

## The God of Jews Only?

For the mistake happens in the beginning and the beginning is said to be half of the whole, so that even a minor mistake at the beginning is equal to those made at different stages.

Aristotle, *Politics* 5, 1303b

Empirical “Israel” may not have been simply identical to the “*Ioudaioi*” for some of the New Testament writers.

Martina Böhm<sup>1</sup>

From Marduk in Babylon to Athena in Athens, ancient deities were characteristically regional, ethnic, and familial, serving as the patrons or matrons of their “families” – that is, specific people groups – who were expected to demonstrate loyal deference and respect to their gods through specific prescribed customs. In this respect, Paul’s God was, as Paula Fredriksen observes, “much like his pagan colleagues,”<sup>2</sup> as illustrated by Paul’s own characterization of God as “father” and those who have received the spirit as “children of God” (Rom 8:17). The God Paul proclaimed, Fredriksen explains,

had his own people, Israel, with whom he shared a particular bond of love, and of whom he made specific ritual and ethical demands. He presented himself to them as their “father,” and they were his “sons,” as were, in a special way, the kings of David’s line. . . . According to Genesis 2:2–3, this god had observed that most Jewish of practices, the Sabbath; according to *Jubilees* 2:17–20, he observed it weekly, in the company of two orders of circumcised angels. This god might be “the god of the nations also” . . . but he was first of all, and emphatically, “the god

<sup>1</sup> Martina Böhm, “Wer gehörte in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit zu ‘Israel?’” (2012), 201–2.

<sup>2</sup> Paula Fredriksen, “God Is Jewish, but Gentiles Don’t Have to Be” (2019), 5.

of the Jews” (Rom 3:29). In short, and like his people, according to these ancient criteria of ethnicity, God too was “Jewish.”<sup>3</sup>

Ordinarily, inasmuch as ancient deities were ethnic and familial, incorporation into the family of a specific deity would involve an essentially ethnic conversion, as the individual in question becomes incorporated into the people group of that deity. Paul, however, distinctively argues for the integration of non-Jews within the family of his God without their becoming Jews, leading Fredriksen to conclude that for Paul, “God is Jewish, but Gentiles don’t have to be.”<sup>4</sup> Although this pithy formulation rightly calls attention to the oft-ignored ethnic qualities of the God Paul preached, it does have one significant problem: YHWH is never actually *called* “Jewish” in extant ancient literature. Romans 3:29 provides the closest example, but even that passage does not declare that God is Jewish but rather asks a question implying a negative conclusion: “Is God [the God] of Jews only? Is he not also the God of gentiles/nations?” Aside from this single verse, phrases like “God of (the) Jews” or “Jewish God” are strikingly absent across early Jewish literature. Instead, another formulation is consistently preferred: YHWH is the “God of Israel.”<sup>5</sup>

At first, this may seem like a pedantic distinction. After all, one might easily presume that “God of Israel” is simply an alternative way of saying “Jewish God.” But a careful examination of the sources throughout the Second Temple period shows that these terms were not in fact treated as synonymous in this era, and understanding the distinction between them is critical to understanding Paul’s presentation of his gospel – particularly his arguments about Jews, gentiles, and Israel.

<sup>3</sup> Fredriksen, “God Is Jewish,” 5; cf. Fredriksen, “How Jewish Is God? Divine Ethnicity in Paul’s Theology” (2018); *The Pagans’ Apostle* (2017), 115; N. T. Wright, “Paul and Empire” (2011), 287.

<sup>4</sup> Fredriksen, “God Is Jewish,” 3.

<sup>5</sup> Observed by Saul Kaatz, *Die mündliche Lehre und ihr Dogma* (1923), 43. Cf. Solomon Zeitlin, “The Names Hebrew, Jew and Israel” (1953), 366–67; K. G. Kuhn, “Ἰσραήλ, Ἰουδαῖος, Ἑβραῖος in Jewish Literature after the OT,” *TDNT* 3:360; James Richard Linville, *Israel in the Book of Kings* (1998), 28. The words τὸν θεὸν τῶν Ἰουδαίων do appear consecutively in Josephus, *Ant.* 18.286, but τῶν Ἰουδαίων does not modify θεὸν but is the object of the next word προμηθεύμενον, which takes the genitive: “seeing that God provided for the Jews.” The earliest example of “God of the Jews” is found in the late second-century CE apocryphal letter of Pilate to Claudius found in the *Acts of Peter and Paul* 19:3, in which “Pilate” says Jesus “came as the God of the Jews while I was governor over Judaea.”

AN EXPERIMENT IN CRITICISM: BEYOND THE INSIDER/  
OUTSIDER PARADIGM

It is a presumption nearly universally acknowledged that in Paul's day "Israel" meant "the Jews" and that "Jews" and "Israelites" were merely alternative appellations for the same group of people. Throughout scholarly literature, one frequently encounters casual assertions to this effect, such as, "'Israelites' is what Jews were called in earlier centuries,"<sup>6</sup> or "By Paul's day, 'Jew' had become a common designation of anyone who belonged to the people of Israel,"<sup>7</sup> or "my *presupposition* . . . is straightforward: When Paul says 'Israel,' he means 'Jews.'"<sup>8</sup> Even detailed studies of the two terms have not questioned this assumption, instead treating it as foundational.<sup>9</sup> Countless scholars regularly alternate between these terms for stylistic reasons. But if the terms were truly interchangeable, one would expect them to be evenly distributed across the Pauline letters and other early Jewish sources. This is far from the case, however. Paul, for example, uses "Israel" and cognates thirteen times in Romans 9–11 but only six times in the rest of the seven undisputed letters.<sup>10</sup> *Ioudaios* and its cognates, on the other hand, appear twenty-nine times broadly scattered across the seven letters but only twice in 9–11.<sup>11</sup> This terminological shift – with over 70 percent of Paul's use of "Israel" terminology concentrated to three chapters – is by no means random and surely signals something

<sup>6</sup> John M. G. Barclay, "Ἰουδαῖος: Ethnicity and Translation" (2018), 55.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *Romans* (1996), 159. Similarly, Carl R. Holladay, "Paul and His Predecessors in the Diaspora" (2003), 453: Paul "doubtless, although not explicitly, identifies [Israel] with the Jews of his own time." Cf. also Michael Bachmann, "Verus Israel" (2002), 510; Wilhelm Vischer, "Das Geheimnis Israels" (1950), 86.

<sup>8</sup> Paula Fredriksen, "'Circumcision Is Nothing': A Non-Reformation Reading of the Letters of Paul" (2022), 79, emphasis original. Cf. Fredriksen, "What Does It Mean to See Paul 'within Judaism?'" (2022), 376; Matthew V. Novenson, "*Ioudaios*, Pharisee, Zealot" (2022), 170.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Peter Tomson, "The Names Israel and Jew in Ancient Judaism and in the New Testament" (1986), 120, opens by referring to the two terms as "alternative appellations." Similarly, Graham Harvey states, "[*Hebraios*] was already an accepted gentile synonym with Ἰσραήλ or Ἰουδαῖος" (*The True Israel: Uses of the Names Jew, Hebrew, and Israel in Ancient Jewish and Early Christian Literature* [1996], 117, cf. 40), and Jennifer Eyl suggests that "Israelite" is coextensive with *Ioudaios* but with the nuance of "the revered air of the primordial past," meaning "a really, *really* ancient Judean" ("I Myself Am an Israelite": Paul, Authenticity and Authority" [2017], 157, 154–55).

<sup>10</sup> "Israel" occurs once more in the disputed letters (Eph 2:12) and in the majority text of Rom 10:1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ioudaios* also occurs once in the disputed letters (Col 3:11).

important, especially given that similar patterns also emerge in Josephus, Philo, and other early Jewish literature.<sup>12</sup>

The most common explanation is that Paul shifts to “Israel” language to use the “insider” or “honorary” name preferred by Jews themselves in the chapters that explain how the gospel pertains to the Jews.<sup>13</sup> That is, as he turns to speak of his own people, he does so as an insider, employing “the honorary name ‘Israelites.’”<sup>14</sup> This explanation derives from Karl Kuhn’s 1938 *Theologische Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* article, in which Kuhn proposes that “Israel” is an “insider” term preferred by the people themselves while “Jew” is an “outsider” term, sometimes carrying a “derogatory or even contemptuous sense.”<sup>15</sup> But this alleged derogatory nuance of “Jew” – for which Kuhn himself does not list an example but instead asserts as an established fact – is entirely unattested in pre-Christian antiquity.<sup>16</sup> This nuance was, however, unfortunately common in prewar Germany when Kuhn wrote his article, where *Jude* was frequently pejorative, while those wanting to be respectful preferred *Israelite*, the word associated with the biblical chosen people. German Jews understandably preferred the latter term, and German Jewish communities typically called themselves the *israelitische Gemeinde* (Israelite community) of a given area.<sup>17</sup>

Kuhn himself was clearly impacted by this environment, as he joined the Nazi party in 1932 and showed his enthusiasm for the cause by giving his lectures on Judaism at Tübingen while wearing a paramilitary Storm Detachment (*Sturmabteilung*) uniform complete with *Ehrendolch* (honorary dagger) with inscription of Nazi comradeship.<sup>18</sup> Kuhn was also one of fifteen members appointed to the Forschungsabteilung Judenfrage (Research

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed discussion, see Jason A. Staples, *The Idea of Israel in Second Temple Judaism* (2021).

<sup>13</sup> E.g., J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans* (1988), 526.

<sup>14</sup> Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an der Römer* (1980), 187–88. Cf. (among many others) Joshua D. Garroway, “*Ioudaios*” (2017), 524; Robert Jewett, *Romans* (2006), 561–63; Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (1978), 295; Tomson, “The Names Israel and Jew,” 288; John H. Elliot, “Jesus the Israelite Was Neither a ‘Jew’ nor a ‘Christian’” (2007), 144; Ulrich Luz, *Das Geschichtsverständnis des Paulus* (1968), 26–27, 269–70.

<sup>15</sup> K. G. Kuhn, “Ἰσραήλ, Ἰουδαῖος, Ἑβραῖος in Jewish Literature after the OT,” *TDNT*, 3:360–68 (quote 368).

<sup>16</sup> As pointed out by Shaye Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness* (1999), 71 n. 5. Kuhn does anticipate this objection, protesting, “But it is plainly attested already in Jewish lit” (Kuhn, *TDNT* 3:368 n. 72), citing no examples.

<sup>17</sup> Daniel R. Schwartz, “‘Judaean’ or ‘Jew’” (2007), 19–20; Maurice Casey, “Some Anti-Semitic Assumptions in the ‘Theological Dictionary of the New Testament’” (1999), 283.

<sup>18</sup> M. A. Beek, review of *Achtzehn Gebet und Vater unser und der Reim*, by Karl Georg Kuhn (1950), 21–22. The *Ehrendolch* with inscription was received due to Kuhn being one of the first thousand members of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA).

Department for the Jewish Problem) established by the Nazis in 1936, published multiple anti-Semitic works on *Weltjudentum* (World Judaism) and the so-called *Judenfrage* (Jewish Problem),<sup>19</sup> and delivered public addresses on these subjects.<sup>20</sup> Given this context, it is difficult to read Kuhn's statements about "the depreciatory element that clings so easily to [*Ioudaios*]" as anything but an indication of the assumptions Kuhn brought to the evidence due to the context in which he formulated his model.<sup>21</sup> Put bluntly, Kuhn's insider/outsider paradigm superimposes the anti-Semitic idiom of Nazi Germany upon the ancient evidence, resting on the assumption that the term *Ioudaios* shared the derogatory nuance *Jude* did in prewar Germany and therefore functioned as an "outsider" term as opposed to the more respectful "Israelite," providing a signal example of how modern ideologies can dramatically impact interpretation of the past.<sup>22</sup>

This insider/outsider paradigm has now been assumed by multiple generations of scholarship, with some scholars even ironically having marshaled it in the fight against anti-Jewish readings.<sup>23</sup> But again, the problem is that Kuhn's paradigm depends on an assumption entirely unsupported by the data; there is simply no evidence that *Ioudaios* ever carried a derogatory nuance in antiquity or that it was an outsider term while "Israel" was the preferred, "honorary" name for the same people. Instead, the evidence strongly indicates that the reason "Israelite" and "Jew" are used differently throughout the literature of the Second Temple period is that these terms were not synonymous or coextensive in the Second Temple period, nor can they justifiably be treated as such in Paul's letters.

#### TWO NATIONS UNDER GOD: THE OTHER ISRAELITES

The biggest obstacle to treating "Israel" as merely an alternative term for "the Jews" in this period is the fact that the Jews were not the only

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Karl Georg Kuhn, "Die Entstehung des talmudischen Denkens" (1937); "Weltjudentum in der Antike" (1937); "Ursprung und Wesen der talmudischen Einstellung zum Nichtjuden" (1938); *Die Judenfrage als weltgeschichtliches Problem* (1939); "Der Talmud, das Gesetzbuch der Juden: Einführende Bemerkungen" (1941).

<sup>20</sup> For more on Kuhn's anti-Semitism and scholarly tendencies, see Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 29–39.

<sup>21</sup> Contra Tomson, "The Names Israel and Jew," 121; David Goodblatt, "The Israelites Who Reside in Judah" (2009), 86–89; Beek, review of *Achtzehn Gebet und Vater unser und der Reim*, by Kuhn, 22; J. S. Vos, "Antijudaismus/Antisemitismus im Theologischen Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament" (1984), 94.

<sup>22</sup> See Casey, "Anti-Semitic Assumptions," 285–86.

<sup>23</sup> E.g., Elliot, "Jesus the Israelite"; Tomson, "The Names Israel and Jew."

Yahwistic ethnic group claiming the Israelite label in the Second Temple period.<sup>24</sup> Instead, there was a competing “Israel,” the people best known as Samaritans, who preferred to call themselves *Shamerim* (“guardians” of the Torah) or simply “Israelites.”<sup>25</sup> These claimants to Israelite status and heritage were decidedly not Jews, a fact most clearly illustrated by a famous passage in the Gospel of John, which informs the reader, “Jews [*Ioudaioi*] do not have common dealings with Samaritans” (4:9),<sup>26</sup> a statement that would be incoherent if Samaritans were considered Jews or a subset of *Ioudaioi*. Indeed, unlike the Idumaeans, who became *Ioudaioi* (though still, as Shaye Cohen notes, remaining Idumaeans) after the annexation of their territory under the Hasmoneans,<sup>27</sup> the Samaritans were never so identified.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Lester Grabbe observes that, surprisingly,

in the external references to peoples and kingdoms of Palestine, there is no evidence that “Israel” ever refers to Judah or the Judahites; rather “Judah,” “Jews,” and similar designations are always used, at least until the Christian era. The only group referred to as “Israelite” in Greco-Roman sources in the pre-Christian period is the Samaritan community associated with Mt Gerizim.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, until recently, most modern scholars have treated the Samaritans not as a distinct people but rather as a sect of Judaism,<sup>30</sup>

<sup>24</sup> “The Jews were not the only strictly monotheistic, Torah-observant, and cultically active Yahwists in Palestine and the Diaspora. There was at the same time, both in the motherland of Palestine and in the diaspora, another large Torah-observant part of the population; and in the political-sociological sense, at least in Samaria, there is also an *ethnos* that likewise internally understood itself as ‘Israel’” (Böhm, “Wer gehörte,” 183).

<sup>25</sup> See Gary N. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 15–16.

<sup>26</sup> Although a few early witnesses (most notably  $\kappa^*$  D it) lack this explanation, it is unlikely to have been a secondary addition, and in any case the rest of the passage presumes the distinction. David Daube, “Jesus and the Samaritan Woman: The Meaning of  $\sigma\upsilon\chi\chi\rho\acute{\alpha}\sigma\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ ” (1950), 139–43; and Richard J. Coggins, *Samaritans and Jews* (1975), 139, render  $\sigma\upsilon\chi\chi\rho\acute{\alpha}\sigma\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$  “use together,” meaning Jews and Samaritans do not share common vessels.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Ant.* 13.254, 257–58. See n. 134 on p. 35.

<sup>28</sup> See Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, 18.

<sup>29</sup> Lester L. Grabbe, “Israel’s Historical Reality after the Exile” (1999), 13. Similarly, Zeitlin observes: “We never find the term Israel denoting the people of Judaea, in the entire tannaitic literature of the time of the Second Commonwealth. The term Israel was used only in contrast to the priests and Levites” (“Hebrew, Jew and Israel,” 369).

<sup>30</sup> This view goes at least as far back as James Alan Montgomery, *The Samaritans, the Earliest Jewish Sect* (1907). Other important studies treating the Samaritans as a Jewish sect include Frank Moore Cross, “Samaria and Jerusalem in the Era of Restoration” (2000), 175; Stefan Schorch, “The Construction of Samari(t)an Identity from the Inside and from the Outside” (2013); Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (1987); Lester L. Grabbe, *The Roman Period* (1992); Uriel Rappaport, “Reflections on the Origins of the Samaritans” (1999); Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the

largely due to the habit of treating Yahwism as equivalent to Judaism, an assumption itself owing to widespread scholarly acceptance of Jewish polemics dismissing Samaritan claims to distinct Israelite heritage.<sup>31</sup> More careful recent scholarship has called such treatment of the Samaritans into question,<sup>32</sup> and once it is recognized that the Samaritans were not Jews but instead called themselves – and were called by others – Israelites, the assumption of these terms’ equivalence is no longer tenable. Certainly, many Jews rejected Samaritan claims of Israelite status, but that does not negate the fact that the Samaritans could not be ignored in the Second Temple period. The Samaritans therefore provide an important parallel to Paul’s “former gentiles,” another group that is neither Jewish nor gentile but something else.<sup>33</sup>

#### THE GREAT DIVORCE: ISRAEL AND JUDAH

The reason the Samaritans identified themselves as Israelites but not Jews is that they claimed descent from the northern Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh rather than from Judah.<sup>34</sup> Here we are reminded that in

Early Second Temple Period” (1987); Martina Böhm, *Samaritanen und die Samaritaner bei Lukas* (1999), 63–64, 84; Alan D. Crown, “Another Look at Samaritan Origins” (1995); “Redating the Schism between the Judaeans and the Samaritans” (1991).

- <sup>31</sup> See especially Böhm, “Wer gehörte,” 181; Ingrid Hjelm, “What Do Samaritans and Jews Have in Common?” (2004), 25 (cf. also 46).
- <sup>32</sup> Most notably Matthew Chalmers, “Representations of Samaritans in Late Antique Jewish and Christian Texts” (2019); “Rethinking Luke 10: The Parable of the Good Samaritan Israelite” (2020); Chalmers, review of *Judah and Samaria*, by Gary N. Knoppers (2021); Böhm, “Wer gehörte”; Ingrid Hjelm, “Changing Paradigms” (2005). For a survey of recent trends in Samaritan studies, see Matthew Chalmers, “Samaritans, Biblical Studies, and Ancient Judaism: Recent Trends” (2021).
- <sup>33</sup> Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 220–21. Similarly, even after the Second Temple period, “most [Tannaitic] passages concerning the Samaritans mention non-Jews and *kutim* as separate categories” (Lawrence H. Schiffman, “The Samaritans in Tannaitic Halakhah” [1985], 325–26); it is not until sometime between the mid-second and fourth centuries that rabbinic materials more clearly distinguish Samaritans from Israelites and class them with foreigners or *goyim*. See also Adi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi, *Goy*, 185–92; Yuval Shahar, “Imperial Religious Unification Policy” (2011); Rocco Bernasconi, “Tannaitic ‘Israel’ and the Kutim” (2008); Yitzhak Magen, *The Samaritans and the Good Samaritan* (2008); Pieter W. van der Horst, “Anti-Samaritan Propaganda in Early Judaism” (2003); Yehudah Elitsur, “Samaritans in Tannaitic Texts” (2000); Reinhard Pummer, “Samaritanism in Caesarea Maritima” (2000).
- <sup>34</sup> This claim by the Samaritans represents significant counterevidence to Michael Satlow’s assertion that by the first century CE, tribal identity was “long defunct” (*How the Bible Became Holy* (2014), 301 n. 7).

the biblical narratives of the pre-exilic past, when the united kingdom of Israel ruled by David and Solomon splits into two, it is the northern kingdom that retains the moniker “Israel,” while the southern kingdom based in Jerusalem is called Judah.<sup>35</sup> By the end of the Former Prophets, “Israel” is no longer in the picture, with Judah alone in view after the dissolution of the northern kingdom after a series of Assyrian invasions and deportations in the eighth century BCE.<sup>36</sup>

Remarkably, the kingdom of Judah nevertheless identified its patron deity as the “God of Israel,” which Michael Stahl observes was “an act of religious appropriation that asserts, at least in ideal terms, a fundamental social-political and religious unity between Israel and Judah.”<sup>37</sup> And yet it is striking that, although the political interests of the Hebrew Bible’s primary authors and editors . . . lay with Judah, not Israel,<sup>38</sup> neither Kings nor Chronicles applies the name “Israel” to the southern kingdom or the Judahite exiles even after the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations.<sup>39</sup> This distinction is especially visible in the summary statements after the fall of Samaria:

YHWH warned Israel and Judah . . . but they did not listen and stiffened their neck like their ancestors, who did not trust in YHWH their God . . . . And they went after the empty things and became empty<sup>40</sup> – after the nations that surrounded them, which YHWH had commanded them not to do . . . .

So YHWH was very angry with Israel, and he removed them from his sight. No one was left except the tribe of Judah. Judah also did not keep the commands of YHWH their God but followed the practices introduced by Israel. When he had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel away from following YHWH and caused them to sin greatly. And the children of Israel walked in all the sins that Jeroboam committed and did not desist from them until YHWH removed them from his sight, just as he had spoken through all his servants the prophets. So Israel went into exile from their own land to Assyria to this day. (2 Kgs 17:13–15, 18–23)

Remarkably, the Assyrian invasions and deportations of Israel to which this passage refers are routinely ignored by scholars of Early Judaism and the New Testament, who typically begin any discussion of

<sup>35</sup> Gary N. Knoppers, “Did Jacob Become Judah?” (2011), 45.

<sup>36</sup> See Ingrid Hjelm, *Jerusalem’s Rise to Sovereignty* (2004), 30–92, 117–18.

<sup>37</sup> Michael J. Stahl, *The “God of Israel” in History and Tradition* (2021), 2.

<sup>38</sup> Stahl, *The “God of Israel,”* 2. <sup>39</sup> Knoppers, “Did Jacob Become Judah,” 45.

<sup>40</sup> LXX ἐματαιώθησαν, echoed in Rom 1:21 as the consequence for those who “despite knowing God refused to honor him as God or give thanks” (see pp. 124–25 below). MT: “went after the nothing (ההכל) and became nothing (יהיהכל).”



exile with the Babylonian Exile,<sup>41</sup> often mislabeled as the exile of Israel or “Israel’s Babylonian captivity.”<sup>42</sup> The result is that Israel and Judah and their respective exiles are regularly conflated, as though Israel as a nation had persisted until the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians.<sup>43</sup> The biblical authors, however, distinguished between the fall and captivity of *Israel* and that of *Judah* over a century later, long after Israel had ceased to exist as a nation.

#### GREAT EXPECTATIONS: THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

The Hebrew prophets, however, declared that both Israel and Judah would ultimately be restored and focus on the fate of the northern Israelites to a surprising degree, though this fact has largely been ignored or overlooked due to the presumption that after the Babylonian exile the meaning of Israel narrowed to the remnant of Judah. But there is no evidence of such a shift within the prophetic corpus; instead, as Knoppers observes:

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and other books hardly speak with one voice, but they assume the survival of Israelites and Judahites in a variety of territories and

- <sup>41</sup> E.g., “The exile in Babylon had only been the first stage of a much longer process of God’s people being enslaved to pagans” (N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 114). Timo Eskola, *A Narrative Theology of the New Testament* (2015), 16 begins his “short survey on Israel’s exile” with the “Babylonian exile.” The conflation is even assumed in the title of Rainer Albertz, *Israel in Exile: The History and Literature of the Sixth Century B.C.E.* (2003). See the critiques of Hjelm, “Changing Paradigms”; Brant Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile* (2005), 31–40; Robert P. Carroll, “Exile! What Exile? Deportation and the Discourses of Diaspora” (1998), 69–79; Philip R. Davies, “Exile? What Exile? Whose Exile?” (1998), 132–38.
- <sup>42</sup> E.g., John K. Goodrich, “Sold under Sin: Echoes of Exile in Romans 7.14–25” (2013), 477, 495; Richard N. Longenecker, *Romans* (2016), 505; Richard E. Averbeck, “Christian Interpretations of Isaiah 53” (2012), 53; G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (1999), 565. Similarly, Steven M. Bryan, “The Reception of Jeremiah’s Prediction of a Seventy-Year Exile” (2018), 108, refers to “Jeremiah’s prediction that Israel [*sic*] would serve the king of Babylon for seventy years (Jer 25:11–12),” but that prophecy is not about “Israel” but rather “all the people of Judah” (Jer 25:1). Bryan is therefore correct to point out that later readers understood Jeremiah’s prophecy as having been fulfilled in the past, but this prophecy about the Babylonian captivity of *Judah* is irrelevant to the question of whether *Israel’s* exile was ongoing.
- <sup>43</sup> E.g., “With the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, the old 12-tribe association came to its effective end” (Stephen Westerholm, “Whence ‘The Torah’ of Second Temple Judaism” [1991], 31); “The political situation in Israel was unstable and quite soon after the death of Josiah (609), Syria and Palestine came under Babylonian rule” (Eskola, *A Narrative Theology*, 17).

prophesy their reconfiguration in some new political form within their ancestral land. But such prophetic passages are wishfully directed to the future; they do not refer in a past historical sense to something that has already occurred. According to the prophets, the deported northern groups never returned to the land of Israel.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, the hope for a new era of YHWH's favor and Israel's obedience, the time when all Israel would return and be reunified, remains undiminished in the biblical prophetic books.<sup>45</sup> The situation in the Second Temple period, however, fell far short of the prophetic expectations of Israel's redemption. In particular, David Greenwood has called the numerous predictions regarding a restored northern kingdom "perhaps the most conspicuous example in the Tanak of patently false prophecy."<sup>46</sup> Consequently, as Jonathan Goldstein explains:

Despite the joyous proclamations of the postexilic prophets, despite the return of many exiles to the Promised Land, despite the completion of the Second Temple, it was clear to believing [Jews] that they were still living in the "Age of [God's] Wrath."<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, as is often the case with unfulfilled prophecy, the long delay did not quench the hope of fulfillment.<sup>48</sup> Instead, as circumstances continually fell far short of prophetic expectations, those unfulfilled prophecies of restoration remained a source of hope to those still expecting their eventual fulfillment, shaping the perspectives of Jews

<sup>44</sup> Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans*, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Stahl (*The "God of Israel,"* 372) argues that even "the use of the appellation 'God of Israel' to define the identity of the biblical deity – an identification that has persisted in religious and scholarly communities until the present day – must ultimately be seen as a post-biblical interpretive development, the roots of which can be traced back to the work of particular biblical authors and editors who sought, in their various ways, to define 'Israel' as the one people of God." That is, this emphasis on the whole people of Israel including but not limited to Judah is coded into the very description of the deity within these texts.

<sup>46</sup> David C. Greenwood, "On the Jewish Hope for a Restored Northern Kingdom" (1976), 384.

<sup>47</sup> Jonathan A. Goldstein, "How the Authors of 1 and 2 Maccabees Treated the 'Messianic' Promises" (1988), 70, citing CD 1:5.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails* (1956); Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (1962); Robert P. Carroll, "Ancient Israelite Prophecy and Dissonance Theory" (1977); J. Gordon Melton, "Spiritualization and Reaffirmation" (1985); Lorne L. Dawson, "When Prophecy Fails and Faith Persists" (1999); Chris Bader, "When Prophecy Passes Unnoticed" (1999); Simon Dein, "What Really Happens When Prophecy Fails: The Case of Lubavitch" (2001); Mathew N. Schmalz, "When Festinger Fails: Prophecy and the Watch Tower" (2011).

living both in the land and in the diaspora.<sup>49</sup> First-century Jews who looked to the prophets and the biblical narratives as their own authoritative history were therein consistently confronted with reminders of the present incompleteness of Israel and simultaneously instilled with hopes of a future restoration when YHWH would re-choose, reunify, and regather the people of Israel from the nations among which they had been scattered.<sup>50</sup> Nathan Thiel summarizes the situation as follows:

That Jewish authors continued to have an active interest in an idealized Israel patterned after the biblical precedent should not surprise us . . . . The prevalence of “Israel” in prayer, liturgy, and more generally within texts like 1 Maccabees and in the early rabbinic corpus is influenced by speech situation but also by consciousness of the biblical narrative. Convergence between “Israel” and “Jews” as identity markers may have been taking place, but it was not yet complete . . . . For authors looking back to a golden age and looking forward to national restoration in the age to come, “Israel” expressed an idealized self-identity of which they were a part but not the only part.<sup>51</sup>

This distinction between northern Israel and southern Judah – maintained and even emphasized throughout the biblical tradition – is ultimately the source of the terminological distinctions between “Israelite” and “Jew” that continue to be made throughout the Second Temple period. The earliest extant examples of “Jew” (*Yehudi*) are found in later biblical texts and refer specifically to people from the kingdom of Judah,<sup>52</sup> whereas “Israelite” in these sources typically represents those from the northern tribes – that is, those not from Judah. As such, “Israel” by

<sup>49</sup> See, e.g., Goldstein, “‘Messianic’ Promises,” 69–70; Robert P. Carroll, “Deportation and Diasporic Discourses in the Prophetic Literature” (1997), 64. Cf. also Jon D. Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel* (2006). In contrast, Floyd, “Was Prophetic Hope Born of Disappointment” (2006), argues that such a view too closely resembles the early Christian *adversus Judaeos* interpretations of the prophets. Cf. also A. Thomas Kraabel, “Unity and Diversity among Diaspora Synagogues” (1992), 30; Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas* (2008), 24–25; Jules Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt* (1964). Although it is true that the exile/covenantal curse narratives were (and sadly still are) used in later anti-Jewish polemics, the interpretation that Israel remained under the covenantal curses with the restoration prophecies remaining unfulfilled is not a Christian innovation but was rather the dominant Jewish interpretation before the Common Era – one then easily leveraged by Christians for anti-Jewish purposes.

<sup>50</sup> Eskola, *A Narrative Theology*, 19–20. Cf. the continued preeminence of restoration eschatology in the Targumim, for example, as discussed in Bruce D. Chilton, “Messianic Redemption” (2011).

<sup>51</sup> Nathan Thiel, “‘Israel’ and ‘Jew’ as Markers of Jewish Identity in Antiquity: The Problems of Insider/Outsider Classification” (2014), 99.

<sup>52</sup> Jer 32:12; 34:9; 38:19; 40:11–12, 15; 41:3; 43:9; 44:1; 52:28, 30; 2 Kgs 16:6; 25:25; 1 Chr 4:18.

definition includes non-Jews. After the Babylonian deportations, “Jew” (*YehudilIoudaios*) became the default term used to refer to Judahites, whether in the land or in the diaspora, and the returnees from Babylon established not a renewed Israel but rather a Persian province of *Yehud* (Judah) populated by *Yehudi* (Jews/Judahites).<sup>53</sup> Consequently, Thiel explains, the term “‘Jews’ could not replace ‘Israel’ because it was too narrow to carry the same meaning.”<sup>54</sup> Whereas “Israel” could refer to any of its subsets by synecdoche, early Jewish literature consistently (and somewhat surprisingly) continues to represent Jews/Judah as only one – albeit the leading – part of the larger category of Israel.

#### WILL THE REAL ISRAELITES PLEASE COME BACK?

This background explains how the Samaritans could claim to be Israelites but not Jews: inasmuch as they claimed descent from northern stock, they were not “Judahites.” For many Jews, however, Samaritan claims of Israelite status were illegitimate, as they regarded Samaritans as descended from the ethnic groups resettled in Israelite territory by the Assyrians in the eighth and early seventh centuries BCE according to 2 Kings 17:24–41. Such a view, for example, is evident in Ezra, when the “enemies of Judah and Benjamin” (note: not “enemies of Israel”), who are later identified as chiefly from Samaria (4:10),<sup>55</sup> initially offer to aid the returnees in building the temple (4:1–2) but are rebuffed by the Jewish elders who reject them as outsiders (4:3). Nevertheless, although Samaritan claims of Israelite status were rejected by many Jews, this did not imply that only Jews were Israelites but rather that the other *real* Israelites (the scattered northern tribes) remained in exile until the restoration and reunification with Judah promised by the prophets.

An especially clear example of this perspective can be seen in 4Q372 I, a fragmentary text found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>56</sup> This brief fragment laments the “fools” (=Samaritans) living in Joseph’s land who provoke the

<sup>53</sup> For this as a surprising fact requiring explanation, see Goodblatt, “Israelites who Reside in Judah,” 84–86; *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism* (2006), 136–37; “Varieties of Identity in Late Second Temple Judah (200 B.C.E.–135 C.E.)” (2011), 17–18; “From Judeans to Israel: Names of Jewish States in Antiquity” (1998).

<sup>54</sup> Thiel, “‘Israel’ and ‘Jew,’” 96. <sup>55</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 11.84–115.

<sup>56</sup> This fragment is generally regarded as pre-sectarian and dated to around the third century BCE, though it is by no means certain that it is pre-sectarian, particularly given its use of *yahad* (twice). For more on provenance and dating, see Eileen M. Schuller, “4Q372 I: A Text about Joseph” (1991), 371–76; Michael A. Knibb, “A Note on 4Q372 and

traditional southern tribes of “Judah, Levi, and Benjamin” to jealousy and anger (4Q372 I 10–11, 14), thereby fulfilling the role of the “foolish nation” of the Song of Moses (Deut 32:21), while the real Joseph and his brothers have been “given into the hands of foreigners devouring his strength and breaking all his bones until the time of the end” (4Q372 I 14–15). The fragment looks forward to the day when Joseph and his brothers will return and offer sacrifices and praise, when God will also “destroy [the foreigners] from the whole world” (22). Matthew Thiessen explains:

The Samaritans function as a reminder to the southern tribes (Levi, Judah, and Benjamin) that, while they might be tempted to conclude that the exile is over, Israel (Joseph) still endures God’s punishment. Restoration has not been achieved: Joseph is still in foreign lands . . . While they remain in exile, full restoration is yet to come, even for those currently in the land. Through such means, the author attempts to convince his readers that the southern tribes’ fate remains bound to the fate of the northern tribes.<sup>57</sup>

For Israel to be complete, Joseph and his brothers must return to their rightful land, joining “Judah, Benjamin, and Levi” at the restoration, accompanied by judgment on the “fools” and other nations. The fates of northern Israel and southern Judah (=the Jews) are therefore inextricably linked, as each awaits final restoration and reunification.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, the War Scroll looks forward to an eschatological battle fought by all “twelve tribes of Israel” (1QM 3:14; 5:1–2), with the three southern tribes finally united with the eschatologically restored northern tribes, “the return of the exiles (*golat*) of the sons of light from “the wilderness of the peoples” (1:1–3). Remarkably, the Romans (Kittim) are identified with the *Assyrians* in this text, further highlighting that the current conditions are seen as continuous with the period of exile initiated by the Assyrian deportations of Israel. Despite living in the land, the Yahad sectarians consider Israel’s exile as ongoing (e.g., 4QMMT<sup>C</sup> 12b–14; CD 1:5–12) and present themselves as the righteous portion of the tribes of Levi, Judah, and Benjamin having departed to the wilderness to rejoin the rest of Israel in exile to await the coming eschatological restoration, which will include the destruction of the unjust nations and the wicked among Israel and Judah.<sup>59</sup>

4Q390” (1992), 166–70; Florentino García Martínez, “Nuevos textos no bíblicos procedentes de Qumrán” (1991), 124–25.

<sup>57</sup> Matthew Thiessen, “4Q372 I and the Continuation of Joseph’s Exile” (2008), 395.

<sup>58</sup> Thiessen, “Joseph’s Exile,” 395.

<sup>59</sup> See Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 259–89. Cf. Martin G. Abegg, “Exile and the Dead Sea Scrolls” (1997), 125; Noah Hacham, “Exile and Self-Identity in the Qumran Sect and in Hellenistic Judaism” (2010).

Josephus not only rejects Samaritan claims of Israelite heritage, calling them “Cutheans,” a name derived from one of the groups mentioned in 2 Kings 17:24, and emphasizing that they are neither Jews nor legitimate heirs of Israel (*Ant.* 9.288–91; 11.340–47), he also consistently differentiates between the terms “Israelite” and “Jew” across his works. The distinction is striking: the terms “Israel” and “Israelite” appear 188 times in the first 11 books of the *Antiquities* but nowhere else in the Josephan corpus.<sup>60</sup> *Ioudaios*, on the other hand, appears approximately 1,188 times across Josephus’ works but only 26 times in the first ten books of the *Antiquities* – the books in which he uses “Israel” (see Table 1.1).<sup>61</sup>

Table 1.1 *Jews and Israelites in Josephus*

	Israel/Israelite	Per 1,000	<i>Ioudaios</i>	Per 1,000
<i>Ant.</i> 1–10	174	1.12	27	0.17
11	14	1.02	90	6.55
12–20	0	0	530	3.85
<i>War</i>	0	0	468	3.73
<i>Life</i>	0	0	24	1.52
<i>Ag. Ap.</i>	0	0	51	2.48

Josephus explains that this transition from “Israelites” to “Jews” is not haphazard but occurs due to an important historical transition at a specific point in his narrative. While narrating the events of Ezra, he makes it clear that only a small portion of Israel returned to the land:

when these Jews (*Ioudaioi*) learned of the king’s piety towards God, and his kindness towards Ezra, they loved [him] most dearly, and many took up their possessions and went to Babylon, desiring to go down to Jerusalem. But all the people of Israel remained in that land. So it came about that only two tribes came to Asia and Europe and are subject to the Romans, but the ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates until now and are a countless multitude whose number is impossible to know. (*Ant.* 11.132–33)

Here Josephus clarifies that only two (southern) tribes, which he labels “Jews” (*Ioudaioi*), returned, while the remaining ten tribes of *Israel* did not return and remain beyond the Euphrates, outside Roman territory. In case the reader misses this distinction, Josephus explicitly calls attention to the shift in terminology a few paragraphs later:

<sup>60</sup> Of these, “Israel” occurs only twice, in the first and fourth books.

<sup>61</sup> This section summarizes Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 43–53, 210–232.

From the time they went up from Babylon they were called by this name [*Ioudaios*] after the tribe of Judah. Since the tribe was the prominent one to come from those parts, both the people themselves and the country have taken their name from it.<sup>62</sup> (*Ant.* 11.173)

Josephus explains that he will henceforth use the term *Ioudaios* rather than Israelite or Hebrew because the narrative from this point forward will focus on a specific *subset* of Israel – specifically, the subset identified with the dominant southern tribe of Judah. The scope of his narrative narrows at this point from Israel as a whole to those derived from the southern kingdom of Judah, who are properly referred to as Jews (*Ioudaioi*), while “Israelites” includes the rest of Israel (i.e., the northern part), who Josephus has already stated did not return from exile, again drawing a distinction between the Jews and the rest of Israel.

Josephus therefore explains that although Jews are Israelites and Samaritans are (in his view) illegitimate impostors, Jews are not the *only* Israelites, and some Israelites cannot rightly be called Jews. Instead, “Jew” (*Ioudaios*) refers specifically to a person descended from the southern kingdom of Judah or otherwise incorporated into that ethno-religious group (e.g., proselytes or those incorporated by marriage). In its broader sense, the term includes not only those from the tribe of Judah but also Levites and Benjaminites, since persons from these tribes were included among the returnees from the southern kingdom of Judah to the Persian province of *Yehud* after the Babylonian exile and are thus among those now “subject to the Romans” (*Ant.* 11.133).

Consequently, when all twelve tribes are in play, Josephus prefers the more comprehensive term, “Israel,” and during the divided kingdom Josephus uses it only for the northern tribes.<sup>63</sup> But once the northern tribes are off the stage in the so-called postexilic period, he avoids it entirely in favor of more precise terminology limited to those from the kingdom of Judah, the subset of Israel with which he identifies himself. Thus, rather than treating these terms as

<sup>62</sup> Contrary to Malcolm Lowe, “Who were the ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ” (1976), 106, which reads “Judah was the first tribe to return from exile,” and Ralph Marcus’ Loeb translation (*Jewish Antiquities, Volume VI* [1937], 399), “the first to come to those parts,” πρῶτος is best taken in the sense of “most important” here rather than “first” in a temporal sense. Neither the biblical accounts nor Josephus’ account suggest that the tribe of Judah preceded the other tribes in returning to the land; rather, it was the dominant, prominent tribe of those that returned. Cf. Stephen C. Carlson, “Luke 2:2 and the Census” (2004).

<sup>63</sup> See Paul Spilsbury, *The Image of the Jew in Flavius Josephus’ Paraphrase of the Bible* (1998), 40.

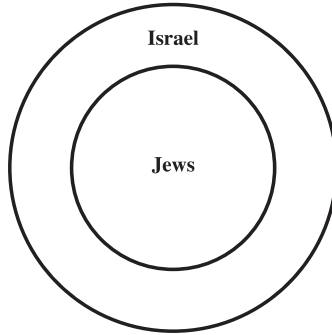


Figure 1.1 Jews as part of Israel

synonymous, Josephus carries forward the biblical distinction between these terms and explains that they have a *partitive* relationship, with Jews a subset of the larger category of Israel (see Figure 1.1).

This explanation of the distinction between “Israelite” and “Jew” accounts for the full pattern of Josephus’ use of these terms as, even the few instances where the terms do appear to be interchangeable, the equivalence only works in one direction.<sup>64</sup> That is, before the divided kingdom (i.e., when the full people are in view), Josephus can be more flexible with his terminology, especially where he wishes to emphasize the connection between ancient Israel and contemporary *Ioudaioi*,<sup>65</sup> and in rare cases he does employ *Ioudaios* in place of “Israelites” – though always referring to activity in the southern territory. The reverse, however, never occurs. As for Israel’s future, Josephus also reminds his audience that whereas many *Ioudaioi* are presently subject to the Romans, the “ten tribes” of *Israel* are not, obliquely hinting that this “innumerable multitude” will overwhelm the current Roman hegemony when God’s promises are fulfilled, an expectation that also subtly emerges elsewhere in the Josephan corpus.<sup>66</sup>

#### REVIVAL IN THE LAND AND ISRAEL’S ONGOING EXILE

The examples discussed so far are by no means anomalous in their presentation of Israel’s present plight and hope for the future. As has

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Spilsbury, *The Image of the Jew*, 38–40.

<sup>65</sup> Spilsbury, *The Image of the Jew*, 37–40, is right to point out that Josephus “regarded his description of these ancient people as fully relevant to the ‘Jews’ of his own day” (40).

<sup>66</sup> See Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 216–32 and the sources cited there.



been widely recognized at least since the work of Peter Ackroyd and Odil H. Steck,<sup>67</sup> numerous early Jewish texts similarly presume that Israel's exile never ended and look forward to a future restoration.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, despite the prevalence of these themes in the literature of the Second Temple period, there has been significant pushback against the idea that Jews in this era actually considered exile to be ongoing. Erich Gruen, for example, concedes the pervasive presence of exile and redemption themes in early Jewish literature but argues that these texts are not reflective of the authors' views of their current situations:

A caveat has to be issued from the start. The majority of these grim pronouncements [about exile] refer to the biblical misfortunes of the Israelites, expulsion by the Assyrians, the destruction of the Temple, and the Babylonian Captivity. Were they all metaphors for the Hellenistic diaspora? The inference would be hasty, and it begs the question.<sup>69</sup>

Maurice Casey similarly objects:

At the time of Jesus, many Jews lived in Israel. Some lived permanently in Jerusalem. We would need stunningly strong arguments to convince us that these Jews really believed they were in exile when they were in Israel.<sup>70</sup>

By now, the problem with this critique should be evident: these first-century Jews did not live in *Israel* but rather in *Judah* (Judaea). By

<sup>67</sup> See Peter R. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (1968); Odil Hannes Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten* (1967); "Das Problem theologischer Strömungen in nachexilischer Zeit" (1968).

<sup>68</sup> James M. Scott has been especially influential in pushing the importance of these themes in the English-speaking world in recent decades. See "Paul's Use of Deuteronomical Tradition" (1993); "For as Many as Are of Works of the Law Are under a Curse" (Galatians 3.10) (1993); "Restoration of Israel" (1993); "The Use of Scripture in 2 Corinthians 6:16c–18 and Paul's Restoration Theology" (1994); *Paul and the Nations*; "Philo and the Restoration of Israel" (1996); "Exile and the Self-Understanding of Diaspora Jews in the Greco-Roman Period" (1997); *On Earth As in Heaven* (2005); "Exile and Restoration" (2013). Scott has built on Steck's idea of the pervasive influence of a "Deuteronomical worldview" (*Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten*, 184–89, 274–78), though mostly dropping Steck's three-stage model for its development. For criticisms of Steck and Scott's paradigm, see Guy Prentiss Waters, *The End of Deuteronomy in the Epistles of Paul* (2006), 29–42, though Waters agrees that exile and restoration are important in early Judaism and for Paul's use of Deut 32 in Rom 9–11. For trenchant critiques of Waters' position, see David Lincicum, "Paul's Engagement with Deuteronomy" (2008), 50–53. See also the recent history of scholarship on restoration eschatological paradigms provided by Eskola, *A Narrative Theology*, 8–13 and the extensive discussion in Pitre, *Jesus*, 1–130.

<sup>69</sup> Erich S. Gruen, "Diaspora and Homeland" (2002), 20–21.

<sup>70</sup> Maurice Casey, "Where Wright Is Wrong" (1998), 99.

presuming that Israel had been reestablished – and the exile brought to an end – through the Persian-period returns and rebuilding of the temple narrated in Ezra–Nehemiah, such critiques conflate the restored “Israel” of prophetic expectation with the “Judah” of the Second Temple period.<sup>71</sup> In Gruen’s words, “redemption came, the promise of a new Temple was kept. The lamentations do not apply to current conditions,”<sup>72</sup> meaning any connection between the historical misfortunes (and covenantal curse) of exile could only apply to the “Hellenistic diaspora” in a metaphorical sense. Interestingly, these assumptions also seem to be shared by N. T. Wright, with whom the concept of Israel’s ongoing exile has become most closely associated in recent years, leading to his reinterpretation of the continuing “exile” in a more typological and metaphorical sense.<sup>73</sup>

But I am unaware of a single early Jewish text that treats the events of Ezra–Nehemiah as the restoration of Israel or the end of exile.<sup>74</sup> The book of Daniel, for example, brushes over the time when Jerusalem is rebuilt “with streets and moat and in times of oppression” (9:25), declaring that the *real* fulfillment of Israel’s promised redemption would come centuries later, when an “anointed one, the prince” (Dan 9:25–26) would be “cut off” (cf. Isa 53:8),<sup>75</sup> setting in motion the final restoration and the “end of

<sup>71</sup> Similarly, Bryan (“Jeremiah’s Prediction”) conflates the end of *Judah’s* Babylonian captivity in accordance with Jeremiah’s prophecy of seventy years (Jer 25:11–12) with the end of *Israel’s* exile despite the fact that Jer 25 is explicitly limited to Judah rather than pertaining to all Israel (25:1).

<sup>72</sup> Gruen, “Diaspora and Homeland,” 24; cf. Ronald Charles, *Paul and the Politics of Diaspora* (2014), 6–7.

<sup>73</sup> E.g., N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (1992), 268–72; *Climax of the Covenant* (1993), 140–56; *Jesus and the Victory of God* (1996), xvii–xviii, 126–27, 203–4, 248–50; “In Grateful Dialogue: A Response” (1999). Similarly, Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (1989), 46.

<sup>74</sup> “The ‘restoration’ of Judah under the Persians is really a scholarly rather than a biblical concept” (Philip R. Davies, “‘Old’ and ‘New’ Israel in the Bible and the Qumran Scrolls” [2007], 35).

<sup>75</sup> For the links between the Suffering Servant of Isa 52:13–53:12 and this anointed one who is “cut off,” see William H. Brownlee, “The Servant of the Lord in the Qumran Scrolls I” (1953), 12–15; cf. Harold Louis Ginsberg, “The Oldest Interpretation of the Suffering Servant” (1953); John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (1989), 300; Anthea E. Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire* (2011), 272–76. The oft-repeated dictum that there is no evidence for the concept of a suffering and dying messiah or of a messianic interpretation of the Suffering Servant within pre-Christian Judaism is therefore mistaken. Dan 9:25–26 may refer to the murder of Onias III in 171 BCE (cf. Dan 11:22; see Louis Francis Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel* [1978], 252), an event the author seems to regard as the beginning of the final period of trial immediately preceding the fulfillment of the prophetic promises of restoration, though the passage was obviously

the age of wrath" (Dan 8:19, 11:36).<sup>76</sup> Tobit similarly downplays the events of the Persian period,<sup>77</sup> looking forward to the time of the fuller restoration that will include Naphtalites like Tobit's family:

God will again show mercy to them, and he will bring them back into the land, and they will build the house, not like the former one, until the appointed times of the age will be completed. Then, after this, they will return from their exiles,<sup>78</sup> and they will build Jerusalem honorably. And the house of God will be built in it as a glorious house for all generations of the age, just as the prophets said concerning it. Then all the nations will turn truly to fear the Lord God, and they will bury their idols, and all the nations will bless the Lord, and his people will acknowledge God, and the Lord will exalt his people. (Tob 14:5–7a)

Similar sentiments about the inadequacy of the events of the Persian Period and afterwards are expressed in Josephus,<sup>79</sup> Sirach,<sup>80</sup> Jubilees,<sup>81</sup> 1 Enoch 89,<sup>82</sup> 4Q390 1 2–10,<sup>83</sup> and the Damascus Document,<sup>84</sup> among others. Thus, although it is true that some Jews had indeed returned to the land and a new temple was operating in Jerusalem, these events are consistently understood in early Jewish sources as only an intermediate stage, with the restoration of *all Israel* – including the northern “house of Israel” – still to come. Remarkably, of this future era, the Damascus Document even declares, “When the number of years of this age are complete, there will no longer be joining with the house of Judah but rather each one standing on his watchtower” (4:11).

On this point, it is revealing that the Persian province, the Hasmonean kingdom, and the Roman province were all called “Judah” (*Yehud*/

interpreted differently by the first century CE. For more on Dan 9 and its interpretation in early Judaism, see Dean R. Ulrich, “How Early Judaism Read Daniel 9:24–27” (2014).

<sup>76</sup> John S. Bergsma, “The Persian Period as Penitential Era” (2009); Hartman and Di Lella, *Daniel*, 251–53.

<sup>77</sup> See Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 292–302. See also Michael A. Knibb, “The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period” (1976), 268; Michael E. Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel* (2006), 30–31.

<sup>78</sup> The plural “exiles” (αἰχμαλωσιῶν) is significant, especially in a story about a Naphtalite family in exile. The NRSV (unfortunately quoted in Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 300) obscures this detail with the singular “exile.”

<sup>79</sup> Louis H. Feldman, “Restoration in Josephus” (2001), 231–41.

<sup>80</sup> Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel*, 39–40.

<sup>81</sup> Betsy Halpern-Amaru, “Exile and Return in Jubilees” (1997), 140.

<sup>82</sup> James C. VanderKam, “Exile in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature” (1997), 100.

<sup>83</sup> See Anja Klein, “New Material or Traditions Expanded?” (2016), 324–25.

<sup>84</sup> See Lawrence H. Schiffman, “The Concept of Restoration in the Dead Sea Scrolls” (2001), 220; see also John J. Collins, “The Construction of Israel in the Sectarian Rule Books” (2001), 28; Jonathan G. Campbell, “Essene-Qumran Origins in the Exile?” (1995), 148.

Judaea) rather than “Israel” – a marked contrast to the nomenclature chosen by the revolutionaries in both the first and second Jewish revolts against the Romans, each of which adopted “Israel” terminology in the expectation that the final restoration was imminent.<sup>85</sup> There is therefore no reason to imagine that the persistent focus on the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles in so many early Jewish texts was a metaphor for the Hellenistic diaspora because there is no evidence that Jews in this period regarded these things as distinct phenomena. That is, the Hellenistic diaspora is not something separate that happened after the other exiles had come to an end but is rather the continuation of the long “age of wrath” (CD 1:5) extending back (at least) to the eighth century BCE Assyrian invasions and continuing to the present day of the respective authors.<sup>86</sup>

Even Ezra–Nehemiah itself does not give a triumphant account of the promised restoration of Israel but instead presents a more ambivalent picture of “a little reviving” (Ezra 9:8) conspicuously limited to some from the southern tribes of “Judah and Benjamin and the priests and Levites” (cf. Ezra 1:5), while the rest of Israel remains jarringly absent.<sup>87</sup> The temple is built by “the elders of the Jews” (Ezra 6:14), while its dedication prominently features “a sin offering of twelve male goats, corresponding to the number of the tribes of Israel” (6:17). The juxtaposition here between the “elders of the Jews” and the twelve tribes of Israel underscores the absence of elders from the other tribes and calls attention to the continued hope for a fuller restoration including the tribal groups that had not yet returned.<sup>88</sup> The dedication of the temple also conspicuously lacks the glory of God that characterized the dedication of Solomon’s temple and the tabernacle in the wilderness. Not

<sup>85</sup> See Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 42–43, 169–73, 346.

<sup>86</sup> “The significance of the ongoing nature of the Assyrian exile is repeatedly ignored by most scholars, including Wright and both the defenders and critics of his exilic hypothesis” (Pitre, *Jesus*, 38).

<sup>87</sup> Pamela Barmash, “At the Nexus of History and Memory: The Ten Lost Tribes” (2005), 230, highlights a few passages that suggest some non-Judahite Israelites may have returned as well but concedes that the editor minimizes their presence, portraying the returns of Ezra–Nehemiah as insufficient to qualify as the restoration of all Israel. Ezra–Nehemiah also narrates not one but *three* returns to the land and restorations of Jerusalem occurring over about a century, those of Zerubbabel/Jeshua, Ezra, and Nehemiah, all of which share some overlapping features. See Lester L. Grabbe, “Mind the Gaps” (2001), esp. 84–85; “They Shall Come Rejoicing to Zion’ – or Did They?” (2009).

<sup>88</sup> Pace Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (1988), 130–31.

coincidentally, the returnees are repeatedly called “exiles” both in this passage and the remainder of the book as a whole.<sup>89</sup> The rebuilding of the temple is therefore a necessary and important step toward the fulfillment of the prophecies of restoration, but it is only a step.<sup>90</sup>

In case the reader misses these other indicators, the narrator punctuates the account of the temple's dedication with a remarkable anachronism, referring to the Persian ruler as “the king of Assyria” (Ezra 6:22) – surely no accident given the correct reference to the “king of Persia” only a few verses above (6:14).<sup>91</sup> The implication is clear: regardless of who is now ruling the empire, Israel has not yet been liberated from the oppression that began under Assyria, a freedom toward which the exiles look with hope as they observe the Passover – a festival that both celebrates the exodus from Egypt and looks forward to the future restoration.<sup>92</sup> The book also explicitly reminds the reader that the people remain “slaves” (Ezra 9:9). The captivity itself has not yet come to its end even for the returnees (Neh 1:3), a point further reinforced by the use of “province” (מדינה) rather than “land,” reminding the reader that the land remains under the control of a foreign empire.<sup>93</sup>

The people's propensity for intermarriage is so disastrous from the perspective of Ezra–Nehemiah and its protagonists precisely because it illustrates the lack of repentance and purity among the returnees, without which the promised total restoration will never happen.<sup>94</sup> The book makes it clear that Nehemiah's victories – rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, resettling Jerusalem via lottery, and fighting to keep the

<sup>89</sup> E.g., בני־גלותא (“children of exile”; Ezra 6:16); בני־הגולה (“children of the captivity”; Ezra 6:19, 20). Cf. Ezra 4:1; 8:35; 9:4.

<sup>90</sup> Wayne O. McCready, “The ‘Day of Small Things’ vs. the Latter Days” (1988), 230.

<sup>91</sup> Etienne Nodet, “Israelites, Samaritans, Temples, Jews” (2011), 125, misses the inference that the exile was still ongoing but correctly observes that “‘Assyria’ should not be viewed as a sloppy mistake, but as a coded message that now the Jerusalem temple is the only one for all of Israel, including any ancient returnees. In other words, the new temple is akin to Solomon's.”

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Jer 6:14–21. See Barry Douglas Smith, *Jesus' Last Passover Meal* (1993), 40–50. Cf. Federico M. Colautti, *Passover in the Works of Josephus* (2002); Pitre, *Jesus*, 447.

<sup>93</sup> See especially Harm van Grol, “Indeed, Servants We Are” (1999), 219.

<sup>94</sup> E.g., Ezra 9:13–14; Neh 13:23–29; Neh 13:17–18. See J. Gordon McConville, “Ezra–Nehemiah and the Fulfillment of Prophecy” (1986), 216–17, 222–24. On the other hand, many people may have begun to intermarry with those within the land because they believed the new age had already begun – if Israel had already been restored, such precautions against intermarriage may no longer have been considered necessary. Either way, Ezra and Nehemiah are among those insisting that a greater future restoration contingent upon adequate repentance and purity awaits.

priesthood pure – are not insignificant. But they also serve as reminders that the prophets’ promises remain unfulfilled. Each episode of Ezra–Nehemiah begins in hope and ends in disappointment, and the final chapter of Nehemiah emphasizes this disappointment by sequentially epitomizing the failure of all three reform movements reflected in the book: the Jerusalem temple is misused and forsaken (Neh 13:4–14), the people are violating the Sabbath and thus Ezra’s instruction (13:15–22), and exogamy continues to be practiced (13:22–31).<sup>95</sup> Such behavior, Nehemiah declares, only “adds to the wrath on Israel” (13:18), a statement that strikingly assumes that Israel is presently under wrath. For Ezra–Nehemiah, Israel is not as it should be, and the return of some from Judah, Benjamin, and Levi to the land and the rebuilding of the temple by no means brought an end to the age of wrath.<sup>96</sup>

#### THERE AND BACK AGAIN: ISRAEL AND RESTORATION ESCHATOLOGY

The evidence therefore strongly indicates that the distinction between “Israel” and “the Jews” throughout the Second Temple period carries forward the distinction between Israel and Judah witnessed in the biblical texts, with *Yehudi/Ioudaios* ultimately meaning “Judahite,” of which the English “Jew” is simply a shortened form. This pattern holds up with remarkable consistency across the extant evidence from the Second Temple period, wherein *Ioudaios* is consistently preferred (and Israel avoided) when referring to contemporary Jews, while that preference is reversed when (1) referring to the people of the biblical past, (2) in cultic or diachronic settings (e.g., “God of Israel” or in prayers), or (3) referring to eschatological Israel, including both Jews and northern Israelites.<sup>97</sup>

This last category is especially important. Rather than narrowing the concept of “Israel” to refer solely to Judahites after the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations, the Jewish literature of this period attests to a dominant theological paradigm looking backwards to biblical Israel and

<sup>95</sup> “Nehemiah’s reforms were temporary, lasting only as long as he could maintain them by force. In the following century . . . [we find] a community that took a rather different view from that of Nehemiah” (Lester L. Grabbe, “Triumph of the Pious or Failure of the Xenophobes?” [1998], 64; cf. Grabbe, “Mind the Gaps,” 97).

<sup>96</sup> See McConville, “Ezra–Nehemiah,” 211–12; Grabbe, “Mind the Gaps,” 84, 97, 100–01.

<sup>97</sup> This conclusion depends on Staples, *The Idea of Israel*. Cf. also the observations of Böhm, “Wer gehörte,” 182.

forwards to a future restoration of Israel far exceeding the small return of Judahites in the Persian period.<sup>98</sup> This paradigm, which I will call “Israelite restoration eschatology,”<sup>99</sup> reflects a narrative framework in which: (1) because of biblical Israel’s covenantal infidelity and disobedience (2) Israel fell under the covenantal curses, most notably the dissolution, captivity/exile, and dispersion of Israel, sometimes characterized as the “death” of the people as a whole,<sup>100</sup> from which (3) God will redeem, reunify, and restore all twelve tribes of Israel to covenantal favor, including an inward ethical transformation of the people to ensure the restoration will be lasting, an eschatological miracle akin to resurrection from the dead (Ezek 37:1–14).<sup>101</sup> David Lambert observes that much of the prophetic corpus is framed within the dysfunctional second stage, in which “effective communication between the people and their God ceases . . . God is now at war with his own people.”<sup>102</sup> This is true not only of biblical prophetic literature but also of a sizable proportion of Jewish literature in general from the Second Temple period, which also portrays Israel as presently in stage two – the defining characteristic of a restoration eschatological perspective.

Once one recognizes that the distinction between Israel and Judah persists throughout the Second Temple period, a great deal of early Jewish discourse makes considerably more sense, and there is no need

<sup>98</sup> “In general terms it may be said that ‘Jewish eschatology’ and ‘the restoration of Israel’ are synonymous” (E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* [1985], 97).

<sup>99</sup> I have followed Sanders’ terminology of “restoration eschatology” (*Jesus and Judaism*, 90) rather than “apocalyptic” theology because the latter term is so variously used and defined that it lacks clarity (e.g., “prophetic” vs. “apocalyptic” theologies in studies on the Hebrew Bible, the “apocalyptic school” of New Testament interpretation). In this book, I will reserve the term “apocalyptic” and its cognates for references to revelatory material or mystical revelation in general. Note that “eschatology” in this context does not necessarily imply the end of the *world* but rather the end of the present *age* and the dawn of a new one.

<sup>100</sup> E.g., Ezek 37; Deut 30:17–20; 32:39; Hos 8:8; 13:1–16.

<sup>101</sup> Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* (1992), 289–98, discusses four main themes of restoration eschatology: the restoration of the twelve tribes, the subjugation or conversion of the nations, the purification of the temple and Jerusalem, and the transformation of Israel into a pure and righteous people, noting that these themes were also often accompanied by messianic expectations. David E. Aune and Eric Clark Stewart, “From the Idealized Past to the Imaginary Future” (2001), discuss the same four plus the themes of the restoration of creation and paradise regained.

<sup>102</sup> David A. Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical* (2016), 96–97. In Lambert’s model, the first stage involves “a reasonably functional relationship” and stage three involves “anticipated return to a normal relationship.”

to redefine exile (as does Wright) in typological or metaphorical terms.<sup>103</sup> Instead, continued concern for northern (non-Jewish) Israel and the necessity of the regathering of all twelve tribes appears with striking frequency in early Jewish literature. The book of Tobit, for example, follows the progress of non-Jewish Israelites from the tribe of Naphtali, assuring the reader that God had preserved faithful Israelites even from the first northern tribe to be deported by Assyria.<sup>104</sup> The books of 4 Ezra, Baruch, and 2 Baruch all call special attention to the fate of northern tribes of Israel, looking forward to the eschatological day in which Israel will be reunited with Judah.<sup>105</sup> The Wisdom of Ben Sira shows surprising interest in and concern for the eschatological fate of Israel – and, tellingly, avoids using the term *Ioudaios*.<sup>106</sup> These discussions even persist well into the rabbinic era. Notably, the Mishnah records that the late first/early second century rabbis Aqiva and Eliezer took different positions on Israel's fate:

The ten tribes are not destined to return (להזור), since it says: “And he cast them into another land, as this day” [Deut 29:27 (ET: 29:28)]. As the day passes and does not return, so they have gone (הולכין) and will not return.” These are the words of R. Aqiva.

R. Eliezer says, “As this day is dark and then grows light, so for those in darkness it is destined to be light for them” [cf. Isa 9:2]. m. Sanh. 10:3 (cf. t. Sanh. 13:12)

The Mishnah gives R. Eliezer the last word without comment, suggesting the editor also favors his position.<sup>107</sup> Of this exchange, the Bavli reports the words of R. Yoḥanan that in this judgment, “R. Aqiva abandoned his love/piety,” citing Jeremiah's proclamation of northern Israel's return (Jer 3:12), while Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi shared R. Eliezer's position against R. Aqiva on similar grounds (b. Sanh. 110b). Similar hopes for northern Israel also appear in Genesis Rabbah 98.

It is therefore not the case that, despite the return of Israel to the land, Jews continued to regard themselves as *metaphorically* in exile. On the contrary, Israel's *literal* exile had not ended because *Israel* – that is, the twelve-tribe totality but especially the ten northern (non-Jewish) tribes – had never been restored as promised. Here it is important to distinguish between individual Jews or Jewish groups believing *themselves* to be in exile versus understanding *Israel*, either as a whole or in part, to still be in

<sup>103</sup> Pitre, *Jesus*, 34. <sup>104</sup> Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 292–302.

<sup>105</sup> Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 331–36. <sup>106</sup> Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 317–25.

<sup>107</sup> On the last word having favored status in the Mishnah, see Judith Hauptman, *Rereading the Mishnah* (2005), 138; Lisa Grushcow, *Writing the Wayward Wife* (2006), 199.



exile.<sup>108</sup> So long as the rest of Israel (the ten tribes) remained largely absent, the age of wrath had not ended and Israel as a whole – both those in the land and abroad – remained under the covenantal curses.<sup>109</sup>

In the minority of early Jewish texts that do apply the term “Israel” to the contemporary era, another pattern emerges: such usage consistently occurs in the context of groups that believe themselves to be a faithful remnant participating in the first stages of the promised restoration of Israel. Examples include the restoration attempts in Ezra–Nehemiah,<sup>110</sup> 1 Maccabees,<sup>111</sup> the Dead Sea Scroll sect,<sup>112</sup> the participants in the Bar Kokhba revolt, and the early Jesus movement. Notably, however, these groups still distinguish between Israel as a whole and Jews as a subset of that whole – and in most cases, these groups do not believe that all Jews will be included in the restored Israel but only those holding to a specific prophetic/sectarian perspective (see Figure 1.2), while the rest will be cut off as Israel is narrowed to those obedient to YHWH.<sup>113</sup>

Jacob Neusner is therefore correct to observe that the various “Judaisms” of this period and beyond are all tied together by a “formative Judaism” rooted in the generative myth of exile and return, the conception that Israel is currently in exile but still has hope of restoration.<sup>114</sup> This story of exile and restoration, he explains, became

<sup>108</sup> Along these lines, Sean Freyne, “Studying the Jewish Diaspora in Antiquity” (2002), 4, wonders whether living in Galilee “was a form of Diaspora existence for a Jew,” while Tessa Rajak, *Translation and Survival* (2009), 95, notes that “the Jews were in fact always a minority in much of Palestine, subject to the same circumstances and the same rulers as Jews further afield.”

<sup>109</sup> On exile as the most prominent (but by no means the only one) of the covenantal curses, see Steven M. Bryan, *Jesus and Israel’s Traditions of Judgement and Restoration* (2002), 12–20; Thomas Richard Wood, “The Regathering of the People of God” (2006), 55, 172–73; Pablo T. Gadenz, *Called from the Jews and from the Gentiles* (2009), 49–50; Jeffrey Wisdom, *Blessing for the Nations and the Curse of the Law* (2001), 43–64. As will be discussed below, Paul understands the ultimate curse of the Torah to be death itself, with Israel’s redemption involving not only restoration from the situation of exile but the gift of (eternal) life, which he understands as promised in the Torah.

<sup>110</sup> Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 143–61. <sup>111</sup> Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 166–73.

<sup>112</sup> Staples, *The Idea of Israel*, 259–89.

<sup>113</sup> In Lambert’s words, the transition from the age of wrath to a renewal of covenantal relationship “usually entails the violent removal of whatever cuts Israel off from [God] . . . often through the elimination of a portion of the people” (*How Repentance Became Biblical*, 97).

<sup>114</sup> See Jacob Neusner, *The Way of Torah* (1993), 9–15; “Exile and Return as the History of Judaism” (1997); and especially the explanations in Neusner, “What Is ‘a Judaism?’” (2001), 6, and *Judaism When Christianity Began* (2002), 55–66. For the diaspora as formative and central to Jewish identity, see Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, “Diaspora: Generation and Ground of Jewish Identity” (1993).

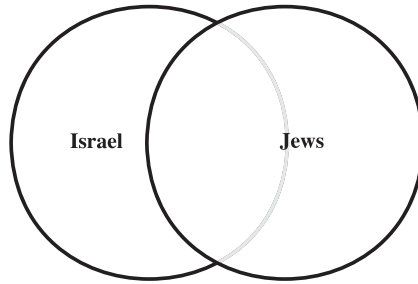


Figure 1.2 Prophetic/Sectarian View of Jews and Israel

“the paradigmatic statement in which every Judaism, from then to now, found its structure and deep syntax of social existence, the grammar of its intelligible message.”<sup>115</sup> That is, despite the tremendous diversity across the various forms of Judaism (or, if one prefers, “Judaisms”) throughout the Second Temple period, this perspective of Israelite restoration eschatology, together with the related concept of covenant, seems to have functioned as a shared grammar assumed within the discourse, mediated through the reading of authoritative texts in synagogues, the Torah in particular.<sup>116</sup> In this restoration eschatological framework, Israel is presently in the “age of wrath” (CD 1:5; cf. Dan 8:19, 11:36), awaiting the time when all Israel will be restored, reunited, and exalted above the other nations as promised in the Torah and Prophets.<sup>117</sup>

In this light, “Israel” cannot be treated as merely an alternative appellation for “the Jews” in the Second Temple period, regardless of whether one puts “ethnic” or “empirical” before the term. Whereas “Jew” consistently denotes a person from a specific (Judahite) subset of Israel, there was persistent debate about and competition over who properly comprised (or would comprise) Israel, particularly in light of other claimants to Israelite identity such as the Samaritans, and there is no evidence to suggest that Jews believed Israel had been narrowed down to Judah alone. Instead, throughout the Second Temple period, “Israel” is a category that includes both Jews and non-Jewish Israelites from other tribes of Israel.

<sup>115</sup> Neusner, *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 61.

<sup>116</sup> On such a shared discourse mediated through Torah and synagogue practices, see Michael L. Satlow, “Defining Judaism” (2006), 845; Scott, “Self-Understanding,” 181–82.

<sup>117</sup> It should be noted that it is not necessary (or likely) that all Jews maintained a restoration eschatological perspective. What matters is that restoration eschatology was a prominent, foundational part of the wider Jewish theological discourse in this period.

Jews are Israelites, but they do not comprise all Israel, nor are all Israelites Jews (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2).<sup>118</sup> Consequently, when the term “Israel” is used in this period outside the context of ritual or prayer, we should always be aware of its larger scope, and our ears should be primed for eschatological, messianic, and restorationist connotations.

#### RETURN OF THE KING: JESUS AND THE GOSPEL

The same patterns are also evident in the New Testament itself. It is now widely accepted that the earliest Jesus movement was focused on the impending restoration of Israel, which the Gospels call the coming of the “kingdom of God.”<sup>119</sup> Indications of restoration eschatology are so consistently present on nearly every page of the Gospels that even a brief survey of Gospel traditions easily illustrates just how central the full restoration of all Israel was to Jesus’ proclamation and that of his earliest followers:<sup>120</sup>

- (1) The very term “gospel” (εὐαγγέλιον) echoes key restoration promises in the prophets (esp. Isa 40:9; 52:7; 61:1; cf. also Joel 3:5 LXX [ET 2:32]; Nah 2:1 [ET 1:15]; Ps 67:12 LXX [68:11 MT]).<sup>121</sup>
- (2) Jesus appoints twelve disciples (Mark 3:13–19 // Matt 10:1–4; Luke 6:12–16), “which either symbolizes, foreshadows, or inaugurates the reconstitution of the tribes.”<sup>122</sup>

<sup>118</sup> It bears emphasizing at this point in the study that I am *not* suggesting that “Israel” refers exclusively or even primarily to the so-called lost tribes” (as some slanderously report – their condemnation is just) but rather that the term Israel is not limited to Jews and is preferred when the whole people, including the non-Jewish northern tribes, is in view.

<sup>119</sup> E.g., Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 95–105; John P. Meier, “Jesus, the Twelve, and the Restoration of Israel” (2001); Dale C. Allison, *Constructing Jesus* (2010), 42–43, 71–76; Michael F. Bird, *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission* (2007); Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel*; John A. Dennis, *Jesus’ Death and the Gathering of True Israel* (2006); Bryan, *Jesus and Israel’s Traditions*; Craig A. Evans, “Jesus & the Continuing Exile of Israel” (1999); Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel* (1999); Joel Willitts, *Matthew’s Messianic Shepherd-King* (2007); Pitre, *Jesus*. This scholarly trajectory ultimately builds on Albert Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede* (1906) (ET: Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* [2001]) through Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (1979) and eventually Sanders.

<sup>120</sup> Much but not all of the following list derives from the one found in Tucker S. Ferda, “John the Baptist, Isaiah 40, and the Ingathering of the Exiles” (2012), 156.

<sup>121</sup> Pitre, *Jesus*, 256–61; Evans, “Continuing Exile,” 100; cf. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 29–33; Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (1991), 72.

<sup>122</sup> Ferda, “Ingathering of the Exiles,” 156; cf. Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus and Community* (1984); Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 98, 106; Wright, *Victory of God*, 430–31; Evans,

- (3) Even more plainly, Jesus promises his disciples that they will “sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt 19:27–30 // Luke 22:28–30).<sup>123</sup> Inasmuch as there were not twelve tribes in Jesus’ day, this is a very clear declaration that Jesus was initiating the long-awaited restoration of those twelve tribes.
- (4) Jesus says he was sent (and sends his disciples) “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 10:6; 15:24).<sup>124</sup>
- (5) Jesus calls himself the “good shepherd” (John 10:11–14), tying himself to prophecies that God would restore Israel and Judah and “appoint over them one shepherd, my servant David” (Ezek 34:23), replacing the bad shepherds who had abused the flock (cf. Isa 40:10–11; Ezek 34:10–23; 37:24).<sup>125</sup>
- (6) The Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4) is replete with restoration motifs and pleas for Israel’s restoration, such as “hallowed be your name” (cf. Ezek 36:23; 39:7, 25), “your kingdom come,” and the plea to be spared from trial (πειρασμός).<sup>126</sup>
- (7) The significance of the Samaritans in Luke–Acts and John (e.g., Luke 9:52; 10:33; 17:16; John 4:1–42; 8:48) suggests a connection with the northern tribes and expectations for the restoration of both northern and southern portions of Israel.<sup>127</sup>

“Continuing Exile,” 91–93; “The Twelve Thrones of Israel” (2001); Meier, “Jesus, the Twelve”; Scot McKnight, “Jesus and the Twelve” (2001).

<sup>123</sup> See Meier, “Jesus, the Twelve,” 386–87; McKnight, “Jesus and the Twelve,” 208–09; Evans, “Continuing Exile,” 91–93.

<sup>124</sup> See Willitts, *Matthew’s Messianic Shepherd-King* and the abbreviated version in “Matthew’s Messianic Shepherd-King” (2008). Willitts highlights the territorial aspects of Jesus’ ministry, arguing that “the phrase refers to the oppressed and marginalized remnant of the former Northern Kingdom to whom Jesus sends his disciples” (“Matthew’s Messianic Shepherd-King, 379). See also Young S. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd* (2006).

<sup>125</sup> Mary Katharine Deeley, “Ezekiel’s Shepherd and John’s Jesus” (1997); Gary T. Manning, *Echoes of a Prophet* (2004), 100–35.

<sup>126</sup> See Pitre, *Jesus*, 132–59 and the numerous references found there. See also N. T. Wright, “The Lord’s Prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer” (2001); Raymond E. Brown, “The Pater Noster as an Eschatological Prayer” (1968). Pace Jeffrey B. Gibson, “Matthew 6:9–13//Luke 11:2–4: An Eschatological Prayer?” (2001), though Gibson’s analysis of the prayer as a petition to avoid apostasy is not (as he suggests) necessarily at odds with a restoration eschatological perspective underlying the prayer.

<sup>127</sup> On Samaritans and Israel in Luke–Acts, see Isaac W. Oliver, *Luke’s Jewish Eschatology* (2021), 122–25; Chalmers, “Rethinking Luke 10”; Jeannine K. Brown and Kazuhiko Yamazaki-Ransom, “The Parable of the Good Samaritan and the Narrative Portrayal of

- (8) Jesus' promise that he would make his disciples "fishers of humans" (Mark 1:17 // Matt 4:19 // Luke 5:10; cf. Matt 13:41-42) echoes Jer 16:14-16, which promises that God would appoint "many fishers" to search out and restore Israel in a new exodus.<sup>128</sup>
- (9) Many will come "from east and west" (Matt 8:11-12 // Luke 13:29; cf. Ps 107:2-3; Isa 43:5) and eat with the patriarchs in the kingdom (cf. Isa 25:6-9).<sup>129</sup>
- (10) Numerous gathering/scattering passages allude to the exile and restoration,<sup>130</sup> most notably the allusion to Zech 2:6 (MT 2:10) that the Son of Man will send his angels to "gather the elect from the four winds" (Mark 13:27 // Matt 24:31).<sup>131</sup>
- (11) The last supper narrative is full of Israelite restoration themes, presenting Jesus as inaugurating the new exodus (cf. Jer 16:14-18; 23:7-8) through his symbolic and prophetic actions.<sup>132</sup>

Samaritans in Luke-Acts" (2021); Vanmelitharayil John Samkutty, *The Samaritan Mission in Acts* (2006); Ravens, *Luke and the Restoration of Israel*, 72-106; Richard J. Coggins, "The Samaritans and Acts" (1982); Jacob Jervell, "The Lost Sheep of the House of Israel" (1972). On the same in John, see Albert S. Geysler, "Israel in the Fourth Gospel" (1986); Jürgen Zangenberg, *Frühes Christentum in Samarien* (1998); Charles H. H. Scobie, "Johannine Geography" (1982); Margaret Pamment, "Is There Convincing Evidence of Samaritan Influence on the Fourth Gospel?" (1982); John Bowman, "Samaritan Studies" (1958). See also Charles H. H. Scobie, "The Origins and Development of Samaritan Christianity" (1973); "Israel and the Nations" (1992), 294.

<sup>128</sup> Ferda, "Ingathering of the Exiles," 156; William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark* (1974), 67; M. Eugene Boring, *Mark* (2006), 59; Harrington, *Matthew*, 72; *pace* Jack J. Gibson, *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch* (2013), 22 n. 9. Note that this reading seems to cut against the grain of the Jeremiah passage itself, which seems to regard the "fishers" as agents of judgment. See William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah I* (1986), 477-79; D. Rudman, "The Significance of the Phrase 'Fishers of Men' in the Synoptic Gospels" (2005); Wilhelm H. Wuellner, *The Meaning of "Fishers of Men"* (1967).

<sup>129</sup> Ferda, "Ingathering of the Exiles," 156; cf. Dale C. Allison, *The Jesus Tradition in Q* (1997), 176-91.

<sup>130</sup> E.g., Matt 3:12 // Luke 3:17; Matt 12:30 // Luke 11:23; Mark 4:29; Matt 13:24-30; Matt 22:9-10; Luke 14:21-23; Matt 25:32.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. also Deut 30:3-4; Isa 11:12; 54:7; 27:13; 60:4; Jer 23:3; 29:14; 31:8; 31:10; 32:37; Ezek 11:17. See Evans, "Continuing Exile," 97-98; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 98; Wright, *Victory of God*, 430-31.

<sup>132</sup> See Pitre, *Jesus*, 439-51; Wright, *Victory of God*, 554-63; Morna D. Hooker, *The Signs of a Prophet* (1997), 48-54; W. David Stacey, "Appendix: The Lord's Supper as Prophetic Drama" (1997), 80-95; John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew* (1991), 3.153.

In this light, it is evident that the “kingdom of God” Jesus proclaimed was the restored Israel promised by the prophets, through which God himself would bring justice to all the nations. This was the radical message Jesus went to the cross proclaiming and expecting to initiate. Not coincidentally, it is also exactly the sort of revolutionary message that would get an apocalyptic Jew executed by the Romans.

Restoration eschatological themes are by no means limited to the Gospels and appear throughout the rest of the New Testament. The epistle of James, for example, is addressed “to the twelve tribes in the dispersion” (Jas 1:1), an especially remarkable statement in light of the fact that there were not twelve tribes of Israel in this period.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, Revelation depicts the “sealing” of 12,000 members from each of the twelve tribes of Israel (7:1–8),<sup>134</sup> not just the three southern tribes, and appears to identify this group with the multitude from every nation that praises God and the Lamb in 7:9–12.<sup>135</sup> And although the book does not explicitly mention “Israel” or the twelve tribes, 1 Pet 1:1 is addressed to “the elect strangers of the diaspora,” again hinting at the restorationist identification of the book’s addressees.<sup>136</sup>

Tellingly, whether in the Gospels or elsewhere, these restoration eschatological passages consistently employ Israel language. But when referring to contemporary Jews outside the context of eschatological renewal, the books of the New Testament, like other early Jewish evidence, employ the term *Ioudaios*, a category that also includes Jesus and his disciples. This pattern is especially noticeable in John and Acts, where *Ioudaios* appears 71 and 79 times, respectively, always referring to contemporary Jews. In contrast, whereas contemporary Jews could, as part of a subset of Israel, be referred to as “Israelites” (particularly in the vocative address, “men, Israelites”),<sup>137</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Joel Marcus, “‘The Twelve Tribes in the Diaspora’ (James 1.1)” (2014). For more on restoration eschatology in James, see Eskola, *A Narrative Theology*, 394–97.

<sup>134</sup> The “sealing” here is reminiscent of 2 Cor 1:22. On the twelve tribes in this passage, see Richard J. Bauckham, “The List of the Tribes in Revelation 7 Again” (1991); Christopher R. Smith, “The Portrayal of the Church as the New Israel in the Names and Order of the Tribes in Revelation 7.5–8” (1990); Ross E. Winkle, “Another Look at the List of Tribes in Revelation 7” (1989); Albert S. Geyser, “The Twelve Tribes in Revelation Judean and Judeo-Christian Apocalypticism” (1982).

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Marcus, “Twelve Tribes,” 434–35. For more on exile/restoration themes in Revelation, see Benjamin G. Wold, “Revelation’s Plague Septets: New Exodus and Exile” (2009); Eskola, *A Narrative Theology*, 410–17.

<sup>136</sup> On restoration eschatology in 1 Peter, see Eskola, *A Narrative Theology*, 397–99.

<sup>137</sup> E.g., Acts 2:22; 3:12; 5:35; 13:16; 21:28. As Thiel (“‘Israel’ and ‘Jew’ as Markers,” 96) explains, “Subsets within this entity [Israel] took on the appellation by synecdoche.”

Israel/Israelite is nowhere treated as equivalent to *Ioudaios*. Instead, the term regularly refers to biblical Israel or suggests an eschatological nuance, particularly in the context of the proclamation of the gospel.<sup>138</sup> *Ioudaios*, in contrast, is never used in these contexts. Once one recalls the larger sense of “Israel” as including both Judah and the tribes of northern Israel, the plural in Acts’ reference to “the peoples of Israel” (4:27) is also noteworthy.<sup>139</sup>

Nevertheless, if Jesus’ gospel message amounted to a proclamation of the end of the age of wrath and the reunification and restoration of all twelve tribes of Israel, there is no avoiding an uncomfortable question in the years after the crucifixion: Where are the twelve tribes?<sup>140</sup> Was Jesus wrong? This question would grow even more urgent as more gentiles became Messiah-followers, further drawing attention to the apparent absence of Israel’s restoration since the prophetic promises – and Jesus’ proclamations of imminent fulfillment – were made to Israel and Judah, not everyone else.

In many respects, Schweitzer’s “undischarged task” referenced in the Introduction is a reformulation of the same question: How did a movement focused on Israel’s restoration develop into the primarily gentile phenomenon that came after Paul, and how does one get from Jesus’ restoration eschatology to Paul’s gospel of gentile incorporation?<sup>141</sup> Remarkably, this is also the question that governs the narrative of Acts, which opens with the disciples asking the risen Jesus, “Is this the time that you restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6).<sup>142</sup> That is, if Jesus came to redeem and restore Israel through his death, when will this restoration take place and why has it not already happened?<sup>143</sup> Paul himself is at pains to answer this question in Romans, and the remainder of this study will focus on how Paul addresses this question by connecting Israel’s restoration with the incorporation of faithful gentiles.

<sup>138</sup> E.g., John 1:31; Acts 1:6; 9:15; 13:23; 28:20.

<sup>139</sup> Some later scribes seem to have been puzzled by the plural λαοῖς here, as E Ψ 326 and the Syriac tradition correct it to a singular.

<sup>140</sup> See Matthew S. Harmon, review of *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile*, by Brant Pitre, *RBL* (2007), 6.

<sup>141</sup> Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, v–vii.

<sup>142</sup> For a recent and thorough examination of the implications of this question, arguing that the continued expectation for Israel’s restoration is central to Luke–Acts, see Oliver, *Luke’s Jewish Eschatology*. See also David L. Tiede, “The Exaltation of Jesus and the Restoration of Israel in Acts 1” (1986).

<sup>143</sup> For more discussion of Israel’s restoration in Acts and how that relates to gentiles, see Richard J. Bauckham, “The Restoration of Israel in Luke–Acts” (2001); David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (2000); Ravens, *Luke and the Restoration of Israel*; Tiede, “Exaltation of Jesus”; Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God* (1972).