth and his brothers. One such thinker was Theodotus, who writes: "And from Adam three natures (φυσεις) are descended (γεννωνται): First the irrational, which is Cain's, second the rational, which is Abel's, and third the spiritual (πνευναματικη), which is Seth's" (Clement, *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 54.1).[533] Theodotus further explains these three descent-groups may be called the choic (χοϊκος), the psychic (ψυχικος), and the spiritual (πνευματικος), respectively (*Exerp. Theod.* 54.2). The gnostic thinker Ptolemaus elaborated on the role of individual *agency* in such a taxonomy:

> They assume three types (γενη) of men; the spiritual, the choic, and the psychic, corresponding to Cain, Abel, and Seth, in order that they may represent by these the three natures (φυσεις), not with reference to an individual, but with reference to kinds (γενος) of men. The choic ends in corruption; the psychic, if it chooses what is better, reposes in the place of the Middle, but if it chooses what is worse, it goes to what corresponds thereto. The spiritual beings which Achamoth sowed in righteous souls up till now will, since they were sent forth immature, be trained and brought up here, and later, when they are accounted worthy of perfection, they will be given as brides to the angels of the Saviour. . .
>
> – Irenaeus *Adv.Haer.* 1.1.5; cf. *Ep. Pan*. 31.1-27[534]

Individual choice is only a factor for one of the three "races" of mankind. It is a foregone conclusion that the choics are destined for hell; similarly, the spirituals will be brought to heaven *when*, not *if*, they are accounted worthy. Only for the middle species—the "psychics"—is individual agency in play. Heracleon, a Valentinian gnostic who wrote the earliest-known

[533] My trans.
[534] Foerster, *Gnosis*, 141.

commentary on John (mid-second century), espoused the same general taxonomy of humanity.[535] The most important feature of gnostic Seth speculation was that they themselves— i.e., the gnostics—were of the race of Seth.[536] Related to Seth speculation, a common gnostic motif described Cain as the son of the serpent in Eden. This notion also found some traction outside of Gnosticism.[537]

Cosmological Race in Antiquity: Conclusions

The preceding survey has demonstrated that there were several traditions in antiquity that divided humankind into a few primordial "races." These categories claimed to describe a layer of human identity more fundamental than mere "race," at least as described by such labels as Thracian, Lydian, or Gaul. However, these transcendent categories were often marked by typical *criteria* of race, such as ancestry, homeland, shared virtue, distinctive way of life, or religion.[538] As such, they have the characteristics of *ethnē*, even when they are not called by that term.

We noted that in some cases, these "ontological races" mapped onto actual historical-geographical races. So, Greeks (and sometimes Romans) are fully human, as opposed to beastly barbarians. Similarly, the "Children of Light" are made up of Judeans, while the Children of Darkness are gentiles. Note that, in these cases, any "leakage" in the correspondence between "levels" of race takes the form of degeneration. That is, some Judeans might become Children of Darkness; but there is no opportunity for those who "naturally" belong to this category (i.e.,

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[535] Heracleon wrote that people were composed of different "substances" (ουσιαι) or "natures" (φυσεις). In Heracleon's system, the substance to which one belongs was fixed and deterministic (Origen, *CJ* 20:20-23; 19:20). There were three such substances; all humanity was divided into material (χοϊκοι), psychic (ψυχικοι), or spiritual (πνευματικοι) human beings (*CJ* 20:24).

[536] Burns, *Apocalypse of the Alien God,* 79.

[537] For further reading on this Cain-Serpent tradition, see: Gedaliahu A. G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (Boston: Brill, 1984), 40-42; Alistair Logan, *Gnostic Truth and Christian Heresy: A Study in the History of Gnosticism* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 254, FN 75; and John Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 17.

[538] See Appendix: "Ontological Races in Judean, Johannine, and Gnostic Traditions."

gentiles) to become Children of Light. Similarly, Aristotle admitted that some Greeks might be "beast-like" due to pathology or sickness, but barbarians were animals by nature.

John might well have at least been exposed to the *notion* of ontologically distinct categories of people, even if he had no detailed knowledge of the particular versions outlined above. They collectively form a plausible "conceptual context" for the John's construction of two cosmic races, set in primal opposition: the children of God, and children of the devil. He would not have had to invent the idea of such races *ex nihilo;* his anthropology could have been influenced by notions that were already at large in several Mediterranean cultures.

Let us turn our consideration to the gospel, and investigate how John's version of such a division differed from other ancient examples. By making faith in Jesus *the* defining feature of the two races, he creates a system in which one division of humankind is constitutionally incapable of believing in Jesus—and therefore, in his estimation, incapable of receiving eternal life.

CHAPTER 6: COSMOLOGICAL RACE IN JOHN

This chapter will discuss the two cosmological races we encounter in John. First, we shall investigate their racial characteristics—including their birth, their descent, their association with a homeland, and their distinctive character. Then, I will consider two passages in which John appropriates common biblical images for Israel, the sheepfold (10:1-16) and the vine (15:1-17), and reconfigures them so that they now refer to his own favored race, "the children of God."

Indicia of the Children of God / Children of the Devil

Throughout John, we get glimpses into the characteristics of the Children of God and Children of the Devil. By piecing these together, we can construct a profile for each group. Each one descends from a particular ancestor, has a distinctive homeland or origin, and a shared moral character—all of which were common features of how ethnicity was constructed in the ancient world. Additionally, the sort of birth (or conception) by which the Children of God come to be can be distinguished from the biological mechanisms of reproduction; this group seems to have an additional, spiritual element as part of their generation.

1. Birth

How do the members of this race, the "Children of God," come to be? In John's gospel, the Children of God are not (only) conceived by natural, physical means. John intentionally contrasts

conventional descriptions of how humans are born, with his discussion on how the Children of God come to be. They are "born, not of bloods (εξ αἱματων), nor the will of the flesh (εκ θεληματος σαρκος), nor the will of man (εκ θεληματος ανδρος), but born of God (εκ του θεου εγεννηθησαν)" (John 1:13).

The natural mechanisms described here—bloods, the "will" of a man, and the "will of the flesh,"—are consistent with Aristotle's theory of conception, known as "epigenesis." This should not be terribly surprising. Aristotle's ideas about how conception occurred had widespread, lasting influence on reproductive theory across the classical world.[539] The contemporary "science" of human conception can be found in Judean sources. Judean authors were familiar with the popular understanding of human reproduction. In the pseudonymous *Wisdom of Solomon,* "Solomon" narrates his own beginnings in these terms:

> I also am mortal (ανθρωπος), like everyone else,
> a descendant of the first-formed child of earth;
> and in the womb of a mother (εν κοιλιᾳ μητρος) I was molded into flesh (σαρξ),
> within the period of ten months, compacted with blood (εν αἱματι),
> from the seed of a man (σπερματος ανδρος) and the pleasure of marriage. (7:1-2)[540]

This reflects a general outlook congruent with Aristotelian epigenesis. The motive cause, present within the σπερματος ανδρος, works upon the material cause of the αἱματι, the formal process by which the human is molded into σαρξ. The final cause is, of course, an ανθρωπος. Notice that many of the same concepts—blood, flesh, seed/will of a man, and "the pleasure of marriage" (corresponding, perhaps, to the "will of the flesh?")—appear both in this passage and John 1:13.

Philo also demonstrates familiarity with ancient conception theory. Here he combines description of the "science" of reproduction with theology, applying reproductive terms to God's own actions:

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[539] Andrew Coles, "Biomedical Models of Reproduction in the Fifth Century BC and Aristotle's Generation of Animals," *Phronesis* 40:1 (1995): 48.

[540] NRSV.

> A husband unites with his wife, and the male human with the female human in intercourse which results in the generation of children, in strict accordance with and obedience to nature (τῃ φυσει). But it is not lawful for virtues, who give birth to many perfect things, to associate with a mortal husband. But they [the virtues], without having received semen (γονην)[541] from someone else, from themselves alone can never bring forth anything.
>
> Who, then, is it who sows (σπειρων) good in them, except the Father of the universe, the unbegotten (αγενητος) God who is the begetter of all (τα συμπαντα γεννων)? Then this one sows (σπειρει), and presently he bestows his own nature (γεννημα), which he sowed. For God begets (γεννᾳ) nothing for himself, inasmuch as he is in need of nothing, but he creates every thing for him who is able to take it.
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> – *On the Cherubim* 43-44. [542]

Philo here alludes to the physical process of human reproduction. But the surprising facet of this discussion is that after the natural act of procreation, God performs a second act of begetting upon these same people. God assists the Virtues (who cannot procreate on their own) by giving them γονην (Aristotle's word for semen—male seed) which he himself sows (σπειρει) in human beings! In a sense, those who have received the Virtues are "twice-begotten;" once of human parents, and once of God. In other works, Philo articulates this concept of dual-layered paternity in different ways. Every human being has two fathers—a created one (a human), and an uncreated one (God).[543] Human fathers serve a biological function on behalf of our true father, God; therefore "we, who are called fathers, are only instruments of His."[544]

According to Adele Reinhartz, such examples demonstrate that Judeans who were roughly contemporaneous with John were familiar with at least the rudiments of Aristotle's theory of epigenesis, and were willing to apply this "scientific" vocabulary to religious questions.[545]

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[541] *gonē*, used in Aristotle's discussion of epigenesis to describe the male seed.

[542] Philo, *On the Cherubim* 43-44; translation is after Yonge with modifications based on the Greek.

[543] *On Joseph*, 265: "And why should I remember only that father who was created and born? We have also the uncreated, immortal, everlasting God for our father, who sees all things and hears all people..." (Yonge trans.)

[544] *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, 48: "...so that they scarcely ever turn their minds at all to behold the true Father of the universe. For He is in truth the one real and genuine Father of all; and we, who are called fathers, are only instruments of His, serving to generation..." (Yonge trans.)

[545] Adele Reinhartz, "'And the Word Was Begotten': Divine Epigenesis in the Gospel of John." *Semeia* 85 (1999): 91.

In John, we see a similar contrast between two kinds of generation, the biological and the spiritual. The generation of the Children of God is contrasted with the mundane, natural process by which all human beings are conceived and born. To return to the prologue:

1:12 He gave them authority to become children of God (τεκνα θεου), 13 who were born:		
not of bloods	ουκ	εξ αἱματων
nor of the will of the flesh	ουδε	εκ θεληματος σαρκος
nor of the will of a man,	ουδε	εκ θεληματος ανδρος
but of God.	αλλα	εκ θεου.

John's plural "bloods" (αἱματων) fits Aristotle's scientific theory of reproduction; both male and female "seed" were thought to be highly specialized concoctions of each parent's blood, and both were needed for conception. But as this verse explains, the Children of God's origins are not fully described by the biological processes of human becoming, but contain an additional element—they are "born/begotten of God" (εκ θεου εγεννηθησαν).[546]

This contrast between biological birth and divine begetting is again evident in Nicodemus' conversation with Jesus (John 3). Nicodemus interprets Jesus' words about being born ανωθεν ("again" / "from above") in a literal, biological way. He asks, "Can a man enter a second time into his mother's womb (εις την κοιλιαν της μετρος) and be born?" (3:4) This rather ridiculous question misses the point of what it means to be born ανωθεν. To clarify, Jesus answers: "Truly, truly I say to you: unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God. What is born from the flesh is flesh, and what is born from the Spirit is spirit." (3:5). Jesus draws a distinction here between the normal biological means of reproduction, and the way that the Children of God come to be. The distinction might be mapped thus:

[546] Leander Keck recognizes that there is an "additional" element of the generation implied here, rather than one which replaces the biological realities: "The point is not that these people were sired by God instead of by human parents. Rather. . . they are 'begotten of God,' so that they are simultaneously their parents' children and God's 'children.' Keck, "Derivation as Destiny: 'Of-ness' in Johannine Christology, Anthropology, and Soteriology," 275.

natural human procreation:	
born from mother's womb	εκ της κοιλιας της μητρος
born of the flesh	εκ της σαρκος
… is flesh	σαρξ εστιν

Children of God:	
born of water and Spirit	εξ ὑδατος και πνευματος
born of the Spirit	εκ του πνευματος
…is spirit	πνευμα εστιν

Nicodemus' interpretation of being born ανωθεν is thoroughly physiological. Recall that two terms from Nicodemus' question, σαρξ and κοιλια μετρος, also appeared in "Solomon's" description of biological procreation (*Wisdom of Solomon* 7:1). Jesus' description offers an alternate view, with divine/heavenly "parentage." Without denying the physical reality of birth, Jesus superimposes an additional element that must be present; the child of God is born "again/ from above" and born of the Spirit. Moreover, the difference between the two is not limited to birth, but also includes essence: What is born of spirit *is* spirit, what is born of flesh *is* flesh. Jesus devalues the sort of "fleshly" life that exists apart from being born ανωθεν. Elsewhere, he says, "The spirit (πνευμα) is what gives life; the flesh (σαρξ) is worth nothing" (6:63, cf. 3:6).

2. Descent

Ancestry is a crucial element of race in antiquity. John assigns two cosmic fathers to his two new races: God and the devil. The gospel does this both positively and negatively. Positively, John constructs a "cosmic" level of ancestry that is superimposed upon biological descent. Negatively, John deconstructs the human level of ancestry, by devaluing various claims based on human ancestors. John dismisses various characters' ancestry-based arguments,[547] and consistently

[547] E.g., the "seed of David" is only used negatively, and descent from Abraham is never positively evaluated. Michael Peppard, "Adopted and Begotten Sons of God: Paul and John on Divine Sonship," *CBQ* 73.1 (2011):

shows that Jesus is greater than the ancestors. Who one's *human* fathers are, is less important than who one's *cosmic* father is.[548] In terms of racialization, this downplays the importance of earthly race (based on human ancestry) to the point of irrelevancy.

First, let us consider how John downplays the significance of human ancestry. We have already seen instances of this in the preceding chapters;[549] now, we will consider John's treatment of human "fathers/ancestors" as a consistent theme, which runs through the gospel. The sheer number of times characters invoke ancestry is impressive. The pervasiveness of this theme is unavoidably muted in English translations, because translators are forced to choose between "father" and "ancestors" in many places, obscuring the double valency of the Greek word πατηρ.[550]

Throughout the gospel, John employs a pattern wherein a speaker invokes human ancestors to make a rhetorical point, but Jesus then counters in a way that shows that the ancestors are subordinate to Jesus himself. This pattern occurs in two variations. The first type is structured as an honor challenge that explicitly compares Jesus unfavorably with an ancestor. An opponent asks Jesus 1) whether he is greater than the ancestor, phrasing this query in a way which grammatically anticipates a negative answer, 2) adding some point drawn from that ancestor's life, 3) as well as subsequent ancestors or exemplars of the race, 4) to which Jesus affirms that what he will accomplish *is*, in fact, greater than the example set by the ancestor. The wording of the initial question is identical, until the name:

104.

[548] Or, as Peppard puts it, "earthly lineage is trumped by divine begetting." Peppard, "Adopted and Begotten Sons of God," 104.

[549] e.g., chapters 2—4, especially the preceding discussions of John 4:7-23 and 8:39-58.

[550] For example, frequently translators choose to render the singular πατηρ as "father," but the plural πατερες is generally translated "ancestors" as in the NRSV translation of 8:53 and 8:56.

"**Are you greater than our ancestor**... (μη συ μειζων ει του πατρος ήμων...)

[12]...Jacob, who drank from it, and his sons and his flocks [drank from it]?' [13]Jesus answered and told her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, [14]but those who drink of the water that I will give him will not thirst, into the age; but the water which I will give him become a well of water within him, gushing up to eternal life.' (4:12-14)	[53]...Abraham, who died? And the prophets died. Who do you claim to be?' [54a]Jesus answered... [56]'Your ancestor Abraham was glad that he would see my day, and he saw it and rejoiced.' [57]Then the Judeans said to him, 'You're not yet fifty years old, and you've seen Abraham?' [58]Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.' (8:53-54a, 56-58)

In both passages, Jesus goes one better than the ancestor. Although the well at Sychar was good enough for Jacob, Jesus offers water that can quench one's thirst forever (εις τον αιωνα), and will continue to spring up inside the one who drinks "to eternal life" (εις ζωην αιωνιον). Although death has had its way with the Israelites all the way back to Abraham, Jesus promises freedom from death (8:51,53), and Abraham had joyfully perceived Jesus' day from afar (8:56).

With the saying, "Before Abraham was, I am," Jesus discloses himself as the "Once and Future Christ," who was before Abraham, and whose future Abraham foresaw. The temporal framework of Jesus' existence stretches back, not only to the ancestor of the Israelites, but also to a prior existence with God[551]—and stretches forward "into the age" (εις τον αιωνα). In racial terms, then, Jesus may be accounted "Judean," at least according to the processes of human generation—but he is also something else *before* that (in terms of both significance and chronology). Jesus was around before Abraham (8:58)—indeed, he "was in the beginning with God" (1:2). To put it another way: Jesus existed before there even *was* a man named Judah to be descended from!

The other variant of this motif employs the same general logic, but lacks the *explicit* comparison between Jesus and an ancestor—that is, the phrase "Are you greater than. . . " is lacking. However, the example of "our ancestors" (οἱ πατερες ήμων) is still raised as if in

[551] A point John makes implicitly in Jesus' repeated use of the divine "I am" (6:35, 8:12, 10:9, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1), and explicitly in the Prologue (1:1-2).

challenge to Jesus' position. Similarly, Jesus still rebutts this challenge, saying that the reality breaking forth in his ministry exceeds anything that happened in their day:

"Our ancestors" (ὀι πατερες ἡμων) as Rhetorical Challenge

	"What sign are you doing, that we may see and believe you? What work are you performing?
"Our ancestors (οἱ πατερες ἡμων) worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where one must worship is in Jerusalem."	Our ancestors (οἱ πατερες ἡμων) ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" (6:30-31)
Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, that the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem. (4:20-21)	"I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.' (6:48-50)

In the first case, the Samaritan woman only *assumes* Jesus will share the position of other Judeans and prefer to worship in Jerusalem; it turns out that he does not. In the second example, the Judeans object to Jesus' promise that those who eat the bread of life will "never see death." In both cases, Jesus turns our attention from deeds of the progenitors, toward "greater things than these" (1:50) which are beginning with Jesus' ministry.

To John, the racial progenitors and their works are less important than Jesus himself. Jesus existed before them, lives on after them, and represents a level of being which transcends human procreation. Now that Jesus is in the picture, John suggests, those who appeal to these ancestors are thinking too small. We must look past human forebears, who lived and died in the course of earthly history, to the level of being we share with the messiah who "was in the beginning with God" (1:2), and who gives himself so that we might "live into the age" (8:51).[552] John is emphatic that the reality unfolding right now, as a result of Jesus' ministry, began at

[552] John may even imply Jesus is the one who "sent" the patriarchs of the Judeans. Twice, Jesus is asked whether he is "greater than" (μειζων) the ancestors, to which he essentially answers, "Yes." Elsewhere, he tells his disciples that "Slaves are not greater (μειζων) than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them" (13:1). Placing these remarks side-by-side could imply that the patriarchs of Israel were Jesus' obedient servants, commissioned and sent by him.

creation, was foreseen by the patriarchs, is greater than anything they did, and will continue to shape the destiny of those who receive him.

John never suggests, however, that Jesus is the primal "ancestor" of believers. That position belongs to "the Father," to whom Jesus insistently directs his listeners' attention. As the Father's son, Jesus is not the "father/ancestor" of the children of God—he is their brother. Jesus says as much to Mary Magdalene, after his resurrection: "Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'" (20:17).[553] The disciples are his "brothers," in a very literal sense: they share the same Father. This is not the sort of fictive kinship address common among Greco-Roman voluntary associations, nor even the "spiritual" kinship that "brothers" conveys in the Pauline letters: it is an affirmation of consubstantial unity, of shared essence, derived from their membership in the same people.

As opposed to the various human ancestors to whom historically contingent races trace their existence, the two cosmic races originated with God and the devil. This division, then, also transcends history, in that the age-old opposition between God and Satan was generally thought to predate the existence of humanity—or at least, to stretch back into primeval times so remote that they comprised a "mythical past" more than a "history." From this point of view, even "ancients" like Abraham are relative newcomers.

These "dueling fathers" may find precedent in earlier examples of ontological races, as I argued in the previous chapter. For example, Strecker proposes that we might find the precedent of the Johannine "τεκνα του διαβολου" and "τεκνα του θεου" in the parallel construction "children of light" and "children of darkness" from many Second-Temple sources.[554] Whatever

[553] Jesus cannot be speaking of his biological brothers here, for John has already made it clear that they wished to murder Jesus just as "the Judeans" did (here probably the religious leaders; 7:1-4) and that they were "at home" in a world that hates Jesus (7:6-7). *These* so-called "brothers," then, share the same characteristics that Jesus attributes to the Devil and his children—murderousness and hatred of Jesus (8:42-47). Therefore, Jesus would not be able to speak to them of "my Father and your Father," for their father seems to be the Devil.

[554] Strecker, *The Johannine Letters,* 105.

Examples might include 1QS 1:9, 3:20ff, 4:6; 1QM1:1-14; and *Jub*. 15:26-32 (where the exact formulation is "children of destruction" vs. "children of the covenant." For a less clear example, see *Apoc.Ab.* 14:6, where the Azazel's heritage is over "the men born by the clouds, whose portion you are, indeed they exist through your

the source of the idea, the result is the construction of two races that can trace their origins to two transcendent "fathers" just as Greeks could to Hellen, or Judeans could to Abraham.

3. Homeland/Origin

As shown by the preponderance of environmental theories, homeland was a potent component of ancient race theory.[555] Hall ranks association with a specific territory as the second most significant racial criteria in antiquity. This territory could be either a current residence, or a land historically associated with the people. It could even be a mythical, utopian territory.[556]

The Children of God and Children of the Devil are also linked with their own places. In keeping with the cosmic scale of John's two races, their corresponding territories are similarly grandiose. John associates the Children of the Devil most closely with the world (ὁ κοσμος). The Children of God, on the other hand, do not belong to the world (17:19); they belong instead to Jesus' kingdom, which is not of this world (18:36).

The Children of the Devil are closely associated with the world. Their father the devil is called "the ruler of this world," who will be condemned and driven out (12:31, 14:30, 16:11). We may also identify him with "the evil one" of 17:5: "I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but that you guard them from the evil one (του πονηρου)."[557] For the disciples, the world is a place of persecution, a "hostile territory" for all who do not conform to its perverse loves and hates. Jesus encourages them, saying, "in the world you face persecution; but take courage, I have conquered the world" (16:33b).

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being." Later Abraham sees a vision of creation, including all humanity divided into "the people set apart for Azazel" and "perdition," and on the other hand those "to be born of you [Abraham] and called my people" for "judgment and order" (*Apoc.Ab.* 21:7-22:5). See Appendix for a partial list of "Sons of Dark / Light" parallels.

[555] cf. Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 56-101; Kennedy et al., *Race and Ethnicity in the Classical World*, 35-2.

[556] Hall, *Ethnic Identity,* 25.

[557] Του πονηρου may also have the sense of "evil / evil things," rendering this a petition for God to preserve them "from evil." Even if we prefer this reading, the world is marked as the place where evil (and thus, the Devil) holds sway.

Frequently, the personified "world" is the subject of various verbs—verbs which elsewhere characterize the children of the devil. The world did not know Jesus (1:10), and it hates him (7:7, 15:18) as well as his disciples (15:18-19, 17:15). In fact, the world rejoices at Jesus' suffering and the disciple's pain (16:20). The world loves darkness rather than light (3:19), does evil works (7:7), and cannot receive the Spirit of truth (14:17). However, this unmitigated hostility is completely one-sided. Jesus repeatedly declares that he did not come into the world to judge it; he came to give it life (3:16, 6:33). The world is a place of (temporary) exile for the children of God, but those who hate Jesus have made themselves quite at home.

This contrast between "in" the world and "of" the world shows up during a dispute over the proper place of worship (4:19-24). The Samaritan woman frames the issue as if it were a matter of making the right choice between two physical locations—Mt. Gerizim or Jerusalem. Jesus reframes the issue, dismissing the two geographical locations proposed:

Proposed locations of worship (4:21)	**Alternate locality of worship** (4:23)
The hour is coming, when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father	The hour is coming and now is, when when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth
ερχεται ὡρα ὁτε ουτε εν τῳ ορει τουτῳ ουτε εν Ἱεροσολυμοις προσκυνησετε τῳ πατρι.	ερχεται ὡρα και νυν εστιν, ὁτε οἱ αληθινοι προσκυνηται προσκυνησουσιν τῳ πατρι εν πνευματι και αληθειᾳ

The verses are composed in parallel. Both begin with "the hour is coming," followed by someone who will worship "the Father," an act which is qualified by two dative words following εν. Structurally, "on this mountain or in Jerusalem" stands in apposition to "in spirit and in truth." In the former, it is clear that the εν + dative phrase is the locative dative of place; it tells *where* you will no longer worship the Father—neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. Given the structural similarity between the sentences, it is not unlikely that the second εν + dative construction also carries a locative sense. In this case, this would be the locative dative of

sphere,[558] almost as if "*in* spirit and *in* truth" were a sort of placeless place—tied to no specific geography, yet in some sense a locality unto itself.

Of course, the two traditional worship sites are no longer functional cultic centers by the time the gospel of John reaches its final form. The temple at Gerizim had been destroyed during the Hasmonean era, and the Jerusalem temple was destroyed in 70 CE. On a historical level, Jesus' prediction at 4:21 anticipates the destruction of the Temple. But Jesus does not merely predict a new cultic site. He goes on to replace *earthly place* with *spiritual sphere*, as the locality of true worship.

The world (and its poorly-defined antithesis, "*not* of the world") are also linked with the vaguely locative concepts, "above" (ανω) and "below" (κατω). It seems that the location "below" can be identified with the world:

> *You* are from below (εκ των κατω);
> *I* am from above (εκ των ανω);
> *you* are from this world (εκ του κοσμου τουτου);
> *I* am not from this world (ουκ εκ του κοσμου τουτου). – John 8:23

In this verse, the alternation between the emphatic nominative pronouns "you" (υμεις) and "I" (εγω) serve to emphasize the contrast between Jesus and his opponents—and thus also emphasizes the contrast between where each party is "from" (εκ). The phrases "from below" and "from this world" stand in parallel, two ways of describing the same origins. In like manner, the location "above" can be identified with heaven:

> The one who comes from above (ανωθεν)
> is above (επανω) all.
> The one who is from the earth (ὁ ων εκ της γης)
> is of the earth (εκ της γης εστιν)
> and speaks about the earth (εκ της γης λαλει);
> the one who comes is from heaven (εκ του ουρανου)
> is above (επανω) all. – John 3:31

[558] Brooks and Winbury, *Syntax of New Testament Greek*, 40-1.

The first and last affirmations are identical but for one word, illustrating that it is the same thing to be "from above" as "from heaven."

The kingdom of God is another elusive "place" where the children of God belong. It occurs in only two passages in the gospel, Jesus' discussions with Nicodemus and Pilate. The children of God seem to be at home in the kingdom: those born again can see it (3:3), and those born of water and the spirit can enter it (3:5). To what extent the concept represents a location is not entirely clear. The verb "enter," at least, does seem to imply spatial movement. In chapter 18, Jesus speaks about his "kingdom" to Pilate. If this kingdom has a locative sense, it is only articulated in the negative:

> My kingdom is not of this world (εκ του κοσμου τουτου);
> if my kingdom were of this world (εκ του κοσμου τουτου),
> my servants would have fought so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Judeans.
> But my kingdom is not from here (εντευθεν). – John 18:36

The "world" of the first two lines should be understood as the "here" of the last. The word εντευθεν denotes place-from-which, so the phrase implies that Jesus' kingdom is *some*where: "My kingdom is not from here [the world, but rather from elsewhere.]" Pilate's error lies in hoping to identify Jesus' kingdom with some earthly location. He asks Jesus whether he claims to be the king of the Judeans, as "your own people (εθνος)" have informed him (18:33,35). Pilate frames the discussion in terms that are too parochial and local for Jesus. In response, Jesus pans the camera out—way out—to reveal a widescreen vista beyond earthly kingdoms.

The servants of 18:36, who would be fighting if Jesus' kingdom *were* of this world, seem to be the proper residents of this kingdom. These servants are the ones who, like Jesus, "do not belong to this world" (17:16)—that is, they are none other than the Children of God. It seems that in this world, the Children of God do not have a *where,* but only a *whence* and a *whither.* They are *from* somewhere, and going *to* somewhere, but they are not themselves *of* the place

they currently inhabit. Or, to the extent that they are at home in the world, it is only a sort of home-in-diaspora, because God and Jesus "will come and make our home with you" (14:23).

The Children of God and the Children of the Devil each have a proper homeland. This was consistently one of the most important features in ancient discussions of race. Their association with the "world" on one hand, and the "heaven" on the other, gives them each a distinct territory, marking each as a distinct people. But these territories do not have precise coordinates on any map. It might be better to conceptualize "the world" and "the kingdom of God" as spheres rather than places, cosmological realms that transcend earthly geography in much the same way the category "Children of God" transcends (earthly) race.

4. Moral/Psychological Character

We have seen that John's two cosmological races possess two of the most definitive hallmarks of ethnicity in the ancient world: they each possess a common ancestor, and are associated with a proper homeland. These two races are "cosmic" in scope, because these ancestors are the primordial progenitors of good and evil. Their territories are equally transcendent, "the world" on one hand, and "above" or "heaven" on the other.

What of the third most significant criteria of race in the ancient world, "shared culture?" Certainly the two races possess significant *religious* differences: the children of God believe in Jesus, and the children of the devil do not. However, John's logic leaves little room for us to consider this difference "religious" in a meaningfully cultural sense, because it is not clear that either group *chose* whether to believe in him. John strongly implies that the two races are "fixed" groups, with no real ability to change. By contrast, "common culture" was one area where ancient ethnicity wore its fluidity on its sleeve. One could adopt Hellenism and become, to an extent, a "Greek;" one could adopt the traditions of the Judeans and become a "Judean."

Certainly, the two races each possess a distinctive "way of life" (πολιτεια), but this way of life is *not* a matter of individual choice. Each group's distinctive way of life is the natural outgrowth of certain traits, which all members of that race share. For that reason, I think it is more accurate to speak of the two races as each having their own distinctive racial "character," rather than a shared "culture." We saw a similar sort of racial moral determinism in physiognomy, as well as natural slavery theory, and also in many Greco-Roman ideas about the "barbarian." In John, as in these modes of racializing discourse, members of groups are assumed to think, feel, and behave in certain stereotypical ways.

Each of John's two cosmic races has its own unique moral and psychological profile, each the mirror image of the other. Their differences might be categorized as differences of perception, passion, and reasoning. Firstly, the two groups have very different powers of perception; the children of God have the capacity to "see" and "hear" in ways that the children of the devil simply do not. Secondly, the two groups have antithetical loves and hates, and opposing desires. Lastly, the two groups have incompatible ways of understanding events, and judging matters. Taken all together, these characteristics comprise a very definite profile for each race. Just as a physiognomist might expect all Egyptians, for example, to conform to the contours of their racial stereotype, John expects all of the children of the Devil to share an inability to see, hear, or know Jesus, a love of darkness, murderousness, and defective "worldly" judgment.

Let us first consider the two groups' radically different powers of perception. The children of God have the ability to recognize God, whereas the children of the devil lack this capacity. John often frames this characteristic in terms of *sight*. Jesus sees the Father in a unique way (1:18, 3:32, 5:19, 8:38), but to a lesser extent, the ability extends to others. Throughout the gospel, those who belong to God have the capacity to see God (1:14, 5:37, 12:45, 14:9), to see the Holy Spirit (1:32-33), and to properly see Jesus (1:13, 1:29–34, 4:19, 4:29, 6:40, 8:56, 9:35–38, 12:41, 12:44-45, 14:19, 16:16-22, 17:24, 20:14-24). Those who are "born from above" are

able to see God's kingdom (3:11; cf. 1:50-51, 4:35). By way of contrast, the children of the devil *cannot* see: they see neither the kingdom of God (3:11) nor the Spirit (14:17), neither will they see life (3:36). Most importantly, they do not "see" Jesus (6:36, 9:39–41, 12:37–41, 14:19). They do, however, wish to see works/signs (7:43, 11:29), a desire that John criticizes (4:48, 2:23, 6:26).[559]

This sight is a capacity that an individual either has, or lacks—an innate ability (δυναμις) that cannot be taught or cultivated. Jesus explains that only those who are born from above (γεννηθη ανωθεν) are able (δυναται) to see the kingdom of God (3:3). Simply put, the children of God can see God's kingdom, and the children of the devil cannot. In another place, John cites Isaiah to explain why many are unable to see:

> [37]Although he [Jesus] had performed so many signs before them, they did not believe
> him, [38]so that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he said:
> "Lord, who has believed in our word?
> And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"
> [39]For this reason they were not able to believe him; for again, Isaiah said:
> [40]"He has blinded their eyes
> and hardened their heart,
> Lest they see with their eyes
> and understand with their hearts,
> and turn, and I would heal them."
> [41]Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory, and spoke about him [*or* about it].
> – John 12:37–41

The narrator asserts that some cannot (ουκ δυναμαι) recognize Jesus, so that the prophecy can be fulfilled (12:38-39). Their blindness was foreseen, and *foreordained,* in order that the prophecy can come true. There is no room in such reasoning for variation, or fluidity. Instead, the category

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[559] Some of the children of God also share this desire to see signs; consider Nathanael's impressed reaction to Jesus' prescient vision of him under a fig tree, to which Jesus responds that he will "see greater things than these" (1:43-51), or Thomas' need to see Jesus before he can believe he has returned, about which Jesus comments, "Blessed are those who have *not* seen, and yet believe" (20:24-29). John seems to grudgingly concede that some of those who are capable of seeing God, need the extra "nudge" that signs provide. He does this both in narrative (e.g., when Jesus shows his wounds to Thomas), as well as in the overall structure of his composition itself (i.e., the collection of various "signs" John presents to the reader for her consideration). John concedes an awareness that some children of God may need to be "shown" why they should believe: "Jesus did many other signs before his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the son of God" (20:30-31a). When the children of the devil are presented with the same "evidence," however, they still do not believe.

of those-whom-God-has-blinded (12:40) is a fixed identity, from which its members cannot escape.

John also uses the motif of *hearing,* to describe the two groups' perceptual differences. The children of God hear Jesus' voice (10:3, 10:16, 10:27, 18:37b), and so are able to hear Jesus' word (5:24-25), and the words of God (8:47a). By contrast, the children of the devil do not hear Jesus (8:47b, 10:20), and so do not hear God's voice (5:37-38, 8:38-40, 8:47b). In many of these verses, the verb ακουω might just as smoothly be translated as "listen," a verb that implies some active participation on the part of the listener. But we should not mistake this for independent agency, as if the listener exerts her "free will" and decides whether to listen to (or ignore) Jesus. Rather, John repeatedly suggests that the categories of those-who-hear and those-who-don't are fixed (e.g., 6:44-45, 10:3, 10:16). This is most clearly stated during an argument between Jesus and some Judeans who had believed in him. Jesus declares, "Whoever is from God hears the words of God; the reason you do not hear them, is that you are not from God" (8:47).

Perception is not the only innate difference between the cosmic races. Their passions and affections are also radically opposed. The children of the devil are characterized by hatred (3:20; 7:7; 15:18-19,23-25; 17:14), murderousness (5:18; 7:1; 7:19-20, 25; 8:37,40; 10:10; 16:2), and love of the darkness (3:19-20). The children of God, for their part, are characterized by love of Jesus (8:42; 14:15,21-24; 16:27; 21:15-17), love of peace (14:27, 16:33; 20:19-21,26), and love of the light (3:21; 12:35)—in fact, "children of light" is another label for this group (12:36). The children of the devil have an instinctive hatred of anyone who does not belong to the world (15:18-23, 17:14), whereas the children of God are commanded to love one another (13:34-35, 15:12). The two races have opposite loves and hates.

Similarly, Philo occasionally speaks of two sorts of people, which have a radically different character and orientation to God. In *Who is the Heir of Divine Things*, he writes,

> The race (ειδος) of mankind also is twofold, the one being the race of those who live by the divine Spirit and reason; the other of those who exist according to blood and the pleasure of the flesh. This species (ειδος) is formed of the earth, but that other is an accurate copy of the divine image.[560] – *Who is the Heir* 22:57

Seemingly, there are two broad "species" of humankind. These may be allegorically described by the two accounts of humanity's creation (Gen 1:27, 2:7). Those "formed of the earth" are governed by their creaturely physicality, living by "blood and the pleasure of the flesh." On the other hand, those who are "an accurate copy of the divine image" live by the divine Spirit and reason. Philo elaborates on these groups when he comments on God's instructions to Abraham to "look up to heaven" (Gen 15:5), saying:

> Look up then, so as to convict the blind race (γενους) of common men, which, though it appears to see, is blind. For how can it be otherwise than blind, when it sees evil instead of good, and what is unjust instead of what is just, and the indulgence of the passions, instead of a mastery over them, and things mortal, instead of things immortal, and when it runs away from its monitors and correctors, and from conviction and instruction, and admits flatterers, and the reasonings of idleness, and ignorance, and luxury, all exerted in the cause of pleasure. The good man, then, alone sees. – *Who is the Heir* 15:76-78[561]

Philo's "blind race" is characterized by evil, injustice, lack of self-control, and orientation toward death. These "common men" reject all attempts to teach them a better way. By contrast, the "good man" sees, and is characterized by the opposing traits: goodness, justice, mastery of the passions, and orientation toward life. A similar set of diametrically opposed traits describes the children of the Devil, and children of God, in John. Philo's description of those who only *appear* to see, calls to mind the Pharisees objection, "We are not blind, are we?" to which Jesus responds, "Now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains" (9:40-41).

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[560] Yonge trans.
[561] Ibid.

Old Racial Images for a New Race

Two well-known passages in John—the "Good Shepherd" (10:1-18) and the "True Vine" (15:1-11)—invoke familiar metaphors from Judean tradition. Both images—the sheep and the vine (or vineyard)—were frequently used in scripture to describe Judeans as the people of God, and continued to enjoy currency during the Second Temple period. Because an audience familiar with Judean traditions would immediately recognize these images as symbols for the Judean people, it would not be a stretch to describe these passages as a form of racial discourse.

John's usage of these images reconfigures the boundaries of the group they signify. The use of these images immediately evokes the concept of a people who stand in a special, favored relationship with God; John's innovation is that this group no longer coterminous with Israel. The sheep (or branches of the vine) are determined by criteria other than physical descent from the patriarchs; response to Jesus becomes the sole criteria by which this race may be recognized.

Thus, these familiar symbols of the people of God are given a new referent: they now stand, not for Israel, but for the Children of God—a race that includes (some) Judeans, as well as non-Judeans. Judeans *qua* Judeans are not sheep; anyone who "knows his voice" is. Inclusion in the vine is not determined by biological ancestry, but by "abiding" in the True Vine—Jesus. Jesus' re-presentation of these images, now defined by positive response to him, is a form of racialized discourse that challenges the Judeans' own self-understanding as God's people.

God, the Shepherd of Israel

The image of sheep had long been used to describe the people of Israel.[562] Israel is a flock, and although human rulers might be appointed as "shepherds" of this flock,[563] it is ultimately God himself is who is the shepherd of his people.[564] The Psalmist declares, "We are his people (λαος) and the sheep of his pasture (νομης)" (Ps 100:3 [99:3 LXX]; cf. Ps 74:1 and 95:7). As Israel's shepherd, God tends to their needs and cares for them: "Like a shepherd he shepherds his flock (το ποιμνιον), and with his arm he gathers his lambs, and holding them in his bosom, he comforts them" (Isa 40:11).[565] John 10 shares a good deal of vocabulary with the Greek versions of such passages.[566]

The enemies of the sheep fall into two general categories: untrustworthy shepherds, and predators. The bad shepherds are rulers, often themselves members of the people, who lead the flock to harm (Jer 23:1-4; Jer 50:6-7; Ezek 34:1-10; Zech 10:2-3). God warns such leaders through the words of Jeremiah: "Woe, you shepherds who scatter and destroy the sheep of my pasture (νομης)!" (Jer 23:1 [LXX]). The other major hazard facing the flock is predation (Jer 50:7; Ezek 34:5,8). The wild animals who prey upon the sheep are τα εθνη, the nations (Ps 44:1; Ezek 34:25,28). As Ezekiel puts it:

> And no longer will they be a prey for the nations (τοις εθνεσιν),
> and the beasts of the earth will no longer devour them;
> And they will dwell in hope,
> and there will be no one to frighten them. – Ezek 34:28 [LXX]

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[562] e.g., Num 27:17; 1 Kgs 22:17 // 2 Chr 18:16; Ps 44:11; Ps 78:52 Ezek 34:30-31; Ezek 37:24.
[563] Human shepherds: 2 Sam 5:2, 2 Sam 7:7, Ps 78:71, Ezek 34:23.
[564] God as shepherd: Gen 49:24; Ps 28:9; Ps 80:1; Mic 7:14; Jer 34:31.
[565] God the shepherd tending and caring for his flock: Isa 40:11; cf. Mic 2:12, Ps 23, Jer 23:3, and Ezek 34:11-16.
[566] Craig Evans, *Word and Glory: Exegetical and Theological Background of John's Prologue* (JSNTSup 89. Sheffield: JSNT, 1993), 29-31.

Within the logic of the metaphor, it is the negligence of the bad shepherds that allows wild animals to hunt the sheep. Similarly, it is the neglect (or failed guidance) of its leaders that leads to Israel's victimization at the hands of the nations.

This complex of images continues to appear in the literature of the Second Temple period and beyond. Josephus transmits the image of Israel as sheep in his retelling of the biblical story (*Ant*. 7.328; 8.404). The motif appears in the *Biblical Antiquities* of Pseudo-Philo, where God promises Israel, "I will tend you like a lovable flock" (*L.A.B.* 23.12*).*[567] After hearing a message of judgment, the people lament, "Will the Shepherd destroy his flock for any reason except that it has sinned against him?" (*L.A.B.* 28.5).[568] The "Lord's flock" (το ποιμνιον κυριου) is mentioned in the *Psalms of Solomon* (*Pss.Sol.* 17:40). Matthew twice mentions "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" as the intended recipients of Jesus' ministry (Matt 10:6, 15:24). The image of God as shepherd also appears in the Christian introduction to *4 Ezra*, likely added around the middle of the second century (*4 Ezra* 2:33-34).[569]

The motif of human rulers serving as "shepherds" of Israel continues in later literature, as well.[570] *2 Baruch* laments that the shepherds of Israel have perished (77:13). There is an interesting wrinkle, however: because these human shepherds came from the law (77:15), "if you look to the Law. . . you will not be lacking a shepherd" (77:16). In the sectarian *Damascus Document*, the Inspector of the Camp "shall have pity on them [the people] like a father on his

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[567] Harrington, *OTP* v. 2.

[568] Ibid.

[569] Andreas J. Köstenberger, "Jesus the Good Shepherd Who Will Also Bring the Sheep (John 10:16): The Old Testament Background of a Familiar Metaphor," *BBR* 12.1 (2002): 84.

[570] The motif of kings as "shepherds" was a commonplace in ancient Near East cultures. Greek authors also employed the metaphor; Homer frequently compared kings to shepherds of their people, and the comparison appears in myriad authors influenced by him. For example, Dio Chrysostom used this image in his treatise *On Kingship* (1:17, 3:40-41, 4:43-44). "A ruler is no true king unless he has the qualities of a 'good shepherd,' (ποιμενος επιεικους) taking thought for the shelter and pasturage (νομης) of his sheep, and guarding them from wild beasts and thieves (φωρας)" (3:40-41 [Cohoon, LCL]). During the Hellenistic era, the popularity of the motif among Greeks may well have reinforced its use by Hellenized Jews.

sons, and will heal all the strays like a shepherd his flock" (*CD* 13:9).[571] In *4 Ezra*, written in the late 1st century CE, a chief of the people addresses Ezra:

> Do you not know that Israel has been entrusted to you in the land of their exile? Rise therefore and eat some bread, so that you may not forsake us, like a shepherd who leaves his flock in the power of savage wolves. – 4 Ezra 5:17-8[572]

Again, we see a causal link between unreliable shepherds set over Israel, and the predators/nations who prey upon them. If such shepherds fail their flock, wild animals will prey upon them.

1 Enoch's "Animal Apocalypse" is a particularly lengthy instance of the Israel-as-Sheep metaphor, and deserves some focused attention. In this extended allegory, various animals stand for different races. As we might expect, the Israelites are sheep; other races belong to various other species. The animal species are not "bare" symbols for peoples; instead, races are evaluated in terms of the *characteristics* of these animals—predatory or peaceable, wild or domestic, clean or unclean. The increasingly violent relations between peoples are the unavoidable result of their *nature;* for example, predators cannot live peaceably with prey! Such identification of race with species naturalizes certain traits. This imagery suggests an understanding of race as a relatively fixed, deterministic category.

The various animals begotten after the flood listed in 89:10-12 represent various gentile peoples.[573] It is possible to determine the allegorical reference of some from the narrative: the wolves, for instance, are fairly easily identified as Egyptians. Others—particularly the hyrax,

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[571] Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, 43. Köstenberger interprets the pronoun of this line to refer back to the priest, last mentioned in *CD* 13:5, as the one who shall tend the people, rather than the "Inspector of the Camp," although the latter is the nearest antecedent (Köstenberger, "Jesus the Good Shepherd," 83).

[572] Metzger, *OTP* v. 1; cf. Köstenberger, "Jesus the Good Shepherd," 84.

[573] There is some disagreement among scholars as to how to translate certain of the animals, although this need not concern us overmuch. For my argument, it is enough to note that *all* of the possibilities are unclean, wild, and carnivorous. For a chart laying out some of the translations suggested, see Daniel C. Olson, *A New Reading of the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch: "All Nations Shall Be Blessed,"* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 122. When I refer to individual animals, I will follow the translation of George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108* (Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 365.

hyena, and birds—are harder to pinpoint, and have attracted a number of candidates from interpreters.[574] Precise identification is not crucial here; it is enough to note that these peoples are all gentiles, distinct from the original cattle and the Israelite sheep (of whom Jacob is the first).

The gentile animals in 89:10-12 share certain characteristics. All are wild animals, and all are unclean. All (except for the hyrax)[575] are predators or scavengers. Tiller argues that these factors are all likely active in the production of meaning.[576] This differentiates these species from the domesticated, clean, herbivorous sheep. What judgments are implied by these factors? I would propose that these symbolic elements suggest something about the races' *nature* (violent or peaceable), *culture* (domesticated or wild), and *spiritual worth* (clean vs. unclean).

1) **Nature**. The races represented by these beasts are *carnivorous*, as either predators or carrion-feeders. This implies a violent nature, in contrast to the vegetarian sheep. Many are, in particular, "the sort of animals that might prey upon live sheep or eat dead sheep."[577] Several species on the list, particularly lions and wolves (or "bears," if that is the proper translation) are often described in the bible as dangers to sheep—either literal sheep,[578] or as a symbol for Israel.[579] *Jubilees* picks up this trope, as an enraged Esau tells Jacob:

> [21]And if the wolves make peace with lambs so as not to eat them or assault them,
> and if their hearts are (set) upon them to do good,
> then peace will be in my heart for you.
> [22]And if the lion becomes a friend of the ox,
> and if he is bound with him in a single yoke,
> and he plows with him and makes peace with him,
> then I will make peace with you. – *Jubilees* 37:21-22[580]

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[574] See Olson for a comparison of the animal identifications of Charles, Tiller, Nickelsburg, and Olson. *A New Reading of the Animal Apocalpyse*, 129.

[575] Patrick Tiller argues on this basis that hyraxes (or "conies") were interpolated into the list to follow the unclean animal lists of Deuteronomy 14, or Leviticus 11. He notes that the hyrax does not appear again the apocalypse; it will similarly drop out of our discussion. Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1993), 29 n. 24, 30.

[576] Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse,* 29.

[577] Ibid.

[578] For beasts threatening literal (non-figurative) sheep, see 1 Sam 17:34, Amos 3:12, Isa 31:4, Sir 13:17.

[579] For beasts threatening Israel see, for instance, Hos 13:7-8, Zech 11:3, Jer 2:15, 5:6, 12:7, 25:38, 50:17, 51:38-40. In Micah 5:8 the theme is reversed: Israel will be the lion attacking the nations like flocks of sheep.

[580] Wintermute, *OTP* v. 2.

Just so, in *1 Enoch*, the non-sheep species are the primal foes of the sheep. Representing races as carnivores suggests that they are *constitutionally unable* to live peacefully with the "sheep" (Israelites).

2) **Culture**. The gentiles are also portrayed by *wild* animals, which may suggest the inferiority of their culture. Most basically, domestication is a marker of civilization; sheep and cattle are "social" animals with the capacity to live with humans and in herds among themselves. But the symbolic value of "wild" may extend beyond this surface level, to describe relationship with God. Dimant stresses that as domesticated animals, sheep are obedient to a master, from whom they receive food and protection.[581] Israelites are yoked to God; the gentile animals do not serve or even know him. Certain races are too "wild" for relationship with the "master of the sheep." Because knowledge of (a particular) God and his laws is a cultural trait, wildness could describe how members of a race "inherit" the wrong religion—a cultural trait—as well as a society that breaks God's laws.

Philo also explores wildness/domesticity as a trope for society. In *On Rewards and Punishments*, he speaks of the "war between all wild beasts and men" (15:87). Philo distinguishes the behavior of tame animals, such as the Maltese dog and the sheep, from that of wolves, bears, lions, and leopards (15:87). The latter type are "our natural enemies; for these are hostile not only to one city, or to one nation, but to the whole of mankind" (15:85). Here, wildness represents all that is unsociable about humanity. This fits into the larger Hellenistic pattern, wherein bestial nature was especially associated with barbarians, and with the sort of savage behavior that mitigates against civil life.[582] It seems probable that in the "Animal Apocalypse," wildness signifies something similar about gentiles.

3) **Worth**. Cleanliness may describe the "spiritual worth" of a race. Many commentators have linked the list in *1 Enoch* 89:10 to the cleanliness lists of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.

[581] in Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse,* 29.
[582] Isaac, *Invention of Racism,* 198-199.

In contrast to the Israelite sheep, these "gentile" species are unclean. The sheep's cleanliness shows that they are acceptable for sacrifice—thus, that they are pleasing to God. By contrast, the other animals are worthless in a cultic setting, and by implication, unable to be holy or acceptable. Uncleanness speaks to the spiritual worth(lessness) of gentiles.

Enoch would not be alone in attaching symbolic meaning to uncleanness. It joins a trajectory of Second Temple Jewish thought that treats Torah's unclean animal codes allegorically, to describe types and qualities of people. In the *Letter of Aristeas,* unclean birds are the "carnivorous kinds, and the rest who dominate by their own strength, and who find their food at the expense of domesticated birds—*which is an injustice*" (*Aristeas* 146[583], emphasis added). The "moral" failings of unclean birds make them a foil for God's people, who "should not achieve anything by brute force" (147). Clean animals that chew the cud are "those who ruminate on the word of the Lord" (*Aristeas* 154-157).[584] The cloven hoof symbolizes the division between righteous behavior and wickedness, which "explains why we are distinct from all other men" (150-151).[585] In the *Testament of Asher*, quite different moral characteristics are ascribed to those who are like the unclean "hares," than those who are like the clean "gazelles or stags" (2:1-10, 3:1-5). The symbolic importance attached to cleanness, then, could represent whether certain people were pleasing or displeasing to God. In these latter examples, however, the unclean animals represent *individual people* who are wicked. *1 Enoch's* use is much more sweeping: the "Animal Allegory" paints entire ethnicities as "unclean."

Our survey of the sheep motif in Jewish literature encountered a few consistent themes: 1) **Israel** is frequently compared to a flock of sheep, of whom 2) **God** is the ultimate shepherd, but over whom 3) **other shepherds** (rulers) may be appointed. Due either to the sheep's own

[583] Shutt, *OTP* v. 2.
[584] Ibid.
[585] Ibid.

waywardness or the mismanagement of the shepherds, 4) **wild animals**, that is gentiles, prey upon the flock.

Such "sheep" discourse defines Israel specifically by its relationship with God the shepherd—that is to say, *defines Israel largely on the basis of religion*. What marks the sheep as a "flock," rather than a loose conglomerate of individuals, is the shepherd. "The sheep," then, are those who flock around a particular shepherd—that is, follow a particular God. But this allegiance does not entirely define them: those who go astray are still sheep, but they are now "bad sheep," who have not listened to their shepherd.[586] It might be more accurate to say that the sheep are defined by the shepherd's concern *with them*, rather than by their obedience to the shepherd. The sheep are those *for whom the shepherd cares*; Israel is the people *whom God has chosen*. The defining action comes from the shepherd, and their own fickleness cannot completely undermine their collective identity.

Jesus the Good Shepherd: John 10:1-16,26-29

In chapter 10, John takes up the familiar trope of the sheep and the shepherd, but switches the referents of these symbols. As we have seen, the flock was commonly used to refer to Israel. In earlier Judean literature, the sheep are those who *should* listen to the shepherd—although they do not always *do* this. But in John's παροιμια we must rule out this interpretation. John shores up the fences: the sheep are those who listen to the shepherd, period. Those who do not are no longer "bad sheep"—they are not sheep at all. In a similar way, the figure of the shepherd is resignified. The shepherd, formerly identified with God, now stands for Jesus—himself the Son of God, or even identifiable as God himself (1:1b).

[586] Consider, for example, how God promises to judge "between the sheep and the sheep" in Ezekiel 34:17-22. Similarly, the sheep in the Animal Apocalypse of *1 Enoch* have their eyes "darkened" when they disobey God, but they do not cease to be sheep.

In earlier instances of the motif, the sheep could be of mixed faithfulness. Particular sheep, or even whole groups, might wander off or be led astray by faithless human shepherds; nevertheless, they continued to be sheep. That is, the Israelites as a people comprise the flock, whether they heed their shepherd-god or not. Even in *1 Enoch's* "Animal Apocalypse," where species are remarkably mutable,[587] the Israelites never stop being sheep no matter how badly they sin—loss of faith is instead indicated by a loss of eyesight[588] or change in color.[589]

John tallies the members of his "flock" very differently. For him, the sheep are *only* those who hear (ακουω) and know (οιδα/γινωσκω) Jesus. This response to his voice is a defining characteristic—perhaps *the* defining characteristic—of the sheep. By contrast, the sheep will not listen to others who attempt to call them:

Response to the Shepherd:	**Response to Others:**
10:3 The sheep listen (ακουει) to his voice (φωνης) and he calls (φωνει) them by name...	10:5 But they certainly not follow a stranger, but they will flee from him, because they do not know (οιδασιν) the voice (φωνην) of strangers.
10:4 ...the sheep follow him, for they know (οιδασιν) his voice (φωνης).	
10:14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know (γινωσκουσιν) me...	10:8 All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen (ηκουσαν) to them.
10:16 ...I must lead these [other sheep] also, and they will listen (ακουσουσιν) to my voice (φωνης)...	

This pattern of the recognition and response to Jesus, and the corresponding *lack* of response to others, is the primary identifier of the group. The sheep "hear;" it is quite simply *who they are*. The παροιμια does not even entertain the idea that some sheep might not listen. Similarly, those who are *not* among his sheep seemingly *cannot* listen. This is the exasperated explanation Jesus

[587] Examples of transformations between species are many. Cows and sheep become human beings — Noah (1 En. 89:1) and Moses (89:36), respectively. Animals give birth to offspring of different species, such as the offspring of the cows and the fallen angels (86:4), the generation after the Flood (89:10), Esau and Ishmael (89:11-12), and the twelve tribal patriarchs, who are sheep born of cattle parents (89:12). After the final judgment, the surviving members of all animal species become are transformed back into cattle (90:37-39).

[588] For dim-eyed sheep, see *I Enoch* 89:32, 33; 89:41; 89:54; 89:74; 90:7; 90:26.

[589] By contrast, the sheep in the transformed Temple after the final judgment are "all snow-white, and their wool considerable and clean" (90:32).

offers to "the Judeans" following the discourse—remarkably similar to the explanation Jesus gives a different group of Judeans for their inability to listen:

Only the sheep hear (10:26-7):	**Only those "from God" hear (8:47):**
You don't believe because you are not from my sheep (εκ των προβατων). My sheep hear (ακουουσιν) my voice (φωνης), and I know them, and they follow me.	Whoever is from God (εκ του θεου) hears (ακουει) the words of God; this is why you don't listen (ακουετε): because you are not from God.

As shown above, the remark about the sheep closely echoes Jesus' words to some of "the Judeans" in John 8. The parallel reasoning is striking: only those "from/εκ" the proper group will hear Jesus—who, recall, speaks the words of God (8:26, 14:24, 15:15). The failure of both groups is explained by their origins; they are not "from my sheep" or "from God." Seemingly, whether someone will listen is already determined by which category they belong to.

This emphasis on the sheep hearing God's voice echoes Psalm 95 (94 LXX):

> Because he is our God,
> and we are the people (λαος) of his pasture (νομης),
> and the sheep (προβατα) of his hand.
> Today, if you would listen (ακουσητε) to his voice (φωνης)... – Ps 94:7 [LXX][590]

Some elements here resemble John's use of the motif. God's people, the sheep of his hand, should listen to his voice. However, the differences are just as telling. Beginning with verse 8, the psalm does consider the likelihood that at least some sheep will *not* listen. The use of the conditional "if" signals this possibility, and the counter-example of Israel's disobedience in the wilderness provides a troubling precedent of such disobedience (Ps 95:8-11). John, by contrast, is not at all worried about the behavior of the sheep. Jesus can confidently affirm that they will "listen to his voice" (John 10:3).

The passage suggests that the sheep "naturally" respond this way. The possibility of voluntary "acceptance" or "rejection" is not in view—people either "know" and "hear," or do

[590] My translation (from the LXX).

not. Thus, one cannot become a sheep by one's own behavior; rather, one's behavior can be used to diagnose a pre-existing identity, *which itself predetermined the behavior.*

In such a schema, there can obviously be no question of "good sheep" who listen, and "bad sheep" who do not. *All* sheep listen.[591] Therefore, the figures in John's παροιμια roughly comparable to the "bad shepherds" of Jewish tradition—the stranger (10:5), thief (10:1,10), and hired hand (10:12)—do not pose the same kind of threat. In earlier iterations of the sheep image, "bad shepherds" often harmed the flock by deceiving or misleading them, thus causing them to stray (e.g., Jer 50:6-7; Ezek 34:1-10; Zech 10:2-3). For John, there is no danger of that: the sheep know the shepherd's voice (10:3-4, 14, 27), and will not follow a stranger (10:5, 8). So, the threat which John's "bad shepherds" pose is of a different sort. Rather than harming sheep by leading them astray, they harm them by either attacking them directly, like the thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy (10:10), or by abandoning them to the predations of others, like the hireling who flees the wolf (10:12-13).

Earlier Judean uses of the sheep motif cast God as the shepherd of the sheep. When appointed shepherds proved faithless, God would step in and remind them that he was the ultimate, true shepherd (Ezek 34:11-16; Jer 23:1-4). Where humans prove worthless, God proves Godself good. John's gospel changes this identification; now, the good shepherd is *Jesus*. This shift logically shifts the identity of the sheep as well. No longer are the sheep merely those beloved of God—now, they are those who love God *as revealed in Jesus*. They are his own (10:3, 10:14) and he calls them by name (10:3).

Because all people who respond positively to Jesus are his sheep, the category now extends beyond the specific geographical-ethnicity "Judean/Jew." Jesus affirms, "I have other sheep, not of this fold (εκ της αυλης ταυτης); and I must lead these also, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock (ποιμνη), one shepherd (ποιμην)" (10:16). We might take "this

[591] For a similar reading with slightly different emphasis, see Trumbower, *Born from Above,* 103.

fold" (της αυλης ταυτης) as a *geographic* reference to Judea-Samaria-Galilee, or as a *demographic* reference to the people formerly associated with the sheep-metaphor—i.e., the Judeans. Either way, the verse insists that membership in the *poimnē* (sheepfold) must be understood in terms of relationship to the *poimēn* (shepherd). No such parochial distinctions as geography or family can limit its scope.

The shift to Jesus, as shepherd, excludes many formerly reckoned among the sheep. Because Jesus is the shepherd, the sheep are defined by their relationship to him. This means that those who might consider themselves the people of God, but who do *not* acknowledge Jesus (i.e., most Judeans) do not belong to the flock. This is, of course, a radical change from prior uses of the motif. Judeans constructed their sense of identity not only based on territory or ancestry, but based on their relationship to God. Now, John is claiming that it is Christ-believers, not Judeans, who are God's sheep. Individual Judeans may believe in Jesus, of course, but Judeans as such are no longer automatically members of the flock. To the extent that Judeans understood themselves as "the sheep of his pasture" (Ps 100:3; cf. 95:7), John's appropriation of this image is not only a religious attack; it is also a racial one.

Israel the Vine

John chapter 15 begins, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser." In this discourse, Jesus again describes believers using a traditional symbol for Israel. For an audience even casually familiar with Judean traditions, this verse would evoke the common trope of Israel as the vine (or vineyard) of God.

Judean scripture abounds with variations on the theme. Israel is the vineyard of God (Jer 2:10, Isa 5:7, Hos 10:1), his "pleasant portion" (Jer 12:10). God plants and tends the vine (Jer 2:21a; Isa 5:1-2). God's act of settling the people in the Promised Land is likened to the planting

of a vine (Ps 80:8-14; Ps 44:1-2). This tradition defines the people of Israel as God's precious planting. The trope also illustrates what God should be able to expect from Israel. Because God has planted, watered, and tended the vine so carefully, it is reasonable for God to expect the vine to be fruitful. When the vine does *not* bear good fruit, it is a grave disappointment to God, certainly not due to any fault on his part (Jer 2:21; Isa 5:1-7; Isa 27:2-5). As Isaiah says,

> [1]My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. [2]He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watch-tower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.
> [3]And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. [4]What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? – Isaiah 5:1-4[592]

After Judah has been invited to condemn the vine, Isaiah reveals that they condemned themselves (Isa 5:7). This cluster of traditions also illustrates the consequence of wickedness: If the vine does not bear fruit, God will prune or burn parts of it (Ezek 15:1-8, Isa 27:4, Isa 5:5-6).

Such traditions continue to appear in subsequent Judean writings. It is found in a number of genres, from rewritten scripture, to prayers, to apocalypse (*4 Ezra* 5:23-30, and John's near-contemporary, *2 Baruch* 39:7-8). The image appears among the writings found at Qumran. For example, 2Q433a preserves a psalm-like meditation on Israel's election:

> [2]A p[ara]ble concerning the glory of [. . .] [3]He planted a delightful plant in His gard[en] and in His vineyard [. . .] [4]its vines, and its branches brought fort fruit and multiplied in it [. . .] [5]and its branches are over the lofty supports of the heavens and it offered itself willingly [. . .] [6]branch throughout the eternal generations and to produce the frui[it of . . .] – *4Q33a* Frag.2[593]

The fragmentary "Allegory of the Vine" from 6Q11 seemingly fits this pattern. God says, "I have planted a vineyard, and I shall guard it."[594]

The author of the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum (L.A.B.)* makes particularly frequent use of vine imagery, and develops it in some interesting directions. For one thing, the author links the vine with the idea that Israel was chosen even before it was created. In a vision, Phinehas' father

[592] NRSV.
[593] Wise, Abegg, and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls,* 499.
[594] Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, 403.

learned that before the creation of the world, God had already planned to plant a "great vineyard" in it, "And from it I would choose a plant; and I would care for it and call it by my name, and it would be mine forever. When I did all the things that I said, nevertheless my plant that was called by my name did not yield up its fruit to me" (*L.A.B.* 28:4).[595] Not only does Pseudo-Philo extend the vine's temporal reach (from before creation to "forever"), he also extends it spatially. The vine of Israel stretches from the abyss to the very highest heaven:

> Behold now, you O God, who have planted this vine and set its roots into the abyss and stretched out its shoots to your most high seat, look upon it in this time, because that vine has lost its fruit and has not recognized its cultivator. And now, if you are angry at your vine and you uproot it from from the abyss and dry up its shoots from your most high and eternal seat, the abyss will come no more to nourish it, nor will your throne come to cool that vine of yours that you have burned up. – *L.A.B.* 12:8[596]

The vine is truly cosmic in scope, both in terms of its creation and destiny. It is, as it were, part of the architecture of the created world—but no less dependent upon God's continual favor to flourish (see also *L.A.B.* 12:9). These and other instances of the vine image show that it was still a compelling image in the minds of Second Temple Judeans, as they sought to understand their identity as God's chosen race.

Vine imagery was also very popular in Judean art and architecture. The vine was commonly used as a decorative motif in Judean buildings, in the Second Temple Period.[597] According to Josephus, the door of the Herod's temple was adorned with golden vines laden with grapes (*Ant*. 15.395). Coins were struck during Jewish War that bore the vine leaf, along with the revolutionary slogan "for the freedom of Zion."[598] Of course, we must be cautious considering such data. It is difficult to determine the exact valence of such imagery, especially with a such a multivalent image as the vine, which could as easily signify prosperity, cultic practice,

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[595] Harrington, *OTP* v.2.
[596] Ibid.
[597] Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Synagogues - Archaeology and Art: New Discoveries and Current Research* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 470.
[598] David Hendin and Nathan Bower, "Irregular Coins of Judaea, First Century BCE—First Century CE: New Insights from Comparisons of Stylistic, Physical, and Chemical Analyses," *American Journal of Numismatics* 23 (2011): 43.

drunkenness, or wisdom. Either way, its use on the Temple, and on revolutionary coinage, demonstrate that the vine held an important place in the iconography of Judean identity.

We have seem that the vine was a powerful image for the people of God, both in scripture and Second-Temple period writings. It is not unlikely that the popularity of the image in visual media, such as coinage and synagogue decoration, echoed this symbolism. Let us turn now to John's appropriation of the image of the vine.

Jesus, the True Vine: John 15:1-7

The "True Vine" discourse of John 15:1-17 resonates with scriptural depictions of Israel as a vine or vineyard. Craig Evans notes that John's discourse draws significant vocabulary from the Septuagint of such passages.[599] Like the "Good Shepherd" discourse, this passage draws on a traditions that describe Judean as a distinct people, beloved by God. And also like the "Good Shepherd," this passage reworks underlying traditions to make membership in the image dependent upon Jesus.

Jesus himself replaces Israel as the referent of the vine, and people who belong to this category are consigned to the position of "branches." John's placement of Jesus toward the root of the plant puts him in the position of an ancestor, relative to the younger branches. Judean scripture often employed arboreal imagery to discuss genealogy, including the famous "root of Jesse" (Isa 11:1), which Paul invokes in his own discussion of ancestry (Rom 15:12). Scriptures and pseudepigrapha described Abraham as the "root" of Israel (*Jub*. 16:26, *1 En.* 93:8-10) .[600] In like manner, Philo praises Abraham as the root of the virtuous branch, Israel:

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[599] Evans, *Word and Glory*, 38-9.

[600] Richard H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9—11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. 1994), 121. Raymond E. Collins, *The Power of Images in Paul* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1989), 214.

> For that man [Abraham] is truly a chief of a nation (ἐθνάρχης) and ruler of a family (γενάρχης), from whom, as from a root (ῥίζης), sprang that branch so fond of investigating and contemplating the affairs of our nature, by name Israel.
>
> – *Who is the Heir of Divine Things?* 279[601]

Here, Abraham is called *ethnarch* (ruler of an *ethnos*) and *genarch* (ruler of a *genos*). Philo's terms play upon both senses of ἀρχη: Abraham is both ruler and *origin* of this ethnos/genos. Indeed, Colson renders these words "founder of the nation / race" in his translation of this passage.[602] Here, and elsewhere in Jewish usage, an ancestor is described as the "root" of his descendants, the "branches."

As an aside, non-Judeans also used plant terminology to discuss descent. Elite Romans used the Greek loan-word *stemma* (literally "garland") for the linked family portraits they displayed in their houses. As Pliny describes it, "The pedigree (*stemmata*) of the individual was traced in lines upon each of these colored portraits" (*Natural History* 35.6).[603] Juvenal lambasts a rival with *Stemmata quid faciunt?* ("What avail your pedigrees?") in the opening volley of his eighth satire (*Satires* 8.1).[604] Romans might speak of "branches" growing from these *stemmata,* talk of family growing from "stock," or describe adoption as grafting (lat. *insitio*), as Philo also did.[605] Plutarch employed the Greek στεμμα with this sense of "lineage."[606] Non-Judeans *and* Judeans used plant imagery to think genealogically.

In John, Jesus tells the disciples, "I am the true vine; you are the branches" (15:5a). Jesus is properly located in the "ancestor" position within this plant. This makes the branches, in some sense, his children. According to the image, those who "abide" in Jesus draw their life from him, as well as their identity—he is, after all, the one whom they are branches *of.*

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601 Yonge trans.; see also *On Sobriety* 65.
602 Colson & Whitaker, LCL.
603 Translated by John Bostock. Perseus Online. http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/collection?collection=Perseus%3Acollection%3AGreco-Roman. Accessed April, 2013.
604 Ramsay, LCL.
605 Emily Gowers, "Trees and Family Trees in the Aeneid," *Classical Antiquity* 30.1 (2011): 89.
606 as, for example, in *Numa* 1.1, where στεμμάτων means "genealogies." Perrin: LCL.

John's use of the vine can be fruitfully contrasted with Paul's use of the olive tree in Romans 11:16-24. Both passages repurpose a common scriptural image for the people of Israel, in order to reconstruct the ethnic identity of their audience. But the ways in which the two passages go about this is strikingly different. Paul adapts the biblical image of Israel as a olive tree to address his predominantly gentile audience. He adds the common Mediterranean practice of grafting to the biblical image, to illustrate how gentiles are inserted into a pre-existing Judean identity. Israel-as-olive is not deconstructed, but space is made for gentiles to be added to their tree. Paul's olive remains an essentially Jewish image.[607]

The radically different conclusions these two passages arrive at are striking, precisely because the root image behind each is so similar—a plant metaphor traditionally applied to Israel. Both authors use symbols transplanted from Judean soil to engage in racializing discourse, which has direct implications for the (reconstructed) ethnicity of believers. Both even develop their imagery in a similar direction, discussing how branches draw their nourishment from the main trunk, and are dependent upon it for life (John 15:4,6; Romans 11:17-18). Compare the two author's use of the Israel-as-plant motif:

John 15:4-6

[4]Just as the branch is unable to bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. [5]I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, because apart from me you are able to do nothing. [6]If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch, and dried out; and they throw them into the fire and burn them.

Romans 11:17-21

[17]And if some of the branches were broken off, and you – although you are a wild olive – were grafted in among them, and have come to share the oily sap of the olive root, [18]do not boast over the branches. And if you do boast, [remember that] you don't support the root, but the root supports you! … [20b]So do not think highly of yourself, but fear – [21]for if God didn't spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.

[607] Hodge, Caroline Johnson, "Olive Trees and Ethnicities: Judeans and Gentiles in Rom. 11.17—24," in *Christians as a Religious Minority in a Multicultural City: Modes of Interaction and Identity Formation in Early Imperial Rome* (edited by Jürgen Zangenburg and Michael Labahn. New York: T & T Clark International, 2004):77-89.

As can be seen, a similar development to the trope bears very different fruit in these two passages. Both play upon the branches' organic dependence upon the plant. But one discourages a sense of superiority over the Judeans—the other practically invites it. For Paul, *Israel* is the tree from which (gentile) believers draw their support and lifeblood; they are therefore invited to think of themselves as belonging to a Judean ethnic category, and warned not to boast over those who "naturally" belong to this category—i.e., Judeans, whether they believe in Christ or not. But for John, *Jesus* is the vine. Israel is not the vine at all, despite Israel's longstanding self-understanding as such. It is *Jesus* from whom believers draw their lifeblood; they can therefore feel smugly assured that they "naturally" belonging to this identity, far more than individual Judeans who reject Jesus. Unlike Paul, whose "graft" grants gentiles a place on a Judean tree, John has driven the Judeans from their own vineyard, and claimed it was never theirs to begin with. Rather than adding gentile believers into a pre-existing people, John removes the Judeans as the proper referent of the symbol, and then replaces them with his own ethnic construction—the Children of God.

Stolen Fruit

As we have seen, the vine and the sheep were deeply cherished symbols of the chosen people. These images were important to Judean self-understanding. They were part of not only their religious, but racial, heritage. Judean authors thinking through meaning of chosenness, and their unique position among the *ethnē* of the world, were liable to reach for these familiar motifs almost instinctively.[608]

[608] Authors could employ the images playfully or freely, deploying them in exploratory theology in new ways, sometimes even "inverting" their usual function. For example, Bruce Fisk notes that although the vine imagery generally illustrates why God expects obedience *from Israel*, Pseudo-Philo instead uses the image to show why Israel can expect mercy *from God*. Bruce Norman Fisk, *Do you Not Remember? Scripture, Story and Exegesis in the Rewritten Bible of Pseudo-Philo* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 322, esp. n 13.

Ezra's prayer in *4 Ezra* 5:23-30 gives a good feel for the power these images held to articulate Judean ethnic identity. The passage is an impassioned appeal for God's mercy, with a catalog of metaphors for Israel's place in God's heart:

> [23]O sovereign Lord, from every forest of the earth and from all its trees you have chosen one vine,
> [24]and from all the lands of the world you have chosen one region,
> and from all the flowers of the world you have chosen one lily,
> [25]and from all the depths of the sea you have filled for yourself one river,
> and from all the cities that have been built you have consecrated Zion for yourself,
> [26]and from all the flocks that have been fashioned you have fashioned for yourself one sheep,
> [27]and from all the multitude of people you have gotten for yourself one people.
>
> – *4 Ezra* 5:23-27

Ezra's plea piles up image after image, picking and choosing from the many fruits of tradition, selecting motifs that echo with centuries of use. The prayer begins with the vine, moves through various geographical markers of Israel, and reaches a crescendo with the image of the flock. Verse 27 finally states the meaning of the various metaphors plainly: The people of Israel are uniquely beloved by God.

As we saw in the example above, authors could use these two potent symbols for Israel, flock and vine, alongside each other. Pseudo-Philo juxtaposes sheep and vine imagery twice. God tells the Israelites, “I will plant you like a desirable vine and tend you like a lovable flock.” (*L.A.B.* 23:12). Elsewhere, a vision of the vine reveals that Israel was chosen even before the creation of the world; the prayer immediately following features the sheep image (28:4-5).

By claiming these two images for Christ-believers, John's gospel directly refutes deeply held Judean convictions about their own identity. In the gospel text, these two symbols convey *some* of the same ideas as they did in their original Judean context. In both places, the images describe God's relationship with a people. God carefully watches over these people, and loves them. However, the specific referent of the symbols—the Judean *ethnos*—has been removed, and

replaced by Jesus-believers. John appropriates the vocabulary of their self-understanding, and claims that Christ-believers are everything the Judeans believe themselves to be.

These passages set out to demonstrate that all of the goods of the Judean religion belong to a group much broader than any one geographical ethnicity. As Culpepper puts it, "In the separation and divorce between Christianity and Judaism, the Fourth Evangelist has gone through their common home and claimed all the valuables for Christianity."[609] John has stripped the Temple and stolen its spoils; the vine, the sheep, manna, Mosaic authority, the true meaning of festivals—all are carried off, melted down, and recast in terms of Jesus. As far as John is concerned, apart from Jesus, there is not much left to Judaism.[610]

This wholesale theft of Judean cultural symbols illustrates the ethical danger of a "colorblind" (or "race-blind") system, such as that implied in John's gospel: it justifies appropriation. If "race" is nothing, then there is nothing wrong with claiming other races' traditions as one's own—or even in denying that the groups who generated those traditions have any further claim to them. Having deconstructed the category of (earthly) race, the John does not hesitate to plunder the treasures of the races.[611]

It should be noted, at least, that John's appropriation is not meant to attack the Judeans, as if there were something "wrong" with that group. Recall that John typically treats racial discrimination as a failure of perspective: such polemic treats worldly race as a far more important category than it truly it is. No worldly distinctions based on the accidents of human birth, such as ancestry or geography, are as important as one's cosmic identity. For John, "the Judeans" are not coterminous with the Children of God (despite the claims of some, in 8:41)—

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609 Alan R. Culpepper, "Anti-Judaism as a Theological Problem," in *Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel* (edited by Reimund Bieringer, Didier Pollefyt, and Frederique Vandecasteele-Vanneuville. Louisville: Westerminster John Knox, 2001), 69.

610 Culpepper, "Anti-Judaism as a Theological Problem," 69.

611 John appropriates traditions not only from the Judeans (e.g., the Vine, the Sheepfold, Festivals now associated with Jesus, and "My Father's House" which will replace God's other "house," the Temple), but also from the Samaritans (Jesus is depicted as "the Prophet," recalling the Samaritan expectation of a "prophet like Moses"). *See* "Chapter 3: Samaritans."

but neither are all Judeans to be identified as Children of the Devil. Markers of Judeans self-understanding are not deconstructed as an end in itself, but as part of John's attempt to claim their heritage for Christ-believers.

Cosmological Race in John: Chapter Conclusions

John consistently downplays the significance of various markers of earthly race, such as one's descent, and instead champions a new layer of racialized identity. These two "cosmic races" each have their own spiritual ancestor, their own distinct homeland, and a set of characteristics that all members are assumed to share.

Although John is aware of various ways that people use racialized rhetoric to discriminate, he does not approve of this practice, because one's earthly ethnicity is simply not important enough to merit consideration. By contrast, one's *cosmic* race is absolutely determinative of one's moral character, spiritual worth, and ultimate fate (eternal life, or eternal death).[612]

This determinism leads to a strange tension in the Gospel. Jesus frequently preaches in an obvious attempt to inspire belief. Indeed, John acknowledges this as the purpose of his gospel (20:31). But John's also affirms that some people are constitutionally unable to receive such an offer. How do we reconcile the two? Jeffrey Trumbower suggests the Johannine group must have sensed the tension between their lived experience and their ideology; surely there would have been members of their community who had been hostile to the gospel before their conversion. How to resolve this tension? Perhaps, Trumbower suggests, the offer of salvation is essentially "diagnostic" in nature:

[612] Jeffrey Trumbower suggests, for example, that Nicodemus is a hopeless case from the start, because he is "from below" and cannot see; by contrast, Jesus immediately recognizes the Samaritan woman as one like Nathanael and the man born blind—one of the worshipers whom the Father seeks to worship him in Spirit and in truth. See Trumbower, *Born from Above*, 79.

> This objective [i.e., conversion] in no way renders impossible, however, the author's view from hindsight that the ultimate reason for acceptance or rejection is attributable to the fixed origin of each person . . . The "offer" of salvation is made, but in the theory, the person's response only indicates the fixed category to which he or she belongs.[613]

If one should accept the gospel, this reveals that she has been one of the children of God all along. The same rationalization can be applied in the negative: when former members have abandoned a Johannine *ekklēsia*, 1 John explains: "They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us" (1 John 2:19).[614] The racial fatalism that predetermines one's response to the gospel required some rationalization, given the community's experiences of conversion and apostasy.

Because the human level of ethnic identity is irrelevant to one's standing with God, John feels no compunction about co-opting two biblical symbols for Israel. The sheep and the vine had long stood for the people of God; John appropriates the images and claims that the *true* people of God are not necessarily the Judean *ethnos*, but those who are born of God. This illustrates one ethical pitfall implicit in John's devaluation of race: it leaves virtually no room for a positive racial self-identity, at least as race was conventionally understood. To John, it is acceptable to plunder the treasures Israel's tradition, because the mere fact of being born Judean simply *does not matter*. However, to countless flesh-and-blood Judeans of John's day, their ethnicity was an indelible part of their sense of self—and these scriptural images were a cherished part of their ethnic heritage.

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[613] Ibid., 83.
[614] NRSV.

CONCLUSION

(Now Judeans and Samaritans do not share things in common.)

– John 4:9b

Throughout the Fourth Gospel, race informs scene after scene, sometimes hidden, sometimes bursting out into the open in ugly ways. The text is full of examples of how racial dynamics can distort everyday interactions (4:9b), escalate polemic (7:52a, 8:48), and incite cruelty (11:48-50). The logic of the gospel is not aligned with such egregious misuses of race, only placing them on the lips of Jesus' opponents. More subtly, ethnicity can be called upon to bolster one's honor (8:33), or simply provide a positive sense of identity (4:20, 8:33). The text calls even these relatively innocuous functions of race into question. John would rather his reader stake their sense of self wholly in their allegiance to Jesus Christ, that is, their confidence as children of God. In John's estimation, any other claimant for their loyalty—including race—is a potential distraction from what is truly important.

The gospel consistently repudiates arguments based upon various facets of race; this has the effect of systematically undermining the validity of the concept itself. No one's earthly race, based upon supposed descent from some ancestor, shared history, or geography, is a valid basis upon which to denigrate them or their ideas.

However, this dismissive stance toward ethnicity has extremely problematic implications, as well. In undermining the criteria upon which historical-geographical race is based (especially human descent and geographical homeland), John's rhetoric attacks the very idea of race. This attack does violence to those who value their race. Although John would question such an

attitude, many Christians can and do cherish their racial heritage as a valuable facet of their full self—less significant than their salvation in Christ, perhaps, but no less a part of their God-given identity for all that. Other early Christ-believers seem to have allowed for a more positive valuation of ethnicity as just one component of the believing self. Luke, for example, seems to respect the ethnic backgrounds of the crowds of "both Judeans and proselytes," who hear the disciples prophesying in the languages of their various countries during Pentecost (Acts 2:5-11). Or again, the vision of John the Seer includes a multitude of saints "from every race (εθνους), and tribe (φυλων), and people (λαων), and language (γλωσσων)," who stand before God's throne in heaven (Rev 7:9).[615] Some among the earliest churches were able to preserve a positive estimation of ethnicity, even in the face of the new identity of being "in Christ"—even some among the Johannine believers. John, however, does not.

John's dismissal of historical-graphical race also paves the way for another ethical pitfall: cultural appropriation. If earthly race is a non-category, then there is nothing wrong with appropriation: indeed, the original claimant to any tradition (race) has been been invisibilized, appropriation is a "victimless crime." There is no theft if there was no original owner. Various passages in John recast various Judean and Samaritan traditions in terms of Jesus.[616] However, it is questionable whether most members of these ethnicities would have looked favorably on these reworkings of their cherished traditions.

Moving beyond the conventional construction of race in his day, John proposes the existence of another, higher layer of identity—which nevertheless bears all of the crucial hallmarks of race, such as shared ancestry, association with unique "homelands," and even

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[615] How could the Seer recognize them as such? It cannot be from stereotypical clothing, as they are all dressed in white robes; nor can it be from stereotypical cultural behavior, as they are all engaged in the same activity—glorifying God. Therefore, the Seer must recognize them as coming from many races based on one or both of the two features which he *can* observe: their (bodily) physical appearance, and their various languages. That martyrs before the throne of heaven *still* bear ethnic markers such as appearance or language implies a fairly high esteem for ethnicity—a significant anthropological difference between *this* Johannine author (the Seer) and the John the Evangelist!

[616] See Chapter 3 (Samaritans) and Chapter 5 (especially the second to last section, "Stolen Fruit").

distinct psychological/moral profiles. These "cosmological races" are of ultimate significance. While one's historical-geographical race is essentially unimportant, being a Child of God (or the Devil) determines how one will respond to Jesus, and means the difference between the eternal life and death.

There is something supremely frustrating about the way Jesus lectures groups of people whom he already seems to regard as a lost cause. What exactly does he hope to gain, if they are actually *incapable* of receiving his word? It's like chastising a wolf for not being vegetarian! Similarly, praising one such as Nathanael or the Beloved Disciple is a bit like congratulating a sheep for eating grass. A wolf's stomach is built for flesh, as a sheep's is for fodder. If, like natural carnivores, the children of the Devil *simply cannot do what they were not built for*, why does Jesus expend so much energy reaching out to them, berating them, pleading with them? After all, one's cosmic origin decides one's fate, doesn't it?

Or does it? Much in the Gospel of John does, indeed, support the picture sketched out above, but other passages point in a different direction. Here and there in the gospel, there are indications that a certain amount of fluidity might exist in the cosmic-racial categories—or even that transference from one state to the other might be possible! A few examples should suffice to establish this: those who believe can "become" (γινομαι) the children of God (1:12);[617] Jesus came that "the world" might be saved (3:17; cf. 6:51b); the Son of God seems to be able to "free" the slaves if he wishes (8:35-36); branches in Christ who do not bear fruit will be cut off (15:2a,6); and finally, Jesus hopes to prevent the disciples from "falling away" (σκανδαλιζειν), which is therefore theoretically possible (16:1-4). Moreover, the gospel's overall missiological concern to reach and convince new believers implies that membership in the Children of God an

[617] Largely based on this verse (Jn. 1:12), Leander Keck argues that Trumbower's insistence on fixed origins for the children of God "falls flat." Leander Keck, "Derivation as Destiny: 'Of-ness' in Johannine Christology, Anthropology, and Soteriology," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (edited by R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 275.

achieved, not ascribed, status.[618] However, for every implication that the categories might be fluid, another passage bluntly states that one's pre-existing fixed origin determines one's response to Jesus. All whom the Father has given Jesus will come to him (6:38a), and conversely, "No one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father " (6:65; cf. 3:27, 6:44a, 10:28-29). Judas is "a devil" (that is, a child of the Devil) even before he betrays Jesus (6:70-71), and Jesus' opponents "are not able" to hear Jesus' word because they come from their father, the devil (8:38-47).[619]

Two early interpreters of John, Origen and Heracleon, disagreed profoundly over whether John's anthropology actually allows for transference between categories or not.[620] Jeffrey Trumbower observes that this debate is still a live issue in Johannine scholarship today. The question remains open: "Does the language of transference and change in the Fourth Gospel refer to a true change of status between saved and unsaved similar to Paul, or is it closer to the later Valentinian language that indeed envisions transference and change, but only for those who have the proper (fixed) origin (as well as for those *psychikoi* who choose correctly)?"[621] Various Johannine scholars favor determinism, while others assert that John's "children of God" and "children of the devil" merely represent a *moral dualism,* not an ontological one.

Still, the question can be overstated. To insist on which of these is the "correct" reading of the gospel is, implicitly, to assume that the evangelist is internally consistent, and never deviates from the logic of his position for a moment. To make this assumption about *any* author is perilous; it is doubly so when applied to a gospel in which scholars perceive the interweaving of so many distinct layers of tradition.

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[618] So, for example, Charlesworth holds that we must rule out any "predestination" in John because of the gospel's missiological bent, citing John 3:16—21 as support, but concedes that there are "definite strains of predestination" in various passages. Charlesworth, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel According to John," 83.

[619] The list goes on. Jesus tells his opponents, "You are from below, I am from above" (8:23; cf. 17:16). Jesus insists, "I know my own, and my own my own know me" (10:14), but "You do not know because you are not among my sheep" (10:26). We also learn that "Jesus knew from the beginning who it was who would not believe, and who it was who would betray him (6:64). Cf. 10:4-5,27; 10:14b; 12:37-41; 13:11,18; 15:18-19; 17:12; 17:6-7,11.

[620] See "Epilogue: The Children *of* the Children of God."

[621] Trumbower, "Origen's Exegesis of John 8:19-53," 150-51.

Not only can the question itself be overstated—so can its importance. If one is concerned with the gospel's potential to shape a reader's character, what matters most is not the "correct" reading but the plausible one. What meaning is liable to emerge in the encounter between text and reader? By the time a compliant reader finishes the gospel, she will have been repeatedly bombarded with the message that one's cosmic race fixes one's response the Jesus, one's moral character, and eventually, one's prospect of eternal life.[622] After absorbing so many of these messages, will the relatively few counter-indications really win the day? I repeat: What general impression racialization is the reader likely to take away from the gospel?

Broadly speaking, two sorts of ethically-problematic notions of "cosmic race" might arise from a reading of John's gospel: the over-identification of the "Children of the Devil" with the Judeans (and latter-day Jews), and the "racialization" of adherents of other religions into a category perceived as iredeemable and ontologically-distinct.[623]

The first of these dangers poses the most obvious danger. As discussed earlier, the *War Scroll* not only described two broad "heavenly races" into which all humanity was divided ("children of light" and "children of darkness"), but also provided a partial catalog of *actual, historically-grounded* races that could be mapped onto these divisions (1QM 1:1-8, 2:10-14). In like manner, a reader of John who picks up on the often-adversarial function of "the Judeans" in the gospel may be tempted to identify them with the adversarial cosmic race John constructs, "the children of the devil." Such a reading of John can be found among anti-Semitic interpreters from Nazi Germany to the modern-day "Anglo-Israelite" and "Christian Identity" movements. To be clear, *this is a misreading of John*. According to John's own logic, the children of the devil are not all Judeans, and not all Judeans are children of the devil. To identify the two groups with

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[622] On the concept of the "compliant reader" of John, see Adele Reinhartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple*, 26-28, and especially 54-80.

[623] We see this second sort of thinking in 1 John, Heracleon, and many other gnostic sources: Those who do not believe the right things are easily diagnosed as "children of the devil." Juxtapose these ideas with actual, flesh-and-blood adherents of other religions, and you have a recipe for a sort of hatred which resembles the most virulent racism, although it is not based upon the *usual* criteria for defining race (i.e., country, phenotype, etc.).

each other misreads John on several counts: **1.** It mistakes "Galilean" as antithetical to "Judean," or at least distinct. This reading ignores not only archaeological and literary evidence from outside the gospel, but also internal signs: John's Galileans share Judean purity concerns (2:6), Judean pilgrimage practices (2:23; 4:45, 7:2-4), and even the name "Judean" (4:9; 4:6:41,52; 18:35). **2.** Related to this notion is the assumption that Galileans, as the group to which Jesus belong, could not be "children of the devil." However, Jesus' own brothers (7:1-8) share all of the identifying marks of the "children of the devil" as outlined in John 8:39-47.[624] **3.** Neither are all "children of the devil" Judean, even in the broader sense: Pontius Pilate displays all of the characteristics of the devil's children, and seems particularly implicated in the "judgment on this world" and "its ruler," a saying linked with Jesus' crucifixion (12:31-32). **4.** Nor are all Judeans "children of the devil," as made clear by the fact that many of the disciples (not to mention Jesus!) are Judeans. **5.** Lastly, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, such a reading misses the fact that John does not construct his new layer of racial identity (children of God/devil) in order to map these upon existing ethnicities, but in order to largely replace them. John's rhetoric does not "accuse" any earthly race, so much as deconstruct the category itself. To the extent that the gospel's characters continue to use these earthly identities to argue with one another, they are "mistaken," having failed to perceive the identities which really matter.

John's view of race was unquestionably influenced by the messages and points of view that permeated the world in which he lived. This statement is as sure as the affirmation that someone taught John how to speak, or that he knew the customs of his own people. No ideas are born *ex nihilo*, out of some psychological void into which the Word speaks; rather, whatever inspiration John was granted found expression through his own unique voice, itself shaped by the innumerable, inescapable voices of his culture. Culture is, by its very nature, ubiquitous, and to

[624] i.e., murderousness (7:1, 8:44), duplicity (7:1-5; 8:44c-47), and wrong orientation to Jesus (7:5,7; 8:42,47), not to mention being "at home in the world" (7:7; contrast 15:18-19).

insist that an author is immune from the power of ubiquity is to risk enshrining conventional evils as divine commands.

In our own day, the fourth gospel itself is now among the inescapable, ubiquitous voices that form our own ideas about race. For the engaged Christian, who may have heard its sayings hundreds or even thousands of times, its various implications may have become familiar enough to become reflexive. However, if we consider these ideas carefully, there may be much that is ill-suited to followers of one who taught that “all the law and the prophets” hangs upon the love of one's neighbor (Mark 12:31; Matt 19:19; Luke 10:27)—or even, as in John's more limited formulation, that we must love each other as Jesus loved us (John 13:34). In fear and trembling (Phil 2:12), we must dare to “test the spirits” (1 John 4:1), in order to firmly claim what gives “life, and life abundant” (John 10:10), and to reject that which leads to death.

EPILOGUE: THE CHILDREN *OF* THE CHILDREN OF GOD

> "Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, because his seed (σπερμα) abides in him, and he is not able (ου δυναται) to sin, because he has been born of God."
>
> – 1 John 3:9

As I have argued above, many passages in John suggest a division between two "cosmic races," which trump any consideration of earthly descent or geographical homeland. But how did John's category "Children of God" fare *after* the gospel? If John does indeed imply the construction of such layer of cosmic identity, we would expect to find some recognition of this among his earliest interpreters. How do the racializing ideas in John's gospel find expression in related literature? And how do the ethical implications of John's anthropology reverberate in subsequent traditions, for good or for ill?

In this section, we will consider these questions by examining two sources: 1 John, and Heracleon's *Commentary on John*. These two texts woill provide a sort of "test case" for my argument: if certain racializing concepts are in fact implicit in the gospel itself, we might expect to see them reflected in others developing the Johannine tradition. And we do: in these texts, we encounter concepts familiar from our investigation of the gospel, although modified. One might flip through an old photo album and discern unique variations on a theme—here a grandmother's nose, there the shape of a father's eyes, but with a different color—changed, perhaps, but still recognizable. Just so, we encounter in these two works, if not exactly the "Children of God" from John, at least the children *of* the Children of God.

The Cosmological Races in 1 John

The first letter of John presupposes the same general anthropology as the gospel of John, taking it for granted that there are two cosmic "races"—the Children of God, and Children of the Devil—whose members will necessarily act in certain characteristic ways. Indeed, the author of 1 John has more to say on the subject in five short chapters than the evangelist does in twenty-one! The author—whom we shall call John the Epistler, for convenience—elaborates on the racial construction found, in briefer form, in the gospel. He clarifies much that was ambiguous, more explicitly contrasts the two cosmic races, and utilizes the "spiritual anthropology" of the Johannine circle to explain schisms experienced by his audience.

Over the course of this discussion, I will generally follow the stance of C. H. Dodd, Rudolf Bultmann, and Raymond Brown, in assigning 1 John a date some time after the composition of John, by someone from the same general Johannine circle.[625] However, I appreciate Judith Lieu's word of caution, that the layers of redaction which scholars recognize in John's gospel makes mapping its relationship to 1 John a complicated proposition.[626] Von Wahlde, for example, argues that 1 John was written *after* the second edition of the gospel, but *before* a third edition.[627] Strecker proposes that 2 and 3 John were written first, followed by 1 John and the gospel some time in the early second century.[628] Against Strecker, Trumbower argues for the traditional chronology placing the gospel first, on the grounds that many theological positions are stated much more clearly in 1 John than in the gospel. "We generally find precision with regard to theological issues *increasing* into the second century, not decreasing as Strecker's sequence would require."[629] Kysar further suggests that 1 John's concern for intra-

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625 Trumbower, *Born From Above,* 135-36.
626 Judith Lieu, *I, II, & III John: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 8.
627 Von Wahlde, *Gnosticism, Docetism, and the Judaisms of the First Century,* 1.
628 Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John* (Hermeneia 76. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), xlii.
629 Trumbower, *Born From Above,* 136 n. 4, italics added.

church conflicts, lacking in the gospel, suggests a later point in time.[630] Although I loosely align my discussion with the position that the Gospel came first, my argument is not overly tied to such a proposition. Neither does my argument depend upon the position that the writer of 1 John knew the Gospel directly. After all, the letter contains no incontrovertible evidence that its author knew John's Gospel,[631] nor, indeed, that he knew *any* biographical traditions about Jesus' life.[632] If it so happened that the Epistler *was* acquainted with the Gospel, this would make him the earliest interpreter we have of John; if, on the other hand, he was *not*, we may still note that his comments about the "Children of God" arose in the same Johannine milieu. Whether we have a case of interpretation or parallel development, 1 John represents a fresh articulation of the sort of anthropology that underlies both documents. And, 1 John represents a more *focused* elaboration on the two cosmic races—consistent with, but more extensive than, what we encounter in the gospel itself.

When speaking of the two cosmic races, the Epistler uses terms similar to those found in John, although with greater frequency. The more numerous references to those "born" of God, and the children of the two cosmic "fathers," are all the more striking in such a short document. Consider the language describing cosmic descent in the two sources:

John: 9 terms in 879 verses	**1 John:** 15 terms in 105 verses
"born of God" – 1 occurrence (1:13) cf. "born from above" (3:3, 7) "born of the Spirit" (3:5, 6, 8)	"born of God" – 9 occurrences: 2:29, 3:9 (x2), 4:7, 5:1 (x2), 5:4, 5:18 (x2) cf. "God's sperma" (3:9)
"children of God" – 2 times (1:12, 11:52)	"children of God" – 3 occurrences (3:1,10, 5:2)
"your father the Devil" – (8:44)	"children of the Devil" – 2 times (3:8, 3:10)

The Epistler heavily emphasizes the anthropology of John, making it a central theme of his relatively brief letter. He uses the terms "born of God," "children of God," and "children of the

[630] Kysar, *John: The Maverick Gospel*, Revised Edition (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993 [1976]), 142.
[631] Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, 8.
[632] Strecker, *The Johannine Letters, 5.*

Devil" more times than the gospel, in a document only one-fifth as long! The Epistler also adds missing terms that clarify the two-race schema. For example, the gospel speaks of "the children of God" (1:12, 11:52; cf. 12:36), but never actually uses the opposite term, "the children of the Devil." The reader is left to infer the existence of this category from Jesus' revelation that the devil is the father of those who resist him (8:42-47). 1 John supplies the missing term, placing it in clear juxtaposition with its opposite, "the children of God" (3:8,10).[633]

As in John, the two cosmic races are characterized by a striking moral resemblance to their fathers. Those born of God work righteousness, as God himself is righteous (2:29). Indeed, "All who have been born of God do not perform sin—because God's seed abides in them, *they are unable to sin*" (3:9).[634] The converse goes for the children of the devil—they are unable to *refrain* from sinning. Recall that in John's gospel, the offspring of the devil were unmasked by their conformity to their father's example—who was a murderer "from the beginning," and the father of lies (8:43-45). In 1 John, the children of the devil are again known by their deeds: "Whoever works sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning" (3:8). Observation of moral conduct therefore provides ready proof of identity: "The children of God and the children of the devil are revealed (φανερα) in this: everyone who doesn't perform righteousness is not of God, nor is one who does not love his brother" (3:10).

The general phraseology above ("Everyone who . . .") is prevalent throughout the letter. Often, it is coupled with language of descent and origins. The pattern occurs in two variants. Usually, the Epistler begins with a behavior, and proceeds to a statement of origins (i.e., "Everyone who _____ has been born of God"). Occasionally, however, he moves from origins to behavior (i.e., "Everyone who has been born from God does _____").[635] Here are the instances

[633] Recall from chapter 1 that in antiquity, race was largely a matter of (purported) descent from specific ancestors, or as Jonathan Hall puts it, "Can you, or can you not, claim descent from *x?*" (*Ethnic Identity*, 25). With two very clearly labeled groups, who trace their descent to one of two cosmic fathers, we are once again in the realm of "cosmological race."

[634] In full, the verse reads: " All who have been born of God do not perform sin, because God's seed abides in them, and they are unable to sin, because they have been born of God." (3:9)

[635] As can be seen below, some of these statements deviate from the general pattern very slightly. A couple lack the

of this pattern in 1 John:

Pattern A: "Everyone who does *(action)* is *(origins)*"

"of God" / εκ του θεου	Everyone who performs righteousness has been born of him. 2:29b
	Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 4:7b
	Everyone who believes that Jesus is Christ has been born of God. 5:1a[636]
"not of God" / ουκ εκ τ. θ. i.e., "of the Devil" / εκ διαβ.	Everyone who sins has not seen him and doesn't know him 3:6b.
	Whoever performs sin is of the devil. 3:8a
	Everyone who does not perform righteousness is not of God... 3:10b
	Whoever does not love his brother [is not of God]. 3:10c
	Every spirit who does not confess Jesus is not from God. 4:3
	Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 4:7b

Pattern B: "Everyone who is *(origins)* does *(action)*"

Everyone who abides in him does not sin. 3:6a
Everyone who has been born of God does not perform sin. 3:9a
Everyone who has been born of God conquers the world. 5:4a
Everyone who has been born of God does not perform sin. 5:18a
Whoever is born of God protects himself, and the evil one does not touch him. 5:18b

Judith Lieu and Jeffrey Trumbower both suggest that this series is consistently concerned with the *performance* of justice/sin, and therefore represents only a *moral* dualism (rather than a truly ontological dualism).[637] Such an interpretation may fit the first group of sayings ("Pattern A" above), where the behavior precedes the statement of origins. These could reasonably be interpreted as suggesting that those whose moral conduct resembles God are therefore God's children (cf. 4:7b), and those whose moral conduct is "devilish" are therefore the children of the devil (cf. 3:8a).

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subject "everyone" (πας), and instead feature a participial subject best expressed by a relative clause: "Whoever. . ." Others lack the "born of" language and simply describe people as being "of" (εκ) God" or "of the devil." For a list of such phrases, see Trumbower, *Born from Above*, 139. For a list of "Everyone who. . ." statements in 1 John which do *not* feature descent-language, see Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, 117-18.

636 cf. 5:1b, "Everyone who loves the bearer/begetter loves the one born/begotten."

637 Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, 118. Although Trumbower sees less of an ontologically-based "fixed origin" anthropology in 1 John than he sees in the gospel of John, he does acknowledge that in both, one must *already* be a member of the special category (those "from God") in order to hear the community's message properly (1 Jn 4:6a; cf. Jn. 1:13, 3:3, 6:45; 8:43-47; 18:37); Trumbower, *Born From Above,* 138-139.

However, the "moral dualism" interpretation does not fit the second type ("Pattern B" above). In these verses, *everyone* (πας) "born of God" will act in a certain way. Grammatically, these statements begin with a pre-existing origin, taken as a given, and then proceed to the sort of conduct that "everyone" (πας) who come from that origin will necessarily exhibit. Later in her discussion, Lieu acknowledges that formulations which place the "paternity" clause *first* imply a more ontological (not merely moral) dualism:

> The concern is no longer with identifying people by their actions and with drawing conclusions, but instead with taking for granted the actions that will result not from their own choices but from a state for which they are not responsible. Offspring have no choice in their parentage and can take no credit or blame for it. Whereas in human society children are not automatons, their every thought or deed determined by their genetic inheritance, those who are born from God do not, it is assumed, have what it takes to sin.[638]

Verse 3:9 states that the Children of God are *unable* (ου δυναται) to sin; paternity determines behavior. In this "sharply dualistic model," Lieu suggests, "there is little room for a change of parentage and there can be no third alternative or middle way, not even prior to choosing one or the other."[639] I would strengthen this assertion by reference to 1 John 3:10, which affirms that the "the Children of God and Children of the Devil are revealed (φανερα)" by whether they perform righteousness or not. The verb choice ("revealed") indicates that behavior merely allows others to perceive one's origins. That is, origins determine actions, not the other way around.[640]

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[638] Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, 136-37.

[639] Ibid., 141.

[640] My stance is in opposition to those who understand these verses as representing only a *moral dualism*, as, for example, Georg Strecker.

Strecker sees the "not able to sin" of 3:9c as a rhetorical overstatement of the basic sentiment that believers *normatively* do not sin (3:6, 9a). He argues that because many verses (e.g. 1:8, 3:4) presuppose the existence of sin in the Johannine church, the author clearly does not mean believers truly cannot sin; he has merely overstated the case to emphatically caution against sin (Strecker, *The Johannine Letters,* 102-3). Similarly, when 1 John says that the children of God or the devil are "made known" by their deeds (3:10), this does not mean that some underlying "nature" or "essence" is revealed by actions; "what is at issue for the author, is not a statement of essence but rather that the community should behave in the right way" (Strecker, *The Johannine Letters,* 104).

I am cautious about this reading, as it places the interpreter in the precarious position of claiming to know "what the author *really* means"—even when this meaning stands in opposition to the plain sense of the text. Also, underlying such a reading is the assumption that authors are necessarily internally consistent, and express ideas which all fit into one unified logic. In reality, authors are often wildly inconsistent, able to express ideas which contradict each other or fit poorly together. The Epistler expresses an anthropology shared by the Johannine community, which in his view includes the theoretical sinlessness of the Children of God—but at the same time, the Epistler is worried about the church's recent experience of sin and schism.

We can see that the two racialized groups are characterized by a high degree of determinacy in 1 John; they will *necessarily and inevitably* act in accordance with their racial nature. The Epistler uses this determinacy to explain a recent traumatic schism that the community has experienced. He writes,

> [18]Little children, it is the last hour, and just as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come, from which we know that this is the last hour. [19]They went out from us, but they were not of us, *for if they were of us, they would have remained with us* – but [they went out] so that it might be revealed that they are not of us. [20]But you have been anointed by the spirit, and you know everything. [21]I wrote to you, not because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it, and because every lie is not of the truth. [22]Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist: one who denies the Father and the Son. (2:18-22, emphasis added)

The defection of many supposed "members" is easily explained: because they were never true members to begin with, their betrayal was inevitable. There is therefore no such thing as apostasy —there is only the unmasking of outsiders masquerading as believers.[641] The remaining members of the group can comfort themselves that they did nothing *wrong* to lose their seeming-brethren —those ones were *always* going to leave. However, a schema in which fellow believers are revealed to have been "antichrists" all along, may lead to neurotic self-doubt among those left behind: What if *they*, too, are actually children of the Devil, simply deluding themselves? The Epistler anticipates this pastoral concern. He assures the remaining members that they, at least, "have been anointed by the spirit, and know everything" (2:20).

There remains, however, a sort of schizophrenic tension between confidence in their identity, and anxiety to hold the rest of the church community together. On the one hand, the Epistler rallies the still-faithful around their unshakable identity as children of God (2:13-14, 3:1-2); on the other hand, he cautions them to persevere and hold fast to conduct becoming of God's children. The author's pastoral desire to inspire confidence seems at war with a certain ecclesiastical *realpolitik*. It cannot be simultaneously true that ***A*)** the letter is addressed to

[641] Trumbower, *Born From Above,* 140.

children of God (3:1-2), and who are ***B)*** unable to sin (3:8, 5:18), but at the same time ***C)*** they are self-deluded if they say they have no sin (1:8-10)! Sometimes, these seemingly contradictory impulses rub shoulders uneasily even in the same passage:

> [28]And now, little children, remain in him, so that when he is revealed, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. [29]If you know that he is righteous, you know that all who perform righteousness have been born of him. [3:1]See what love the father has given us, that we should be called children of God, which we are.[642] [2]Beloved, already we are children of God; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he is revealed,[643] we shall be like him, because we will see him just as he is... (2:28-3:2)

Here, the Epistler exhorts the community to persist in God and perform righteousness—and in the next breath he reassures them *twice* that they are indeed, children of God, and will be like Jesus! If the Children of God are inevitably good, just as the children of the devil are inevitably sinful, then an exhortation to hold fast should be unnecessary—indeed, nonsensical. However, the community has, in fact, experienced dissension and loss, and the Epistler aims to prevent further schism. This tension seems to point to dissonance between theory and lived experience: despite expectations, members of the community do sin.[644]

The epistle identifies the Children of the Devil with the world, assigning them the same "homeland" as John's gospel. Although the Children of God are not explicitly assigned a proper homeland, they are cautioned against making themselves at home in the world:

> [15]Love neither the world, nor the things in the world. If someone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him, [16]because everything in the world—the desires of the flesh, and the desires of the eye, and the pretension of life—is not from the Father, but from the world. [17]And the world is passing away, as well as its desires; but whoever is doing the will of God remains into the age. (2:15-17)

If the Johannine circle does not have a native land, they do at least have their own "native time"—that is, the "age" into which (εις τον αιωνα) they will remain. This age is unlike the world's time, which is passing away. As in the Gospel, the "world" has its own peculiar desires

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642 *lit.* "and we are."

643 *or* "when it is revealed," *i.e.,* when "what we shall be" is revealed.

644 Trumbower, *Born From Above,* 138; Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, 230. Discussing this inconstancy of theory and experience, Lieu cites 5:17 (which implies that some of the in-group do sin, although not "unto death") followed by 5:18 (a flat denial that the Children of God sin).

and inclinations, which the brothers are warned against. The Epistler further explains that the world is under the power of the "evil one" (ὁ πονηρος), and who therefore rules all who belong to the world. "Everyone born of God does not sin, but whoever was born of God guards himself, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, but the whole world stands in the thrall of the evil one" (5:18-19). This figure is equivalent to the "ruler of this world" in the gospel (Jn. 14:30, 16:11).

We have seen, then, that in 1 John, the two cosmic races have their own "genealogy" from the two fathers, identifiable moral traits that resemble them, and a unique homeland. The Epistler adds another element to his letter not explicitly found in John: an allusion to Cain and Abel. As we saw in chapter 5, speculation that Cain, Abel, and Seth represent distinct types (or "races") of humanity were just one part of the general conceptual context in which John was written. Such traditions speculating on two or three archaic "races," which have existed as long as humankind, may have influenced the Epistler's understanding of his two primal human species —the Children of God and Children of the Devil. He writes:

> [10]The children of God and the children of the Devil are revealed in this: everyone who doesn't perform righteousness is not of God, nor is one who does not love his brother.
> [11]This is the message which you heard from the beginning (απ' αρχης): that we should love one another, [12]not like Cain who was of the evil one (του πονηρου) and murdered his brother; and why did he murder him? Because his own works were evil (πονηρα), but those of his brother were righteous.
> [13]And don't be amazed, brothers, if the world hates you. [14]We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers; whoever does not love remains in death. [15]Everyone one hates his brother is a murderer ("man-killer," ανθρωποκτονος), and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (3:10-15)

Although Cain traditions are not explicitly mentioned in John, some have argued that common vocabulary between 1 John and John 8:33-59 (such as "man-killer" ανθρωποκτονος, and "from the beginning" απ' αρχης, cf. 3:8) suggest that the same Cain-speculation influenced both passages. As we saw earlier, speculation on the offspring of the generation of Cain/Abel/Seth can

be found in many Second-century Judean sources, and continues in gnostic traditions.[645]

At any rate, what can we say about the Epistler's own use of these traditions? If we apply his own criteria to this account, we can identity Abel as a child of God, and Cain as a child of the devil. Cain is one "who does not love his brother," whereas Abel "performs righteousness" (3:10). Rather than positing the existence of two primal races, which are the progeny of either Cain or Abel (or Seth), 1 John explains that these ancestors were, in turn, the children of prior fathers: God and the devil. Here, the ancients serve as exemplars of the two races, rather than their originators.

Despite some tension between exhortation and determinacy, 1 John strongly emphasizes the fixed nature of the two races, to an even greater degree than John's gospel does. The Epistler applies the fixed character of the races not only to contemporary controversies, but also to mythical events from the dawn of time. In his logic, the betrayal of the church by the "antichrists" was as inevitable as the betrayal of Abel by Cain. In both cases, Sons of the Devil acted as Sons of the Devil must, hating the children of God. But is this hatred a two-way street? Or does the love so characteristic of the Sons of God extend even to their eternal enemies? In the next section, we will consider what the Johannine anthropology suggests about hatred and love between the two races—and we shall raise the question of the ethical implications of such a system.

Who Loves Whom: Johannines vs. Synoptics

Like other Christian writers before him, John relates that Jesus delivered a commandment to love. However, unlike those authors, he does not encourage a broad interpretation of this commandment. When contrasted with the love-commandment as framed in the synoptics, it

[645] Lieu suggests that the "Seed which remains in him" (1 John 3:9) may refer to the "another seed" promised to Adam, i.e. Seth, after the murder of Abel and flight of Cain. Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, 138-39.

becomes clear that John has a much narrower idea of *whom*, exactly, the Christ-believer should love. This fits well into the gospel's general anthropology, with its two "species" of humanity who are constitutionally inimical to each other. We shall see that 1 John follows the gospel's lead, so that the moral demand to love only applies to fellow Children of God.

The synoptics gave a high profile to the love-command. As the second of the two "Great Commandments" upon which "all the law and the prophets depend," Jesus cites Leviticus 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Mark 12:31, Matt 19:19, Luke 10:27).[646] In the Levitical context of the saying, "your neighbor" had a relatively narrow frame of reference, standing in apposition to "any of the sons of the people (λαου)," or even more specifically, "your brother."[647] However, none of the synoptic evangelists preserve these elements, allowing for a looser interpretation of "neighbor." Rather than being limited to one's clan or race, might "neighbor" have a broader sense? Indeed, Luke directly appends the question, "Who is my neighbor?" to the command; prompting Jesus to widen the term to encompass *anyone* who stands in need of help—so that a "neighbor" relationship exists even between traditional racial enemies such as Judeans and Samaritans (Luke 10:29-37). Both Matthew and Luke include explicit instructions to love even one's enemies (Matt 5:43-48 // Luke 6:27-63).[648] Matthew frames this as an expansion (or perhaps, a deepening) of the original Mosaic commandment:

> Jesus said, "You have heard it said, 'You shall love your neighbor, *and hate your enemies*.' [Citing and expanding upon Lev. 19:18] But I say to you: Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." – Matt 5:43-44

Although the phrase "and hate your enemies" is not found in the original, Matthew apparently finds the commandment too conducive to readings that allow for hatred of others—indeed, he views such hatred as so strongly implied as to comprise the unspoken "second half" of the saying. Matthew's expanded version might suggest that such an interpretation circulated in Jesus'

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[646] cf. Rom 13:9-10, Gal 5:14 , Jas 2:8.
[647] Lev 19:17-18.
[648] cf. Rom 12:14-20

own day. From this brief survey, we may conclude that the authors of the synoptic gospels understood the commandment to love one's neighbor as widely as possible, applicable even to one's bitterest enemies.[649] The Christ-believer owed her love not only to other believers, but to all human beings.

John's version of the love-command has a very different emphasis. It occupies a prominent place in the gospel, coming immediately after the last supper, at the beginning of the farewell discourse. After washing his disciples' feet, Jesus instructs them,

> "I give you a new commandment—that you should love one another; just as I have loved you, so also you are to love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for each other. " – John 13:34-35

But this is no commandment to love everyone, nor even to love one's "neighbor." Rather, Jesus commands his disciples to love "one another" (αλληλους). The reciprocal pronoun αλληλους indicates that this love is *also* reciprocal: a mutual love shared between members of the same community. The commandment's setting, a secluded dinner gathering, further emphasizes this point. Whereas the synoptic gospels have Jesus deliver the love-commandment in public to a mixed audience of disciples and enemies, John's "new commandment" is only given to an intimate circle of friends at a private dinner. Indeed, Jesus even waited for Judas, the betrayer, to leave before delivering it! It seems that the commandment is for "insiders only," and its applicability is consequently limited to fellow-believers.

John is not interested in love for one's enemies; what concerns him is the reciprocal love between the "brothers." The gospel takes it for granted that like loves like—and unlike hates unlike. The children of the Devil, who belong to the world, hate the children of God, who do *not* belong to the world (15:18-19, 17:14). Those of the world do, however, love others like themselves (7:2-7, 15:19a), just as the children of God love each other (13:34-35). While it is never stated that the children of God *hate* the Children of the Devil, they are never forbidden

[649] The same holds for Paul; cf. Rom 12:14-20; 13:8.

from doing so; John certainly does not go the extra step of commanding them to love their enemies! The oppositional rhetoric in the gospel, constructing one race as the antithesis of the other, encourages a certain amount of loathing towards the villainous children of the Devil, especially in light of the fact that they themselves already hate the Christ-believers![650]

Like the gospel, 1 John also limits love to one's fellow-believers.[651] The letter's version of the love-command is essentially a shortened version of the "new commandment" of John 13: "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning: that we should love one another" (1 John 3:11). If we scan the entire letter for a sense of who loves whom, a picture emerges that strongly resembles that from the gospel. The Children of God love those born of God (5:1), in other words, their brothers (2:10, 3:17-18, 4:16-21).[652] Or, in terms familiar from the gospel, they love "one another" (αλληλους: 3:10-11,14,16-17, 3:23, 4:7, 4:11-12). After all, "everyone who loves the parent (τον γεννησαντα) loves the one born (γεγεννημενον) of him" (5:1b). Such love is part of the child's natural resemblance to the parent: "Love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God . . . because God is love" (4:7b,8b; cf. 4:11).

However, love has its limits. The Children of God are cautioned not to love the world (2:15). Conversely, they are never ordered to love their enemies. The Epistler's reticence to issue such a command makes sense; if "everyone who loves the parent loves the child" (5:1b), then love of the Children of the Devil might be tantamount to love of the Devil himself! But should the faithful go so far as to *hate* them? Certainly, the Children of God are forbidden from hating

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[650] Ironically, John would agree with Luke's belief that traditional racial enemies, such as Judeans and Samaritans, need not hate each other—although for a very different reason. For John, one's worldly racial identity, based upon geography and genealogy, is simply not important enough to base loves and hates upon. However, one's cosmic identity, based upon the fatherhood of God or the devil, certainly *is* important enough to govern one's loves, and, presumably, one's hates.

[651] "Finally, it is clear from the Letter that when the author speaks of the love of the 'brother' or of 'one another' he is not speaking of one's neighbor in general, but rather—and very specifically—of the members of the community." Fernando F. Segovia, *Love Relationships in the Johannine Tradition* (Chico, CA: Scholar's Press, 1982), 76. Cf. Culpepper, *The Gospel and Letters of John,* 265; Von Wahlde, *Gnosticism, Docetism, and the Judaisms of the First Century,* 142-43.

[652] They are also not to *hate* their brother; cf. 2:11, 3:15, 4:20.

each other (2:11, 3:15, 4:20), but their attitude toward the Children of the Devil is never spelled out.

For their part, the Children of the Devil have their own loves and hates. The Children of the Devil "do not love" (4:8), but rather *hate*, the brothers (3:10, 3:15). Similarly, the "world" does not "know" the Johannine group (3:1), and hates them (3:13). The Children of the Devil are characterized by murderousness, like Cain; and as Cain hated Abel, they hate those who perform righteousness (3:10-12). The Children of the Devil may not have genuine loves, but in some sense they do "love the things of the world," and are characterized by worldly passions (επιθυμιαι) such as "the desires of the flesh, and the desires of the eye, and the pretensions of life" (2:16).

Therefore, we cannot simply say that the Children of God are characterized by love, and the Children of the Devil are characterized by hate. The situation is more complicated than that. It would be more precise to say that the Children of God are characterized by rightly ordered affections, and the Children of the Devil are characterized by disordered affections. The former love what indeed ought to be loved; but the latter hate what they should love, and love what they should hate.[653]

The oppositional anthropology of 1 John can foster hatred towards those perceived as "Children of the Devil." The in-group is assured that their enemies are a race of beings who descend from the Devil, who are constitutionally unloving, and who hate them. Because it is a foregone conclusion that these enemies will betray, persecute, and even murder the faithful, there seems to be nothing to be gained by reaching out to them. Such a diametrically-opposed cosmic-racial schema strongly tends toward antipathy of the outgroup.

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[653] Fernando F. Segovia speaks of these two sorts of love ("of the world" and "of God") as being wholly incompatible, admitting no *via media* between them. He further notes how narrowly defined the right love of the community is: "The 'new' relationship of love, viz., the command to love one another in a very precise way, now serves as the main criterion for membership in that community: whoever does not so love falls outside the given hierarchy of love, goes forth 'into the world' and is not to be loved by the community (v. 2:15)." Segovia, *Love Relationships in the Johannine Tradition,* 212.

The description of one's enemies as a diabolical race unto themselves, naturally lends itself to daydreams of violent vindication, such as those evident in much of the Qumran material.[654] The Epistler invites his audience to think of themselves as bit players in a grand drama, which includes spiritual as well as human actors (4:1-6)—a conflict that they will ultimately win. Already, the author assures them, they have conquered both the evil one (2:14) and the antichrists (4:4), and God will eventually "destroy the works of the devil" (3:8). The fact that the epistle lacks imagery of explicitly *violent* retribution, probably says more about the community's inability to imagine they could win such a conflict, rather than its incompatibility with their worldview. The circle addressed in the letter was probably not large enough to imagine itself in a direct, military-style clash with its enemies. But what might another, more powerful group do, if their outlook was informed by such an anthropology? What atrocity would not be justifiable, if one's enemies consisted of the Children of the Devil?

The ontologically-divided anthropology of John leads in dangerous directions. The exemption of an entire class of humans from the love of the "new commandment" leaves them fair game for hatred, instead. As a Christian, I find it monstrous that in a letter which has so much to say about "love," one emerges with the distinct impression that the sooner the "bad half" of humanity is eliminated, the better. At *best*, John's anthropology encourages its adherents to avoid those who disagree with them, as a devilish race. At worst, this anthropology could justify ad-hoc, or even systematic, violence against them.

Who's Who in Heracleon: John's Characters and the Gnostic Races

Heracleon, an intimate of the arch-gnostic Valentinus, and the most-esteemed student of his school, wrote the earliest-known commentary on the gospel of John.[655] His commentary—

[654] e.g., 1QSb 5:20-29; 4Q174, and almost the entire *War Scroll.*

[655] Clement calls him the most famous (δοκιμωματος) of the school of Valentinus (*Strom*. 4.9), and Origen claims he

seemingly the first full-length systematic treatment of the gospel—was written late in the second century, ca. 160–180 CE. We only have access to it through fragments preserved within Origen's own *Commentary on the Gospel of John* (hereafter *CJ*), written in the 230's. In these readings of John, we can discern Heracleon's views on human nature—which is clearly a form of "cosmic race" as discussed above, albeit a more elaborate version than any we have considered so far.

The general shape of Heracleon's anthropology resembles that of Ptolemaeus, another disciple of Valentinus. Irenaeus describes his views as follows:

> They posit three races (γενη) of men; the pneumatic (πνευματικον), the material (χοικον), and the psychic (ψυχικον), just as Cain, Abel, and Seth also came out of these three natures (τρεις φυσεις)—not with reference to individuals, but with reference to race (γενος).[656] – Irenaus, *Adv.Haer.* 1.7.5

It is not certain whether Ptolemaeus himself employed the word γενος to describe the species of human beings, or whether Irenaeus has imposed this term upon the discussion. Regardless, this use of the term would fit the system. At any rate, Heracleon's view on humanity conforms to the contours outlined above. Like Ptolemaeus, he espouses a tripartite division of humanity, into pneumatics (or "spirituals," πνευματικοι), psychics (ψυχικοι), and materials (or "formed of earth," χοϊκοι).[657] Certainly, Heracleon brings his certain ideas about humanity to John's Gospel —but, of course, we might say the same of Origen, with his preconceived notions include the preexistence of souls, and the possibility that all (even the damned) may eventually be redeemed. The question is not necessarily, "Does Heracleon have certain biases?"—for every interpreter does. A more apt question is, "To what extent does John's gospel lend itself to an anthropology like Heracleon's?"[658] Or we might even go so far as to ask, "Whose anthropology is closest to

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was "acquainted with" Valentinus himself (*CJ* 1.8).

656 My translation. Alternatively, the middle phrase could read ". . . represented by Cain, Abel, and Seth . . ."

657 Unlike "Pneumatic" and "Psychic," which derive from Greek stems also used in English, "Choic" (derived from χοϊκος) sounds utterly meaningless to English-speaking ears. In this section, I opt to call this race "Materials" instead. Χοϊκος itself denotes "made of earth or dust;" see for example *Sib. Or.* 8:455, which affirms that Adam was χοϊκῳ πλασθεντι, or "molded of earth" (*BDAG* 883; *Liddell-Scott* 890).

658 Sadly, Irenaeus does not preserve any Gnostic interpretations of the Fourth Gospel which reflect the tripartite anthropology outlined above, but Heracleon *is* heir to a prior tradition of Valentinian interpretations of John; Irenaeus relates certain interpretations of John which Valentinians gnostics cited as proofs of their cosmogony (*Adv.Haer.*1:8:5). Clearly, then, Valentinians did believe that John supported aspects of their theology. Possibly,

that found in the Fourth Gospel—Heracleon's or Origen's?"

In Heracleon's assessment, various characters in John can be identified as coming from the three cosmic races. The Samaritan woman, for instance, is a "pneumatic" (*CJ* 13.15). The royal officer of John 4:46-53 is a "psychic," who is converted to belief in Jesus (*CJ* 13.60). And some of the Judeans of John 8 are "psychics" who choose not to believe (*CJ* 20.24), whereas others among them are "materials/*choics*," incapable of salvation (*CJ* 20.20).[659]

The Samaritan woman of John 4:5-42 exemplifies the pneumatic human being. Heracleon praises the Samaritan woman "because she showed the kind of faith that was inseparable from her nature (τῃ φυσει) and corresponded to it, in that she did not hesitate over what he told her" (*CJ* 13.10).[660] Here we learn that πνευματικος is a "nature,"—one that almost demands that she believe, although there is a definite moment of awakening.[661] Before meeting Jesus, the woman's awareness of her pneumatic nature had "dried up," to the point that she has been living as if she were merely a psychic person,[662] having "neglected all the things that were essential for her life" (*CJ* 13.15).[663] This shows that pneumatics can live in a way that is ignorant of their elect nature —her identity as a child of God is a potentiality that must be activated by an encounter with the Logos, but as soon as she is reminded of who she is, she responds wholeheartedly:[664] According to Heracleon, "Having been only just pricked by the word, from then on she hated even the place of the so-called living water" (*CJ* 13.10).[665]

Heracleon explains that the royal officer (βασιλικος) of John 4:46-54 allegorically

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this heritage of previous interpretation included readings which (in their eyes) suggested the three cosmic races.

659 Jeffrey A. Trumbower, "Origen's Exegesis of John 8:19-53: The Struggle with Heracleon over the Idea of Fixed Natures," *VC* 43.2 (1989), 139.

660 Foerster, *Gnosis*, 169.

661 Kyle Keefer, *Branches of the Gospel of John: The Reception of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 39.

662 Elaine H. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon's Commentary on John* (New York: Abingdon, 1973), 87.

663 Koester, *Gnosis*, 170.

664 Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis,* 88,91; Harold W. Attridge, "John and Heracleon: Reassessment of an Early Christian Hermeneutical Debate," in *Essays on John and Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 203-205.

665 Foerster, *Gnosis*, 169.

represents the Demiurge, the creator entity in Valentinian cosmology, who also rules over the world like a king. He is of the psychic type; as his sick son, who represents "the nature (τῃ φυσει) thus constituted"—that is, psychic humanity (*CJ* 13.60).[666] The Demiurge is thus the "father" of the psychic race, and he himself (allegorically) leads his "son" (psychic human beings) to the Logos to accomplish the salvation that he cannot give them himself. Heracleon adds, "'He and his whole house believed' (v. 53) 'is said with reference to the order of angels and to the men who are akin (οἱ οικειοτερων) to him [the Demiurge]'" (*CJ* 13.60). Not only psychic humanity, then, but also some angels are said to be "akin" to the Demiurge, psychic beings who can choose whether to become children of God by adoption, or children of the Devil by adoption (*CJ* 20.24). This adoption gives them the "nature" of their adoptive father.[667] Irenaeus observes that Valentinians used the term "*psychikoi*" to refer to non-Valentinian Christians (*Adv.Haer.* 1.6.4), and Heracleon's exegesis of this passage fits the general idea that believing psychics should be viewed more-or-less favorably.[668] However, they remain inferior to pneumatics. Psychic humans, psychic angels, and even the Demiurge himself are all dependent upon sense-perception to believe. They belong to the category of those whose signs-based faith John's gospel disparages, even as it makes reluctant provision for it. Moreover, psychic salvation is always uncertain and contingent, in this life; but pneumatic redemption is certain even in this world.[669] This afforded gnostics, who saw themselves of the pneumatic type, a comfortable sense of their own superiority, while still allowing a positive view of other Christians.

The "Judeans who had believed in Jesus" of John 8:31-59 are a mixed bag. Many of them are also psychics who, unlike the royal officer, do *not* choose Jesus, and so are rightly called children of the Devil.[670] Heracleon is careful to specify that these particular Judeans are not

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666 Keefer, *Branches of the Gospel of John*, 40.
667 Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis,* 103.
668 Trumbower, "Origen's Exegesis of John 8:19-53," 139.
669 Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis,* 85, 97.
670 *CJ* 20:8,20,23,24.

children of the Devil "by nature," but rather "by intent."[671] Again, he says: "He now calls them children of the Devil, not because the Devil produces any of them, but because by doing the works of the Devil they became like him" (*CJ* 20.24).[672] At the same time, some of the Judeans present are the Devil's own proper children, the materials or "*choics*," who truly cannot hear the savior's words because they "are not of God" (cf. John 8:47).[673]

Lastly, and most strangely, there are pneumatic Judeans in the wings, who apparently have no speaking roles in the scene. Heracleon infers their presence from his rather counterintuitive interpretation of John 8:38, which reads:

> What I have seen with my Father, I speak,
> and what you have heard from your Father, you do. – John 8:38

In most readings, the "father" of 8:38a is understood to be God, and the "father" of 8:38b is the Devil. But for Heracleon, the verse constitutes a parallelism, not an antithesis: verse 38b shows that some among the Judeans in the crowd have the *same* Father as Jesus (God) and are thus pneumatics, not psychics. These pneumatics apparently remain silent while the other Judeans, who are the Children of the Devil (some by nature, some by choice), argue with Jesus. With this rather idiosyncratic reading, Heracleon has found members of all three cosmic races among the Judeans of John 8:33-59—thus extending the Johannine motif of crowds with mixed reactions to Jesus (7:11-13; 7:40-44) into this scene as well.

Nature, or Lineage? Johannine Anthropology and The Valentinian Races

Heracleon does much more than simply impose a preconceived three-race schema upon a few passages in John. From the fragments of his commentary available to us, we can perceive that he attempted to construct a system that reconciles the three cosmic races of Valentinian thought (the

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671 *CJ* 20:24.
672 Foerster, *Gnosis*, 180.
673 Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis,* 102.

πνευματικοι, ψυχικοι, and χοϊκοι) with the two cosmic races of Johannine thought (the Children of God, and Children of the Devil). He consistently described the former three groups as having a particular "nature," but not all children of the cosmic fathers necessarily share a nature: some Children of the God are his "natural" children and share his nature (pneumatics), but others are his children by choice (and thus do *not* share his nature). Although the resulting schema may seem unnecessarily baroque, it actually resolves a theological tension in John's gospel, as I will argue below.

As revealed over the course of his reading of John, Heracleon's anthropology begins with the premise that all human beings are born into one of three groups. Each of these has its own "nature" (φυσις).[674] There are three cosmic fathers, from which these three types descend: the devil (cf. John 8:44), the demiurge (allegorically called "Abraham," John 8:33), and God (cf. John 8:18).[675] These are the natural fathers of material, psychic, and pneumatic humanity, respectively. These groups are literally, not figuratively, related to them. Those whom the Father will seek to worship him (4:23) are "akin" (οικειον) to him.[676] In like manner, psychic human

[674] Harold Attridge challenges the proposition that Heracleon spoke of "natures" at all. He argues that the technical terminology of "nature" (φυσις) is not original to Heracleon, but has been injected into the discussion by Origen at a later time; he notes that the references to "nature" tend to occur in what he [Attridge] deems to be introductory material, or in Origen's own editorial comments (Attridge, "Heracleon and John," 204, 206.)

To this suggestions, I would put forward the following list of citations in which Heracleon does, in fact, appear to speak of "natures." I have specifically drawn these examples from instances in which Origen makes it plain that he is conveying Heracleon's own ideas, perhaps even his own words, with indications of quotation such as "Heracleon says . . .," "He goes on to say . . .," or "he interprets this to mean . . ."

"Nature" directly attributed to Heracleon: • "He draws a distinction by saying: 'The word "children" must be understood in three ways: first, by nature (φυσει), secondly, by inclination (γνωμῃ); and thirdly, by merit (αξιᾳ). By nature,' he goes on, '(the child) is one begotten by someone himself begotten, and is properly called "child."'" (*CJ* 20.24) • "Heracleon interprets 'Because my word has no place in you' as 'It has no place for the reason that they are unsuitable for it either by their substance (ουσιαν) or by their disposition (γνωμην).'" (20.8) • "So much then on Heracleon's statement when he says that 'This verse, "You are of your father the Devil," is to be understood as meaning "of the substance (εκ της ουσιας) of the Devil".'" (20.24) • "After this Heracleon says, 'This was said not to those who are by nature (φυσει) children of the Devil, the choics (χοϊκους), but to the psychics (ψυχικους) who have become sons of the Devil by intent (θεσει); some who are of this nature may also be called sons of God by intent.'" (20.24) • "And on the word 'many' he says: 'Because there are many psychics (ψυχικων). But the one, in his view, is the imperishable nature (φυσιν) of the election, uniform and unique.'" (13.51) • "He goes on, 'the father asks the only Saviour to help his son, that is, the nature (τῃ φυσει) thus constituted.'" (13.60) • "And he praises the Samaritan woman 'because she showed the kind of faith that was inseparable from her nature (τῃ φυσει) and corresponded to it, in that she did not hesitate over what he told her'." (13.10) These quotations are from the edition of Foerster, *Gnosis*, pp.162-183 (with Greek added to illuminate the technical vocabulary for certain words).

[675] Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis,* 100.

[676] *CJ* 13.20.

beings are akin (οἱ οικειοτερων) to the Demiurge.[677] Similarly, the materials are "naturally" (φυσει) the children of the devil; throughout this passage Heracleon uses this qualifier to specify those children who are actually *begotten* by someone, and thus "properly" called their children.[678] The three races, then, are the natural descendants of their fathers, and actually related to them.

But John's gospel itself is only concerned with two of these fathers—God and the Devil. Heracleon, then, has to reconcile the gospel's two-race taxonomy with the Valentinian three-race system. He does this by downplaying the "fatherhood" of the Demiurge, who, after all, is willing to bring his "son" (psychic humanity) to Jesus.[679] Psychics are able to become Children of God by disposition, or Children of the Devil. With the removal of one "father," whose children can be "adopted out" between the other two, we are back to the two cosmic fathers mentioned in the gospel. There are three natures, yes, but they are only divided into two "families."

Heracleon is therefore quite interested in what it means to be the "child" of a particular father. This issue receives the greatest attention in his comments on John 8:33-59, where he is particularly concerned with just how the Judeans are, or are not, Children of the Devil.

> So much then on Heracleon's statement when he says that 'This verse, "You are of your father the Devil," (8:44) is to be understood as meaning "of the substance (εκ της ουσιας) of the Devil".' Again, on 'and your wish is to perform the desires of your father', he makes a distinction, saying, "The Devil has not will (θελημα), but desires (επιθυμιας).' . . . After this Heracleon says, 'This was said not to those who are by nature (φυσει) children of the Devil, the choics (χοικους), but to the psychics (ψυχικους) who have become sons of the Devil by intent (θεσει); some who are of this nature may also be called sons of God by intent.'… (*CJ* 20.24) [680]

In this passage we see that one might be a "son of the Devil" by *nature* or by *intention.* The materials are his sons naturally, but some psychics also choose to align themselves with the devil and perform his desires. Even these, who are the children of the devil by choice rather than by nature, are said to be "of the substance" of the Devil. It seems that once a psychic has decided for

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[677] Ibid., 13.60
[678] Ibid., 20.24
[679] As allegorically represented in the story of the βασιλικος (royal officer), John 4:46-54.
[680] Heracleon commmenting on Jn 8:44 (*CJ* 20.24); Foerster, *Gnosis* 180.

or against faith, and has thus become a child of God or Devil by "choice" (θεσει), they can also be said to share their new father's "substance" (ουσια). One's "nature," then, whether *choic*, psychic, or pneumatic, is fixed—but some human beings (i.e., psychics) are able to take on the "substance" of their adoptive father, whether God or the Devil.

Heracleon then goes on to consider the different ways in which someone might be called the "child" of someone else:

> He draws a distinction by saying: 'The word "children" must be understood in three ways: first, by nature (φυσει), secondly, by inclination (γνωμη); and thirdly, by merit (αξια). By nature,' he goes on, '(the child) is one begotten by someone himself begotten, and is properly called "child": by inclination, when one who does the will of another person by his own inclination is called the child of him whose will he does: by merit, when some are known as children of hell, or of darkness and lawlessness, and offspring of snakes and vipers. For', he claims, 'These (all) do not produce anything by their own nature; they are destructive and consume those who are cast into them; but, since they did their works, they are called their children.' . . . Again, he says, 'He now calls them children of the Devil, not because the Devil produces any of them, but because by doing the works of the Devil they became like him.' (*CJ* 20.24)[681]

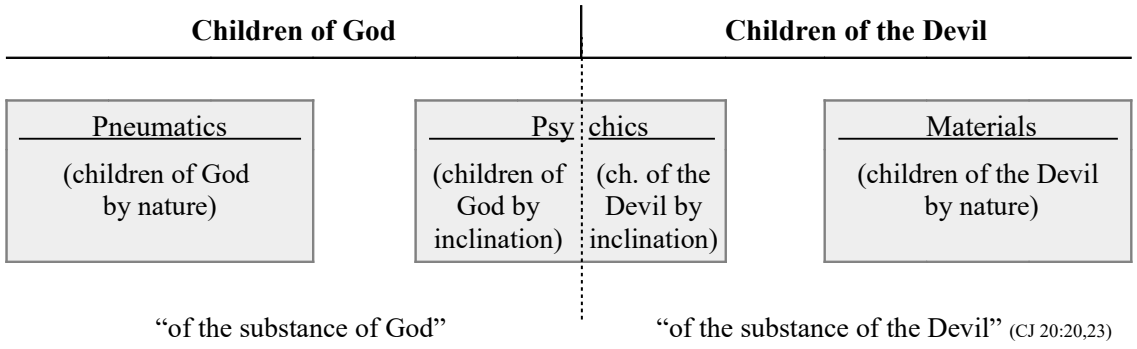
To map these distinctions onto the three-nature, two-father system, then we might observe that pneumatics are the natural children of God, and material humans are the natural children of the Devil; these may be "properly called 'child'" of these fathers, respectively. Heracleon is very clear that here, "by nature" indicates the same sort of physical continuity implied by the biological processes of begetting. But the psychics, for their part, are not the natural children of either of these fathers.[682] However, they may become their children, by inclination (γνωμη, cf. "intent/θεσει" above), as when they choose to "do the will of another person" (cf. John 8:44 "you choose to do your father's wishes"). The Devil is the father of many of the Judeans, "not because the Devil produces any of them" biologically, "but because by doing the works of the Devil they became like him."

The anthropology of John, then, contains two partially overlapping categories, either of which might be considered "racial" in a sense. The three "natures," called γενη by Irenaeus (and

[681] Heracleon on Jn 8:44 (*CJ* 20.24); Foerster, *Gnosis* 180.

[682] They are, as we have mentioned, the natural children of the Demiurge, who is the father of their kind. However, the Demiurge is not nearly as important; what matters most is which of the other two they call "Father."

perhaps Ptolemaus himself), each have a natural father (God/Demiurge/Devil) from which they descend, and the congenital likeness amongst themselves that implies, as well as certain moral and cognitive traits that are peculiar to the group. The materials simply cannot recognize God; and the psychics are dependent upon their senses. However, more important than these groupings are the two descent-groups that determine one's salvation or damnation: the Children of God and the Children of the Devil. This two-fold taxonomy slices right down the three-fold one, because each "Father" claims all of one "nature" and some of the middle one (psychics). These two "races," familiar from John, are racial in the sense that they, too, share a common "ancestor," have a presumed proper homeland, and even come to share a common consubstantial unity.[683] Heracleon's two-layered cosmic-racial schema may be mapped thusly:



As we have seen above, Heracleon identifies how several characters in John map onto this schema. The Samaritan woman belongs on the far left, and royal officer belongs among those psychics who are now adoptive Children of God. Some of the Judeans of 8:31-59 are psychics who have become Children of the Devil, while others are implied to belong to the Materials, his "natural" offspring.

Heracleon's interpretation of John actually resolves tensions within the gospel itself. John's gospel is capable of supporting interpretations compatible with Origen's doctrine of free will,[684] and equally capable of bolstering a gnostic racial theory like Heracleon's. This

[683] Recall that, after becoming Children of either God or the Devil, psychics also come to share their ουσια, "substance."

[684] For a few passages wherein Origen cites John in discussions of "free will," see: *De Principiis* 3.6 [John 15:22]; *CJ* 1.29 [John 10:7,9]; *CJ* 2.3 ["free will" in connection to the *Logos*]; *CJ* 2.9 [John 12:48]; *CJ* 2.14 [John 1:4];

ambivalence arises from the gospel itself, which speaks, Janus-like, with two voices. On one hand, John frequently states that one's cosmic origin/race predetermines one's response to Jesus.[685] At the same time, the gospel frequently implies that there is some fluidity between categories; under the right circumstances, perhaps one might transfer from one group to the other.[686] The gospel implies the existence of some human beings who will *necessarily* respond positively to Jesus,[687] and others who are constitutionally *incapable* of doing so.[688] However, it also seems to acknowledge that many people are able to choose how they will respond.[689] These divergent messages might leave the gospel open to the charge of being inconsistent, but Heracleon's interpretation cleverly resolves this. John's two categories of cosmic identity—children of God or the Devil—are preserved, and the gospel's implications of both determinacy and moral agency are both accommodated. Some human beings (the psychics) do, indeed, possess individual agency when it comes to faith; while others (pneumatics and materials) have natures that determine their reaction to Jesus.

What are the ethical implications of this system? On the everyday, practical level, Heracleon's anthropology is more forgiving than the deterministic duality we find in much of John. In John's two-race system, anyone who does not believe in Jesus is *de facto* a devil, and thus excluded from the command to love. However, in Heracleon's reading, those who do not believe in Jesus might be *either* materials (χοϊκοι), or psychics. If a psychic does not believe, there is always the chance that she may later "switch fathers" and become a child of God. For one who ascribes to Heracleon's anthropology, then, no non-believer can be safely assumed to be irredeemable. However, at the same time, Heracleon's system allows for distinctions between

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CJ 6.22 [John 7:37]; *CJ* 13.64 [John 4:15].

685 Cosmological race seemingly determines response in John 3:27; 6:38a; 6:44,65; 10:28-29; 6:70-71; 8:23; 8:38-47; 10:14; 17:6-7,11; 17:16.

686 Consider the verb "become" [γιγνομαι] in vs. 1:12; see also hints of fluidity between the two cosmological races in 3:17, 6:51b, 8:35-36, and 15:2a,6; or consider the theoretical possibility of disciples "falling away" 16:1-4.

687 Some must respond positively to Jesus: 6:38a, 10:4-5, 10:14b; 13:18a; 15:18-19.

688 Others must respond *negatively*: 6:64, 6:70-71; 13:11,18; 10:26; 12:37-41; 17:12.

689 Suggestions of individual moral agency: 3:36, 5:24a, 5:29; 6:30; 6:47; 7:37-38; 11:25-26.

"Children of God." Some of them are spirituals, who are Children of God by nature; others are only pneumatics who have been "adopted" into this status, and possess a lesser nature and inferior cognitive capacities, remaining dependent upon the evidence of their worldly senses to perceive God. Christians who ascribed to such a system might be inclined to view themselves as better than some of their brethren—as did those Valentinians who held other Christians to be mere psychics.

John and Heracleon: Epilogue Conclusions

In two very different Johannine traditions, 1 John and Heracleon further develop the anthropology found in the Gospel of John. 1 John utilizes the concept to reflect upon a specific incidence of schism within a Johannine church, assuaging the sting of betrayal with the insight that those who left the group were "Children of the Devil" all along—and thus destined to leave, sooner or later. Heracleon interprets John's categories through the lens of his own gnostic traditions, dividing three "natures" between the two cosmic fathers, in a way that incidentally accommodates the gospel's seemingly contradictory indications of both moral agency and fixed origins. John's "Children of God" provided the seed of an idea that could be adapted to different circumstances and presuppositions. However, both of these variations share the assumption that certain people are categorically—one might even say *racially*—evil.

In this chapter, we have seen how the cosmic racializations John constructed were adopted and adapted by other thinkers. The twofold racial anthropology of the Fourth Gospel found new articulations, as the Johannine tradition continued to unfold. As I have argued, these two author's ruminations on cosmic race were not impositions of foreign concepts onto John, but elaborations on ideas implicit in the gospel itself.

APPENDIX: A COMPARISON OF COSMOLOGICAL RACES

	"Good" people	"Father" figure	Proper Homeland	"Bad" people	"Father" figure(s)	Proper Homeland
Jubilees (Jub.)	“Sons of the covenant” (15:26); “Sons of Israel / Israel” (15:28-32)	“God alone is their ruler” (15:32)	“they will not be uprooted from the land” (15:28)	“sons of Beliar” (15:33); “sons of destruction” (15:26)	Beliar (15:33); and “He caused spirits to rule over them to lead them astray” (15:31)	“to be annihilated from the earth and uprooted from the earth” (15:26)
The Rule of the Community (1QS)	"Sons of Light" (1QS I:9, 3:13); "Sons of Justice" (1QS 3:20ff); "Sons of Truth" (1QS 4:6)	"Prince of Lights" (1QS 3:20ff); "Angel of Truth" (3:24); "Spirit of [virtues]" (4:2-6)	"Paths of light" (3:20); "in eternal light" (4:8)	"Sons of Darkness" (1QS 1:9); "Sons of Deceit" (1QS 3:21f	"Angel of Darkness" (3:20ff); "Spirit of Deceit" (4:9)	"Paths of darkness" (3:21); "the dark regions" (4:13); "abysses of darkness" (4:13
The War Scroll (1QM)	"Sons of Light" (1:1, 1:3, 1:9, 1:11, 1:13, 1:14); “Sons of justice” (1:8); “lot of God” (1:5)	God (1:1ff; see the banners bearing God's name in 3:1-4:17) Prince of Light (13:10)	–	"Sons of Darkness" (1:1, 1:7, 1:16, 3:9, 13:16, 14:17, 16:11 "lot of darkness” 1:11); “lot of Belial” (1:5, 1:15, 4:2); “Army of Belial” (1:13, 11:8)	Belial (1:1ff, 4:2, 11:8, 13:11, 16:11 etc.)	“his domain is in darkness” (13:11)
John	“Children of God” (1:12, 11:52 [ironically]); “Sons of light” (12:36)	“born of the Spirit” (3:5-8); God (8:47); “born of God” (1:13)	“you do not belong to the world” (15:19); “from above” (3:3,7)	[children of the devil] (8:44)	the devil (8:44); “the ruler of this world” (12:31, 14:30)	the world (7:7, 8:23, 12:31, 15:18-19); “from below” (8:23)
1 John	“Children of God” (3:1, 3:2, 3:10, 5:2, 5:19)	"born of God" (2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 5:18)	“in the light” (2:9,10) “in life” (3:14)	“Children of the devil” (3:8, 3:10)	the devil (3:8, 3:10); the evil one (2:14, 3:11);	the world (2:15-17, 3:1, 3:13, 5:19); in death (3:14); darkness (2:9,11)
Apocryphon of John, long version (BJn)	“the immovable race” (29:8ff, 25:20ff, 31:31); “the perfect race” (28:2ff)	the spirit of life (25:20-26:19); Seth (25:1-5)	the eternal realm(s) (25:1, 26:31, 31:25); into uncontaminated light (25:17)	"these others" [the rest of humankind] (26:32)	Ialtabaoth (24:8-17); the angels of Ialtabaoth (29:14-30:10); the counterfeit spirit (24:31, 26:32ff,); Cain/Abel (24:8-33)	the "cave" [material world] (22:9, 25:32ff); the earth (29:14-15,)
Revelation of Adam (RAd)	“that great race (64:32, 64:5ff); “the seed of the people of life” (69:15ff); “the undominated race” (82:19); “Those People” (72:1-2, 74:8, 21, 75:22ff, 82:28, 83:11)	Seth (64:5ff, 77:28, 89:19-21)	an eternal, angelic kingdom (76:24-28); a dwelling place in or above the aeons (75:25ff); a high mountain of truth (85:10-11)	"the races of humankind" (85:8)	"the god that made us" (65:16ff, 66:25); Cain (66:25); Shem (72:31-73:12), Ham, and Japheth (73:13-29) minus the 400,000	mortal earth (76:17ff)

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