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Epilogue:

The Early Jewish Messiah of the Gospel of John

Benjamin E. Reynolds

Reading the Gospel of John as an early Jewish text opens up many new ways of looking at the Gospel and its Christology, but as foreseen, it brings with it many challenges to established ways of understanding the Gospel, particularly its context, and its presentation of Jesus. The contributors to this volume have made a concerted effort at reading John's Christology as Jewish messianism. The approaches have been varied, as have been the areas of focus. Adele Reinhartz notes echoes of Jewish thought in the Gospel of John's connection with Jesus's speech and eternal life. Catrin Williams draws attention to the Isaianic influence evident in John's portrayal of Jesus, especially in the respective messiahs of John and the Parables of Enoch, and Jocelyn McWhirter argues for a Jewish messianic exegesis evident in John's engagement with the Hebrew Scriptures. Beth Stovell, Marida Nicolaci, and Joel Willitts each contend, although in various ways, that the Fourth Gospel indicates evidence of a Davidic messianism similar to that found throughout other early Jewish messiah texts. Meredith Warren and Andrea Taschl-Erber both highlight prophetic messiah traditions noticeable in John, either expectations for a signs prophet or for the prophet as the giver of Wisdom-Torah. Paul Anderson, similarly, argues that John's Jesus is portrayed as an eschatological prophet like Moses.

The essays in the final section address divine aspects of John's messiah and questions concerning the relationship of John's Christology with early Jewish messianism. Both Charles Gieschen in his examination of the divine name with the Messiah of the Parables of Enoch and Crispin

Fletcher-Louis with his engagement with the apocalyptic Son of Man are more open to Jewish messiah traditions in John's Gospel, as is Gabriele Boccaccini in his argument concerning John's portrayal of Jesus as uncreated. William Loader and Ruben Zimmermann, noting Wisdom and divine-bridegroom traditions respectively, are more guarded in seeing John closely aligned with Jewish messianism, although Zimmermann less so. The conclusions of the essays have, therefore, differed, but on the whole, the majority has argued for John's Christology fitting within the spectrum of early Jewish messiahs, albeit with a range of nuance.

Thus, as is typical of most scholarly endeavors, we are left with questions that still require our attention, but in what follows, I hope to sharpen the focus on some remaining questions regarding the relationship of John's Christology with early Jewish messianism. First, I will draw attention to recent scholarship on early Jewish messianism and endeavor to highlight how these views are essential for reading John as an early Jewish text, and especially as a Jewish messiah text. Next, I will examine a few of the Fourth Gospel's messiah passages and draw attention to their similarities with other Jewish messiah texts. I will also note some distinctive aspects of John's Messiah and point out how even these distinctive features may be considered part of early Jewish messianic expectations. These similarities present difficulties for a number of assumptions within Johannine studies. If as Gabriele Boccaccini declared in the preface of this volume that "the quest for 'John the Jew' is now officially open," many assumptions of Johannine scholarship will indeed require reconsideration.

Early Judaisms and Early Jewish Messiahs

A way forward for reading John's Gospel as a Jewish text includes recognizing that the Judaism of the Second Temple period was not a single, unified Judaism. That is why early Judaism

scholars are wont to speak of “Judaisms.”¹ We only need to point to the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jesus’s disputes with the Pharisees, the wisdom traditions of Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon, and the apocalypses of 1 Enoch and 4 Ezra to indicate that there were different perspectives and interests in early Judaism. To quote Gabriele Boccaccini, again from the preface of this volume, “Being ‘Jewish’ in the first century did not mean to conform to a monolithic model but to engage in a common debate, where the categories inherited from the past were creatively played and continuously given new (sometimes unexpected) developments.” Part of the common debate within early Judaism concerned expectations about a messiah or “the Messiah.” There is a growing consensus among scholars of early Judaism, given the disparate nature of early Judaism and the variegated portraits of messiahs in extant messiah texts, that we are unable to claim there was a singular “Messiah.”² Within first-century Judaism, there was no agreed upon list of characteristics and traits for “the Messiah.” While we do have numerous early Jewish texts that depict messiahs, and sometimes they do so in similar ways,³ their

¹ For example, Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, and Ernest S. Frerichs, eds., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

² Matthew V. Novenson, *The Grammar of Messianism: An Ancient Jewish Political Idiom and Its Users* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1–33.

³ See especially, William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998), 36–108.

representations of those messiah figures are not completely the same.⁴ Loren Stuckenbruck states:

I find it hard to imagine that Jewish readers of Daniel 7, *Psalms of Solomon*, or any of the other documents considered here would have tried to negotiate the texts around a basic core tradition—not found in any of our passages—about God’s eschatological Messiah. What we do have here, however, is a series of documents composed near the turn of the Common Era by Jews who were inspired by biblical tradition and subsequent patterns and traditions of Israel. Such a dynamic hope drove their descriptions of eschatological events to be “creatively biblical” at every turn.⁵

Similarly, Annette Yoshiko Reed:

in the wake of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the evidence mounts that messianic reflection was more akin to a fluid complex of traditions, cultivated both in exegetical reflection around a set of core biblical passages and in their application to specific figures and circumstances that sparked hope for divine deliverance.⁶

⁴ Matthias Henze, *Mind the Gap: How the Jewish Writings between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 67: “the descriptions of the messiah and of his role vary significantly from text to text.”

⁵ Loren T. Stuckenbruck, “Messianic Ideas in the Apocalyptic and Related Literature of Early Judaism,” in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 90–113 (112–13).

⁶ Annette Yoshiko Reed, “Messianism between Judaism and Christianity,” in *Rethinking the Messianic Idea in Judaism*, ed. Michael L. Morgan and Stephen Weitzman (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014), 23–62 (46).

What early Jewish scholars are attempting to come to terms with is that while there are texts across the spectrum of the Second Temple period which speak of messiahs, there is a lack of coherence in what those texts depict. There are some similarities in their messianic portrayals but there is no uniform expectation.⁷ While many Jews of the Second Temple period may have expected a messiah, it is now clear that there was no singular, universally expected “Messiah.” Rather, these early Jewish texts were engaging with Hebrew Bible passages texts and traditions in “creatively biblical” ways indicative of a “fluid complex of traditions.”⁸

This state of affairs has led Matthew Novenson to focus on “messiah texts” rather than working to show whether a text or idea meets or does not meet a predetermined definition of “messiah.” Taking his cue from Stuckenbruck’s description of messiah texts as “creatively biblical,” Novenson argues:

if every messiah text is a “creatively biblical” linguistic act, it follows, first, that all such texts should be taken into consideration as evidence of this interpretive practice and, second, that no messiah text has a claim to represent “the messianic idea” in its pristine form over against other messiah texts that do so less adequately. Rather, all messiah texts are on a par in this respect since every particular messiah text is just one instance of the use of certain scriptural linguistic resources.⁹

⁷ Note that Stuckenbruck, “Messianic Ideas,” 113, is “less inclined to speak as confidently as William Horbury about ‘The Coherence of Messianism’” (see Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 64–108).

⁸ See Novenson, *The Grammar of Messianism*, for a thorough examination of this phenomenon.

⁹ Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 62–63.

If we follow this line of argument that all messiah texts provide insight into messianic beliefs of the first century, the Gospel of John is obviously a “messiah text” and should be considered as such within the broad spectrum that was early Jewish messianism. It also behooves us to consider how the Fourth Gospel presents Jesus as Messiah, what the Gospel’s claims regarding Jesus’s messiahship are, and how those claims are made.¹⁰ Also, it is worthwhile to compare these Johannine claims that Jesus is the Messiah with other early Jewish messiah texts.

Reading John as a Jewish Messiah Text

When the Fourth Gospel is read in context with early Jewish messianic texts and when the Fourth Gospel is recognized as a Jewish messiah text, we can say a number of things about the Gospel and its messiah. Surprisingly (or perhaps not), very few essays in the volume have focused specifically on Johannine messiah passages. In a partial response to that lack, I will address a few of them here, since John’s Gospel does declare that “these things have been written in order that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God” (20:31).

In John 1:19–21, John the Baptist is asked whether he is the Messiah, Elijah, or the prophet. This question is perfectly at home within the variegated messianic expectations of Second Temple Judaism. The expectation of three separate figures may not have been widespread (e.g., למשיחו, 4Q521 2 II, 1; χριστὸς κυρίου, Ps. Sol. 17:32), but in 1QS IX, 9–11, we see that at least some Jews in first-century Palestine (located not far from where John the Baptist most likely baptized) expected the coming of three separate figures: the prophet and the messiahs of Israel and Aaron.

¹⁰ This is Novenson’s entire project with regard to a range of messiah texts: *The Grammar of Messianism*, 32–33.

Additionally, John the Baptist's activity of baptizing "beyond the Jordan" (πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, 1:28; 3:26) shares similarities—location, existence of crowds, and prophet-related identity—with Josephus's description of Theudas who gathered a following to himself at the Jordan River and promised a Joshua-like crossing of the river. Theudas's activity took place within a decade or two of John the Baptist's, and he like John was beheaded, although by Fadus the Roman procurator and not Herod Antipas (44–46 BCE, *Ant.* 20.97–98; cf. Acts 5:36). The questions about the Baptist's identity are quite at home within Jewish messianic expectation. They are not surprising questions for Jerusalem religious leaders to ask of a prophetic-like figure gathering crowds on the far shore of the Jordan where Joshua entered the promised land and Elijah was taken up in a fiery chariot. The questions need not have served solely to rebuke followers of John the Baptist in Asia Minor in the late first century.¹¹

But does the Fourth Gospel assume that Jesus is what John says he is not?¹² The subsequent naming of Jesus as Lamb of God (1:29, 36), Son of God/Chosen one (1:34), and Son of Man (1:51) might suggest that the Gospel is redefining what it means to be Messiah, as many Johannine scholars claim.¹³ However, that assumes there was a definite concept to be redefined.

¹¹ Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves, and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times* (New York: Paulist, 1979), 29, 69–71.

¹² Note that Mark 6:14–15; 8:28 presents Jesus as being identified by others as John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the prophets. In Mark 8:29, Peter declares Jesus to be the Messiah.

¹³ See, for example, Marinus de Jonge, "Jewish Expectations about the 'Messiah' According to the Fourth Gospel," in *Jesus: Stranger from Heaven and Son of God: Jesus Christ and the Christians in Johannine Perspective*, trans. John E. Steely, SBLSPS (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 77–116.

Regardless, while there are no further references to Elijah in the Gospel,¹⁴ the Gospel of John does portray Jesus as the Messiah. Andrew tells his brother Peter that he has found τὸν Μεσσίαν (1:41); Philip proclaims to Nathanael that he has found the one of whom Moses in the Torah and also the prophets wrote about (1:45); the Samaritan woman speaks of the coming of Μεσσίας and Jesus claims the designation (4:25–26); and Martha exclaims, “I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world” (11:27; cf. 20:31). All of these instances make clear that Jesus’s identity as Messiah is central to John (also 1:17; 17:3). Concerning the prophet designation, Jesus is declared a prophet or “the prophet” by the Samaritan woman, the Galilean crowd, and the man born blind (4:19; 6:14–15; 9:17; cf. 4:44; 7:40). These identifications are not negated by Jesus or the Gospel, although some of the Jerusalem crowd and the Pharisees clearly do not see Jesus as a prophet or messiah (7:41, 47–49, 52). The identity questions posed to John the Baptist are explainable within early Judaism, and the Fourth Gospel declares that Jesus is the Messiah and implies that he is the prophet.

In John 7, we find the most extensive messianic discussion in the Gospel. The Jerusalem crowd is unable to decide whether Jesus is the Messiah, the prophet, or neither. They expect the Messiah to do signs and question the requisite number of signs a Messiah must do, yet they disagree about the messiah’s origin (7:26–27, 31, 40–44). These questions make sense in light of the variety of messiahs in early Judaism. In 4Q521 2 II, 1–13, mighty acts are said to take place when the Lord’s messiah appears. Scholars debate whether the messiah or the Lord will do these deeds; however, John Collins argues that even if the Lord ultimately does them, it is through the

¹⁴ However, note the possible allusion to Elijah’s ascent (2 Kgs 2:1–14) in John 3:13 and allusions to Elijah’s prophetic work of raising the dead (1 Kgs 17:17–24) with Jesus’s raising of Lazarus.

agency of his messiah.¹⁵ These deeds, drawn mostly from Psalm 146 and Isaiah 61 (cf. Isa. 35:5–7), include healing the wounded, freeing captives, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead, and proclaiming good news (cf. Matt. 11:5; Luke 7:22). In the Gospel of John, Jesus gives sight to the blind (John 9:6–7) and raises Lazarus from the dead (John 11:41–44). Raising the dead is an action associated with messiahs in a number of early messiah texts in addition to 4Q521 (e.g., 1 En. 51:1; 4 Ezra 7:32–36; 2 Bar. 30:1). It is no surprise, given that Jesus does signs and that some early Jewish messiah texts expect the messiah to do signs, that some in an early first-century Jerusalem crowd might wonder how many signs were necessary for a messiah to be the Messiah (7:31; cf. 6:26).

Along with the question of the messiah’s signs, the crowd in John 7 is unsure about the messiah’s origin. Will his origin be unknown or is he to come from Bethlehem and be a descendant of David (7:27, 42–43)? Again, while John is often portrayed as indifferent on these questions,¹⁶ we find evidence of both expectations in messiah texts of Second Temple Judaism. We see evidence for a messiah of David in numerous Dead Sea Scroll texts (4Q174, 4Q252 V; 4Q285 5; 11Q14 1),¹⁷ even though there is no specific Bethlehem origin claim in these texts (cf. Mic. 5:2). In Parables of Enoch, the messiah’s origin is hidden: “For this (reason) he was chosen and hidden in [the Lord of Spirit’s] presence before the world was created and forever” (48:6); “For from the beginning the Son of Man was hidden, and the Most High preserved him in the

¹⁵ See John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 131–41.

¹⁶ de Jonge, “Jewish Expectations,” 93–94; Novenson, *The Grammar of Messianism*, 87–88.

¹⁷ See Beth Stovell’s essay in the volume for more detail.

presence of his might, and he revealed him to the chosen” (62:7).¹⁸ The Enochic messiah’s hiddenness speaks to his preexistence in the presence of God,¹⁹ and since he is unknown to humanity, there is the implication that his origin is unknown (cf. 4 Ezra 13:26, 32). This idea of the messiah’s preexistent presence with God appears to be echoed in the crowd’s statement: “when the Messiah comes no one will know where his is from” (John 7:27). The questions about Jesus’s identity as the Messiah in John 7 reflect differing messianic expectations in early Judaism.

In John 1:49, Nathanael declares Jesus to be “the Son of God” and “the King of Israel.” Many Johannine scholars view the use of “Son of God” here and elsewhere in the Gospel as unrelated to Jewish messianic expectations except as a reinterpretation and correction of *χριστός*. Marinus de Jonge, speaking of 11:27, states: “The Christian confession *ὁ χριστός* is interpreted by *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ*.”²⁰ There seems to be little consideration of the apparent apposition of “Son of God” and “King of Israel” in Nathanael’s declaration (1:49), as well as 11:27 and 20:31. By

¹⁸ Translation from George W. E. Nickelsburg and James K. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012).

¹⁹ George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37-82*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 172–73.

²⁰ de Jonge, “Jewish Expectations,” 84, 92; followed by Judith M. Lieu, “Messiah and Resistance in the Gospel and Epistles of John,” in *Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity*, ed. Markus Bockmuehl and James Carleton Paget (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 97–108 (esp. 102–3); and Matthew V. Novenson, “Jesus as Messiah in the Gospel of John, or The Unlikely Trove of Messiah Traditions in the Gospel of John,” in *Portraits of Jesus in the Gospel of John*, ed. Craig R. Koester, LNTS (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, forthcoming).

contrast, in early Judaism scholarship, it is fairly common to understand “Son of God” as a reference to the Davidic king (Pss. 2; 45; 89; 110; 2 Sam. 7).²¹ Considering this royal, Davidic use of “Son of God” within early Judaism and the messianic references in 1:41, 45, and even Nathanael’s location under the fig tree,²² it would be perfectly understandable to see apposition in the use of “Son of God” and “King of Israel” in 1:49. The Johannine use of Son/Father language in the Gospel is one underlying reason for not accepting a messianic meaning for “Son of God”; however, a messianic understanding of “Son of God” cannot simply be dismissed due to “Johannine correction” without serious interaction with early Jewish texts.

Similarly, the association of the Messiah and the Son of Man in John 12:34 reflects early Jewish understandings that the Messiah and the “one like a son of man” from Daniel 7 would be the same figure (1 En. 46–48; 4 Ezra 11–13; 2 Bar. 29–30).²³ I would also argue that reading the Gospel of John as a Jewish text and John’s Christology as Jewish messianism should compel us to reexamine what has become the majority view on the ἀποσυνάγωγος passages, in particular

²¹ Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 1–73.

²² Craig R. Koester, “Messianic Exegesis and the Call of Nathanael (John 1:45-51),” *JSNT* 39 (1990): 23–34.

²³ See Lester L. Grabbe, “‘Son of Man’: Its Origin and Meaning in Second Temple Judaism,” in *Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels: Reminiscences, Allusions, and Intertextuality*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Gabriele Boccaccini, *EJL* 44 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 169–97.

9:22 (ἤδη γὰρ συνετέθειντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἵνα ἐάν τις αὐτὸν ὁμολογήσῃ χριστόν, ἀποσυνάγωγος γένηται; also 12:42; 16:2),²⁴ but that argument would require more space than I have.²⁵

These similarities among messiah texts emphasize the need to read the Gospel of John in relation to other early Jewish messiah texts. The Gospel is repeatedly considered different from these texts, but a comparative reading indicates that John's Messiah is not an entirely distinctive from messiahs of early Judaism. The questions from the crowds and the claims of the disciples concerning Jesus's identity are coherent within the variety of messianic expectations in the Second Temple period. There is space for John's Jewish Messiah on the spectrum of early Jewish messianic expectation.

John's Christology as Early Jewish Messianism

These conclusions do not negate the distinctiveness of the Johannine Messiah. John should be read as the messiah text that it is: one that names Jesus as messiah and yet also speaks of him as λόγος, lamb of God, bridegroom, one with the Father, and Paraclete. Each of these descriptions are distinct to John's Messiah, even though it has been argued that Jewish traditions lie behind

²⁴ J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd ed., NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003).

²⁵ For criticisms of the majority view, see Adele Reinhartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple: A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 37–53; and more recently, see Jonathan Bernier, *Aposynagōgos and the Historical Jesus in John: Rethinking the Historicity of the Johannine Expulsion Passages*, BIS 122 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 27–76, for an extended argument on ἀποσυνάγωγος with regard to first-century synagogues.

these Johannine christological themes.²⁶ Within Johannine scholarship, there is an overwhelming tendency to view these Johannine themes and presentations of Jesus as so distinctive that any Jewish aspect of John's portrayal of Jesus has been redefined with the result that it is no longer Jewish. For example, C. K. Barrett comments:

In light of such considerations [i.e., that the traditional material did not remain untouched by tensions between Jews and Christians] it is hardly satisfactory to say that the gospel refers to Jewish feasts; that it recalls Jewish exegesis of the Old Testament; that it utilizes Jewish arguments; and therefore it is essentially and fundamentally a Jewish book. Apart from the fact that the gospel also manifests non-Jewish characteristics, we must ask with what Judaism the gospel was in contact and in what relation to this Judaism it stood.²⁷

And Marinus de Jonge states:

Consequently these statements of the "Johannine Jews" add little or nothing to our knowledge of Jewish expectations concerning the Messiah known from other sources. Where there is disagreement in wording or conception there is always Johannine influence to be considered.²⁸

Both of these sentiments are part of a broader assumption within New Testament studies that early Christian Christology developed along a trajectory from low (human messiah/prophet) to

²⁶ See, for example, the essays by Andrea Taschl-Erber, William Loader, and Ruben Zimmermann in this volume.

²⁷ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism: The Franz Delitzsch Lectures, University of Münster, 1967*, trans. D. Moody Smith (London: SPCK, 1975), 42.

²⁸ de Jonge, "Jewish Expectations," 96–97.

high (divine Messiah), and as it developed, it became more and more “Christian” and less and less Jewish.²⁹ Early Christianity is thus understood to be indebted to early Judaism, on the one hand, but on the other, to be decidedly not Jewish.³⁰ This understanding of Christological development has resulted in the Gospel of John’s “high Christology”—that is, John’s presentation of Jesus who was the *λόγος* who was with God and was God, the Son sent by the Father, the Son of Man who descended from heaven and will return there, Jesus who is one with the Father—being viewed as the height of christological development. Therefore, it can be said that the Fourth Gospel is so distinctive and non-Jewish that it “adds little or nothing to our expectations concerning the Messiah known from other sources.”

However, now that we are seventy years on from the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and more than twenty from the final publication of the scrolls, we are in a much better place to assess these “other sources” and there are clearly more early Jewish texts to work with. We are now more aware that the statements of the Jews in John do reflect other known first-century messianic expectations. What is now “hardly satisfactory” is the lack of recognition that high christologies (or divine messiahs) are evident in some early Jewish messiah texts. Daniel Boyarin has argued that high Christology was part of early Judaism, in which case early Christianity’s “high” Christology did not develop from humble Jewish beginnings to a perfected Christian Christology. Jewish messiah texts, namely the Parables of Enoch and 4 Ezra, are evidence of

²⁹ Maurice Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991).

³⁰ For a critique of this understanding, see Reed, “Messianism between Judaism and Christianity”; Novenson, *The Grammar of Messianism*, 187–216.

divine messiah expectations within early Judaism.³¹ The messiah in Parables of Enoch, for example, sits on the Lord of Spirits's throne of glory, which implies some kind of close relationship between the two, and the messiah judges the wicked, an activity predicated of God in the Hebrew Bible (1 En. 62:2–3; 69:27).

The main distinctive in early Christian texts is the declaration that Jesus is the Messiah, Son of Man.³² Stuckenbruck states, “there is no reason to suppose that, beyond the reconciliation of ‘Messiah’ by Christians to experiences of Jesus, Jewish and Christian ideas were necessarily very distinct from one another....”³³ The naming of a messiah is an important aspect to consider in the comparison of messiah texts. The details of messiah's life force messiah texts to present their messiahs in specific ways (e.g., suffering and crucifixion). Thus, although John has distinct Christological themes, such as a messiah who is one with God, these themes share similarities with other early Jewish messiah texts and still may be located in the variety of messianic expectations in early Judaism.

Conclusion

Understanding John's Jesus as a Jewish messiah and the Gospel of John as a Jewish text pushes against much that is assumed within Johannine scholarship and New Testament studies in

³¹ See Charles Gieschen's and Crispin Fletcher-Louis's essays in this volume.

³² Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* (New York: The New Press, 2012), 25–101; idem, “Enoch, Ezra, and the Jewishness of ‘High Christology,’” in *Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch: Reconstruction after the Fall*, ed. Matthias Henze and Gabriele Boccaccini, JSJSup 164 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 337–61. See also the essay by Marida Nicolaci in this volume.

³³ Stuckenbruck, “Messianic Ideas,” 113n44.

general. Johannine scholarship has been isolated for so long from even other areas of New Testament studies, that to speak of the Fourth Gospel as a Jewish messiah text appears to be a great leap. But the essays in this volume have shown that it is time to begin the hard work of reconsidering the Gospel's place in early Judaism. Scholars of early Judaism are already doing so and viewing the New Testament documents as part of the collection early Jewish texts. This volume is a call for Johannine scholarship to read early Jewish texts, to read John as one of them, and to recognize that many assumptions of Johannine studies date from a world unaware of the breadth and richness of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other early Jewish literature. The Gospel is an early Jewish text that presents Jesus as an early Jewish messiah.

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