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978-1-107-07968-7 - The Role of Jewish Feasts in John's Gospel: Volume 162

Gerry Wheaton

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THE ROLE OF JEWISH FEASTS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

Volume 162

In the first three Gospels, Jesus rarely travels to Jerusalem prior to his final week. The Fourth Gospel, however, features Jesus' repeated visits to the city, which occur primarily during major festivals. This volume elucidates the role of the Jewish feasts of Passover, Tabernacles, and Dedication in John's presentation of Jesus. Gerry Wheaton examines the Fourth Gospel in relation to pertinent sources from the second-Temple and Rabbinic periods, offering a fresh understanding of how John appropriates the symbolic and traditional backgrounds of these feasts. Wheaton situates his inquiry within the larger question of Judaism in John's Gospel, which many consider to be the most anti-Semitic New Testament text. The findings of this study significantly contribute to the ongoing debate surrounding the alleged anti-Jewish posture of the Fourth Gospel as a whole, and it offers new insights that will appeal to scholars of Johannine theology, New Testament studies, and Jewish studies.

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32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107079687

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First published 2015

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Wheaton, Gerry.

The role of Jewish feasts in John's Gospel / Gerry Wheaton, Seminario ESEPA, Costa Rica.

 pages cm. – (Society for New Testament studies monograph series ; volume 162)

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-107-07968-7 (hardback)

1. Bible. John – Criticism, interpretation, etc.

2. Fast and feasts – Judaism. 3. Fasts and feasts in the Bible.

4. Jews in the New Testament. I. Title.

BS2615.2.W473 2015

226.5'06–dc23 2014038627

ISBN 978-1-107-07968-7 Hardback

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ABSTRACT

The present work aims to elucidate the role of the Jewish feasts of Passover, Tabernacles, and Dedication in the presentation of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. Specifically, I will seek a clearer understanding of John's appropriation of the symbolic and traditional backgrounds of these feasts by examining pertinent sources from contemporary Judaism and the manner in which John has made use of the traditions preserved therein. Past studies have achieved consensus on certain points of interpretation but overlooked important evidence at other points. Some scholars have also been too quick to cite John's treatment of the feasts as evidence of his anti-Jewish posture in the Gospel as a whole. In what follows, therefore, I will give particular attention to those background sources that have not been accorded due attention. I will also situate my study within the wider question of Judaism in the Fourth Gospel and to suggest how the results achieved in the end may bear upon ongoing debates on this matter.