THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

The Gospel of John is renowned for the challenges it presents to interpreters: its historical complexity, theological and literary unity, and its consistently critical stance toward characters known as "the Jews." There is abundant scholarly literature on each of these challenges, and yet there are very few studies that consider the Gospel as a whole in light of these pressing issues. Christopher Blumhofer offers a fresh approach to understanding the Fourth Gospel, one that draws together the insights of scholarship in all of these areas. He shows that a historically sensitive, ethically attuned, and theologically and literarily compelling reading of the Fourth Gospel lies before us in the synthesis of the approaches that have long been separated. Unlike studies that consider only a narrow portion of the Gospel, Blumhofer's unique approach draws on most of the Gospel and shows how common themes and interests run throughout the narrative of John.

CHRISTOPHER M. BLUMHOFER is Visiting Assistant Professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary.

SOCIETY FOR NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

MONOGRAPH SERIES

General Editor: Edward Adams, Kings College, London

177

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

Recent titles in the series: 165. Jesus and the Temple

- SIMON J. JOSEPH
- 166. The Death of Jesus in Matthew CATHERINE SIDER HAMILTON
- 167. Ecclesiology and Theosis in the Gospel of John ANDREW J. BYERS
- 168. The Book of Revelation and Early Jewish Textual Culture GARRICK ALLEN
- 169. The Origin of Divine Christology ANDREW TER ERN LOKE
- 170. Romans 7 and Christian Identity WILL N. TIMMINS
- 171. Inventing Hebrews
- MICHAEL WADE MARTIN, JASON A. WHITLARK 172. Jesus' Death and Heavenly Offering in Hebrews R. B. JAMIESON
- 173. The Role of Emotion in 1 Peter KATHERINE M. HOCKEY
- 174. Jesus Christ as the Son of David in the Gospel of Mark MAX BOTNER
- 175. Narrative and Drama in the Book of Revelation LOURDES GARCIA URENA, DONALD MURPHY
- 176. Eschatology and the Saviour SARAH PARKHOUSE

The Gospel of John and the Future of Israel

CHRISTOPHER M. BLUMHOFER

Fuller Theological Seminary





Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi - 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108737432

DOI: 10.1017/9781108656122

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2020 First paperback edition 2023

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data Names: Blumhofer, Christopher (Christopher Mark), 1983- author. Title: The Gospel of John and the future of Israel / Christopher Blumhofer. Description: Cambridge ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2020. | Series: Society for New Testament studies monograph series | Includes bibliographical references and index. Identifiers: LCCN 2019035746 (print) | LCCN 2019035747 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108493550 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108737432 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108656122 (epub) Subjects: LCSH: Bible. John-Criticism, interpretation, etc. | Bible. John-Criticism, Narrative. | Israel (Christian theology) | Jews in the New Testament. | Christianity and other religions-Judaism. | Judaism-Relations-Christianity. Classification: LCC BS2615.52 .B55 2020 (print) | LCC BS2615.52 (ebook) | DDC 226.5/06-dc23 LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019035746 LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019035747 ISBN 978-1-108-49355-0 Hardback ISBN 978-1-108-73743-2 Paperback Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this

publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

For Stephanie

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments

page xi

1	Introduction	1
	Locating This Study on the Map of Johannine Scholarship	5
	The Diversity of Second Temple Judaism, and Identification	
	with "Israel" as a Theological Claim	11
	"Ioudaioi" and "Israelites" in the Later Second Temple	
	Period	21
	Judaism as a Tradition in Transformation and Crisis	28
	John, the Ioudaioi, and the Narration of an	
	Epistemological Crisis	38
	Conclusion	47
2	Announcement: John 1–4	48
	John 1:1-18: "The Word Became Flesh"	48
	John 1:19-51: Jesus and Eschatological Hopes of Israel	73
	John 2:13–22: Jesus and the Dwelling Place of God	81
	John 3:1–21: New Birth and Living Water	86
	John 4:4–42: The Restoration of Judah and Samaria	90
	Conclusion	101
3	Debate: John 5–10	103
	John 5: Healing on the Sabbath	103
	John 6: The Bread That Satisfies	118
	John 7-10:21: Jesus: The Hope of Sukkot/The Deceiver	
	of the People	133
	Conclusion	174
4	Crisis: John 11–20	176
-	John 12:37–43: The Message of Jesus and the Disbelief	170
	of the People	177
	John 15: The True Vine and the Future of Israel	187
	som 15. The frue vine and the future of islael	107

ix

Contents

John 13–19: Jesus, David, and Righteous Suffering	194
John 18–20: Who Is the King of Israel?	205
Conclusion: Implications for the Interpretation of John	212
The Historical Context of John's Gospel	213
The Theological Center of John	224
John and Jewish-Christian Relations	226
Conclusion	232
Select Bibliography	234
Index	245
	John 18–20: Who Is the King of Israel? Conclusion: Implications for the Interpretation of John The Historical Context of John's Gospel The Theological Center of John John and Jewish–Christian Relations Conclusion <i>Select Bibliography</i>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During my doctoral studies, I had the opportunity to describe this work while it was still in progress to a senior New Testament scholar who was visiting Duke University. After stumbling through an effort to summarize my project to her in academic terms, I tried a personal approach: "Basically, it's an attempt to read John in a way that holds together what I've learned from Richard Hays, Joel Marcus, and Kavin Rowe – although I'm not quite sure any of them believe it is possible to hold the three of them together!" We laughed, and she affirmed the importance of trying. Whatever the success of my thesis, it traces its beginnings to classes and conversations with these three remarkable teachers. Any student of the New Testament would be fortunate to be shaped by one of them. It is a blessing to have been shaped by them all.

But this is too general. When this project was in its dissertation phase, my advisor, Richard Hays, encouraged, challenged, and corrected me with his exacting insight and seemingly inexhaustible generosity of spirit. A mentor once told me that your advisor leaves a "thumbprint" on your life and scholarship. I can only hope so. For the better part of a decade, Joel Marcus pressed me toward historically sensitive exegesis that follows the evidence of our texts where it leads. He demonstrated this commitment in all of his work: nowhere did I learn it more clearly than among the reams of essays that he turned back to me with red markings pressing me to go back to the text and grapple further with its (often uncomfortable) logic. I am grateful for that extended lesson in interpretive honesty. I have learned from Kavin Rowe the importance of philosophical and methodological clarity, both in numerous classes and also in many conversations on his front porch. I cannot - and would not want to approach the scholarly life or the Christian life apart from his wisdom and influence. In addition to these three mentors, two others, Stephen Chapman and Daniel Boyarin, helped shape this

xi

Acknowledgments

project in its earliest stage. I have often thought that Stephen Chapman knows my field better than I do – and rightly so: he is a Bible scholar who models a respect for the integrity of the Old and New Testaments as distinct parts of the same Bible, and he strives to understand the parts and the whole. His wisdom and insight are matched only by his kindness and good humor. Daniel Boyarin generously agreed to serve on my dissertation committee despite never meeting me. When we did meet in person, his brilliance and creativity as a scholar were complemented by his warm support and encouragement. I am grateful for both his willingness and patience to consider how his ideas might unfold in the work of another. To come full circle: the senior New Testament scholar who once visited Duke and listened to my stammering attempts to articulate this project is now my dean, Marianne Meye Thompson. Like these teachers above, Marianne's scholarly insight and personal support are among the many gifts for which I am deeply grateful.

A generation of peers in Duke's Graduate Program in Religion sustained and sharpened my work through their friendship and engagement. Zack Phillips – one step ahead of me in seemingly every way – is an invaluable conversation partner and friend. Away from Duke, the community at Blacknall Presybterian Church deserves thanks, and especially Allan Poole, who nurtured my sense of vocation for nearly a decade, and also the team of women at Blacknall who included my work in their weekly prayers for the church. At one point, they interceded for my dissertation under the heading "prayers for healing"; it was a tremendous encouragement when they felt comfortable recategorizing my work. Two friends deserve special thanks: Griff Gatewood, whose kindness, hospitality, and wisdom sustain me; and Daryl Ellis, whose support and friendship are a gift beyond words. If the act of thinking cannot be separated from the act of living, then Daryl shows just how deeply and faithfully one can think and live.

My parents, Edith and Edwin Blumhofer, support us through their generosity and love. The courage and faithfulness that mark their lives are an inspiration and a witness to the gospel. I could not be a more grateful son. My parents-in-law, Jennifer and Greg Wheatley, love and inspire us. Our family has thrived these past years thanks in many ways to these parents.

Our daughters, Chloë and Marika, ground our lives, work, and faith. They are a limitless source of joy and silliness, and also of thoughtful observation. This work is dedicated to my wife,

xii

Acknowledgments

Stephanie. Above all, Stephanie is my encourager and conversation partner. She inspires me every day with her work ethic and wisdom; she supported this project and continues to support my vocation with some of the most costly gifts imaginable: her time, her energy, and even the shape of her life. It is a humbling thing to be loved by someone who is willing to lay down so much for another. My gratitude far exceeds my words, but the words are indispensable: thank you.

xiii