Reading John's Gospel within its Socio-political Context: A Rhetorical Analysis of John 8:12-59

By

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Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Theology in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University

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December 2019

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December 2019

Abstract

John 8:44 is a verse that has often justified Christians' traditionally negative attitude towards Judaism, by indicating that the Judeans' father is the devil, hence supporting the historical labelling of Jews as "children of Satan". This kind of embarrassment regarding the reception history of a text happens when we limit our interpretation to its linguistic context only, instead of accounting for the historical, ideological, and sociological dimensions of the text as well. Texts are usually written in response to changing social circumstances. It is important, then, to realise that when we approach the Bible in general, and the New Testament in particular, we are not reading about people or characters who have fixed, homogeneous, and hypostatised religious identities, but about groups who are developing and formulating their identity within a diverse and changing social milieu. Therefore, reading John 8:12-59 within its socio-political context, aims at exploring the identity of the characters involved by understanding the text within the socio-historical world from which it originated. A rhetorical analysis of John 8:12-59 within its socio-political context attempts, therefore, to solve the interpretation problem referred to above by accounting for the historical, ideological, and sociological contexts of its time.

Opsomming

Johannes 8:44 is ’n vers waarmee Christene se tradisioneel negatiewe houding jeens Judaïsme dikwels geregverdig word – deur die siening dat die vader van die Jode die duiwel is, wat Jode by implikasie as “kinders van Satan” tipeer. Dié soort verleentheid met betrekking tot die verstaansgeskiedenis van die teks ontstaan wanneer die interpretasie van sodanige tekste slegs tot hulle linguistiese konteks beperk word, en historiese, ideologiese en sosiologiese kontekste geïgnoreer word. Tekste word gewoonlik geskryf as reaksie en in antwoord op veranderende sosiale omstandighede. Gevolglik is dit belangrik dat ons benadering tot die verstaan van die Bybel in die algemeen, en die Nuwe Testament in besonder, moet wees dat ons nie alleen met mense of karakters se vaste godsdienstige identiteit te make het nie, maar met groepe wat ontwikkel en hulle identiteit teen die agtergrond van ’n diverse en veranderende sosiale milieu formuleer. Om Johannes 8:12-59 in sosio-politieke konteks te lees het daarom ten doel om die identiteit van die betrokke karakters binne die sosio-historiese wêreld waarin die teks ontstaan het, te verstaan. ’n Retoriese analise van Johannes 8:12-59 in sosio-politieke konteks poog dus om die interpretasieprobleem waarna hierbo verwys word, op te los – met inagneming van die historiese, ideologiese, en sosiologiese kontekste waarbinne die teks geskryf is.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge my parents, Sandi and Chuma Qina. Your sacrifice to ensure I have food in my stomach, a good quality education, and not to be denied the opportunities that were not afforded to you because of apartheid, humbles me to dedicate this thesis to you. I thank you for raising me with Christian values, teaching me to fear and trust God above all else, and yet not be a stranger to our Xhosa cultural customs. Without your love, care and constant support during this Masters journey I do not think I would have made it. Therefore, I am forever grateful for you both and I hope that my efforts make you proud.

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Chapter One: The Hermeneutical Challenge

Key words: John 8:12-59, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, Anachronistic Reading, Language in Context, and a One-dimensional reading and interpretation of John 8:44.

Introduction: The Challenge of Reading and Interpreting John 8:12-59

John 8:12-59 is possibly the most offensive and difficult text among the entire Gospel accounts in the New Testament canon.[1] The other Gospel narratives build upon the hostility between Yeshua[2] and the Pharisees, Chief Priests, and Judean leaders through issues pertaining to their shared theological concerns such as: healing on the Sabbath, questions regarding divorce, marriage, and resurrection, and all culminating in the passion. John's Gospel explicitly uses the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (often translated as "the Jews") along with Chief Priests and Pharisees, but its narrative not only heightens the hostility between Yeshua and these groups, but also rebukes them harshly, using negative language that contradicts οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι's very identity. In John 8:44, at the climax of Yeshua's conflict between the Pharisees and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John 8:12-59, Yeshua labels the Ἰουδαῖοι as having a paternal parenthood that is associated with "the Devil". Yet, earlier in the narrative, this same Yeshua tells the Samaritan woman that salvation, ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν (is from "the Jews") (cf. John 4:22). Marilyn J. Salmon (2006:109) explains that Matthew, Mark and Luke depict controversies with names of Jewish groups, Scribes, Pharisees, and Chief Priests. In John's Gospel, the opponents of Jesus and his followers are most often simply "the Jews" (cf. Salmon 2006:109). Salmon (2006:109) further explains that the persistent portrayal of "the Jews" as adversaries in John's Gospel presents a challenge for the preacher who is sensitive to the problem of Christian anti-Judaism.

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[1] The Greek and English Translation of John 8:12-59 is available in addendum 1. See the full Greek and English translation of John 8:12-59 in addendum 1.

[2] In this thesis, particularly when not referencing a source, "Yeshua" will be used instead of "Jesus" because Jesus has a linguistic and translation problem. The name of Jesus comes from the Greek name Ἰησοῦς (which in Latin is *Iesus*). There is no Y in the Greek and in the Hebrew. The problem is that we do not have an original source for the name of the Messiah in Hebrew as the Hebrew iod is transliterated to Y as it is compared to a Latin Y sound (Baldi 2017). To remain sensitive to the linguistic and translation problem, Yeshua will be used in this thesis, considering that the Hebrew translation of the New Testament (called the Haderekh/HaBritHaKadash) calls Jesus the Messiah, Yeshua. Although this linguistic concern will only apply to Ἰησοῦς and no other Greek words that take up the same form, the purpose is to ensure that the Jewishness of Yeshua is reclaimed.

James D. G. Dunn, a British New Testament scholar, explains that the term "Judaism" suggests a homogenous entity, that all Jews practised "Judaism" (2001:51). Until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, there was a tendency, both in Jewish and Christian scholarship on the period, to assume that Judaism of rabbinic tradition (the Mishnah etc.) was identified as "Judaism" *in toto* (including Second Temple Judaism), and that there was a concept and practise of what might be called "rabbinic orthodoxy" already operative in Second Temple Judaism (Dunn 2001:51). Ironically, within the spectrum, which was Second Temple Judaism, the Christian belief in Messiah Jesus, initially at least, was not much more than another element in the range of options that individual Jews might follow in practising (their) "Judaism" (Dunn 2001:51). Therefore, Dunn (2001:49) is correct to assert that our embarrassment in history is when reading the Bible we interpret the text within a linguistic context only, instead of a historical, ideological, and sociological one as well. In addition, by referring to the translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John's Gospel, with the straightforward translation as "the Jews", has proved to be a misleading translation over the centuries, and particularly in the twentieth century (Dunn 2001:49). This translation can be taken out of context and used to justify violence upon the Jews of today. For example, the shooter at the Tree of Life Synagogue retorted on social media that, "'Jews [You, the text reads] are the children of Satan (John 8:44)'" (cf. Grieser 2018).

The shooter, Robert Gregory Bowers, clearly did not read the entire Gospel of John, where the final author of the Fourth Gospel states, in John 20:31, that: "the purpose of the Gospel was, so that you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you have life in his name".[3] Furthermore, the shooter is unaware that Yeshua is making this statement in the Temple Treasury (cf. John 8:20) at a Jewish Festival called Sukkot (also called "Feast of Booths"). The Festival is also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, and is one of three pilgrim festivals within Judaism (cf. *Britannica Academic* 2019).[4] The shooter anachronistically justifies his violent act on social media upon the Jews of today by reading and identifying οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John 8:44 as "the Jews" that Yeshua rebukes in this biblical text. Ironically, John 8:31 refers to "τοὺς Ἰουδαίους who believe" in Yeshua. Furthermore, the themes under discussion are: truth, freedom, slavery and sin (cf. John

[3] I assume this is the final text. I use the final text of the *Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum Graece*.

[4] The other two festivals are: Pesah (Passover) and Hag Shavuot (Feast of the Weeks, and also called Pentecost) (cf. *Britannica Academic* 2019).

8:31-32). Yeshua calls these Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in him to "abide in his word" (John 8:31). Abiding in his word will set you free (cf. John 8:32). Thus, the author here alludes to the prologue with the Greek word λόγῳ, which, in its nominative form is ὁ λόγος that was introduced in John 1:1.

Yeshua's identity in John's Gospel is revealed from the prologue, and unlike the other Gospel narratives, the final author of John invites the reader to know the identity of Yeshua from the beginning.[5] Andrew (Simon Peter's brother) goes to fetch his brother and identifies Yeshua as the Messiah (John 1:41). Phillip runs to tell Nathaniel and identifies Yeshua as, "the one Moses wrote about in the law and also the prophets, is Jesus the son of Joseph" (John 1:45). Nathaniel, on the other hand, proclaims Yeshua to be "the Son of God and King of Israel" (John 1:49). However, prior to John 8:12-59, in John 7:25-44 but particularly John 7:40-44, there is confusion with regards to Yeshua's identity. The debate is whether Yeshua is the Messiah or a Prophet. The question is centred on Yeshua's ethnic community origin, Galilee (cf. John 7:41). Why would this be a problem for the Ἰουδαῖοι if followers like Nathaniel, Phillip, and Andrew believe that Yeshua is not only the Messiah and a Prophet but also the Son of God? If Yeshua truly is God's son, why then do the Ἰουδαῖοι object to his salvific offering of freedom?

The Ἰουδαῖοι take offense at Yeshua's proposal of freedom from slavery (cf. John 8:33). They do not see themselves as slaves and rightly so as salvation itself comes from τῶν Ἰουδαίων (cf. John 4:22). Yet, Yeshua does not deny that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are the σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ (seed of Abraham) (cf. John 8:37). In fact, the dialogue between Yeshua and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι becomes one about paternity. The issue Yeshua has is that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι want to kill him because they have no room for his word (cf. John 8:37). Paternity becomes characterized by actions and by one's acceptance of Yeshua's identity. Hence Yeshua retorts: "If you are Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But you seek to kill me, a man who speaks truth to you, a man who hears from God; this Abraham would not do. You are doing the deeds/works of your Father" (John 8:39-41). The argument climaxes with the Ἰουδαῖοι defending their own ethnic-religious identity, by saying that: "they are children of God" (John 8:41), but then Yeshua alludes to their inability to understand or accept him because of their misunderstanding (cf. John 8:43) of his identity and word. Therefore, the Ἰουδαῖοι are harshly labelled with a paternal parenthood that is associated with "the Devil" (John

[5] Immediately after the prologue, in John 1:19-22, Yeshua's identity is contested by οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι leaders as to whether he is the Messiah (1:20) or a Prophet (1:21).

8:44). But who are οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι? Is Yeshua referring also to the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in him as well? If Yeshua is the Son of God and the promised Messiah of Israel, why would οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in him, be labelled as children of "the Devil"? Especially if salvation comes from the τῶν Ἰουδαίων in the first place, and if Yeshua is talking to those who believe in him? And why does it seem that Yeshua and the Ἰουδαῖοι are speaking at different ideological levels, levels that continue to lead to a misunderstanding of both Yeshua and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι identities?

Research Problem

Ruth Sheridan (2014:196) affirms that identity is central to the Gospel of John on a number of levels. John's Gospel clearly projects an ideological viewpoint through its implied author, where this viewpoint is succinctly encapsulated in the "purpose statement" of the Gospel: "[these words] were written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that you may have life in his name" (20:31) (Sheridan 2014:196-197). This persuasive agenda emerges throughout the Gospel narrative through its insistent use of dualistic categories to depict the consequences of belief in Jesus (in language such as "light", "life", "truth") and of rejection of Jesus (in language such as "darkness", "death", "judgement", "lies") (Sheridan 2014:197). The biblical text of John's Gospel has categories that demonize the Ἰουδαῖοι as Yeshua's opponents, by placing them in negative thematic categories within the narrative. These categories, especially when the historical context is not accounted for, results in a reading and interpretation that suggests all of Jews are against God's son, Yeshua of Nazareth, as they are cosmologically/spiritually categorised as "children of the Devil" (cf. John 8:44). The outcome, especially in the case of the Robert Gregory Bowers use of John 8:44, is a dualistic reading that takes the language of the implied author outside of the context in which it was written. This evidently results in a one-dimensional interpretation of John 8:12-59 that supports the author's "dualistic categories" as a present reality and "judgement" upon the Jews of today, without careful and creative understanding of the historical setting of the biblical text.

The problem that occurs is an anachronistic reading of John 8:12-59, and John 8:44 in particular, which results in an eschatological judgement upon all Jewish people. An anachronistic reading of John 8:12-59 is placing οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι of this biblical text outside of the context in which it was situated, by labelling of them as the Jews of today without responsibly understanding the original situation. Brian K. Blount, a New Testament Scholar and President at Union Presbyterian Seminary, explains that texts have "meaning potential" (1995:8). Interpreters access this potential

interpersonally, that is, contextually (Blount 1995:8). The context of the interpreter directs him/her towards particular slices of that meaning potential (Blount 1995:8). Blount (1995:7) evaluates this through sociolinguistics, using M.A.K. Halliday's linguistics, which has a sociolinguistic component and is how a user contextually appropriates the text's "meaning potential".

Halliday's model utilises three categories of text-linguistic inquiry: textual, ideational, and interpersonal (Blount 1995:8). The textual category considers language as its function grammatically; where the investigator is concerned with the way the components of language – words, phrases, and sentences – are structured syntactically so as to establish meaning (Blount 1995:8). The ideational category considers the conceptual implications that lie behind the lexical terms and phrases; meaning more than the placement of terms and phrases, it is also conceptual reference or references signified by those terms and phrases (Blount 1995:8). According to Blount (1995:8), in both textual and ideational categories, meaning is understood to reside within the formal boundaries of a particular text's language, to create meaning or apprehend meaning, and then the language user manipulates the textual and ideational evidence and draws a proper conclusion (Blount 1995:8).

The hermeneutical challenge of reading and interpreting John 8:12-59 is particularly rooted in ignoring contextual factors behind the "textual" and "ideational" categories (cf. Blount 1995:8) of the biblical text. Thus, without an understanding of this context, the reader only has their own contextual background when they interpret a biblical text, and is based on their selected of textual and ideational categories. The danger of this approach when interpreting John 8:12-59, is that the text's dualism and identity claim of Yeshua results in a one-dimensional interpretive reading that perpetuates anti-Judaism. Furthermore, it is used irresponsibly to justify violence and potentially perpetuating anti-Semitism.[6] This thesis is primarily concerned with the use of language, particularly the language of vilification between Yeshua and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, which culminates in John 8:44. The main problem is indeed a contextual "meaning potential" that does not consider, and neither understands, the language within its context first, as the basis of interpretation. Thus, ignoring the context results in an interpretive reading that manipulates the ideational and textual features without

[6] Anti-Semitism is hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious or racial group (*Britannica Academic* 2019). The term coined in 1879 by German agitator Wilhelm Marr, the term is associated with discrimination to all Semites (i.e. Arabs and all other Semites) (cf. *Britannica Academic* 2019). The term is inappropriate as a label for the anti-Jewish prejudices, statements, or actions of Arabs or other Semitism (*Britannica Academic* 2019).

considering the context that the language is situated. Sadly, in the context of America, the shooter used John 8:44 on social media to justify an act of violence upon the Jewish community at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. This act of anti-Judaism by the shooter, who anachronistically used John 8:44 as a justification for his violent act on social media, is a one-dimensional interpretation that does not understand this text within its historical context first. Such an interpretive reading is limiting and anachronistically labels the Ἰουδαῖοι in the narrative of John 8:12-59 as the Jews of today, taking the language outside of its original context.

Hermeneutically, this "one-dimensional" or even "literalistic" reading serves as an identity claim that does not consider the languages historical background. Biblical literalism is not a hermeneutical method, but is primarily an identity claim indicating a specific theological or religious identity (Franzen & Griebel 2013:523). Schüssler Fiorenza (1999:40) describes this "biblical literalism" as a "doctrinal-fundamentalist paradigm" and is part of the "fundamentalist biblical discourse". Fundamentalist biblical discourses address this global postmodern anxiety by promising certainty in a sea of change, by delineating exclusivist group boundaries and clear-cut identities, and by fabricating emotional stability in an ever more complex and changing world (Schüssler Fiorenza 1999:40). To that end, they are not only projecting a spiritualised vision of the world but also manipulate symbols of evil, stereotype the "others" as deviant, and rigidly defend "orthodox" tradition by identifying "the enemy" and by scapegoating the deviant "others", they seek to both alleviate people's helplessness in a world that seems to be coming to an end and to promise salvation and success to those who have a claim to righteousness (Schüssler Fiorenza 1999:40).

Adele Reinhartz, professor in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa, defines such a one-dimensional reading as a "compliant" reading of John's Gospel (Reinhartz 2009:386). A "compliant" reader accepts the view of the world that is presented in the Gospel of John, as they see the Gospel as a sacred Scriptural text, and accepts the words in the Gospel as "gospel truth" (Reinhartz 2009:386). Unfortunately, such an interpretive reading creates a false ideology that is not sensitive first to the "meaning potential" of the text within its original context. Again Blount (1995:8) helps us here by explaining the interpersonal category. Language is understood to function interactively so that its meaning cannot be comprehended by considering textual and ideational features alone (Blount 1995:8). The sociocultural environment of the language user functions as a primary variable in the determination of language's meaning (Blount 1995:8). As

a result, when the context is not understood or neither the "ideational" and "textual" categories are situated within this context, an unconscious interpretation occurs, which is an interpretation that is unaware of the languages historical setting. There are three "worlds" readers have to take cognizance of when reading biblical texts in order to ensure a total range of meaning, namely: the world "behind" or "engrained in" the text, the world of the text, and the world before the text (Brown 1997:28).

Biblical texts are historical documents that have their own history of composition, tradition and preservation (Lategan 1992:153). The biblical texts are a product of human language and culture (Osborne 1991:7). The problem of not considering the historical context of a biblical text, results in anachronistically assuming "synchronic" interpretive readings at the expense of the "diachronic" contextual realities of a biblical text's language. "History" is the diachronic aspect, relating to the milieu within which the sacred writers produced their works; it refers to the events and times within which God's sacred revelation is couched (Osborne 1991:127). "Culture" is the synchronic aspect, referring to the manners, customs, institutions and principles that characterise any particular age and form the environment within which people conduct their lives (Osborne 1991:127). The problem occurs when we separate the synchronic reading away from the historical dimension, labelling it as 'ahistorical' (cf. Hong 2013:524). Ironically, the synchronic/diachronic dialectic still belongs in the historical sphere, in which two historical dimensions are at play (Hong 2013:524). As indicated, Osborne (1991:127) states that, synchronic aspects refer to the manners, customs, and institutions that characterise a form of environment within which people conduct their lives. However, our own contextual interpretation of a text is part of what Hong (2013:524) describes as a "synchronic state of a language system". This means people from one period do not lack a sense of historicity, as language is a product of history, and is synchronic in its time (cf. Hong 2013:524). Therefore, contemporary readers have a dual hermeneutical challenge of understanding the original context without negating their own present context. This, according to Lategan (1992:149), requires a conscious effort for us as readers and interpreters to overcome this historical distance. However, the alienation and evident historical distance is caused by the interpreter's own reality, a reality that includes a person's own existence and human development (cf. Lategan 1992:149).

The problem of not being sensitive to the "historical distance" of a biblical text is that it produces both an uninformed reading, and an ideology that anachronistically manipulates the text without any

conscious understanding of the importance of first situating the ideational and textual categories within the implied readers/hearers context. Justin Ukpong, an African Biblical Scholar, explains in his article, *The New Testament Hermeneutics in Africa: Challenges and Possibilities*, that ideology is not necessarily a negative factor, as it refers to a system of ideas that provides a particular view on power relations in a society and that orients action (2001:149). It comprises of biases, beliefs and inherited convictions (Ukpong 2001:149).[7] All readers have one ideology or another as part of the pre-understanding in their reading (Ukpong 2001:149). Readers are consciously or unconsciously imbibed by this "pre-understanding" from their particular reading community (cf. Ukpong 2001:149). In other words, our pre-understanding of any text is informed by the context and interpersonal category, which is a product of the synchronic aspects that we are part of, and in turn are part of us. We construct this ideology, according to Ukpong (2001:149), through our identity, and social location. The components of identity construct include: racial/ethnic identity, worldview, gender, belief system, religious affiliation, and the biases arising from all these (Ukpong 2001:149). The social location components include: position in the social, economic and political ladder, education, and factors that are historical, geographical, psychological, and sociological (Ukpong 2001:149).

The issue, then, with reading and interpreting John 8:12-59 outside of its language context, results in a "meaning potential" that is informed by one's ideology, rather than being evaluated and discerned through an understanding of the context first. Köstenberger and Patterson (2011:78-79) stress the importance of the interpreter, regardless of the passage of scripture, needs to study: (1) the historical setting, (2) the literary context (including matters of canon, genre, and language), and (3) the theological message - that is what the passage teaches regarding God, Christ, salvation, and the need to respond in faith to the Bible's teaching. A "meaning potential" of John 8:12-59 becomes dangerous if the actual context is not considered and its complexity clearly understood within its setting first, as then the interpretation is limited to the individuals' own perspective, limiting his/her discernment and possible multi-dimensional interpretative reading that the biblical text possesses. The hermeneutical challenge, therefore, is to understand what this harsh language towards the

[7] For example, the Exodus narrative was used by "Afrikaners" in South Africa to legitimate apartheid early last century, and by Black theologians since the middle of the century to fight apartheid, and each side used a different ideological position for its reading of the narrative (Ukpong 2001:149).

Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua means within its context first, in an attempt to not perpetuate any anti-Judaism attitudes towards the Jews of today.

This thesis attempts not only to prevent anti-Semitist violence towards Jews of today but also wants to challenge the attitude of anti-Judaism in John's Gospel. Perhaps we can move towards this through an exegetical analysis that produces a contemporary "meaning potential" of this biblical text, which is not anti-Jewish. However, to work towards this plight, there needs to be an emphasis on the problem of an anachronistic reading of John 8:12-59 – particularly the harsh language of John 8:44, that further serves as a justification that perpetuates anti-Judaism. In what follows, the research problem will be further explained in the following sections. The first section, "Anti-Judaism, John 8:44, and the Jewishness in John's Gospel", will further explicate why a one-dimensional hermeneutical paradigm is a problem that perpetuates anti-Judaism. Moreover, the section will connect this hermeneutical problem to John's Gospel, and further emphasis why it is significant when using John 8:12-59. The second section, "Identity, Language, and Rhetoric", will further elaborate on how this research problem affects our understanding of language in New Testament biblical texts, by displaying how this hermeneutical framework is unhelpful for responsible exegesis. However, the section will guide us to the hypothesis in a creative way by alluding to how the research problem can be solved through situating the language within its context. The last section will consist of the "Problem Statement and Research Question(s)" that this thesis will attempt to solve.

Anti-Judaism, John 8:44, and Jewishness in John's Gospel

The hermeneutical challenge with John 8:12-59 is an anachronistic reading of this biblical passage; the anachronism labels οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John's Gospel as "the Jews" of today, by placing the language in the Gospel outside of the context in which it was written. Of course, shooting Jewish people in a synagogue and justifying the act with a scriptural verse such as John 8:44, is unacceptable. However, the problem is that this text seemingly perpetuates anti-Judaism and can be used to justify anti-Semitic violence (i.e. Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting). This, anti-Judaist attitude, happens when the biblical text is read outside of its literary-rhetorical and socio-political context. For example, it strikes the nerve when one considers that even Hitler used Christian language to justify his violent murderous acts towards European Jews in Germany during the implementation of the

Holocaust.[8] Furthermore, in the biblical texts of the New Testament "negative" portrayals of Pharisees, Sadducees, and chief priests in the Synoptic Gospels and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John's Gospel (where a group becomes ultimately responsible for the crucifixion of Yeshua in all the Gospel narratives), perpetuates negative perceptions, attitudes, and even superstitious thoughts about Jews today. Levine (2006:99) explains that the crucifixion scene in Matthew 27, where the crowd goes as far as to say that "his blood will be on us and our children" (cf. Matthew 27:25), is suspect. This is particularly because, according to Levine (2006:99), Rome was ruthless; and releasing a political insurrectionary, especially during the Passover holiday celebrating the Jews release from an oppressive and enslaving government of Egypt, would have been seen as a political folly (Levine 2006:99).[9]

Levine (2006:102), further adds that John 8:44 is the origin of the view that was popular during the Middle Ages and still found even among well-meaning people today. This is based on the perception that Jews were literally seen as "children of the devil", complete with cloven hooves and horns (cf. Levine 2006:102). The Michelangelo's statue of Moses is an example that Levine (2006:102) uses to support this view. The horned stature of Moses by Michelangelo was not because of John 8 but because of the Latin translation of Exodus 34:29-35, which describes the "rays of light" that shone from Moses' face, and served to confirm the forehead accessories (Levine 2006:102). In addition, Levine (2006:102-103) describes a story, whereby two Protestant women asked her whether she had her horns removed. However, as Levine (2006:103) affirms, the women had never met a Jew before, but both of the women had read John's Gospel and seen the picture of Michelangelo's horned Moses, and therefore, had asked her in all innocence. According to Levine (2006:103), the women were surprised and relieved to know that the Jews do not have horns. Levine (2006:103) further expressed to them that, "she neither had tails and cloven feet", just in case that they thought that as well but were too embarrassed to ask.

[8] Kessler's chapter on "Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust", in his book: *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations* explains how even Hitler did not hesitate to use overtly Christian language to appeal to a pious audience (Kessler 2010:132). Thus, Hitler could piously affirm, 'I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the word of the Lord' (Kessler 2010:132).

[9] The second reason as to why it is suspect, according to Levine (2006:99), is that Matthew presents Pilate more as a weak pawn, manipulated by high priests and the crowd, than as the decisive ruler known from other ancient sources for deliberately provoking the sensibilities of his Jewish subjects.

The problem is that John's Gospel is associated with a polemic against οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, and categorises the final author as anti-Judaistic. Salmon affirms this by saying that: "the most common reading of John is that the polemic against the Jews reflects the anti-Jewish sentiments of its author and community toward the end of the first century" (2006:110). But there are many scholars who place the Johannine community within the context of Judaism in the late century (Salmon 2006:110). Moreover, the evident Jewishness within the Gospel of John ignores the possible identity reconstruction of Yeshua within Judaism. Reinhartz (2009:382) argues that the Jewishness of John's Gospel is actually taken for granted. The gospel refers to Jewish practices such as ritual hand washing (2:6), blessing of the bread before a meal (6:11), the Sabbath (5:9), and festivals, such as the Passover (2:13; 6:4; 12:1), the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2), and the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah; 10:22) (Reinhartz 2009:382). Furthermore, Reinhartz (2009:382) stresses that: Jesus's regular participation in these activities confirms his own Jewish identity, even when he heals a lame man (5:6-9) and a blind man (9:6-7) on the Sabbath (5:18; 9:14, 16).

Unlike the other Gospels, where the Gospel narrative builds up towards Yeshua's journey from his baptism in the Jordan river by John the Baptist and culminates in his death in Jerusalem, the Gospel of John has Yeshua go up, attend, or partake in the events happening in Jerusalem four times, before being arrested, put on trial, and dying on the cross (i.e. John 2:13, 2:23 (for Passover), John 5:1 (Feast of τῶν Ἰουδαίων), John 7:10 (Feast of Booths), and John 10:22 (Feast of Dedication)). If Yeshua is portrayed as Jewish through his participation in these Jewish events, why does the implied author categorise the Ἰουδαῖοι as "children of the Devil" in John 8:44? Why do the "dualistic categories" place Yeshua positively and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι negatively? And who are the Ἰουδαῖοι within the original context of the biblical text? The major problem for Reinhartz (2009:383) with the Gospel of John is the use of the Greek word οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, commonly translated as "the Jews". The term appears seventy times in the Gospel and more than all the other Gospels put together (Reinhartz 2009:383). Literally, however, the term also means "the Judeans", meaning the inhabitants of Judea (cf. Reinhartz 2009:383).[10] However, this for Reinhartz (2009:383) is hard to

[10] Levine (2006:102) translates Ἰουδαῖοι ("Jews", "Judeans") and also indicates that it appears seventy times, but the approximation is because of manuscript variations. The Gospel of John's use of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, according to Levine (2006:102), has received the most attention from scholars concerned about the anti-Jewish potential of New Testament texts.

maintain, as it is likely that by the first century CE the term was generically used regardless of whether they lived in or came from Judea.

On the other hand, Thompson (2015:199) transliterated οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as "the Judeans". The Judeans are construed geographically and referred as the inhabitants of the region of Judea, as opposed to Galilee or Samaria (Thompson 2015:199). In addition, Thompson (2015:199) explains that, references to "the Jews" are also found in ancient literature written by Jews when speaking of themselves, whether the literature is directed to other Jews or to non-Jews (Thompson 2015:199).[11] Philo, using the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, speaks of them as "the Jews" without clearly identifying himself as one, and yet assumes that all of the Ἰουδαῖοι live throughout the ancient world (cf. Thompson 2015:199).[12] Josephus, on the other hand, refers to the people whose history he narrates as "the Jews" (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) and sometimes explicitly includes himself among them, while describing a peculiarity of commitments (Thompson 2015:199). Levine (2006), Thompson (2015), and Reinhartz (2009), express that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι refers to "the Judeans" within its context. If οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are "the Judeans" within the language context of the text, why does the final text of John 8:12-59 goes as far as to identify the Judeans as having a paternal parenthood with "the Devil" (cf. John 8:44)? What is happening within the context of the community of believers of John's Gospel? Furthermore, if the Gospel's portrayal of Yeshua is linked to his Jewish identity, as highlighted above by Reinhartz (2009:383), why does the final author negatively label Yeshua's ethnic-religious group as being children of the very adversary of God? How does the final author account for this harsh language? And yet uses Jewish practices to associate Yeshua with the identity of the Judeans?

Identity, Language, and Rhetoric

Interpreting John 8:44 as a justification and final theological judgement upon all Jews today, represents a one-dimensional reading of the verse. It does not consider the evident thematic ideas (i.e. truth and freedom cf. John 8:31) that the implied author is attempting to articulate through the actual pericope in which the verse is set (i.e. John 8:12-59). Neither does it begin to acknowledge

[11] One finds the term frequently throughout the Maccabean literature and on other texts of the Greek Old Testament (LXX), especially Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther (Thompson 2015:199).

[12] Thompson (2015:199) goes on to explain that this ancient world includes Egypt and Rome. However, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are also characterised by a particular ancestry, a set of laws, religious practices, and various customs (cf. Thompson 2015:199).

that in verse 8:31, it is referring to the Ἰουδαῖοι "who believe" in Yeshua. Epitomising the problem in the Fourth Gospel is chapter 8, where Jesus tells the Jews "who believed in him", "You are from your Father the Devil, and you choose to do your Father's desires" (v. 44) (Levine 2006:102). Levine takes this statement further by saying that: "if Jews who believe in Jesus are 'children of Satan', there is little hope for a positive view of those Jews who do not believe in him, especially given John's tendency to divide the world into those who follow Jesus and those who do not" (2006:103). Therefore, the dualistic categories in John's Gospel do not assist us in remedying this violent text, as within the narrative, the final author divides the world between Yeshua and the opponents who disagree with him, and labels them negatively if they do not adhere to believing and accepting Yeshua's identity. Yet John 8:44 is set within the Feast of Sukkot (cf. John 7:2), and Yeshua begins with a statement "I am the light of the world" (cf. John 8:12), a statement that is then confirmed and explained through the healing act of the "man born blind" in the next section of the narrative (cf. John 9:1-5).

The word πατήρ (I translate as "Father") is evident in John 8:12-20 already, in the dispute between Yeshua and the Pharisees, with regards to Yeshua's declaration as "light of the world" (cf. John 8:12). Πατήρ appears up to 12 times in John 8:12-59 (i.e. John 8:16, 8:18, 8:28, 8:38, 8:39, 8:41, 8:42, 8:44, 8:54, & 8:56). The "Father" confirms and makes Yeshua's testimony valid (John 8:14 & John 8:16). The Father sent Yeshua (John 8:16 & John 8:29), Yeshua speaks what the Father has taught him (John 8:28), and the Father does not leave Yeshua because Yeshua does what pleases the Father (John 8:29). Yeshua knows this because the author has already indicated in the Gospel narrative in previous disputes with οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and οἱ Φαρισαῖοι (translated as: "the Pharisees") that, Yeshua is the only one who has seen the Father (John 6:46) and is the only one who has heard the Father's voice (John 5:37). Moreover, in this section of John 8:44, the issue becomes one of accepting Yeshua's truth and word (John 8:31). The Ἰουδαῖοι are "Abraham's seed" (cf. John 8:33 & John 8:37), and Yeshua does not deny them as descendants of Abraham (cf. John 8:37). Rather, the issue is about whether they accept Yeshua's truth or not (cf. John 8:39-40). The implied author's dualism does not help in this section as the author constantly depicts Yeshua as "coming from above" and "knows where He is going" (cf. John 8:14). Thus, paternal parenthood is a distinguishing marker of one's true identity and allegiance, which in this passage results in a cosmic/spiritual association with either God through Jesus or "the Devil". It is evident in John

8:12-59 that fatherhood is a key identification marker that labels a group negatively or positively through the author's dualistic categories of language. However, is the parental parenthood a justification and theological judgement upon the Jews of today because they do not believe Yeshua is their Messiah and Son of God? Or is the biblical text not rebuking the Ἰουδαῖοι who believed in Yeshua, rather, than the Jews of today who do not?

The dualism and contrasting of Yeshua's opponents negatively is a problem. It perpetuates an anti-Judaistic attitude, even though this biblical text was written for an implied audience by the final (or implied) author. Sadly, the result is an anachronistic reading which negatively labels the Ἰουδαῖοι as Jews of today. In terms of New Testament literary studies, the problem is the inability to identify the genre, language, and rhetoric within its implied audience context. Burridge (2008:434) explains that the gospels were seen as popular folk literature, collections of short stories ('pericopes') handed down orally over time. The gospels were seen as a type of community document, within which the story of the community is overlaid upon the story of Yeshua and the first disciples, giving a two-tier approach to reading them (Burridge 2008:435). Burridge (2008:436) suggests that the Gospels functioned as a genre called ancient biographies.[13] While the author may claim to provide information about his subject, often his underlying aims include apologetic, polemic, or didactic (Burridge 2008:436). However, many ancient biographies cover the subject's death in great detail, since in the story it reveals the subject's true character, resulting in the act of death revealing the subject's definitive teaching and showcases the subject's greatest deed (Burridge 2008:436). Burridge (2008:436) further expresses that these ancient biographies pay particular attention and focus on one person, with the quarter to a third of the verbs dominated by the subject, while the other 15 to 30 percent occur in sayings, speeches, or quotations from the subject person.

Therefore, the final author's dualistic categories of language within the genre of an ancient biography concerned about Yeshua identity, through constructed discourses that aim to serve a "polemic" or "apologetic" or "didactic" function, is a problem, as it limits the textual construction to only a literary-rhetoric dimension. The Gospel of John is concerned with the identity of Yeshua, making the ancient biography focused on revealing an aspect of the subject's identification in a

[13]Ancient biographies are not the same as modern biographies. Unlike modern biographies, Greco-Roman lives do not cover a person's whole life in chronological sequence, and have no psychological analysis of the subject's character (Burridge 2008:436).

significant way. Desilva (2004:417) supports this notion in the Gospel of John being concerned with the identity of Yeshua. Desilva (2004:417) goes as far as to say that the most important contribution of the Fourth Gospel is its extended reflections on the identity and significance of Jesus. However, if the Gospel of John is about Yeshua's identity, why use harsh language such as "the Devil"? Burridge (2008:435-436) indicates a "two-tier" approach to reading ancient biographies, where the author provides information through underlying aims to achieve "apologetic", or "polemic", or "didactic" with regards to the subject.

Ben Witherington, a Professor in New Testament interpretation at Asbury Theological Seminary, says that a biographer could come at his subject with a variety of interests and aims - the desire to persuade, which entailed the art of rhetoric, the desire to convey a certain amount of historical information about a historical person, the desire to teach or instruct by presenting a subject's discourse, and the desire to praise a dead hero (Witherington 1995:4). Furthermore, Witherington (1995:4) believes that this gospel should be seen as a dramatic biography written for Christians to use for evangelical purposes.[14] Thus, if the biographer is using the text to "dramatically" assist Christians to evangelise, why contrast the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua to a fatherhood that is associated with God's adversary? Why not deny their paternity to Abraham (cf. John 8:37), and then completely discount their spiritual/cosmological paternal identity in John 8:44? Witherington's book, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament*, helps us here by saying that: "texts were not for private reading, like for us today, but were for public reading" (Witherington 2009:1). This is because the culture of the Bible was an oral one, unlike our text-based culture, and the people of the Bible had an oral-based culture (cf. Witherington 2009:1).[15] In light of this, Witherington (2009:3) explains that, the material we have in "our" New Testament are in fact discourses, homilies, and rhetorical speeches of various sorts that the creators could not be present to deliver to a particular audience, and so instead they sent a surrogate to proclaim them. However, these were not just given to anyone at random, rather, they

[14] It is not simply a missionary tract to be handed out, but rather a document for Christians to use for evangelistic and missionary purposes (Witherington 1995:4).

[15] Furthermore, texts were enormously expensive to produce, as papyrus was expensive, as well as ink, and the scribes, who were responsible to write, were ultra-expensive as well (cf. Witherington 2009:1).

were given to one who already knew the contents of the document and could also place emphasis on the right places so that the message was effectively communicated (Witherington 2009:3).

Now, because documents were communicated orally, there was a greater emphasis on rhetoric, due to the context in which these authors were situated. Rhetoric was a popular spectator sport in the first century, and most persons were either producers or consumers of some kind of rhetoric, and that rhetoric had long been a staple of education, at all levels beginning with elementary education (Witherington 2009:11).[16] Furthermore, rhetoric was a useable tool for the educated and uneducated, the elite and the ordinary, and most public speakers of any kind or skill in antiquity knew they had to use the art of persuasion to accomplish their aims (Witherington 2009:5). Witherington (2009:3) stresses that, early Christianity was not, by and large, a movement led by illiterate peasants or socially deprived people. Rather, the leaders of the movement mostly produced the texts of the movement, and the texts of the New Testament reflect a considerable knowledge of Greek, of rhetoric, and indeed of general Greco-Roman culture (Witherington 2009:3).[17] Therefore, if the genre of John's Gospel is an ancient biography, where the final author is attempting to construct Yeshua's identity through discourses between Yeshua and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, then perhaps the negative labelling could be a rhetorical strategy for converting Ἰουδαῖοι to believe more strongly and evangelise to their fellow ethnic-religious kin. If that is the case why does the final author juxtapose the Jewishness of the Gospel in contrast to the identity of the Ἰουδαῖοι using Yeshua? The main point here, however, is that texts are constructed for the implied readers. It is the text that constructs an understanding for the implied readers, as the biblical texts of the New Testament are creative rhetorical devices.

Warren Carter, New Testament professor at Brite University, takes it further by explaining that people generally make two mistakes when interpreting John's Gospel (2008:3). Firstly, people often tend to have an individual-spiritualised interpretation that focuses on salvation, eternal life and a believer's soul going to heaven when one dies (Carter 2008:3). Secondly, others read the Gospel as

[16] There were many schools of rhetoric throughout the Mediterranean crescent, as rhetoric itself was a basic part of elementary, secondary, and tertiary education as well (Witherington 2009:5).

[17] This skill and erudition can only selfdom be attributed to scribes, except in cases where scribes such as Tertius or Sosthenes (cf. Romans 16 and 1 Corinthians 1) had been converted and donated their skills to the movement (Witherington 2009:3).

a "sectarian synagogue" interpretation that has a communal focus on the Jesus believers group (cf. Carter 2008:3). This interpretation focuses on a community that has been alienated or as a sect of Jesus believers who have been painfully separated or expelled from the synagogue (Carter 2008:3). Both approaches, for Carter (2008:3), i.e. "individual-spiritualised" and "sectarian-synagogue" readings, render Rome invisible. An interpretive reading that does not acknowledge the Roman Empire results in the socio-political context of John 8:12-59 not adequately being accounted for. In addition, the rhetorical language of a biblical text is then not understood within its context, resulting in a one-dimensional reading that underplays or ignores the influence of Rome and Greco-Roman culture. This ancient biography is then seen as solely about Yeshua's identity in contrast to the identity of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, instead of a critical understanding of what that identity actually meant within a Greco-Roman culture through the implied author's use of rhetorical language, which may or may not have had significance within the socio-political context of the Roman Empire.

Problem Statement and Research Question(s)

Therefore, this thesis is concerned with the problem of a "literalistic" or "one-dimensional" reading of John 8:12-59. This literal reading can result in a reception of this biblical text that constitutes as an anti-Judaistic attitude, which in turn can serve as a justification for anti-Semitism towards Jews of today. A reading that situates John 8:12-59 within its context first aims to facilitate an interpretation that is not anti-Jewish, but rather assists readers of John 8:12-59 to creatively discover new "meaning potentials" within their contemporary contexts. This one-dimensional reading is what Reinhartz (2009:386) calls a "compliant reader". A compliant reader, as I have mentioned, accepts the world that is presented in the text (Reinhartz 2009:386). In addition, a compliant reader may be an anti-Jewish reader, which then accepts the role as the killers of Christ at a historical level and children of Satan on a cosmological level (Reinhartz 2009:386). Accordingly, the final form of the text is an accurate and literal display of the historical nature of Christianity's relationship to Jewish people, because cosmologically Jews are no longer God's chosen people, as they are children of Satan (cf. Reinhartz 2009:386). This complaint reading approach of John's Gospel does not interrogate the historical context at all, and limits the interpretation of this biblical text to a literal reading that synchronises the text's language away from its socio-political context.

In terms of the hermeneutical challenge for contemporary readers articulating a biblical text within their context and being sensitive to the "world behind the text", this compliant reading approach can

perpetuate anti-Judaism (e.g. Robert Gregory Bowers). Thus, this hermeneutical paradigm ignores the socio-political context of John 8:12-59, limiting the interpretive reading to a linguistic level alone, without considering the historical, sociological, and ideological levels as well. Moreover, a complaint reader projects an interpretation that assumes the textual construction is historical as well. The assumption does not interrogate the historical context of the implied readers, and leaves the contemporary reader vulnerable to interpretations and theological conclusions that can harm the Jews of today. Furthermore, this one-dimensional reading and "individual-spiritualized" interpretation, does not consider the influence of the Roman Empire and literary function of rhetoric within Greco-Roman culture. Language then becomes a synchronised manipulation from the readers' interpersonal category, without placing the ideational and textual categories within the original context first. This is important because language is itself a synchronic aspect with its own historicity (cf. Hong 2013:524). Thus, the implied author constructs these aspects through his/her own context, which in terms of the New Testament, is done through a text's creative rhetoric. A responsible and conscious interpretation of John 8:12-59 needs to take the "world behind the text" seriously, so that the contemporary reader is not complaint in their interpretive reading of this biblical text.

Therefore, the question(s) this thesis will attempt to answer are:

a) Can a reading of John 8:44 that is situated within the rhetorical context of John 8:12-59 assist in responsible and conscious hermeneutical ways of reading this biblical text?
b) Can an interpretation that prioritises the "world behind the text" help contemporary readers of John 8:12-59 see different dimensions and levels to this biblical text that can assist in their articulation of new meaning potentials' within their present day contexts?
c) Can such a reading of John 8:44 (within its rhetorical and socio-political contexts) assist in avoiding an anti-Judaistic attitude today?

Hypothesis

The research challenge of interpreting John 8:44 within the literary context of John 8:12-59 can tentatively be solved by reading this text through the eyes of narrative criticism. Narrative criticism is a text centred approach whose primary concern is to understand how the text works within its present and final form (Wenham & Walton 2001:84). Narrative criticism further regards the plot,

point of view, characters, setting, and also takes seriously the reading process of engaging the text (c.f. Wenham & Walton 2001). The implied author, as Powell (1995:240) defines it, means the perspective from which the work appears to have been written; a perspective that must be reconstructed by readers on the basis of what they find in the narrative. However, this thesis is concerned with constructing an interpretation that is aware of the "world behind the text". The textual findings within the narrative need to be understood within the historical context of this biblical text, so that it can assist contemporary readers to develop responsible and conscious hermeneutical frameworks when using John 8:12-59. Thus, the textual investigation of John 8:12-59 within the whole narrative of John's Gospel, needs to be couched within the original setting of the biblical text. Although textual construction is facilitate by the author, and the so-called implied readers are textual characters in the final text that we have, evaluating the text within the historical background, ensures an interpretation is not limited to a person's pre-understanding alone.

The pre-understanding, as indicated earlier with Ukpong (2001:149), is a product of a person's reading community. This pre-understanding is categorized by a person's ideology, which for Ukpong (2001:149) is a product of a person's "identity construct" and "social location". If then interpreters use textual, ideational, and interpersonal categories (cf. Blount 1995:8) when using language of a text, which are a product of a person's own synchronic articulation (cf. Osborne 1991:127 & Hong 2013:524), it is important for the historical background of John 8:12-59 to be part and parcel with that interpretation. The danger with John 8:12-59 is that when it is read one-dimensionally (or "literally") it can sometimes be used to justify anti-Semitism towards real Jews of today. However, this original context sensitivity also has its challenges. Firstly, as mentioned above with Lategan (1992:149), that readers overcome the historical distance through the articulation of their own personal existence and human development. The hermeneutical challenge with John 8:12-59 is that, if readers are not aware of different dimensions and levels of interpreting this biblical text, an anti-Judaistic attitude can be extended. The textual and ideational categories need to be mediated so that the interpersonal category of the reader is informed, challenged, and discerned responsibly so that anti-Judaism is not perpetuated.

Furthermore, as mentioned above with Carter (2008:3), the interpretation that reconstructs John's Gospel as "individualised-spiritual" or relates it to the expulsion theory of the "sectarian-synagogue" reading, ignores the Roman Empire. This is important because New Testament texts are creative

rhetorical manuscripts. These manuscripts are embedded in a Greco-Roman culture. Therefore, a suitable tentative solution that can be associated with narrative criticism and avoids ignoring of the Roman Empire when interpreting a biblical text from John's Gospel is "cultural intertextuality". This relates to narrative criticism as the textual evaluation is then situated within the original context of the constructed implied readers/hearers. The historical context becomes a reference point to evaluate the textual constructions of the author, making the language of the text be assessed rhetorically within this setting, instead of evaluating the text outside of its context. Thus, the language of the biblical text is viewed as rhetorical, and assists readers to understand how the author is using language rhetorically. In connection to this, Carter (2008:4) helps us by suggesting that the final author of John's Gospel uses language to create a "rhetorical distance" between the implied readers/hearers and the Roman Empire. Carter (2008:5) writes in his book, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* that, the final text is not only reflecting a set of historical circumstances, but contributing to and constructing a sense of cultural reality that intersects through conceptualisation of the world and through the relationships with the actual conditions of its existence. In other words, the final author not only uses language that reflects the historical circumstances within the first implied audiences context, but also uses language within this context that reflects a cultural reality of that context, and its existing conditions within it.

As indicated above with Osborne (1991:127) and Hong (2013:524), history is a diachronic aspect, whereas culture is seen as synchronic. However, both are a product of a specific time, context, and space. The implied author, who uses language from his or her own context, is situated within a context that cannot be ignored, and contemporary readers need understand, so that they can develop responsible and conscious hermeneutical ways. "Cultural textuality involves locating this Gospel text with [the text of] society and history, placing this specific text within the general text (culture) in which (it is) a part of" (Carter 2008:5). For example, as indicated in the introduction with Sheridan (2014:196-197), the purpose of John's Gospel is for the implied audience to "believe that Yeshua is the Messiah and the Son of God" (cf. John 20:31). Yeshua in John's Gospel is explicitly understood to be God's Son and the Messiah of Israel. Ironically, the term "Son of God", according to Carter (2008:194-195), within the context of Ephesus, serves a political function, as it is a political conceptualisation of the Emperor. The Emperor within the Roman Empire was equal to the

gods, and as the gods are powers and not people; the Emperors then, were like gods as they exercised power (cf. Carter 2008:197).

In addition, the term "Son of God" was used to refer to emperors within the religious system of the Roman Empire, where the Emperor was placed in an ambivalent position and seen as higher than mortals' but not equal to the gods (cf. Carter 2008:197). Thus, the final author reconceptualises the term through this unique relationship between Yeshua and the Father, by making Yeshua the "Son of God" in a new way. The final author in John's Gospel does the same thing by equating Yeshua as "the Son of God" in John 20:31, and constantly placing Yeshua equal to God; a claim Yeshua makes in John 8:58 and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι reject in John 8:59 by "picking up stones to throw at him". In John 8:12-59, as mentioned above, the term πατήρ is mentioned 12 times. Thus, a hermeneutical assessment that is sensitive to the Roman Empire can begin to understand how the implied author may be rhetorically trying to articulate this relationship between Yeshua and the Father within the social-political context of John 8:12-59. This approach can help us to understand how the implied author was using language rhetorically, within the Roman Empire, ensuring that we do not read and interpret John 8:12-59 without situating it within Greco-Roman culture and in the social-political context of the Roman Empire. Carter (2008:14) explains that language of negotiation does not only reconceptualise the Roman world but also involves the practices that are lived daily and within societal interactions. Carter (2008:14) bases this on how the "act of thinking something" cannot be separated from the implications or lack thereof, for how one lives. Rather, this Gospel and other texts from Asia Minor bear witness to struggles among the Jesus-believers over the issue of how to negotiate Roman imperial power on a daily basis, its benefits, challenges, rewards and displeasure (Carter 2008:14). Carter (2008:19) further ads that Jews and Jesus-believers sought to discern appropriate behaviours in a spectrum of responses involving participation, degrees of interaction, and refusal to participate.

Carter's (2008) language of negotiation means that the author could be rhetorically involved in using language that is conceptualised within the Roman Empire. This language is a way for the implied readers/hearers to negotiate their identity within their context, or as Witherington (1995:4) indicated earlier, for the early Christian community to evangelise. The author achieves this by using certain language that is commonly associated with the Roman Empire in an attempt to create a "rhetorical distance" between believers and groups within the Roman Imperial context. Therefore, Carter's

(2008) "rhetorical distance" and "language of negotiation" give us another dimension to reading and interpreting John 8:12-59, a level that is helpful and ensures sensitivity to how the language in this biblical text would have been understood within the context of the Roman Empire. This approach ensures that the narrative criticism approach is interpreted within its historical setting, making the language of the biblical text be read within its context. Furthermore, Carter's (2008) "rhetorical distance" gives us a tentative alternative to not only reading John's Gospel one-dimensionally, but, also, provides us with a meaningful dimension that leads us to start taking into account possible multiple layers and perspectives of interpreting John 8:44 within its pericope of John 8:12-59.

Carter's method (2008) of assessing this negotiated language is called "cultural intertextuality". Cultural intertextuality explores how John could have been engaged in a Roman imperial city (cf. Carter 2008:10). Carter (2008:10) describes it with reference to Julia Kristeva's work: "Cultural textuality involves locating this Gospel text 'within (the text of) society and history', placing this specific text "within the general text (culture) of which [it is] a part and which is in turn part of [it]". Thus, in light of Carter's (2008) tentative solution to our problem of having a one-dimensional reading of John 8:44 and ignoring its significance within its pericope of John 8:12-59 in particular, the question then becomes: how does the final author use language rhetorically to create a "rhetorical distance" within the Roman imperial context? And how is that language being used to speak rhetorically to the implied audience so that they negotiate their identity within the socio-political context of the Roman Empire? However, the thesis will not situate this language within a Roman Imperial city, and neither will it argue for a specific location and authorship. Rather, the concern is rooted in how language is being used rhetorically within the Roman imperial context. If language is being used rhetorically, an ideological (i.e. the implied authors and audiences "identity constructs" and "social location") understanding of this language within the "world behind the text" can be useful for contemporary readers, as it investigates the language within its context first. Therefore, the language in John 8:12-59 is to be assessed within the context of Roman Empire, whereby it is evaluated within the confines of that context for exegetical benefit of the contemporary readers of today, and ensures that their reading does not anachronistically lead to an interpretation that perpetuates anti-Semitism upon the Jews of today.

Methodology

Rhetorical Analysis and Social-History Approach

In my view, the most preferable method to determine the final author's use of language is probably rhetorical criticism. A narrative criticism that culturally intertext's the language of John 8:12-59 within its historical-cultural context, is a starting point. New Testament texts are creative rhetorical documents. These rhetorical documents, at least the Gospels, are textual constructions, which are ancient biographies that are concerned and focused on the subject, Yeshua of Nazareth. Thus, the implied author's dualism needs to be understood not only through a critical evaluation of the narrative, but also a rhetorical assessment of the language within a contextualised understanding of Christianity's relationship to Judaism, so that anti-Judaism is avoided. An evaluation that just considers the group to be Jesus-Believers, who have been expelled from the synagogue, eliminates a Roman imperial socio-political situation, and does not assess the textual production within its historical-cultural setting. Carter's (2008) Roman imperial sensitivity assists us in not limiting our interpretation to Christianity and Judaism alone. Rather, the textual construction has other characters that may be part of the narrative discourse, but are not explicit to readers who do not place the language within its social-political context. Moreover, as Witherington (2009:11) indicated above, rhetoric was taught in schools, and these texts we have today were orally transmitted. The person, who orally presented these texts, had to ensure that they place emphasis on the language that had rhetorical significance within the Greco-Roman culture (cf. Witherington 2009:3). Black (1995:257) agrees by saying that the Hellenisation of the Mediterranean world, first by Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE) and later by imperial Rome (27 BCE – 476 CE), made technical rhetoric become the essence of secondary education, which prepared Roman citizens for advancement in public life. Although it is impossible (and needless) to demonstrate that Jesus, the earliest apostles, or the authors of the Gospels received formal education in rhetoric, it is undeniably certain that they were born into a culture whose everyday modes of oral and written discourse were saturated with a rhetorical tradition (Black 1995:257).

Kennedy (1984:9) takes it further by explaining that rhetoric was a systematic academic discipline universally taught throughout the Roman Empire. It represented approximately the level of high school today and was, indeed, the exclusive subject of secondary education (Kennedy 1984:9). Furthermore, though rhetoric is coloured by the traditions and conventions of the society in which it

is applied, it is also a universal phenomenon – conditioned by basic workings of the human mind and heart, and by the nature of all human society (Kennedy 1984:10). The Greeks gave names to rhetorical techniques, many of which were found all over the world, and they organised these techniques into a system, that could be taught and learned (Kennedy 1984:11).[18] If then rhetoric was taught in schools (cf. Witherington 2009:11) and was a tool even for the uneducated (cf. Witherington 2009:5) within an oral culture, it becomes important to understand what rhetorical techniques the implied author may or may not be trying to employ in John 8:12-59. Rhetorical criticism is the study of rhetoric, whether ancient or modern, with a broad definition of rhetoric being the art of persuasion, though sometimes it has degenerated into the art of speaking well, or mere verbal eloquence (Witherington 2009:6).

However, in this thesis my focus is on analysing the rhetoric in the final text of John 8:12-59. Rhetorical analysis is concerned with the persuasive nature of a text, which sees rhetoric as the art of the composition (cf. Soulen & Soulen 2001:163). The purpose of rhetorical analysis in this thesis is primarily to understand the rhetorical use of language in John 8:12-59 within the social-political context of the Roman Empire. The hermeneutical enterprise strives to ensure that contemporary readers can be able to identify different levels and dimensions of reading this biblical text. Although, as Kennedy (1984:12) indicates that, the ultimate goal of rhetorical analysis is to discover the author's intent and how that is transmitted through a text to an audience. The rhetorical analysis in this project will use rhetorical analysis to excavate the textual construction of the implied author within its original context. Texts are constructed for the implied readers/hearers. The implied audience are a textual construction formulated by the implied author. Therefore, the analysis will evaluate how the implied author may have structured the biblical text rhetorically within the social-political context of the Roman Empire, and how that construction may have an effect on this early Christian group's identity formation within this historical-cultural setting. This rhetorical analysis of John 8:12-59 within its language context will be demonstrated by particularly taking on Kennedy's six steps of a rhetorical criticism of a New Testament biblical text.

[18] Kennedy (1984:11) further explains that, before rhetoric was conceptualised the Greeks practiced it and learned it by imitation with little conscious effort. Though the Jews of the pre-Christian era seem to never have conceptualised rhetoric to any significant degree, the importance of speech among them is everywhere evident in the Old Testament, and undoubtedly they learned its techniques by imitation (Kennedy 1984:11).

The first step is determining the "rhetorical unit" that will be investigated and search for the *inclusio* (cf. Black 1995:261).[19] Thus, this thesis places the provocative verse of John 8:44 within the pericope of 8:12-59 discourses between Yeshua, the Pharisees, and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. The second step is to define the "rhetorical situation", that is, the complexity of persons, events, and relations that generates pressure for a verbal response (cf. Black 1995:261). This is evident in what happens before and after the discourse of John 8:12-59. As indicated earlier, what happens before this pericope, in John 7:40-44, there is confusion with regards to Yeshua's identity, particularly with whether he is the Messiah or a Prophet. However, this is heightened in John 7:45-52, where the Pharisees, the officers, and Nicodemus argue as to whether they should arrest Yeshua or not. After John 8:12-59, Yeshua heals a man born blind (9:1-41), and the opening statement retorted in John 8:12, is explained in John 9:3-5 through the healing action of a man born blind.

The third step for Kennedy, according to Black (1995:261), is to identify "the discourse". Identify whether it is judicial, deliberative, or epideictic rhetoric (cf. Black 1995:261). These are "species of ancient rhetoric", according to Kennedy (1984) and Witherington (2009). The species identification leads to a fourth step, which is to identify the arrangement of the discourse. Witherington (2009:7) explains that forensic rhetoric is a rhetoric of law court and attack that focused on passed things done; deliberative rhetoric, a rhetoric of trying to convince someone to change their course of action or a affirm a policy or vote; and an epideictic rhetoric, is rhetoric of display and seeks to not only change beliefs, behaviours, opinions, or attitudes but rather reinforce existing ones. Kennedy (1984:19) helps us understand it in relation with the final author's intentional use of the rhetorical species. The judicial species is when the author is seeking to persuade the audience to make a judgement about events occurring in the past (Kennedy 1984:19). It is deliberative when the final author seeks to persuade them to take some action in the future (Kennedy 1984:19). And it is epideictic when the final author seeks to persuade them to hold or reaffirm some point of view in the present, as when the author celebrates or denounces some person or some quality (Kennedy 1984:19). In a single discourse there is sometimes utilisation of more than one species, and the definition of the species as a whole can become very difficult, but a discourse usually has one dominant species, which reflects the final author's major purpose in speaking or writing (Kennedy 1984:19). Therefore, the rhetorical analysis of this thesis will identify possible "species of rhetoric"

[19] The *inclusio* refers to the opening and closure in a unit of discourse with some magnitudes (cf. Black 1995:26)

that the final author is using and conceptualising through the rhetorical use of language in John 8:12-59 within its social-political context.

The fifth step is to analyse the "invention and style" of the discourse (Black 1995:262). Invention pertains to the crafting of arguments based on proofs - these proofs are: ethos, pathos and logos (cf. Black 1995:262). Ethos, refers to the person's persuasive power of the speaker's authoritative character; pathos, the emotional response generated among the listeners; and logos, the deductive or inductive arguments of the discourse itself (Black 1995:262). Style, on the other hand, refers to the text's choice of words and their formulation in "figures of speech" and "figures of thought" (Black 1995:262). The last step is reviewing the whole analysis while the critic evaluates the unit's rhetorical effectiveness (Black 1995:264). However, a rhetorical assessment that is void of the original context of John 8:12-59 does not help contemporary readers in understanding the historical, sociological, and ideological factors of the biblical text. The contemporary reader needs to understand the contextual background of language in John 8:12-59. As mentioned above by referring to Blount (1995:8), interpreters manipulate the ideational and textual categories from their interpersonal category. Thus, an interpretation of John 8:12-59 that does not situate the textual and ideation categories of the biblical text within its context, results in the contemporary reader only having their interpersonal category as a reference point. Although, as indicated above with Lategan (1992:149), that there is a historical distance between the context of the biblical text and our present day. This distance can be mediated through our own human development (cf. Lategan 1992:149). However, this thesis is trying to avoid anti-Judaistic attitude when interpreting John 8:12-59, thus, the rhetorical analysis needs to be situated within the texts original context to assist present day interpreters to use this biblical text responsibly. The rhetorical analysis needs a contextual framework that evaluates the language within the Greco-Roman culture and Roman Empire. This is because the "world behind the text" needs to be understood first, before contemporary readers use this biblical text within their present day contexts. Therefore, the method of solving this thesis's research problem cannot be a rhetorical analysis alone, as it needs to be accompanied with another method that situates the language of John 8:12-59 within the ancient Mediterranean world in first century CE.

The method that can ensure this is a social-history approach. Tate (2012:411) defines the social-history approach, as a method that tries to determine the answers to questions concerning the

social developments and movements of the early Christians within the Greco-Roman world (Tate 2012:411). This method distinguishes and clarifies the differences between the social location of the interpreter, the author, and the object to be interpreted (Tate 2012:510). Social location includes factors such as gender, age, class, roles, education, occupation, political and religious associations, language and cultural traditions, and location in place and time (Tate 2012:410). Thus, the social-history approach allows for the textual construction to be evaluated rhetorically through the findings of early Christianity within the Greco-Roman world. Furthermore, it hermeneutically gives the contemporary readers historical insight of how the rhetorical language in John 8:12-59 would have been understood within the social-political context of the Roman Empire. The understanding ensures that the rhetorical analysis is not just limited to a linguistic assessment, but rather is accompanied with a historical evaluation that produces ideological and sociological articulation as well; making the textual construction of the implied author be placed within the institutions, culture, and systems that he or she was part of, and which in turn are part of him/her. Therefore, the social-history approach will help us grasp the use of rhetorical language in John 8:12-59 by the implied author. The investigation will allow an exegetical understanding of what this language would have meant for the implied audience within the Greco-Roman world; allowing us to understand how it may have affected the groups' identity in what they may have had to contend with in the socio-political context of the Roman Empire. The methodology of solving this thesis's research problem ensures that the rhetorical analysis is evaluated within the contextual findings from the social-history approach. This method of approach also assists in coming to terms with the relationship between Christianity and Judaism within this biblical text's historical-cultural setting, by interpreting John 8:12-59 within the social-political context of the ancient Mediterranean world first century CE.

In what follows, the identity of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua will be investigated. The exploration seeks to understand the "identity constructs" and "social location factors" that the author may or may not be rhetorically alluding to in John 8:12-59, using the method of a social-history approach. The importance of this is to see how the final author is using language rhetorically in John 8:12-59 that has significance within the Greco-Roman world. The language is then situated within the social location factors of the ancient Mediterranean world, instead of anachronistically reading it literally outside of its language context. The chapter's that probe this understanding are 2 and 3.

Chapter 2, "Identity Constructs within the Ancient Mediterranean context", starts the evaluation by looking at the purpose of Gospel, John 20:31. In this chapter, a rhetorical assessment and language connection to John 8:12-59 will be made in an attempt to explore how the language of the text is layered with possible meanings that could have had significance within the ancient Mediterranean world. The chapter will also attempt to understand the significance of Jewish elements in the biblical text by attempting to understand, contextually, the identity of implied readers/hearers. The textual category of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι will be culturally intertexted within the first century CE, so that the identities of the characters in this narrative are understood within its context.

Chapter 3, "Social Location of the Group's identity within the Ancient Mediterranean world", will attempt to situate the text within the socio-political context of the Roman Empire. This will ensure that the pericope in question is not only sensitive to the Jewishness of the Fourth Gospel, but also investigates the potential "rhetorical distance" from the Roman Empire. This thesis's sensitivity to the Roman Empire will only account for the following social location factors: class, political and religious associations, and language and cultural traditions, and location in place and time. In this chapter, πατήρ will be the textual category that is assessed from John 8:12-59. In both chapters, however, the search for such language will start in John's Gospel in general, but then connect it to the focus text of this thesis, John 8:12-59 in particular. The social-history approach will serve as a contextualisation method that ensures that the possible rhetorical language in John 8:12-59, is not interpreted one-dimensionally or literalistically. Rather, using the social-history approach, the rhetorical analysis of John 8:12-59 is evaluated within its historical setting, in an attempt to demonstrate the implications of that language within the socio-political context of the implied audience.

Chapter 4, "A Rhetorical Analysis of John 8:12-59 within its socio-political context", will then exegetically analyse the rhetorical language of the text from the findings of chapter 2 and 3. The exegetical analysis will attempt to identify the possible "species of rhetoric" that the final author might have been alluding to within the socio-political context of the implied readers/hearers. The analysis will make use of commentaries on the biblical text, and other helpful sources, to help indicate various interpretations of John 8:12-59 within its socio-political context. However, these sources will be evaluated within the identified "species of rhetoric" that the implied author might have been using, particularly the invention and style of the argument, before evaluating the analysis

as whole, and providing a conclusion. The socio-political context of John 8:12-59 will ensure an anachronistic reading is avoided and a responsible and conscious hermeneutic established for contemporary readers. The language evaluated within its social-political context first, allows for possible multi-dimensions and levels of reading and interpreting John 8:12-59. The multiple layers can give present day users various hermeneutical lenses when using this biblical text. These hermeneutical lenses hope to assist users of this biblical text to better discern a "meaning potential" from their "interpersonal category" and ideology, by first understanding responsibly and consciously the "world behind the text". However, this thesis is not trying to argue that this is the only interpretation of John 8:12-59, rather, it is trying to give the reader, preacher and interpreter of the Bible more exegetical dimensions and levels, to assist them in their interpretive reading of John 8:12-59, so that it does not perpetuate an attitude of anti-Judaism that justifies anti-Semitism violence upon the Jews of today.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, "The Hermeneutical Task for Reading John 8:12-59", will conclude the thesis and evaluate whether the intended rhetorical analysis of John 8:12-59 within its socio-political context was successful. This will be done by, first, reviewing the whole rhetorical analysis of John 8:12-59 within its social-political context and demonstrating different dimensions and levels that have been discovered through the exegetical analysis. Second, a summary will be given. The summary will synthesise the thesis as a whole, before concluding and providing a hermeneutical challenge when using this biblical text. Lastly, the hermeneutical challenge will stress the importance of this evaluation and further emphasise the significance of why an interpretive reading that is literal (or "one-dimensional") and solely based on one's own ideology, is dangerous. The risk will be displayed and related to other people who have fallen victim to this irresponsible hermeneutical paradigm and misuse of the Bible.

In what follows I will evaluate the probable language context that the final author might have been employing rhetorically within the Greco-Roman culture in first century CE. The chapter will further evaluate the implied author's use of rhetorical language that articulates and situates Yeshua's identity within the ancient Mediterranean context. Thus, the investigation aims at ensuring that an interpretive reading of John 8:12-59 is not limited to linguistics alone, but also to an understanding of its "sociological", "historical", and "ideological" dimensions/levels as well.

Chapter Two (a): Identity Constructs within the Ancient Mediterranean Context

Key words: Identity, Judaism and Sects, Ethnicity, Group identity, Boundaries, Second Temple Jewish Literature.

The problem this thesis is concerned with is a one-dimensional (or "literalistic") reading of John 8:12-59. Such a literal reading is compliant to the "world behind the text" as it takes the biblical text as it is, and can result in an identity claim that vilifies the Jews of today. The danger of this reading projects contemporary readers' own "interpersonal category", which does not account for their own ideology, and anachronistically imposes an interpretation on a biblical text. As indicated in the previous chapter, "ideology" for Ukpong (2001:149) is made up of a person's "identity constructs" and "social location factors". This chapter of the thesis, "Identity constructs within the ancient Mediterranean context", serves the purpose of discovering the textually constructed implied audience within the first century CE world. The thesis aims to achieve this firstly by indicating important New Testament factors contemporary (21st century) readers need to be sensitive to, when interpreting a New Testament text using rhetorical analysis. These factors will give readers responsible hermeneutical parameters that they can be sensitive to when reading John 8:12-59. In addition, the investigation in this chapter will attempt to address the textual constructions in this pericope through a close reading of the biblical text in question. The close reading attempts to address the "dualistic categories" that are evident in John 8:12-59. Thus, the dualistic concern is a textual pursuit that wants to understand how texts were used within the ancient Mediterranean world.

A starting point in our understanding of the "world behind the text" is thus to make sense of the "identity constructs" of the implied author, which may be helpful in assisting contemporary readers in their interpretation of John 8:12-59 within their contexts of today. However, because of the volume of material, this chapter will be divided into two parts, (a) and (b). Chapter 2(a) will attempt to understand who John's implied readers/hearers are, by culturally intertexting the textual category οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua. This will situate the investigation within its original setting,

while at the same time giving contemporary readers the contextual parameters that they must be aware of when approaching a New Testament text through rhetorical analysis. Chapter 2(b), on the other hand, will try to make sense of the harsh dualistic language that is constructed by the implied author in John 8:12-59. The investigation will attempt to demonstrate how this biblical text might have been involved in identity formation in the context of first century CE, by assessing this dualistic concern within the function of texts in the ancient world.

The Purpose of John's Gospel

John 8:12 begins with an exordium statement, "I am the light of the World" (Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου) (cf. addendum 1). The exordium is the beginning of the discourse, attempting to make the audience open and well-disposed to what follows (Witherington 2009:16). For Bruner (2012:513), "I am the light of the World"' is a Christo-exclusive claim that suggests an evocation of a Christological and messianic expectation. Christology is the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ (McKim 1996:48).[20] However, the statement comes with a caveat, whereby if one follows Yeshua they "will not walk in darkness but have the light of life" (μὴ περιπατήσῃ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἕξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς) (cf. addendum 1 (John 8:12)). The exordium statement suggests that not following Yeshua results in a person walking in darkness and not having any "light of life" without him. This strict and rigid dualism again serves the implied author's identity agenda. Yeshua being "the light of the world" reveals his identity as God's Son and Messiah, which can be connected to the purpose statement of John's Gospel in John 20:31. If Bruner's (2012:513) suggestion is correct, that the exordium statement is a messianic and Christological claim, as the purpose of the Gospel is for a person to "believe that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God" (cf. John 20:31), then, Yeshua's exordium statement introduces an identity claim that the implied author is alluding to within this phrase and is connected to the very purpose statement of John's Gospel.

Ironically, Jensen (2016:349) explains the positive implications of the purpose statement (20:31) for interpreting John's Gospel, is threefold: firstly, John was written in order to convince its readers that the Christ, the Son of God of Jewish expectation, was the man Jesus; secondly, the intended audience of the Fourth Gospel was Jewish; and thirdly, given this purpose and audience, James D.G. Dunn's suggests that the historical situation behind the text should be understood as an intra-Jewish

[20] The church's understanding of who Jesus Christ is and what he has done grew and developed through the centuries; where early church councils produced Christological statements (McKim 1996:48).

disagreement about the identity of the Christ, where John 9:22, 12:42, 16:2 are evidence of syntactical support. Further, this accounts for John's negative use of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in situations of conflict between Jesus and the Jews (John 5:16, 18; 7:1, 13; 9:22; 10:31; 19:12; 20:19). The negative uses can be seen as ironic (maybe even sarcastic) and occur where the question of Jewish identity is under discussion (Jensen 2016:349).

Although, Jensen's suggestion here assists us to not assume that the Gospel of John is an anti-Jewish biblical text, the textual evidence needs a contextual understanding of what the text would potentially mean within the implied readers/hearers context. Green (2010:224-225), though writing in terms of discourse analysis, indicates that language in use is always culturally embedded. Context refers to the social-historical realities, which then requires attention to social-scientific analysis of the discourse (cf. Green 2010:227-228). This is significant for this thesis because the rhetorical analysis is accompanied with a social-history approach in an attempt to solve the research problem. The discourse between Yeshua and the Ἰουδαῖοι needs a historical background so that the contextual realities are part of the interpretation. Thus, the social-science analysis being used in this thesis is the New Testament social science study of the social-history approach. According to Tate (2012:410), the social-scientific study of the New Testament consists of four approaches: the social description, the social history, the sociology of knowledge, and the use of models from the social sciences. The social-scientific study that this thesis takes is a social-history approach, which considers social location factors. However, as indicated in the previous chapter, the factors that this thesis will focus on are: class, political and religious associations, language and cultural traditions, and location in place and time. My hypothesis is that the social-history approach has the potential to ensure the language of John 8:12-59 is placed within its context. Along with rhetorical analysis, the language will be assessed within the social-historical context of the ancient Mediterranean, so that contemporary readers may understand what the final author might have been alluding to in John 8:12-59 through his or her textual construction. Therefore, the chapter will focus on "identity constructs" within the ancient Mediterranean world, connecting the purpose of John's Gospel to relate to how the implied author is attempting to textually construct the identity of the implied audience within the first century CE, so that an anachronistic reading of John 8:12-59 is avoided.

Rhetoric and Culture

The anachronistic reading of labelling οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John 8:44 as "the Jews" today, places the language outside of the context in which it was situated. The Ἰουδαῖοι in John 8:12-59 are not the Jews of today. Rather, the implied author wrote with an intention to: "…target an effect on belief and behaviour of various audiences" (Witherington 2009:8). They were not intended merely as theological or ethical treaties (Witherington 2009:8). Choice and arrangement of words are one of the techniques employed, where the treatment of the subject matter, use of evidence, and the control of the emotions, are all of great importance in the rhetorical theory within Greco-Roman society (cf. Kennedy 1984:3). Therefore, rhetorical criticism helps us realize the dynamic and interactive nature of these documents (Witherington 2009:8). In fact, rhetoric is that quality in discourse by which a speaker or writer seeks to accomplish their purposes (Kennedy 1984:3). The writers of the books of the New Testament had a message to convey and sought to persuade an audience to believe it or to believe it more profoundly; as such they are rhetorical, and their methods can be studied by the discipline of rhetoric (Kennedy 1984:3).

Thus a rhetorical analysis allows us to situate the language in John 8:12-59 within its context, without anachronistically assuming that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are the Jews of today. An investigation that prioritises an understanding of who are the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua could potential be, ensures that an anachronism does not take place, as it first understands who these textual characters are within the ancient Mediterranean context. This is significant in terms of interpretation, because a contemporary reader must not anachronistically assume that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are the Jews of today, which by implication takes the language of John 8:12-59 outside of its context. Rather, the language is placed within the Greco-Roman culture, giving the contemporary reader the knowledge to discern a responsible interpretation that consciously understands the biblical text within its context first.

The roots of this anachronism are found in the difference (and even similarities) between our culture and the culture of the ancient Mediterranean world. Witherington (2009:16-19) provides notable differences that need to be recognised when approaching a New Testament text. These are three factors that function as a guideline for us to understand the cultural and socio-political context of the first readers and hearers. It attempts to situate the language of John 8:12-59 in its context, so that it is understood within that location first. To avoid perpetuating what Dunn (2001:51) hinted in the introduction, a synthesis of these factors within an understanding of Second Temple Judaism will be

helpful to ensure an excavation of Judaism is understood and not anachronistically assumed. Therefore, the three factors – "Collectivist Culture and Identity", "Economic System and the Temple", and "Honour and Shame" will be explained primarily according to the context of the ancient Mediterranean, and within "identity constructs" of Second Temple Judaism. This will ensure that the potential cultural differences/similarities between the biblical text and contemporary readers are mediated responsibly through a conscious understanding of the "world behind the text".

Collectivist Culture and Identity

Firstly, ancient cultures were, to a far greater degree than most modern cultures, collectivist cultures (Witherington 2009:17). This is primarily based on the differences of identity. Identity in the ancient world was largely established by what group one was part of and by factors like geography, gender, and generation (Witherington 2009:17). These were all patriarchal cultures, where the question of "who is your father" was crucial (Witherington 2009:17). This is precisely why the Gospel writers had to go to such lengths to explain Jesus' origin (Witherington 2009:17). Moxnes (2010:95) explains that identity begins and belongs to a specific space, where the first space is the material spatial practices (or "perceived space") and the second space is the representation of space or better known as "conceived space". The first "perceived" space in the ancient Mediterranean context, or at least as described in the Gospels, was the Temple. This material space had practices that include: agricultural production by peasants, taxation, and also required tithing, which were all, controlled by the elite and occurred within the Temple (cf. Moxnes 2010:95). The second space operates differently, as the material practice is used in the household and participated by a local community, and the governing body of these practises are then represented by the power of the elite (cf. Moxnes 2010:95). Thus, the second space is "conceived" as it consists of images and representations of spatiality, as the thought processes and ideology are what govern the practices that are performed within material spatial setting (cf. Moxnes 2010:95).[21]

In John 8:12-59, Yeshua spoke in the temple (ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ) but specifically in the treasury (ἐν τῷ γαζοφυλακίῳ) (cf. John 8:20). This *narratio* – which explains the nature of the disputed matter or the facts that are relevant to the discussion (Witherington 2009:16),[22] alludes to a Temple

[21] In Palestinian society reflected in the Gospels we may think of this ideology as the Torah regulations as well as oral traditions that provided legitimation of the material practises and made them appear as "natural" (Moxnes 2010:95).

[22] The *narratio* is an element that could be omitted on occasion (Witherington 2009:18).

significance that I believe is the thrust of the authors' argument. According to Flusser (2009:21), the Jewish Temple was the spiritual centre and the place where Jewish holidays were celebrated. The Jewish holidays were celebrated both in the temple and in synagogues, which all faced towards the Jerusalem Temple (Flusser 2009:21). Thus, the Temple represented a symbolic space that is fundamentally tied to the Jewish identity. This is because the spaces are part of the identity of the group, as identity is rooted in memory systems that function as cultural symbols for the group's own identity. Identity in the ancient world was based on memory systems which provided a living basis for cultural identity, where tradition operates as a cultural symbol that objectifies communities axiomatic means and norms, thereby giving moral intelligibility and dispositional orientation to the world (Kirk 2010:61). Malina (2010:17) assists us here with understanding that the people of the ancient Mediterranean had a collectivistic understanding of identity and culture. Collectivistic individuals think of themselves primarily as part of a group, for example as a member of a family, an ethnic group, a team, and even a gang (Malina 2010:17). The group, then, lives in accordance to these norms and meanings as a means of their social interaction within the group's or in-groups identity.[23] The in-group refers to a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, sharing some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves and achieving some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership in it (Malina 2010:20).

Judaism, according to Cohen (1994:9-11), had five unifying forces: Temple, Torah, covenant nomism, monotheistic belief in God (shema), and election (separation from Gentiles).[24] Cohen (1994:4) gives us three designations that described who the Jews/Judeans were: firstly, geographical designation, which is located in Judea, a district around Jerusalem (Cohen 1994:4). This area is an ancient portion of the tribe of Judah, and includes districts of Galilee, Transjordan, the coastal plain, Samaria, Judea, and Idumea (Cohen 1994:4).[25] The second designation is ethnicity. Ethnically the

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[23] The collective mind-set was based on a more parental socialization process, which would learn and live in terms of the norms and meanings of social interaction (Malina 2010:18).

[24] For collectivists groups, groups give their name to places; wherever group member are, they always bear the name of their group/place of origin (Malina 2010:21). Judeans are Judeans no matter where they are located in the Roman Empire, and no matter how long they have lived away from the original group birth locations (Malina 2010:21).

[25] In antiquity Jews were scattered throughout the entire eastern Mediterranean basin: Italy, Greece, modern day Turkey (ancient Asia Minor), Syria, Judea, Egypt and North Africa, and modern day Libya (ancient Cyrenaica) (Cohen 1994:5).

Jews are brought together by a common ancestry, as Jews thought of themselves as descendants of the tribe of Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob (Cohen 1994:4-5). Cohen (1994:5) further adds that, politically speaking, the Jews of Judea were regarded by their neighbours and conquerors as an *ethnos* (meaning a nation), who's defining element in antiquity was a common descendent from a single progenitor (an ancestor or parent) (i.e. Abraham). Even Yeshua in John 8:37, as I indicated above, did not deny that the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua are the σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ("seed of Abraham"). Lastly, the third designation was culture. Culturally speaking, the Jews are those who identified themselves as Jews and practiced or hoped to practise a Jewish way of life (Cohen 1994:5). This attitude and distinction was because the Jews saw themselves in a very different light, as a special people, knowledge of the one true God, as well as having customs and a morality that was divinely inspired (cf. Whittaker 1984:14). It is no wonder then that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua, take offense in John 8:41 and associate their fatherhood with God, after stating already in John 8:33 to being "Abraham's seed".

But Yeshua is in the Second Jewish temple when saying these things in John 8:20. The temple had various functions; particularly, in terms of it being the centre of where rituals and celebrations took place (cf. Schmidt 2001:93). Without a ritual, an act of transformation of the profane through desecration rites opens up a breach in the system and opens up a threat to disintegration within their identity claim and unifying symbols (cf. Schmidt 2001:93). Furthermore, the temple is also the mediation between the natural and the supernatural, as the Priests had to perform acts of purification on behalf of the community (Schmidt 2001:97). Thus, the material space of the Temple is then conceived by the priests, who act as representatives and perform the in-groups cultural practises within this sacred space, which were very much part of their Jewish identity. Yet, if Yeshua represents Christianity in our present context, why then is the Jewish temple the space in which Yeshua speaks at while attending the Feast of Tabernacles? Would this space be significant for an early Christian group who believes Yeshua is the Messiah and Son of God? And if so, what is the significance within the social-political context of John 8:12-59?

According to popular belief, the Jews were regarded as a nation and the Christians as a sect (Bediako 1999:15). Dunn (2009:5) shows that the term 'Christian' first appears in our sources only in the 110s CE, making it over eighty years after the events narrated by Luke in Acts 1-5, or their historical equivalent. A sect is a group within Judaism and suggests that among fellow Jews, Jesus'

disciples, as soon as they were perceived as a significant body, were regarded as yet another of the factions which were a feature of late Second Temple Judaism; as distinctive, and as 'sectarian', as better known like the Pharisees (Dunn 2009:14). There was no single term that served to designate or describe those who participated in the sequel to the death of Jesus and its immediate aftermath (Dunn 2009:15).[26] Therefore, the implication is clear that the Christianity which was beginning to emerge in the early 30s was not a single thing but a whole sequence of relationships of emerging perspectives of attitude and belief of developing patterns of interaction and worship, conduct, and mission (Dunn 2009:16). King (2003:41) supports this, as she argues that the there is no evidence that people who followed Jesus meant a definite break from Judaism. As it was not until well into the third and fourth centuries that at least some followers of Jesus continued to attend the synagogue, observe commandments, including dietary laws and circumcision, and emphasized a common non-supersessionist heritage (King 2003:41).

The Gospel of John then, being viewed as an ancient biography allows us to not view the biblical text as an anti-Jewish text, but rather, opens up multiple possibilities for the potential meaning of this biblical text for us today, by understanding it first within its Jewish identity construct. Whether the author is vilifying οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in general, or specifically the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua, the significance of Christianity being a Jewish sect within the first century CE, is an indication that an interpretation of John 8:12-59 must be evaluated within the ethnic-religious identity of Judaism. This then makes the focus on Yeshua's identity and genre of an ancient biography, significant. Richard Burridge, arguing respectively that techniques of ancient book production and distribution make it highly unlikely that the gospels could have been meant for anything other than a general audience, highlights that the redaction-critical approach to the gospels (by reinforcing their relatedness to a *Sitz im Leben* within particular communities) has obscured their clear commonality with the Greco-Roman *βίοι*, a genre of writing which focuses on the presentation of a single-figure subject to a wide audience (Mortyer 2001:94). The final author does this by beginning with a prologue: "a preface or introduction to a literary work" (cf. *Britannica Academic* 2019). Prologues worked differently in ancient Greek, where the character is introduced before the action of the drama

[26] A term suggested by Dunn (2009:14-15) is the "Nazarene Sect". The Nazarene sect is a group that is closely associated with the Jewish way of describing the first disciples, as they were followers of the man of Nazareth (cf. Dunn 2009:14-15). However, the term Nazarene is a term that persisted as the name for Syrian Christians, and was adopted by the Persians, the Armenians and later the Arabs (Dunn 2009:14-15).

(*Britannica Academic* 2019). The prologue was a common feature of ancient bibliographies. While modern biographies are more interested in the personal appearance, the sociological and psychological factors of the character development, or a consistently precise chronology, the ancient biographies, on the other hand, do not follow that order as we are not the elements needed to characterise ancient literature (Witherington1995:2-3). Thus, Witherington (1995:3) indicates that the common features of an ancient biography are:

- Firstly, there is a prologue.
- Secondly, they focus on a particular individual (unlike ancient histories, which were generally much broader in scope); this individual is introduced by name directly after the prologue and not in the prologue itself (Witherington 1995:3).
- Thirdly, there is a use of chronological, geographical, and topical categories to arrange the material. There was normally an interest in saying something about the origins and outcome of the subject's life; thus normal "life" began with the character's origins and concluded with statements about his or her death and on-going impact (Witherington 1995:3).
- Fourthly, a record deed and word used to build up a portrait or characterisation of the subject of the biography with a focus on incidents that were especially revealing of that person's character (Witherington 1995:3). This brings the character in particular light, and the mode of presentation was some form of continuous narrative, with some interruptions and digressions (Witherington 1995:3).
- Fifthly, a papyrus roll comprised of 21,000-24,000 words and was read out aloud in the audience (Witherington 1995:3). The Fourth Gospel contains 15,416 words, making it halfway the length of the Synoptic Gospels and well within the requisite length to fit on one papyrus roll (Witherington 1995:3).
- Lastly, a tone in most of these biographies, especially those which intended to present their subject in a positive light that tended to be serious in character, inculcating an atmosphere of respect or even reverence in audience for the subject (Witherington 1995:3).

The above characteristics are present in the final Gospel of John that we have today. Although this thesis will not indicate specific evidence of each feature, a brief explanation of the significant features in association with the identity theme of this project, allows for a connection to be made with the genre of ancient biography. Firstly, John's Gospel begins with a prologue (cf. John1:1-18). Secondly, the final author then distinguishes between John the Baptist's identity (cf. John 1:19-28) and Yeshua's identity (cf. John 1:29-34). This distinction is important as the prologue already alludes to this tension between these two identities (cf. John 1:15, 17). However, the final author does introduces Yeshua in the prologue (cf. John 1:17), and again immediately after the scene of the defence of John's identity in John 1:29 (see John 1:19-28). Phillip then refers to Yeshua as explicitly as the son of Joseph in John 1:45, when announcing to Nathanael. Lastly, the discourses between Yeshua and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are often situated in Jerusalem, where the whole structure of the narrative is based on these disputes that reveal significant aspects of Yeshua's identity within the Ἰουδαίους festivals, and geographical location of Jerusalem. In addition, the disputes between the Ἰουδαῖοι and Yeshua portray Yeshua positively towards his opponents, and admonish the Ἰουδαῖοι negatively. The distinct dualism between the groups is distinguished by believing in Yeshua, which in turn makes Yeshua revered because of his significant identity.

This makes sense within a collective identity culture that also understood their salvation collectively. Salvation was not an individual project but rather a group exercise, where salvation was seen as something that God was working in and into the group and its collective identity, especially considering that it met together as an assembly (Witherington 2009:17). It was much easier to appeal to the notion of a group loyalty, group identity, the need for control and unity within the group, because the cultural scripts of that culture had already undergirded such a value (Witherington 2009:17). Thus, the implied author constructing this biblical narrative with absolute loyalty to Yeshua's word (cf. John 8:31), provokes a group fidelity to the identity of Yeshua, for the groups' own purpose. The rigid belief displayed in the narrative, could be the authors attempt to ensure group allegiance to Yeshua, which would not be far-fetched for an emerging Jewish sect within Judaism, because in collectivistic cultures most people's social behaviour is largely determined by group goals that require the pursuit of achievements, which improve the position of the group (cf. Malina 2010:22). The defining attributes of collectivistic culture are family integrity, solidarity, and keeping the primary in-group in "good health" (Malina 2010:22). Therefore, the group's identity is

maintained through collective accountability whereby the group remains and lives according to the precepts, cultural memory, and ethnical reasoning within the group's identity, which in this case, is rooted in remaining and believing in Yeshua's word (τῷ λόγῳ) (cf. John 8:31).

Economic System and the Temple

The second factor we need to understand when approaching a New Testament text is the economic systems and nature of relationships implied within these texts. This certainly affected rhetoric as the ancient cultures had totally different economic systems than our own. In addition, they were not democracies (cf. Witherington 2009:18). There was no free market economy in antiquity; people "got ahead" in life on the basis of patronage and clientage, making it a reciprocity culture (Witherington 2009:18). This also had an effect on identity as the first century Mediterranean societies were very significantly stratified and categorised by group identities, with large measure of discrimination between group's: slave/free; rich/poor; honestiores/humiliores; Roman/Greek; Jew/Gentile (Clarke and Tucker 2014:44). Witherington (2009:18) goes as far as to say, the idea that a human being, much less a deity would do an act of undeserved favour or give an unmerited benefit to someone, without either demanding or asking anything in return, made little sense in a reciprocity culture.[27] As already indicated, the identity of the Judeans had a spatial identification with the Temple. The Temple identification was religious and very much part of the Jews identity in antiquity. Therefore, Yeshua standing by the Temple demonstrates a symbolic identity association with Judaism, as the Temple was a space of identity that was internalized by Judeans and served as a unifying symbol for their group identity. However, the Temple also had an economic function through means of temple tax (cf. Moxnes 2010:95).

The Temple had an economic function as the priestly families worked with the political elites, but the leaders were unable to resist the temptation to gain for themselves and at the expense of social stability (Hertzog 2000:104). Their very base of power, the temple, posed its quandary, because the temple was the symbolic centre of a people who refused to assimilate into the Hellenistic culture and Roman world in the way that collaborationists elites in other area of the empire had done quite

[27] Witherington (2009:18) here is reflecting on Paul's decision on working with his own hands and refusing patronage from the elite Christians in Corinth, which led to trouble. Even more difficult, is that Paul was serving a rhetoric of grace in a culture where it was believed that you did not get "something for nothing", as it was all a matter of exchange (Witherington 2009:18). Yet, this is how Paul depicted the nature of salvation and grace, which must've been a hard to sell in terms of rhetoric, within a culture that even had to "payback" gods (Witherington 2009:18).

gladly (Hertzog 2000:104). This is because in the ancient world, economics were not divorced from politics since the political leader was personally enriched by and held dominance over the economy (Fiensy 2010: 199). Furthermore, kinship relations interpenetrated political, economic, and religious life (Hanson & Oakman 2008:3). Religious institutions outside the family were obtained through taxation compelled by political authorities (Hanson & Oakman 2008:125). The Temple held power over the peasant (lower classes) under God's (and God's representatives') demands (Hanson & Oakman 2008:143). The peasants depended on the temple for personal spiritual rectification within the group, and social-economic produce through agricultural prosperity. The peasants (lower classes) were indebted not only through the need to rectify sins and remove impurities, but also through means of depending on the temple priest for regulating their lives with God, which would evidently ensure fertility to the land and their crops (cf. Hanson & Oakman 2008:143).

The political religion of the temple was expressed comprehensively through personal and communal debts and obligations (Hanson & Oakman 2008:143), obligations such as pilgrimages. Pilgrimages were a strong-group experience, expression of social solidarity, and not simply reflections of conscious choice (Hanson & Oakman 2008:143). This is particularly rooted in the collectivistic identity of the group and the symbolic unifying symbols of the Judean nation. According to Deuteronomy 16:16, Judean males were obligated to visit the temple three times a year at the major festivals (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles) (Hanson & Oakman 2008:143). The communal sacrifices of the temple brought hope to ordinary people that the God worshipped by the Judeans was a God of justice who offered alternative visions for a new household economy (Hanson & Oakman 2008:143). Furthermore, the great pilgrimage festivals, with their *selamim* sacrifices as the prominent feature, were times of communal joy when God provided food for the hungry and when a different kind of redistributive economy was associated with the divine will (Hanson & Oakman 2008:143).[28] It is no wonder then, why the final authors of John 8:12-59 places Yeshua in the Temple by the Temple treasury at a Feast of Tabernacles, and has Yeshua attend festivals in Jerusalem. The emerging Jewish sect is still connected to Jewish festivals due to their requirements that pertain to their identity as citizens within the Judean nation. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the Temple and treasury alludes to the spiritual and economic arrangement that the Temple

[28] At these times of great joy, the ordinary Judean envisioned a new domestic economy of God (Hanson & Oakman 2008:143).

symbolized through means of Temple tax and tithes. The Temple and collectivistic identity symbols functioned as alternative acts against Hellenistic and Roman influence (cf. Hertzog 2000:104), an ideal vision that the priests failed to maintain by gaining for themselves.

This in-group corruption could not stand in the unfortunate outcome of the Second Jewish Temple being destroyed by the Roman Empire in 70 CE. Dunn (2009:1100) stresses that, like the fall of Constantinople in 1453 CE, the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE marks one of the great turning points in the history of the Mediterranean world. Andreas J. Köstenberger, a research professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, agrees but also connects it to John's Gospel by saying that the destruction of the Second Jewish Temple in 70 CE is the most promising candidate for the formative influence on John's Gospel, as we know that it actually happened (2009:71). There is general agreement that it happened not long before the composition of the Gospel (Köstenberger 2009:71). This thesis will not, however, debate the composition and dating of John's Gospel, rather, the point is that in terms of Jewish history and the Judean identity construct, the destruction of the Temple actually happened. A Jewish sect was affected by this action, as the temple was a unifying symbol of Judaism within antiquity. The temple was the most unifying force in ancient Judaism and a focal point of Jewish piety (Cohen 1994:9). For the Jews, the temple was the footstool of the divine throne, the palace of God, and the temple protected the natural order, guaranteeing plentiful rain and abundant harvest, warding off disaster and disease, as the temple was the centre of the Jewish world (Cohen 1994:10). Cohen's (1994) point here is valid considering the role of spaces within the collective identity of groups (cf. Moxnes 2010:95).

The demonstrably universal impact that the destruction of the temple had on Jews, not only affected those in Judea but also those in the Diaspora, heightens the possibility that the composition of the Gospel was also marked by that impact, or rather it makes it incredible to suppose that it was not (Köstenberger 2009:71). The destruction fits into an inherited Jewish typological substructure that qualifies physical sanctuaries as merely provincial manifestations of God's presence, and cherishes expectations that the Messiah would inaugurate a fuller and more permanent manifestation of God's presence with God's people (Köstenberger 2009:71). Köstenberger (2009:71) bases this on the link between the temple and John's Christology, whereby John's Gospel is trying to keep both responses to the loss of sanctuaries by God's people and with Jewish messianic expectations centred on God's coming and manifesting God's presence more fully in the person of the Messiah. Köstenberger's

(2009:71) position here would not be far-fetched, especially considering the two Messianic movements' revolts against the Roman Empire during and after the destruction of the Second Jewish Temple.

These Messianic movements are: the Simon Bar Giora movement in 68-70 CE and the Simon ben Kosiba movement in 132-135 CE (Heard & Evans 2000:938). The latter Messianic movement of Simon ben Kosiba (132-135 CE) was encouraged by Rabbi Aqiba, who proclaimed that Simon ben Kosiba was the Messiah (Heard & Evans 2000:938). The support particularly consisted of Judean peasantry (cf. Heard & Evans 2000:939), but surprisingly included the emerging Jewish sect, which is now understood to be Christianity. Jewish Christians refused to fight in the first revolt, but their loyalty to Bar Kokhba in the second was a contradiction to their own Messianic movement allegiance, as it rejected Jesus as the Messiah (Wilson 1989:83). Ironically, in both Jewish revolts against Roman power, according to Bediako (1999:34), resulted in the Judeans being defeated by force. The principle goal of the movements, according to Heard and Evans (2000:938), was for these "revolutionaries" or "Messianic movement leaders" to overthrow Herodian and Roman domination of Palestine. In spite of the Empire's military might, these messianic movements were difficult to subdue (Heard & Evans 2000:938), as they were motivated by something else - a deep need for liberation.

In addition, the messianic movement that was led by Simon bar Giora (68-70 CE) was motivated by the social oppression exerted by Israel's aristocracy (Heard & Evans 2000:938). The temple corruption was rooted in exploitation through means of debt (cf. Hertzog 2000:104), which could be a possible socio-political reason and contrast of the implied author of John's Gospel, by specifically situating Yeshua in the temple treasury (cf. John 8:20). Such action of corruption, injustice, brutality and high handedness of the last two procurators of Judea and Samaria, Albinus (62-64 CE) and Gessius Florus (64-66 CE), resulted in an outbreak of war against Rome (Scott 1995:101). The explosion came in 66 CE, when Gessius Florus insulted Jewish religious customs and waged war until 70 CE, where the temple and Jewish states were in ashes (Scott 1995:102). Gabba (1999:586) further explains that, the Jewish revolt of 66-70 CE against Rome did not begin suddenly, but was preceded by a long series of incidents, including revolutionary activities. In 66 CE an incident occurred regarding the synagogue in Caesarea, where Judeans seized the temple treasury to help

make up for arrears of tribute and then halted traditional sacrifices for the emperor and his family (Gabba 1999:586).

The Romans then sent Castius, governor of Syria, who was later ambushed with his forces in a gorge near Beth-Horon (Dunn 2009:1101). Many Jews abandoned the city, but knew very well that the Romans would return in force, as the Jews committed to revolt by appointing two commanders to defend the capital, Joseph ben Gorion and High Priest Ananias (Dunn 2009:1101). Nero, the Roman Emperor at the time, then appointed Vespasian and assembled three legions and many troops and began to attack Galilee (Gabba 1999:586). Many Jews had gone to Jerusalem for refuge, but Vespasian surrounded it in the summer of 68 CE (Gabba 1999:586). However, Nero died, resulting in the suspension of military operations until the situation was clear of who would take over Nero's emperorship (cf. Gabba 1999:586).

Johnson (1999:970) indicates that during this time there were four candidates for the role. The first was Otto, who was ousted and murdered by Galba, and then later committed suicide after defeat was certain from Vitellius - the commander of the German legions (cf. Johnson 1999:970). Vitellius became emperor, but was overthrown on the 1st of July by the legions of Alexander who hailed for Vespasian to be the emperor, resulting in allied forces overthrowing Vitellius and assassinating him (cf. Johnson 1999:970). Vespasian was declared emperor by troops in Egypt and throughout the East (cf. Gabba 1999:586). Vespasian then took over and secured his dynasty's succession by appointing his first son Titus and then Domitian, as partners in his government (cf. Johnson 1999:970). Thus, it was Titus who was given four legions to finish conquering Jerusalem (cf. Gabba 1999:586). In the midst of this, Zealots and the Messianic movement emerged, which were fixed on eschatological hopes of overthrowing the Roman Empire. The Jewish Zealots neither respected the emperor nor his ancient pantheon of gods (Selvidge 2003:21). Zealots can be traced back to the clash between the Roman procurator Florus and Jerusalem citizenry, where during the term of this Roman procurator, Florus had pilfered the temple treasury, allowed his army to loot the city and attempted to capture the temple (Heard & Evans 2000:945). Thus, the refusal to offer sacrifices was tantamount to a declaration of war, breaking the peace treaty and making Israel regarded as outside of the Roman Empire (cf. Heard & Evans 2000:945). This was because the Roman government and policy makers

could not tolerate a loss of power and so enacted laws and punishments for insurrectionists (cf. Selvidge 2003:21-22).

Moreover, the Zealots still emerged and seemed to have divided factional leadership (Gabba 1999:586-587). Titus, however, besieged Jerusalem through the spring and summer of 70 CE, and the city was well defeated as the Romans had the resources and technical skill (Gabba 1999:587). Titus gave his troops permission to burn and sack the city. The lower city was subjugated first, then the upper city, until late September when all of Jerusalem was in flames (Dunn 2009:1103). Grabbe (2010:76) explains how the Zealots fought bravely and fanatically in the final siege of Jerusalem, and how most of them perished in the battle. In addition, Grabbe (2010:76) explains that, the Sicarri had left Jerusalem long before, and it was the Sicarri, not the Zealots, who held out at Masada (73-74 CE), despite Yadin's confusing relevance to that last holdout against Rome as a Zealot.

In my view, the narration in John 8:20 plausibly refers to Jewish trauma memory of the Second Temple destruction, and violent events that implicated Jews even after that destruction (i.e. Masada). To support this, Köstenberger (2009:61-63) indicates three effects of the temple destruction. Firstly, it gave Christians a "window of opportunity" for the emerging group, from being excommunicated from Israel by decree of Jerusalem (Köstenberger 2009:61). As the destruction of the temple also handed the Christians a propaganda coup, for it gave them the chance to argue that the catastrophe was divine judgement of Israel for the rejection of Jesus (Köstenberger 2009:61). This is particularly significant because, according to Köstenberger (2009:66), after the temple's destruction the Pharisaic leaders consolidated a policy of consolidation and exclusion, as they sought to fend off both disintegration within Judaism itself and the attraction of outside forces, including paganism, Christianity, and Gnosticism.[29]

Secondly, it affected the identification of the Judeans and diaspora communities. Diaspora communities acknowledge the centrality of the temple through pilgrimages and the widespread participation in the dispatch of monetary offerings for the support of the temple, as the Jerusalem temple remained the central institution of the Jewish people (Köstenberger 2009:64). However, the Romans "trumpeted their victory throughout the empire", resulting in coins proclaiming Judea

[29] The Torah became central and differences between rabbinic schools minimized a process that culminated in the codification of the Mishnah in the early third century, where then the synagogue replaced the temple as a symbol of Jewish unity (Kostenberger 2009:66).

Capta, and the Temple of peace (in which spoils of the Judean wars were displayed) was dedicated on the Capitol in 76 CE (Köstenberger 2009:62). Furthermore, the Latin name *Iudaeus* (Greek Ἰουδαῖοι) led to post-revolt reprisals against Jews all across the empire (Köstenberger 2009:62). The term most basically referred to Judeans, the inhabitants of Judea, but it was also the usual term for Jews wherever they lived, and thus served to tar all Jews as supporters of the revolt (Köstenberger 2009:62). Köstenberger (2009:62) assists in making the connection of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι within the socio-political context of the Roman Empire, as he hints to the generic term that was being used by the Romans for all Jews in antiquity, called Ἰουδαῖοι (in Greek) and *Iudaeus* (in Latin), after the destruction of the Judeans Second Temple

The third implication, according to Köstenberger (2009:63), was Jewish "temple tax". The annual Jewish offering in support of the temple was after its destruction converted not merely into an imperial tax (the *fiscus Judaicus*), but a tax of which the income was devoted to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus (Köstenberger 2009:63). This *ficus Judaicus* was collected rigorously under the reign of Domitian (81-96 CE) (cf. Köstenberger 2009:63). During Domitians reign this would include proselytes and Jewish apostates, who would include the emerging Christian community, making all these groups have to pay this tax to the Roman emperor (cf. Köstenberger 2009:63). This is significant because it was not until Domitian's successor, Nerva (96-98 CE) that the Roman Empire began to distinguish between Jews and Christians (Köstenberger 2009:63). The last point supports Dunn's (2009:17) earlier mentioned position in the previous section, where the distinction between the two religions only started around the 110s. Thus, the new economic tax policy to the Temple of Jupiter is significant; especially considering that Yeshua says these things by the "Temple Treasury" (cf. John 8:20) that is no longer there. Charlesworth (2014:4) affirms this by explaining that the treasury in the temple also performed banking functions, receiving donations, as well as required taxes and tithes. The temple tax of a half-shekel demanded of each male every year, insured that money flowed into the temple treasury from all over the known world, from Adiabene in the east to Spain in the west (Charlesworth 2014:4). Other gifts insured outstanding wealth within the temple, including Herod the Great's lavish edifices and spoils of many wars (Charlesworth 2014:4).

Yeshua saying these things by the Temple Treasury (cf. John 8:20), could be a rhetorical attempt to remind this early Christian group of a social-political memory, which was a traumatic experience that affected the sect within the Judean nation. However, the main objective here is to demonstrate

how the Roman Empire and the Judean factions were involved in its socio-political context, where their sacred space of their identity was destroyed. Things changed for Judaism, the Pharisees attempted to consolidate the Jewish identity from outside influences, and Christians attempted to utilize the opportunity to solidify its own emerging identity. Moreover, in terms of John 8:20, what seems clear here rhetorically is a socio-political connection to Second Temple Judaism, both pre- and post-Second Temple destruction, which is not separate to the Roman Imperial power. In addition, understanding the identification and the role of Temple in terms of the religious aspect of pilgrimages, demonstrates a potential social-political context that John 8:12-59 may be situated in, or rhetorically alluding to, through means of this narration; making this element of the "Economic System and Temple" be a significant and helpful when reading and interpreting this biblical text.

Honour and Shame

Lastly, the third factor to consider when interpreting a New Testament text using rhetorical analysis, according to Witherington (2009:18-19), is that all ancient cultures were "honour and shame" cultures. Establishing honour and avoiding shame was more important than truth, more important than life or death (Witherington 2009:18). On the other hand, according to Rohrbaugh (2010:111), honour is the status one claimed in the community, together with the all-important public recognition of that claim. This meant access to power and privilege that could be gained no other way (Rohrbaugh 2010:111). In a culture where identity is collective, and the economic system is rooted in reciprocal relationships, honour was of great value for individuals within these groups. Legitimate honour is honour that was publicly recognised, and determined your life prospects (Rohrbaugh 2010:111). Rohrbaugh (2010:111) further adds that it provided access to power, opened doors to patrons, conferred the right to exercise authority and, above all, accorded one an audience and the right to speak in public. Shame, on the other hand, was negative, so negative it had an effect on the whole group's identity. Shame was a social catastrophe, especially since shame for one member of a family meant shame for all (Rohrbaugh 2010:111).

In terms of honour, there are two types of honour within the ancient Mediterranean context: ascribed and acquired honour. Ascribed honour comes primarily from one's family; for example, one's ancestry (Rohrbaugh 2010:118).[30] Acquired honour, on the other hand, was a matter of the way one

[30] Honour status is thus given or ascribed at birth, which meant that all members of the family, both male and female, were at roughly the same honour level (Rohrbaugh 2010:118).

lived (Rohrbaugh 2010:118). It was the product of virtue – a public acknowledged worthiness (Rohrbaugh 2010:118). In John 8:12-59, this is evident with the Ἰουδαῖοι "who believed" ascribed honour is being challenged through means of association with the Devil (cf. John 8:44), and even Yeshua being labelled as being a Samaritan and Demon-possessed (cf. John 8:48). This Rohrbaugh (2010:113-114) sees as a "challenge-riposte". The challenging of honour of another offered a means of gaining honour for oneself (Rohrbaugh 2010:113). The result was that the game of challenge-riposte became a central and very public phenomenon (Rohrbaugh 2010:113). This game had two objections: firstly, the game attempts to undermine the honour of another person through words, gesture, and actions (cf. Rohrbaugh 2010:113-114). Secondly, a response of equal measure or ups the ante by means of returning the challenge at the same level (cf. Rohrbaugh 2010:114). Yeshua challenges the ascribed honour of the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in him, by acknowledging that they are Abraham's seed (cf. John 8:33), but then suggesting that they are not set free (cf. John 8:31-32) and are slaves to sin (cf. John 8:34) if they don't accept his word. The challenge of the Ἰουδαῖοι ascribed honour is rooted in their Jewish identity construct and Judaism unifying symbols, whereby the Judeans had a covenantal nomism, which stressed that Jews and God are bound to each other through a covenant; thus, the Jews are obligated to observe the law in return for being God's people (cf. Cohen 1994:10-11).

Yeshua, however, does not disregard that the Judeans are Abraham's seed (cf. John 8:37). The reaffirming rhetorical strategy here seems to be a challenge of ethnicity. Ethnicity by definition is concerned with culture-shared meaning, which consists of any combination of the following: widely accepted values/norms which govern behaviour, a corporate name for the group, myths of the common ancestry, shared 'historical' memories, an actual or symbolic attachment to a specific territory or ancestral land, a shared language or dialect, kinship patterns, shared customs, a shared religion, and a shared genetic feature (Esler 2014:65). In terms of this, the "common name" (Ἰουδαῖοι), "attachment to a specific territory or ancestral land" (the Temple in Jerusalem) and "myths of a common ancestry" (Abraham), seems to be at the fore. This is evident with the narration in John 8:20 and Greek word σπέρμα (cf. John 8:37), which means: "seed, off-spring, children, descendants, and posterity" (Aland, Aland, Karavidpoulos, Martini, & Metzger 2012:167). Yet, the issue proceeds to be about accepting Yeshua, but the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua reinstate their Fatherhood to Abraham in John 8:39. The ethnic identity claim made by these early Christians seem

to be alluding to the fourth and fifth unifying symbol of Judaism, monotheism and election. However, Yeshua distinguishes between his Father (πατρὶ) and the Father (πατρὸς) of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who believe (cf. John 8:38). The paternal parenthood distinction is confusing if both Yeshua and the Ἰουδαῖοι believe in him have a shared ethnic religious belief of monotheism. Monotheism is the belief in one God, which was a belief shared by all Jews in antiquity (Shema) (Cohen 1994:10-11). Furthermore, in terms of election, the Jews of antiquity were animated by some sense of separation or difference, where some Jews advocated a strict separation from the Gentiles regarding them as impure and others more accommodating and realistic to their attitude towards the outside world (Cohen 1994:11).

The challenge-riposte makes no sense without understanding the diversity within Second Temple Judaism, which is tied to the significance of the unifying symbols in the first place. Friedlander (1991:49) stresses that the religious syncretism and sectarianism battled with one another and created movements of Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, New Covenanters, and others. However, they lacked a coherent synthesis and were unable to provide the religious unity they needed to combat the crisis of the political, cultural, and social disintegration (Muddiman 1991:31). The reason is primarily rooted in the different ideological and socio-political positions each group had within Judaism. Moreover, revolutionary movements were a Jewish response to the injustice of Israel's oppressors, particularly the Roman Empire (Heard & Evans 2000:936), thus, making the disunity of this diversity within a people who understand their identity collectively, even more complicated. The significance here, however, is rooted in the collectivistic identity perspective, as the people of the ancient Mediterranean world had dyadic personalities. Persons always considered themselves in terms of the group (s) in which they experienced themselves as inextricably embedded (Malina 2001:62). We might describe such a psychological orientation as "dyadism" (from the Greek word meaning pair, a twosome), as opposed to "individualism" (Malina 2001:62). The dyadic person is essentially a group-embedded and group oriented person (some call such a person "collectively-oriented") (Malina 2001:62). In addition, such people are so collectively bound that their very identity is interdependent on the group that they belong to, as such a group-embedded, collectivistic personality is one who simply needs another continually in order to know who he or she really is (Malina 2001:62).

Although collectivistic identity was part of the context of the ancient Mediterranean, this thesis is not attempting to suggest that collective identity formation is a phenomenon of the past. Neither is this project attempting to insinuate that contemporary readers of today do not belong to community orientated ethnic identities that prioritize a collectivistic (or "dyadic") personality in their identity formation. Rather, the concern is to understand the author's construction within the context in which the implied audience would have been located. The implied author, who writes to a group within the cultural diversity of Second Temple Judaism, uses language that is understood as part of the unifying symbols within Judaism. The text is directed to the group, which rhetorically has implications within the implied readers/hearers cultural context. The implications could possibly be shaming a Jewish group, or challenging the group within the diversity of Second Temple Judaism. However, the main point is that these texts are written to an audience who understands their identity collectively and have dyadic personalities. A good rhetorician knew that they had to start with their group first, in order to lead them in a different direction (Witherington 2009:18-19). The rhetoric of the New Testament calls for a trans-valuation of the extant cultural values in various ways (Witherington 2009:18). In other words, we need to re-evaluate New Testament texts on the basis of what the language would mean within the culture it is situated in; particularly, understanding what language was being employed through rhetoric, and determining what it possibly means within that context first.

In conclusion of part (a) of this chapter, the three factors within the context of Second Temple Judaism reveal that the author is challenging the very identity of the Ἰουδαῖοι "who believe" in Yeshua. The emerging Jewish sect within Judaism uses the unifying symbols of the Judean nation in antiquity, as a basis of the discourse. The emerging sect is within Judaism and among other sects who are suffering within the Roman imperial oppression, and quite possibly intra-Jewish temple corruption. The ramifications, reveal an identity and economic challenge within the in-groups identity, and have cultural implications in terms of the honour and shame culture. Furthermore, the rhetorical ramifications of the language used has to be understood within the collectivist understanding of identity in the ancient Mediterranean context; a context that has a different economic system, and measures societal validation and group identity within an honour and shame culture. The context of John's Gospel is situated either pre or post Second Temple Destruction. The Second Temple Context is not void of the Roman Empire's strong influences, as the very

social-political destruction of this Jewish religious centre involves them directly. However, what role do texts have within this context? If the implied readers/hearers are a sect with Judaism, why does the implied author use dualistic boundaries that demonize fellow Jewish people? And how are texts employed as rhetorical manuscripts for identity formation?

Chapter Two (b): Identity Constructs within the Ancient Mediterranean Context

Key words: Identity, Judaism and Sects, Ethnicity, Group identity, Boundaries, Second Temple Jewish Literature.

Textual Boundaries as Identity Formation

Boundaries as Identity Construction

Judith Lieu, a British theologian and historian, explains that boundaries are reinforced through the text, where these texts construct a sense of 'who we are' (Lieu 2004:30). The construction and maintenance of the identity of the text had much to do with the elite (Lieu 2004:30). Lieu (2004:30-31) further explains that questions of style and subject matter would become weapons in a battle to establish difference, as well as to foster the interests of the elite and at the same time spread the Roman Empire. This went hand in hand with the spread of texts and literacy, not only through the 'inscriptional habit', but also through the dissemination of literature as the Roman Empire was an empire of written word (Lieu 2004:30-31). As already indicated, texts were the work of the elite and rhetoric was used as a means to articulate constructions through a text (cf. Witherington 2009:5). Lieu (2004:30-31) takes it further by explaining that the function of text's are a product of identity construction on the part of the author. Thus, if textual constructions are a form of identity, it can be suggested that the dualism serves the purpose to advocate or reaffirm the identity of the implied readers/hearers (or "in-group") through Yeshua. In the Greco-Roman culture texts were read out aloud within the community setting, making rhetoric an important tool to convince the group members.

In terms of polemic the exegesis are used to draw boundaries against or to invalidate the narrative of 'the other'; the continuing and developing history of such a text is part of the exercise and reaffirmation of identity through appeal to correct retelling of a scripturally enshrined past (Lieu 2004:45). Scripture needs to be properly understood, and its certainties also perceived as an independent witness and source of self-understanding (Lieu 2004:45). Because many of these texts survived only within the Christian tradition, and because clearly distinguishing markers, such as

references to Christ, sometimes appear to belong only to a redaction level; such texts embody dislocation of any priori exclusive classification, of Jewish or Christian (Lieu 2004:45). In other words, our challenge when we are dealing with texts is that they are often redacted through later editors, who through their choices of texts decided to use, or saw as useful for their own self-understanding, by making references and even inserts of Christ later, and is contextually dislocated from the religious distinction between Christianity and Judaism that we have today. Rather, within first century CE context Christianity was a sect within Judaism, and the attempt was not to separate but strengthen and validate the groups' identity claim within the Judean nation. Therefore, the texts we have in the Christian tradition are a work of later Christian editors who were involved in their own identity formation through the use of texts, in an attempt to reaffirm an identity through retelling the scriptural past (cf. Lieu 2004:45).[31] The author constructs this identity using the emerging Jewish past to redefine the in-groups identity with Yeshua being the focal point. The implied audience must believe and have fidelity to Yeshua as he is the subject of the ancient biography.

Furthermore, boundaries are an integral part of identity, for it is boundaries that both enclose those who share what is common and exclude those who belong outside, so that both ensure continuity and coherence, and safeguard against contamination or invasion-or so it seems (Lieu 2004:98). Thus, the dualistic tendency of the final author creates an "anti-language" through rhetoric, which serves an identification purpose for the in-group by contrasting its distinct identity from the out-group. Tajfel's identification of 'in-group' and 'out-group' distinctions consequently has the

[31] John's Gospel is not any different, as there are traditionally four or five stages proposed in terms of its redaction assessment. Bloomberg (2001:39) explains how the Gospel went through redaction, which is a process or method where a text or pieces of a text are combined to make a single document. Bloomberg (2001:39) looking at Raymond E Brown four stages, proposes five stages to the Gospel of John: 1) Material from the apostle; 2) Material developed over decades of preaching in the Johannine community; 3) Organised into consecutive Gospel; 4) Thoroughly edited by an anonymous evangelist, 5)and given a final reworking by later redactor. On the other hand, Morris (1995:20) alludes to Raymond E Brown, and discerns four phases of John's Gospel: 1) The pre-Gospel era; 2) The life situation of the Johannine community at the time the Gospel was written; 3) The life situation in the now-divided Johannine community at the time the Epistles were written; 4) The time of the dissolution of the two Johannine groups after the Epistles were written. However, Von Wahlde (2010:50-54) proposes three editions, and links it to the Epistles of John. The first edition occurred between 55-65 AD focused particularly on Jesus' ministry (including his Passion, Death, and Resurrection) and including all the miracles of the present Gospel (Von Wahlde 2010:50). The second edition, however, is set between 60-65 AD, and this edition focused on the meaning of Jesus' ministry, and developed a much more profound theological understanding of it in light of the Jewish tradition (cf. Von Wahlde 2010:51). The last edition is rather complicated, according to Von Wahlde (2010:52-54), as it is linked to the authorship issue of the Elder and the Epistles of John. The Elder composed 1 John edition started with the Elder in 65-70 AD, which had a more apocalyptic worldview, but the Elder died between 80-90 AD, according to Von Wahlde (2010:53), resulting in then another editor taking over between 90-95 AD (cf. Von Wahlde 2010:52-54).

potential to offer much to scholarly understanding of intergroup relations in ancient Mediterranean society (Clarke and Tucker 2014:44). Esler (2014:23) refers to this by means of identification as self-categorisation. Self-categorisation theory made social identity 'the socio-cognitive basis of group behaviour', in the sense that social identity was not just part of one's identity derived from belonging to a group but the very mechanism making group behaviour possible (Esler 2014:23). This means that (a) within a group there is a tendency to create and enhance favourable differences between oneself and other group members, and (b) between one group and another there is a tendency to create and maintain the benefits that the in-group has over the out-group (Esler 2014:27).

Identification through means of self-categorization using texts, demonstrates how the language or "anti-language" through means of dualism are objects of power. Anti-language is a language deriving from and generated by an antisocial group, and an anti-society is a social collectively that is set up within a larger society as a conscious alternative to it (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:9). An anti-language arises among persons in groups espousing and held by alternative perceptions of reality: reality as experienced and set up in opposition to some established mode of conception and perception (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:10). Socially, Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:10-11) indicate that, the use of language actively creates and maintains the prevailing interpretations of reality, but unlike ordinary language, anti-language creates and expresses an interpretation of reality that is inherently an alternative reality, one that emerges precisely in order to function as an alternative society at large. Therefore, the anti-language then reveals the reality of the in-group in opposition to the out-group's perception of the group (cf. Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:10). In terms of "boundaries" constructed through a text, the dualistic language serves a literary task for the in-group, by challenging them through a constructed dualism that produces anti-languages towards the 'out-group', which is based on demonstrating the benefits of the in-group over the out-group.

In light of this, I have attempted to construct a thematic internal structure in the two sub-sections that follow. The sub-sections attempt to formulate a possible identity construction of John 8:12-59, by being particularly sensitive to the dualistic language of the implied author. The thread of this composition is based on the exordium, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and how the theme of light (φῶς) is already evident in the prologue. This thesis links "boundaries" in the text as identity formation, whereby, dualism serves as identity construction by the implied author.

Therefore, the two following sub-sections serve as an attempt to solve the problem of dualism within the Gospel of John in general, but John 8:12-59 in particular, by ensuring that the cosmology that is evident in the text does not lead contemporary readers to assume an anti-Jewish theological conclusion.

John's dualism as an identity construction

The dualism in John's Gospel is a widely investigated topic in Johannine studies, and John 8:12-59 is not an exception. The exordium and caveat attached to it in John 8:12, suggests that the followers of Yeshua walk in light, while those who do not evidently walk in darkness. Τὸ φῶς (I translate as "the Light") is a concept that is already introduced in the prologue (1:9). John 1:9 reads ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον ("He was the true light that gave light to all humans (that) live in the world"). This idea of light is clearly explained in 1 John 1:5-7, where the author explains that "God is light", and "if we claim to have fellowship with God and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live in truth". Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:156) help us here by explaining that, light in Greco-Roman antiquity was perceived as a substance that had no source other than itself, as well as all living beings were believed to have this light, as life and light went hand in hand. After John 1:9, the theme of light is reintroduced in John 8:12, probably revealing that the light introduced in the prologue is in fact Yeshua. In other words, those who do not follow Yeshua as the "light", walk in darkness as they fail to acknowledge the perceived substance that is in all living beings.

If boundaries typically functioned as identity construction in ancient texts, then the dualism in this ancient biography is probably a strategy of the author for a textual identity formation. According to Lieu (2004:110), construction of boundaries in a text is a fictional claim for continuity that masks the exercise of power through both inclusion and exclusion. These boundaries are reinforced through the text, as texts construct "who we are" even when they seem to be engaged in doing something different (cf. Lieu 2004:30). For example, the author writes in John 8:23-24, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins" (cf. addendum 1). However, within the discourse of John 8:12-59 there is evidence of three Judean groups: the Pharisees the Ἰουδαῖοι, and the Ἰουδαίους (also Ἰουδαῖοι in the nominative form) "who believe" in Yeshua. However, the distinction between the Ἰουδαῖοι in general and the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe

only becomes evident in John 8:31. In John 8:30 the author displays how "many believed" and then in John 8:31 specifies the Ἰουδαίους "who believed in him". It is only at this point of the discourse that the author makes this separation, as prior to this it seems the argument is only between Yeshua, Pharisees, and the Ἰουδαῖοι. This is significant as the identification with Yeshua in the polemic discourses creates boundaries that need a rhetorical understanding, especially if the early Christian community was a Jewish sect in the first century CE.

Sheridan (2014:188) helps us here by suggesting that literature focuses on the power relations between colonisers and colonised and the way in which alterity is in context of this relationship. However, these power relations have an emotion, as literary genres also testify to psychological understanding of identity as trauma erupts when a narrative is retold within its contextual reading (Sheridan 2014:188). A text in John's Gospel is a literary backbone that is highly rhetorical in its presentation of Jesus and its central message of believing in him, where themes of identity and alterity have intrinsic force (Sheridan 2014:189). This is primarily because οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are constructed throughout the narrative as opponents, and also labelled with thematic contradictions that are associated with not believing in Yeshua. How "the Jews" are constructed as the "other" in John's Gospel – and how at times they subvert this category – cannot be appreciated purely on historicist grounds (Sheridan 2014:189-190).[32] Therefore, the boundaries constructed in the dualism create an alterity, which produces an understanding of identity using emotions that challenge the identity of the Ἰουδαῖοι. Psychologically, in the case of John's Gospel, emotional descriptions are an eruption of possible trauma on a group's identity, through the narration of the story, which in this case probably refers to the destruction of the Second Jewish Temple. However, a rhetorical appreciation of the text is important, so that thematic constructions are situated as a process of identity formation that the author might have been attempting to construct, using dualism.

The author distinguishes further in John 8:23 that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τούτου τοῦ κόσμου ἐστέ ("are of this world") and Yeshua is ἐκ τῶν ἄνω ("from above") (cf. addendum 1). The ultimate distinction then is found in John 8:44, where the author suggests that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι "who believe" in Yeshua, πατρὸς (Father) is τοῦ διαβόλου (the devil). However, as mentioned above, in John 8:30 and 8:31 there are two characters mentioned, the πολλοὶ (many) who ἐπίστευσαν (believed) in Yeshua (8:30), and

[32] The rhetorical design of the text, inviting readers to comply with a constructed worldview, can be best appreciated with literary theories – without necessarily discounting the historical-mimetic theories of the "Johannine community" that have been also advanced as explanations for the Gospel's dualistic rhetoric (Sheridan 2014:190).

Ἰουδαίους τοὺς πεπιστευκότας (who believe) in Yeshua (8:31). The harsh paternal parenthood distinction falls within the section that Yeshua is speaking to the Ἰουδαίους "who believe", where he calls them to discipleship by remaining in Yeshua's word (cf. John 8:31). Yeshua's word will result in the Ἰουδαῖοι "who believe" to know the truth and be set free (cf. John 8:32). Yet, the Ἰουδαῖοι "who believe" express that, they are not slaves but rather are Abraham's seed (cf. John 8:33). Yeshua does not deny this and knows that the Ἰουδαῖοι "who believe in him" are Abraham's seed (8:34). Rather, the Ἰουδαῖοι assume that Yeshua is alluding to them being slaves of some sort (cf. John 8:33), but Yeshua is speaking in the context of: "sin", "sonship", and "freedom" (cf. John 8:34-36). The misunderstanding that happens within the discourse needs to be understood thematically, so that the boundaries are structured within confines of the implied author's textual construction. Thus, the divided internal structure of John 8:12-59 below is based on recurring themes that further serve as dividing markers between Yeshua and his opponents. These boundaries that are distinguished through the dualism in the biblical text of John 8:12-59, allows the contemporary reader to understand the author's textually constructed implied audience. The approach attempts to ensure that the language is interpreted within its context first, in order to understand the identity constructs of the groups identity within the boundaries created by the final author within the context of the ancient Mediterranean world first century CE.

The author is constructing this textual identity within the challenge-riposte between Yeshua and his opponents. As mentioned above there are two opponents that challenge Yeshua in John 8:12-59: the Pharisees (John 8:12-20) and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (John 8:21-59). However, the implied author in John 8:30-31 introduces additional groups that believe in Yeshua (i.e. "many who believed" (cf. John 8:30) and "the Ἰουδαίους "who believe" in Yeshua (cf. John 8:31)). This suggests, perhaps, that there is a third audience that the author is trying to address in this dialogue. Thus, this thesis's thematic focus on identity, displays how at the core of the disputes is an identity challenge for these Judean groups. The identity challenge needs a thematic understanding where the author's boundaries display plainly the textual identity construction. Thus, a starting point is distinguishing the internal structure of John 8:12-59 under the thesis's main theme of identity, which is labelled in the following headings:

- 8:12-20 Yeshua's identity Claim

- 8:21-47 Dispute over the identity of Yeshua and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι
    - 8:21-30 Identity of Yeshua
    - 8:31-47 Ethnic identity Challenge of believing in Yeshua (Cost of Discipleship) (particularly the Ἰουδαῖοι "who believe" in Yeshua)
        - 8:31-38 Sin and Slavery vs Sonship and Freedom
        - 8:39-47 The Question of Fatherhood: A question of Election?
- 8:48-59 οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι's rejection of Yeshua's identity

John's identity Construction in John 8:12-59

Jonker (2009:25), speaking within the context of "Textual Identities in the Books of Chronicles: The Case of Jehoram's history", explains that textual identities are fluid, dynamic and representative of discursive processes of identity formation. This notion emphasises the close interrelationship between the social environment within which a group exists, textual resources that are available in a given culture, and the role that renewed textual construction plays in the process of identity formation (Jonker 2009:25). Therefore, if the final author of John's Gospel constructs identity through boundaries using dualism, the textual identity that climaxes in John 8:44, where the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua do not understand Yeshua's word (τὸν λόγον) (cf. John 8:43) and are called "children of Satan" because their Father is the Devil, is an identity formation emerging out of the text's social context. The textual identity distinguished by the author's dualism is related to and ultimately based on, whether one believes in Yeshua and accepts his word. This dualism serves the purpose of discerning the identity of this believing Yeshua movement at the expense of the identity of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι.

Thus, dualism throughout John 8:12-59 is the author's attempt in distinguishing boundaries between other Judean groups. The key themes identified that are important dualistic categories in this biblical text, is the following:

- Light vs. Testimony Validation
- Freedom (Truth?) vs. Slavery to Sin
- Above (not of this world) vs. Below (of the world)

- Abraham Fatherhood/ God Fatherhood (truth?) vs. Fatherhood of the Devil (liar and murderer)

These specific themes represent the internal structure and logic of John 8:12-59. The thematic structure is as follows: 8:12-20 light and testimony, 8:21-30 "I am" and the world, 8:31-38 freedom and slavery to sin, 8:39-47 true Abraham fatherhood and the Devil's fatherhood, and 8:48-59 the word (τὸν λόγον) versus Abraham. The above-mentioned internal structure is thematic. These themes reintroduce themes that the author introduced in the prologue (1:1-18). Three themes that are particularly related to the prologue are: Light (1:9), the Word (1:1-4 &1:14), and Fatherhood (God) and its relationship to the Word (1:14 & 1:18). In addition, John 8:12-59 reintroduces the above-mentioned themes, where Yeshua is the "light of the world" (8:12), "whoever keeps my word will never see death" (8:51), and is "sent by the Father" (8:16), "comes from the Father's presence" (8:38) and "speaks what he has been taught by the Father" (8:28). Each theme reveals Yeshua's identity. This is related to his identity and his relation to the Father, as Yeshua is the Son who has been sent by the Father, honours the Father in all that he does, and only speaks what he has been taught by the Father. Ἐγώ εἰμι ("I am") also appears seven times in John 8:12-59 (8:16, 8:18, 8:23, 8:24, 8:28, and 8:58), and speaks to the self-categorisation of Yeshua's identity. The Ἰουδαῖοι will realise that Yeshua is ἐγώ εἰμι when the Son of Man is exalted (cf. John 8:28).

What follows below then, is an adaptation of John's identity construction, through the use of boundaries based on the above close reading and thematic categories in John 8:12-59. This table serves as a thematic description of the characters involved in John 8:12-59, by relating each character to the thematic construction the author ascribed to characters in each section of the discourse. The demarcation will assist in evaluating the rhetorical viability of the textual construction. This critical close reading of these themes will be beneficial in the exegetical analysis of John 8:12-59 in chapter 4. In the interim, however, it is important in this chapter to distinguish the textual construction, so that the contemporary reader can understand how the implied author divides the characters in the narrative to the thematic ideas that are contrasted from Yeshua's identity. Believing in Yeshua is the determining factor of the division, making the in-group the "Believing Yeshua Movement". This early Christian movement receives the benefits that come with believing in Yeshua, which in turn contrasts them from the opponents in the discourse. Thus, the table is a textual evaluation of the implied author's construction. The textual construction is the implied

author's linguistic construction that we have today and not purely based on historical grounds. The historical context through the findings from the social-history approach has helped us in situating this textual construction within the first century CE world, by demonstrating the nature of relationship between Christianity and Judaism within this ancient Mediterranean context. Thus, this movement is a sect within Judea, attempting to define itself amongst the factions within Judaism. The textual construction is then situated within the language context of first century CE, where Christianity and Judaism are not two separate and distinct religions like we have today. Rather, this interpretation of John 8:12-59 situates the language of this biblical text within first century CE ancient Mediterranean world, where the dualistic boundaries are then evaluated within the identity constructs of emerging Judaism and pre/post Second Temple context. Therefore, the table is a textual artistry from this thesis's close reading and draws its sensitivity from the pericope's dualistic categories.

Table 1: Themes and Characteristics of groups in light of Yeshua's identity

Yeshua's Identity	**Opposition's Identity (Out-Group)**	**Believing Yeshua Movement or the Ἰουδαῖοι "who believe" (In-Group)**
I am the light of the World	The Pharisees and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι	Will never walk in darkness but have the light of life
I am from above	You are from below	Will not die in sin but have freedom
I am not demon possessed	Father is the devil	Father is God and truly Abraham's descendants
Before Abraham I am	Slave to Sin	Obey + keep Christ's word = Disciples of Yeshua

Boundaries in Second Temple Jewish Literature

Ironically, the identity construction through means of dualism is not only a Johannine phenomenon or invention. Rather, John 8:12-59 demonstrates similarities to that of Second Temple Jewish Literature. As already mentioned in the introduction, referring to Dunn (2001:51), that there was a problem that suggests that in the ancient Mediterranean there was 'Judaism' that all Jews practised. Furthermore, I have briefly alluded to the various sects within Second Temple Judaism, and the various revolutionary movements that responded to corruption and Roman Oppression, which all formed in response to injustice. However, Dunn (2001:50) expresses this in light of the recent discovery of the considerable degree of factionalism within Second Temple Judaism, particularly from the Maccabean crisis on. We knew of Pharisees and Sadducees from the New Testament texts themselves (Dunn 2001:50). Philo and Josephus told us of Essenes and Josephus later told us of the Zealots, as well as of different figures who attracted followings in protest against Roman rule (Dunn 2001:50). Add in the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and we become aware of further dimensions of Second Temple Judaism in the Diaspora and of circles that cherished wisdom traditions and apocalyptic writings (Dunn 2001:50).

Lieu (2004:108) agrees, as it was in this context, that the Jews also had to negotiate their boundaries as they found themselves as part of an expanded Hellenistic world, while looking back to earlier patterns enshrined within their traditions. In narrative terms, this emerges so powerfully within Maccabean literature where the boundaries drawn between 1, 2, 3, and 4 Maccabean around the inscribed word "Judaism" -a term first appearing in 2 Maccabees, and has long been reinscribed as an archetypal, particularly between Hebraism versus Hellenism, where there is a supposedly immutable boundary of mythic proportions whose shadow still reaches to the present (Lieu 2004:108-109). Lieu (2004:18) explains that when we speak of "the Jews" there is rich diversity in what these Jews actually did, believed, thought and organised themselves, which constituted of their core identity. However, addressing some of these concerns within the identity debate, arguments have turned to whether Jewish identity in the late Second Temple period should be defined as ethnic or as religious, or whether there was a movement between the two forms of identity: a distinction, analogous to what has already been said against culture, that probably proves a chimera (Lieu 2004:19). Against the tendency in some of these debates to treat Judaism as "unique" (*sui generis)*,

it must be emphasised that in the late Second Temple period and beyond, Jewish self-definition was evolving within the wider context of the Greco-Roman world (Lieu 2004:19).

Boundaries are important in understanding this, as they function as the basis for identity formation through texts, which is continuous and a means to preserve a minority's identity. Boundaries, however, develop over time and are a result of human negotiation and interaction, as they imply selection and the giving of value amidst the experience of difference, and so they are temporary checkpoints rather than concrete walls (Lieu 2004:99). Furthermore, Lieu (2004:101) explains how a minority may be perceived as static if the predominate culture may grow, but in practise, being able to exercise variety of potential strategies for the maintenance of their very identity. The minority culture could be seen as resistant when intersecting with these cultures historically, but neither can it be assumed that their ultimate goal is to assimilate (Lieu 2004:101). The group merely could be attempting to present and represent itself within the continual change and shift within their total situation as being viewed as outsiders (Lieu 2004:101). Therefore, the dualism in John 8:12-59 may be the implied authors attempt to maintain the in-groups identity. The maintenance may be rooted in the possibility that they are a minority group who is responding to changing social situations within the Greco-Roman culture (i.e. Second Temple destruction). It could even be a sect within evolving Judaism, using the Gospel of John as an ancient biography, to redefine the sect's identity within the Judean nation and demonstrating its Jewish significance with Yeshua being the "Messiah" and "Son of God".

The evidence that brought light to the plurality of sects within evolving Judaism, according to Dunn (2001:50), was the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls are first hand evidence of the nearest thing to a Jewish "sect" in the modern sense, which brought home to us disparate where the emphasis and priorities of different groups and factions within Judaism (Dunn 2001:50). This helped us to recognise that a movement which claimed that a Jewish teacher from Nazareth was actually the Messiah would not have been so strange to the majority of Jews living near the eastern Mediterranean seaboard (Dunn 2001:50). Collins (2011:9) indicates that the first batch of scrolls discovered in 1947 near Qumran, by the Dead Sea. This includes, according to Collins (2011:9), the Rule of the Community, or *Serek Hayakhad*, also known as 1QS. In terms of John 8:12-59, Von Wahlde (2001:425) indicates to us how John 8:38-47 bears some similarity to what is found in other types of late Second Temple Jewish literature, particularly the sectarian scrolls from Qumran. The

text reads as follows: 1QS 3:17-18 states: "He created man to rule the world and put within him two spirits to walk with them until the moment of his visitation: they are the spirits of truth and deceit" (Von Wahlde 2001:429). 1QS 3:25 states: "He created the spirits of light and of darkness and on them established all his actions" (Von Wahlde 2001:429).

Von Wahlde (2001:423) suggests that, if we examine John 8:38-47 closely, it indicates that there are five basic elements to the argument:

- First, there is a contrast of the sources of the actions in question (Von Wahlde 2001:423)
- Second, the principle is established that the child does the wishes of the father (Von Wahlde 2001:423)
- Thirdly, after the principle of acting like one's father is stated, general actions characteristic of each group is named (Von Wahlde 2001:424). Here the characteristics are associated with truth and with deceit, where Jesus speaks the truth, which he heard from his father, and the opponents do not accept the truth because their father is the liar and does not stand in the truth (Von Wahlde 2001:424).
- Fourthly, the more specific actions are identified which are associated with the general characteristics of truth and deceit and which are said to be typical of each Father (Von Wahlde 2001:424). So then the Devil is a liar and has been a liar from the beginning (c.f. John 8:44), but Jesus is associated with the truth and speaks the truth he has heard from God (cf. John 8:40) (c.f. Von Wahlde 2001:424).
- Fifthly, in spite of the intensity of the accusation, it is evident that the dualism is expressed in an ethical or modified dualism (Von Wahlde 2001:424). Von Wahlde's (2004:424) modified dualism is distinguished from the absolute dualism of Gnosticism by two features: firstly, both the principles of good and of evil are ultimately under the control of, or created by, God; secondly, there is evidence that change from one orientation to another is possible (Von Wahlde 2001:424). Furthermore, in this passage, the two sets of parents are identified solely by the actions of those who are said to be the 'children'; implicit in this conviction that the opponents could, if they wished, choose God as their father and could choose to do his works rather than of those of the devil (Von Wahlde 2001:424).

In terms of this, Von Wahlde (2001:426-429) compares John 8:38-47 with a sectarian document from the Qumran, particularly the rule of the community (1QS), and applies the above 5 principles practically, making them be helpful for this thesis's interpretation within the ancient Mediterranean context. The five principles and comparisons are the following:

- Contrasting sources of action

In 1QS there is a clear division of humanity that is a complete identical function to John 8, where for example in 1 QS 2:1-4 there are "men of God's lot" and "all the men of the lot of Belial" (c.f. Von Wahlde 2001:427). In 1QS 3:20-4:1 the opposing principles are identified as two spirits that God has placed within man so that he would walk with them until the moment of his visitation: the spirits of truth and of deceit (Von Wahlde 2001:427). In John 8:39-40 Yeshua challenges the Ἰουδαῖοι "who believe" as their identity as Abraham's descendants is contrasted through their behaviour of wanting to kill Yeshua. Such a murderous attitude is not a behaviour of a descendent of Abraham, as Abraham himself would not treat a "man who comes from God" (i.e. Yeshua) in such a way (cf. John 8:40).

- Doing what is pleasing to God or to the Devil

1 QS 3:20-21 distinguishes between "sons of justice" "who walk in the path of light", whereas "the sons of deceit" "walk on the paths of darkness" (Von Wahlde 2001:427). In 1QS 3:25 we are told that "every deed" is associated either with the spirit of light or the spirit of darkness, in 1 QS 3:26-4:1 we read that: "God loves the one without end and delights in its works forever. The advice of the other one he despises and hates its ways forever" (Von Wahlde 2001:427). These expressions are functionally identical with the expressions in the Gospel of John and are verbally quite similar to the notion in the gospel of the children of God doing the wishes of God (Von Wahlde 2001:427). This is the same thing with John 8:47 where those who belong to God would hear what God says. Evidently, Yeshua is a man sent by God who speaks truth that he has heard from God (c.f. John 8:40 & 8:42). The reason they do not hear is they do not believe in Yeshua who speaks the truth (c.f. John 8:31-32 & 8:45).

- The General Characteristic of Each group are then listed

"Sons of truth" "walk on the path of truth" and even called "sons of justice" "who walk on the path of truth" (c.f. 1QS 3:20, 4:2, 3:20; & 4:6); undoubtedly the references to the truth are intended to

characterize the beliefs of the group while justice is intended to characterise their actions (c.f. Von Wahlde 2001:428). The children of God believe in Jesus, therefore, they accept truth and keep Jesus' word; to reject truth is to reject Jesus, and as a result be a child of the devil because of the refusal to believe the truth (c.f. Von Wahlde 2001:428 & John 8:31-32, 8:36 & 8:45).

- Specific Characteristic of each Group are listed

In 1 QS 4:2-8 the author gives an extended description of the specific qualities of the ones who walk in the path of justice and truth (as well as of their final reward): "And these are their paths in the world: to illuminate the heart of man, make straight before him the paths of true righteousness, establish in his heart fear of the ordinances of God…These principles of the spirit for the sons of truth in the world; and the visitation of all those who walk in it will be healing, bountiful peace in a long life, fruitful offspring with all everlasting blessing, eternal joy with endless life" (Von Wahlde 2001:428-429). Von Wahlde (2001:429) refers to 1QS 4:9-14, and identifies the characteristics of those led by the spirit of deceit, and are specified along with the final judgement. However, these are the ways of the spirit of deceit: greed, slackness in the serving of justice, wickedness and lies…and the visitation of those who walk in this spirit will be a horde of punishment at the hand of all the angels of destruction (Von Wahlde 2001:429). In our focus text the consequences of the children of the devil are: "they will die in their sin if they do not believe that Yeshua of Nazareth is he (i.e. the Son of Man)" (cf. John 8:21 & 8:24). Freedom awaits those who believe in the Son, for "the truth shall set you free" (cf. John 8:32 & 8:36).

- A Dualism which is ethical rather than absolute

God controls these spirits in the Qumran texts, as 1QS 3:15 states: "from the God of knowledge come all there is and all there shall be" (Von Wahlde 2001:429). Von Wahlde (2001:429) further explains that 1QS 3:17-18 states: "He created man to rule the world and put within him two spirits to walk with them until the moment of his visitation: they are the spirits of truth and of deceit". 1 QS 3:25 states: "He created the spirits of light and of darkness and on them established all his actions" (Von Wahlde 2001:429). At Qumran it is possible to move from the influence of one spirit to the other; this is evident from texts such as 1QS 4:19: "…God will refine, with his truth, all man's deeds, and will purify for himself the configuration of man, ripping out all spirit of deceit from the innermost part of his flesh, and cleaning him with the spirit of holiness from every irreverent deed".

(Von Wahlde 2001:429). Moreover, according to 1QS 5:21, when a person entered the community, the individual was tested "in respect of his insight and of his deeds in law"; "each member was tested, year after year, in order to upgrade each one to the extent of his insight and the perfection of his path, or to demote him according to his failings" (5:24) (Von Wahlde 2001:429). The principle of ethical dualism also applies in John 8:12-59 as the opponents, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, can be set free by the Son if they recognise their sin and belief that Yeshua is "I am" (c.f. John 8:34-36, 8:21, 8:24, & 8:31-32).

The above comparison with the 1QS text assists us to realise that the language in John 8:12-59 and its harsh vilification of the Ἰουδαῖοι "who believe" in Yeshua, is no new invention of the implied author. Rather, texts within Second Temple Judaism literature were involved in an identity formation through dualistic categories, by constructing boundaries as means of identification and self-categorization of the in-group. The dualism in John's 8:12-59 is a form of anti-language, which was not uncommon within Second Temple Jewish Literature. Therefore, Dunn's (2001:59) statement is correct that the character of John's Gospel being seen as "anti-Judaism" needs a careful analysis before straightforwardly being described and denounced as "anti-Judaism"; making Dunn's (2001:59) suggestion of John's language being more of intra-Jewish polemic rather than of anti-Jewish polemic, more suitable. For Dunn (2001:59), the implied author does this by to warning fellow Jews not to follow what was merging as the dominant view of "the Jews". By his portrayal of Jesus as the definitive revealer of God and of God's will, in continuity with Israel's earlier claims to divine revelation, put them in opposition to other contemporary claimants within the Judaism of his day, as John still hoped to persuade the doubters and wavers to stand with the believers, still mostly fellow Jews, in Messiah Jesus (Dunn 2001:59). In terms of the collectivistic identity and personalities of the people of the ancient Mediterranean context, I would even say the final author is evoking an identity construction for the in-groups emerging Christian identity formation in a first century CE Greco-Roman culture. The boundaries function as an identity formation for the in-groups identification and self-categorisation within their collectivist paradigm of identity, where the implied author reimages the evolving Jewish identity construct in a new creative way. These boundaries are not rigid or "concrete walls" so to speak (cf. Lieu 2004:99); rather, they are the final authors' rhetorical textual artistry that challenges the implied audience to believe in Yeshua more

profoundly, by using harsh language of vilification and creating dualistic boundaries that construct the groups identity.

Lieu (2002:120) takes it further by being sensitive to the Ἰουδαῖοι who actually believe in Yeshua in John 8:30-31. The Jews of John 8 are a cover Judaizers in the Johannine community-they are Jews who believed in Yeshua (as in 8:31) but whose faith is found wanting, making it an internal hostility and has nothing to do with 'real' Jews (Lieu 2002:120). Lieu (2002) is correct to assert this especially considering the rhetorician aims, which according to Witherington (2009), was primarily to change the groups perceptions. Furthermore, Lieu (2002:120) suggests that the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are representative of the world, which within the characteristic dualism of the Gospel, represents for the author the ultimate hostility to God and to believers. The sheer variety and impact of the polemic against Judaism and against those who succumb to its attractions betray the author's actual experience, even though it may be at variance with the image they want to project (Lieu 2002:121). For these early Christians, it is now the church that has replaced the Jews as the heirs to God's promises, the church that is properly 'Israel' (or the 'new Israel'), the church that is the covenant partner with God (Lieu 2002:122). Köstenberger (2009:279-280) agrees with Lieu (2002) and indicates five things that control the final author.

First, by the characteristic Jewish belief in one God, Yahweh, and the God who created the world, delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt, and gave the nation the law through Sinai (Köstenberger 2009:279). Secondly, the author believes that the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament scriptures was made flesh, walked the earth, and died vicariously on the cross in the person of Jesus of Nazareth (Köstenberger 2009:279). Thirdly, the author believes that salvation is gained only by believing that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God (cf. John 3:16, 20:31). Fourthly, the author believes in universal human sinfulness and that without Jesus, "the light of the world" (cf. John 8:12), the world is in spiritual darkness. Furthermore, the author believes that the followers of Jesus now have the privilege and responsibility to maintain spiritual union with the exalted Christ through the Spirit, who has come subsequent to Jesus' exaltation as "another [helping presence]" (Köstenberger 2009:280). Lastly, Köstenberger (2009:280) indicates that the Gospel of John has a strong missionary thrust, driven by a desire to convey the expression of God's redeeming love in the person and work of Jesus to a sinful humanity.

In terms of the textual identity this biblical text is rhetorically speaking within the context of the in-groups categorisation. Nathanael's assertion in John 1:49 could potentially be a rhetorical assertion to Lieu's (2002) point, whereas Köstenberger's (2009) theological categories here are helpful for identifying the in-groups self-categorization, through an identification that is rooted in the identity and person of Yeshua of Nazareth (i.e. Christology). However, considering the factionalism reality that is evident within Second Temple Judaism literature, the historical search needs to be situated within the ancient Mediterranean context, in order to understand how the rhetorical language was being employed within this intra-Jewish situation. Considering that boundaries operate as identifications of a group's identity, and the dualism operating as a possible "two-tier" ancient biography of a particular subject, which in this case is Yeshua, one ought to understand, through rhetorical analysis, how the author is self-categorizing the in-groups identity using rhetoric, for the group's identity formation.

Kessler (2008:37), who attempts to give a social history of Israel, explains that the key problem with "Israel" itself seems vague when one looks at the concept of social history. However, in terms of ethnology and sociological categories, there are four things that are important for Kessler (2008:37). Firstly, the consciousness of an ethnic solidarity expressed primarily in the construction of a common genealogy; secondly, the relationship to the land, which is basically retained even by those in the diaspora; thirdly, how we cannot speak of Israel apart from its relationship to God, YHWH; and finally, how there were other divinities before and even during the royal period (Kessler 2008:37). Moreover, as mentioned at the beginning of this section with Lieu (2004:19) that Judaism was evolving, ironically even Christianity was not a fixed single religion as it is today, but a sect within evolving Judaism (cf. Dunn 2009, Bediako 1999, and King 2003). Saldararini (1994:13) confirms that in the first century Christianity had not established itself as a separate religion and community, many followers of Jesus were Jews and saw themselves as such: for example, if you had asked Paul what he was, he would have identified as a Jew. In the Roman Empire, Jews were a numerous, vital, recognised, ancient ethnic-religious community with legal privileges and duties, despite occasional persecutions (Saldaranini 1994:15). According to Grabbe (2010:126), up until 70 CE the chief means of worship for most Jews in Judea and the surrounding area had been the temple cult. When there was no temple, something had to be substituted for the cult if the religion was to be maintained (Grabbe 2010:26).

The groups that grew and developed with the potential to continue without a functioning temple cult were "Christians" and "Pharisees" (Grabbe 2010:27). The "Christians" did not need a temple because they had Jesus, and then in a short time ceased to be a Jewish sect and became a separate religion (Grabbe 2010:27). The other group that could function without a temple cult was the Pharisees (Grabbe 2010:27). Ironically, the Pharisees are one of two or possibly three opponents in John 8:12-59, as they challenge Yeshua's testimony in John 8:12-20 "Yeshua's identity Claim". The Pharisees were a voluntary group that had members who belonged to different levels of involvement, belonged to other groups, and even earned a living in a variety of ways (Salmon 2006:85). However, there is little evidence in the pre-70 rabbinic traditions that the Pharisees emphasised study as a part of their religious practice, rather their focus was on eating meals and maintaining a ritual purity (Grabbe 2010:27). This is important as, Rabbinic Judaism is a synthesis of various elements of pre-70 Judaism, but two of the main contributors were the Pharisees and the Scribes (Grabbe 2010:27). Rabbinic Judaism is not to be identified with any particular pre-70 group, as on the contrary it was a new creation with its own identity even while borrowing from various sects of the earlier pluralistic Judaism (Grabbe 2010:27).

The main point here is that Judaism was itself an emerging religion with various "sects", "factions", and "groups"" within the first century CE. Christianity emerged as a group within extremely heterogeneous and fluid factions within a single religious identity construct of evolving Judaism, making the final author of John's Gospel addressing hearers/readers who are not disconnected from their Jewish identity construct. The Greek word οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι has assisted in briefly introducing the Second Temple Judaism reality and understanding the emerging Judaism unifying symbols pertaining to the identity of the Jews in antiquity. This Greek word along with the narration in John 8:20, assisted in ensuring a social-historical context of John's Gospel that can be situated in pre and post Second Jewish Temple destruction. In the first section of this chapter, this Greek word has been the key textual category of investigation. The three New Testament factors at the beginning of the chapter were situated within a Second Temple Jewish context. The contextual understanding of the ancient Mediterranean world, particularly the collectivistic identity, honour and shame culture, and economic system and the temple, are the factors needed when using rhetorical analysis. Thus, situating the factors within Second Temple Judaism ensures that the contemporary reader does not interpret this text as if Christianity and Judaism are two separate religions. This is important because

in the first century CE Christianity was a sect within Judaism, and had not yet a clearly defined itself as a separate religion like today.

If we apply Carter's narrative criticism approach of cultural intertextuality and the social-historical data above, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι becomes a key identity marker that could be alluding to the in-groups' shared ethnic identity. This thesis prioritizes the "world behind the text", thus an interpretation that is situated within the factionalism of emerging Judaism where Christianity is a sect, displays a religious-ethnic identity challenge that avoids an anti-Jewish reading of John's Gospel in general, and John 8:12-59 in particular. Though an in-depth analysis of Second Temple Judaism goes beyond the scope of this thesis, such an interpretive reading that is sensitive to the potential "factionalism" allows us to not assume (anachronistically) that the language in this biblical text is demonising all Jews. Instead, the language demonstrates an internal religious identity debate within evolving Judaism, where the early Christian author of John 8:12-59 is constructing an identity that challenges the group's ethnicity.

The second section of this chapter attempted to address the problem with the author's dualistic categories. The dualism being understood as boundaries that are forming a textual identity, demonstrates similarities to Second Temple Jewish Literature. The comparison of John 8:38-47 with 1QS gave evidence of how the implied author's use of dualism is not his or her own invention. Rather, the author denotes categories that can be ethical and cosmic, but are not absolute. In the case of John 8:12-59, believing is the key ethical requirement that ensures cosmic allegiance with God. The thematic close reading expressed this, but this tentative ethical dualism function will be dealt with in chapter 4. In the interim, however, the three factors of Witherington (2009), accompanied with an introductory understanding of Second Temple Judaism, provides a hermeneutical paradigm that does not interpret John 8:44 one-dimensionally as a 'compliant reader', rather, it provides sensitivity to the Jewishness of the text in a creative way that avoids an anachronistic reading that can further perpetuate anti-Semitic violence upon the Jews of today.

Chapter Three: Social Location of the Group's identity within the Ancient Mediterranean world

Key words: The Roman Empire, πατήρ, Socio-political dimension, Greco-Roman culture, Religion & Politics in the Ancient Mediterranean world.

This thesis aims at challenging a (one-sided) literal reading of John 8:12-59. The hermeneutical enterprise of resolving this problem is an exegetical heuristic that takes the "world behind the text" seriously. A literalistic interpretation that does not take into consideration that Christianity in first century CE was a Jewish sect within Judaism, omits the opportunity to understand how the implied author is challenging the groups ethnic identity. In addition, a literal approach to John 8:12-59 proves to be dangerous as it "others" real living Jews of today, by anachronistically labelling the οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι of the text as "the Jews" of today. However, in John 8:31 Yeshua addresses οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in him, which suggests that the implied author is directing the message to the Jewish sect that believes in Yeshua and not to other Judeans within the ancient Mediterranean context. The dualistic language, as indicated in the previous chapter, is an identity construction articulated by the author at the expense of the Ἰουδαῖοι identity. The narrative criticism approach of cultural intertextuality particularly focused on Greek work οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, along with the social-historical investigation that served to be helpful, as it demonstrated a hermeneutical challenge that the implied author might have been trying to convey. The genre of ancient biography focused on Yeshua of Nazareth then becomes an identity claim that the author is attempting to construct about the subject. Moreover, the similarities of John 8:38-47 with other Second Temple Jewish literature, demonstrated how the implied author's dualistic categories were not his/her own invention, but a prominent feature even among the Jewish writers of the Qumran scrolls.

The irony is that Judaism, within this context, was evolving and made up of various sects, groups, and factions who all expressed their Judean identity differently. Although their expressions were different, there were unifying symbols that constituted their emerging religion and culture. The most prominent unifying symbol of the temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, and affected their evolving identity within the ancient Mediterranean world. Thus, exploring the social location of Second Temple Judaism within the first century CE, strives to find out how the implied author is

positioning this emerging group within the social-political context of the Roman Empire. As indicated in Chapter 1, a reading of John's Gospel that ignores the Roman Empire provides an interpretation that views the Gospel only as an affirmation of individuals' salvation and their assurance of going to heaven, or understands it to have been written as a response of Jewish believers of Yeshua who have been expelled from the synagogue (cf. Carter 2008:3). However, the narration of John 8:20 suggests that, the author is well aware of the Second Temple, as Yeshua speaks by the "temple treasury". Ironically, the temple treasury was where finances were stored, as this space had an economic function associated with tithes and taxes. Therefore, this chapter will attempt to understand how the implied author uses language in John 8:12-59 within the social location of the Roman Empire, and how that language might have been involved in a "rhetorical distance" from the imperial power. A starting point is to understand whether the language of this biblical text is rhetorically linked to Roman imperialism within the ancient Mediterranean world.

The Roman Empire in John's Gospel

A one-dimensional ("literalistic") reading of John 8:12-59 ignores the socio-political context of the Roman Empire. The problem of anachronistically labelling "the Jews" of today as "children of the Devil" using John 8:44, is that it places the language out of its socio-political context, without fully understanding what the text potentially meant or would mean within the world of the first century CE audience. Thatcher (2011:141) explains that, at first glance, any discussion of the Fourth Gospel's response to empire seems futile, simply because John does not appear to be particularly interested in Rome. In fact, one could argue that John's Gospel of John is essentially apolitical, on the grounds that the biblical text is only interested in theology (cf. Thatcher 2011:141) and not in the socio-political context it was situated in. The already mentioned two interpretations indicated by Carter (2008:3), "individualized-spiritualized" and "sectarian synagogue", ignore the Roman Empire when reading and interpreting John's Gospel, rendering Rome and the social-political context of its Empire, invisible.

Thatcher (2011:141-143) agrees with Carter's (2008:3) two interpretive reading assertions, but rather connects the invisibility to John's omission of Synoptic Gospel material and readers sole emphasis on Christology. The two obvious aspects of John's presentation could be cited in support of this claim, one relating to John's treatment of traditional Jesus material that might be used to construct a theory of empire, and the other stemming from the overtly Christological interests in the

narrative (Thatcher 2011:141). Firstly, while the Synoptic Gospel's include many episodes and sayings that might inform a study of Jesus' posture towards Rome (or at least a study of the thinking of the respective Evangelists) John omits most of this material (Thatcher 2011:141). For example, John's Gospel says nothing about John the Baptist's admonition of the tax collectors and neither about Jesus' ambiguous answer to the question of whether Jews should pay imperial taxes or not (cf. Thatcher 2011:141).[33]

Secondly, those who fall under the "Christological reflection", are caught up in what Thatcher (2011:142) describes as an "esoteric speculation". Johannine scholarship has traditionally been driven by Clement of Alexandria's (190s CE) famous dictum that John wrote a "spiritual Gospel" (Eusebius, *Hist. ecc. 6.14.7)*: a book that focuses more on the theological implications of Christ's career rather than its relationship to a specific historical context (Thatcher 2011:142). Furthermore, the reconstruction attempts that have followed Louis Martyn's *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, which basically reconstructs the Johannine community's conflicts within late-first century Judaism in detail, says next to nothing about John's relationship to Rome (Thatcher 2011:142). In fact, for Thatcher (2011:142), all have produced fruitful and productive readings of the Johannine literature, but the result is that the emphasis has been placed on portraying the Gospel of John as a Jewish document with deeply Christological concerns, concerns that left the emperor completely off the radar screen.

There are three implications, according to Carter (2008:5-6), for ignoring the Roman Empire. Firstly, it is significant that John 20:30-31 is at the end of the Gospel, as it indicates that readers can understand Jesus only after we have read and understood the whole of John's Gospel (Carter 2008:5). Thus, the Gospel story of Jesus shapes and defines our understanding of Jesus; that story includes actions of somatic and physical transformation, as well as socio-political conflict and Jesus' death on a Roman cross at the hands of an alliance of Roman and Jerusalem elites (Carter 2008:5). Secondly, it ignores that believing and having eternal life actually have a communal dimension (Carter 2008:6). They require a community; together people believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and experience eternal life together (Carter 2008:6). Lastly, the third implication is that the crucifixion happened to individuals, but it was not an individualistic, private, internal, and spiritual

[33] Another example that Thatcher (2011:141-142) uses is "the Kingdom of God" sayings, which have over seventy different sayings, and in John's Gospel the Johannine Jesus refers to the "Kingdom of God" only twice, and both times are in the Nicodemus story (John 3).

event (Carter 2008:6). This means it did not happen behind closed doors but it was a public and societal event that Romans, during the first century, used to exercise and maintain their power, removing those who opposed or threatened its interest and intimidating others to submission (cf. Carter 2008:6).

Yeshua explains in John 8:28 that the Ἰουδαῖοι will only understand that Yeshua is "I am" (ἐγώ εἰμι), when the Son of Man is "exalted" or "lifted up" (ὑψώσητε). Klink (2016:412) explains that the term "lifted up" conveys a rich duality of meaning in the context of the cross (the historical strand of the plot); the verb speaks of death, suffering and defeat. In a larger context (the cosmology of the plot), the verb also speaks of exaltation in majesty and glorification (Acts 2:33); in this one word the message of the gospel is presented, by indicating that it is only in his humiliation that Jesus can be exalted and glorified (Klink 2016:412). Köstenberger (2009:530) suggests that "the lifting up" of the Son of Man on the cross combines two elements of Jesus' mission. Reflecting on Barnabas Lindars, Köstenberger (2009:530) indicates that the word "lifted up" combines the two notions of the crucifixion and exaltation in one single ambiguous word. Thus, the "lifting up" of Jesus is not to be understood merely in terms of Jesus but also of the obedient, dependent mission of the Son sent by the Father (Köstenberger 2009:530). The allusion of the cross in John 8:28 connect the pericope to the Roman Empire. But how is Yeshua's exaltation through the Roman cross part of a "language of negotiation" that rearranges the implied audience's relationship with the Roman Empire through "rhetorical distance"?

The hermeneutical key to answer this above question is again found in the purpose of the Gospel, "that you believe that Yeshua is the Messiah and Son of God" (cf. John 20:30-31). As already mentioned, the Son of God was a title ascribed to the Emperor (cf. Carter 2008:194). The title "Son of God", described earlier by Carter (2008:194-195), who situates John's Gospel within the context of Ephesus, had a political function, whereby it was a political conceptualization of the Emperor. Ironically, in John 8:12-59 the term πατήρ is used and it also was a term for the Emperor. Πατήρ was a title ascribed to the Roman Emperor (Carter 2008:235). Carter (2008:236) demonstrates that "Father" was the common designation of the Roman emperor as "Father of the Country", or "Father of the Fatherland" (*pater patriae*, sometimes *parens patriae*). There are numerous authors, inscriptions and coins within the first century CE onwards that identify the emperor as *pater patriae*, "Father of the Fatherland", or "Father of the Country" (cf. Carter 2008:235). The term "Father",

according to Carter (2008:236), was a widely used designation in the late first century CE. The title gained more prominence during the time of Vespasian (69-79 CE) and Domitian (81-96 CE) (Carter 2008:236).

Furthermore, Carter (2008:236) explains that the title was placed upon coins trying to associate these emperors with peace, fertility, social harmony, Jupiter, victory, and war. The term was used throughout the empire as an idealized relationship between the rulers and the ruled, capturing the duties and obligations of the benign and beneficent emperor (Carter 2008:236). However, the term first gained prominence in connection to the figure of Romulus, mythological founder of the city of Rome and hailed as the father and founder of the community, the source of its existence (Carter 2008:236). In terms of Greek, πατήρ, according to Aland, Aland, Karavidpoulos, Martini, & Metzger (2012:140), indicates that the title was also understood to be an honorary title for a noted person. Thus, πατήρ is significant as the harsh association of the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe, in John 8:44, where they are labelled with a πατρὸς with "the Devil", could be a rhetorical assertion that displays the authors own opposition towards the Emperor or "notable" people within the Roman Empire. This statement would not be far-fetched considering the events that occurred towards the Ἰουδαῖοι as a nation in first century CE, both pre and post Second Temple destruction at the hands of the Romans.

In the interim, however, it is safe to maintain that a one-dimensional interpretation underscores the Roman Empire in John's Gospel and cannot be helpful in providing possible multiple-dimensions and levels of reading John 8:12-59; neither can an interpretation that solely prioritises the Jewishness of John's Gospel, as it ignores the significance of imperial language that alludes to the Roman Emperor. A literalist reading is not even aware of imperial language that the implied author is employing within the context of Empire – a language that is involved in a potential rearrangement within the social-political context of the Roman world. A starting point, to avoid this, is to understand how religion, politics, class, and economics functioned within the context of the ancient Mediterranean world. This will hopefully help us to be aware of the social-economic situation within the ancient world, particularly the socio-political ramifications that πατήρ might have caused within the economic system in which the audience was situated. However, this evaluation must not suggest that the textual construction is an authentic demonstration of the historical background. Rather, the text is constructed by the author and evaluated rhetorically within the information pertaining to the

historical context. Thus, the social location investigation of this social-political context will assist in understanding how the language of John 8:12-59 would rhetorically mean within the Roman Empire, and its possible ramification within this imperial system. Perhaps, this investigation of the "social location of group's identity within the ancient Mediterranean world" will provide us with knowledge and understanding of how the emerging Jewish sect within Second Temple Judaism might have needed to respond towards Roman imperial rule.

The Roman Emperor and Class Arrangement

Emperor, Kinship/Family, and Patronage

The Roman Emperor had a number of titles. The Emperor was the Pontifex Maximus (High Priest) in charge of Roman religious rituals (Gill 2000:996 & cf. Carter 2008:236). The Emperor was also the Father of the Country and assumed the title of imperator or commander (Gill 2000:996). The emperor is the Father of the state's life and secures it as a community with civic and morality (Carter 2008:241). The father, which in this case is the Emperor, gives life, rules the world, judges and also gives laws, as well as creates a people, sends agents and receives honour (Carter 2008:241). Agents are sent to further Roman imperial power; for example, during Augustus's reign Gaius and Lucas were sent to further alliances with other provinces in Italy, Africa, Spain and even Sardinia and also have complete allegiance to Augustus as Emperor (Carter 2008:240).[34] It is no wonder, then, that the Pharisees in John 8:19 ask Yeshua "where is your Father", as Yeshua could be an agent of the Roman Emperor. The questioning of Yeshua's fatherhood is situated in an economic system of patronage and clientage. Patronage was a social relationship central to the behaviour throughout the preindustrial world (Oakes 2010:178). Patronage was indeed central to the way the Roman Elite presented itself to the world (Oakes 2010:178). This relationship went beyond Romans to other groups in the Empire (Oakes 2010:178-179).

The elite were patrons in three ways, according to Oakes (2010:180-181). Firstly, the patrons had their own network of clients (Oakes 2010:180). Secondly, the patrons worked collectively within a rotating system of an individual patronage of the town as a whole (Oakes 2010:180). This is important because a patronage model has an urban structure that first sees the town as a central display area for the elite (the patrons) that is surrounded by the rest of the town (the clients) (cf.

[34] Augustus held reign from 31 BCE until 14 CE before handing it over to Tiberius (cf. Desilva 2004:59). Tiberius continued until 29 CE and then left the emporium to his nephew Caligula in 37 CE (cf. Desilva 2004:59).

Oakes 2010:180). This was done by occupying key magistrate positions, paying for buildings and hosting events such as games in the amphitheatre (cf. Oakes 2010:180-181). Thirdly, the civic elite acted as brokers, on the town's behalf, in dealings with higher external patrons such as senators and emperors (Oakes 2010:181). Many formed inscriptions in honour of such patrons and in turn the civic elite are also honoured as the ones who brought about the patronage within those towns in the first place (cf. Oakes 2010:181). In terms of an "honour and shame" culture, the elite's honour is an acquired honour, as it is the honour that they have attained through their life conduct (cf. Rohrbaugh 2010:118). However, this class arrangement is situated within a collectivistic identity that understands family beyond biological association, but included slaves as well. The ancient household would include husband and wife and their children, and very often slaves (Desilva 2004:139). The purpose of marriage was chiefly the provision for the future, both in terms of offspring and inheritance (Desilva 2004:140).

The Jews particularly married within their kin group so that they stay within their group identity and do not violate incest laws (cf. Desilva 2004:140). This strategy is called endogamy, which was the strategy adopted so that tribal inheritances would remain intact (Desilva 2004:140). The Romans, on the other hand, had exogamous practices, which was marrying outside of one's kin group, and was based more on interest in creating strategic alliances between different families (Desilva 2004:140). However, kinship means the cultural order over the biological universals of sexual relations and continuous human reproduction through birth (Macdonald 2010:29). In the modern western concept of family, family is mainly understood in terms of the nuclear family, whereas in the ancient Mediterranean, family is understood within the ideas of kinship and household (which involves co-residence) (cf. Macdonald 2010:30). Osiek and Balch (1997:41) describe this understanding as a diachronic and synchronic association of persons related by blood, marriage, and other social conventions, organised for dual purpose of enhancement of its social status and legitimate transfer of property.[35] The family is diachronic, inasmuch as all known generations, often even those deceased, belong (Osiek and Balch 1997:41). It is synchronic inasmuch as many living units, united by blood, marriage, patronage, or other contractual obligations participate simultaneously (Osiek and Balch 1997:41-42).

[35] The major means of achieving was through marriage and child raising (Osiek and Balch 1997:41).

Family and Class

The understanding of family within the ancient world is linked to class arrangement within the Roman Empire. The Roman world had two main classifications of people, the upper and lower classes (Watson 2000:1000). According to Watson (2000:1000), the upper class consisted of three classes, as the rich despised manual labour, because they upheld the life of leisure as the truly satisfying one, and was seen as self-sufficient because it allowed one to attend to their virtue. It was hierarchal, with an emperor at the top of the hierarchy, a senate (who were responsible of confirming the emperor's office), and provincial administrators (cf. Gill 2000:996-997). The Emperor and his household was at the top of the social order and it was shared by members of the Emperor's imperial household and officials of the central administration, called the *Servi Caesaris* or *Familia Caesaris*, and all lived comfortably on the Emperor's property (Watson 2000:1001). The three classes in the upper class, which are below the Emperor, according to Watson (2000:1000-1001), are the senatorial order, equestrian order, and decurion's.

The senatorial order were families who had members of the Senate, held the highest governmental offices in Rome, were responsible for administrating the provinces (consular) and even functioned as ceremonial priests (cf. Watson 2000:1000). Gill (2000:996-997) indicates that there were two types of provincial governors. First, the senatorial class had usually held other positions prior to their appointment; this administrator was expected to administer justice until a successor arrived in the province (Gill 2000:996-997). The second provincial governor was given the title prefect and had a judicial function of hearing the cases that were presented to the prefect (Gill 2000:996-997). The emperor, on the other hand, appointed senators, as representatives all over the Roman Empire (Watson 2000:1000).[36] The equestrian order occupied positions in the army, procuratorial appointments of financial administration (especially in small provinces that did not need large numbers of troops), imperial fleets, and prefectures of Egypt and praetorian guard (Watson 2000:1000). The decurion, on the other hand, gained their wealth through inheritance, landowning (the main source of income), trading and manufacturing (Watson 2000:1000-1001). This class also administrated provinces and served as magistrates on the local council that formed the local authority, working alongside the popular assembly (Watson 2000:1000). If members of the families

[36] Watson (2000:1000) further explains that, senators were magistrates who represented the aristocratic families of the Roman city-states, however, the emperor's fight to consolidate power during the early days of the empire, many of these senators were removed and replaced by senators from outside of city Rome and even by those of non-Roman origin.

in this class did well, then they would be elevated to the equestrian order by the Emperor (cf. Watson 2000:1001).

The two-class system of the Roman Empire did not have a middle class. Rather the lower classes are categorized as being of "lowly birth and status" (Watson 2000:1001). The lower classes were small landowners, craftsmen, shopkeepers, and soldiers with some economic means (Watson 2000:1001). The under current within the lower classes is this "slavery" or "freedom" identification that Yeshua may be alluding to in John 8:31-32 and John 8:34-36. The freed lower class, according to Watson (2000:1001), could be owners of small farms and business, fishermen, shoemakers, and hunters. However, slaves worked on farms, road construction, harbours, shipping and mining (Watson 2000:1002). The slaves in rich households, on the other hand, could count on shelter, food, clothing, and some wages and advancement for their children (Watson 2000:1002), as they were dependent on and subject to their masters. As already indicated above, the class arrangement also had religious implication within the context of the Temple. Peasants (lower class) were indebted not only through the need to rectify sins and remove impurity, but also through the heavy expectation of pilgrimage (Hanson & Oakman 2008:148). Each year there are three pilgrim festivals (Passover, Festival of Weeks, and Festival of Tabernacles), when devout Jews would come to Jerusalem to worship, plus other festivals celebrated at home (Wenham & Walton 2001:35). While not every Jew went to every pilgrim festival, most Judean Jews would try to be in Jerusalem for at least once a year, and diaspora Jews would plan to be in Jerusalem at least some time in their lives (Wenham & Walton 2001:35).

Therefore, Yeshua's presence at the Festival of Tabernacles in John 8:12-59 is no mistake, as this believing movement was a sect within Judaism in first century CE. The social-political context of the Roman Empire was an economic system of patronage. This economic system was made up of classes that were organised within the parameters of Roman political organisation. The collectivistic identity is situated in a culture of honour and shame, making the economic system of patronage an imperialistic and oppressive hierarchy that serves the Emperor's kingship. In addition, institutions of marriage and family are also culturally different, making the ethnic identity differences between Judaism and the Roman Empire, even more apparent and difficult if the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua have a relational paternal parenthood with "the Devil". However, the Romans destroyed the Second Jewish Temple in 70 CE, had a 8 year long war (66-74 CE) with Jews that culminated at Masada (73-74 CE), and Yeshua was crucified on a Roman cross - which was a tool of political

violence that was used to subvert insurrectionists and citizens to submission. Yet, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are prime advocates for killing Yeshua, and social-politically align their kingship to Caesar in John 19:15. If Yeshua is the "king of Israel" (cf. John 1:49) and "the one that Moses wrote about" (cf. John 1:45), then why do οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι associate with Caesar, and yet the Romans destroyed their spiritual/religious and economic centre, the Temple, in 70 CE?

The Temple and Jewish Temple Politics within the Roman Empire

Herod's Allegiance

The Judean temple in Jerusalem was a political institution in numerous sense, by virtue of its founding by an Israelite king, Solomon, and re-founded later under Persian King, Cyrus; then again by virtue of its privileging a certain class of people divine right; and by virtue of its co-optation in Jesus' day by Herodian and Roman interests (cf. Hanson & Oakman 2008:127). As already indicated above, Kinship relations interpenetrated political, economic, and religious institutions; power relations structured village, economic and religious life (Hanson & Oakman 2008:3). Hanson and Oakman (2008:3) illustrate this point by explaining how Herod the Great not only expanded the Jerusalem Temple Mount with tax monies, but built temples in honour of Roman Emperors and gods. Hanson and Oakman (2008:3) affirm Carter (2008:236) and Gill (2000:996) remarks concerning the role of the Roman Emperor. The emperor of Rome was not only supreme commander of the government and military *Princeps* (head man), but was *Pontifex Maximus* (highest "priest") of Roman religion and posthumously voted divine status by the Senate (Hanson & Oakman 2008:3).[37] But what do Herod and the Jewish Temple have to do with the Roman Empire, particularly considering that the temple was one of the unifying symbol's that constituted of being part of the identity of evolving Judaism in antiquity?

Herod did great building work in Samaria, but the most famous portion of all his work is found in the Jerusalem area, where Herod built a whole variety of buildings, such as: a palace for himself, a

[37] Julius Caesar emerged as supreme commander but was assassinated in 44 BCE, leaving a new civil war being waged by Caesar's supporters, Octavian and Marc Anthony; who then went against Caesar's assassins (Desilva 2004:56). These civil wars resulted in factionalism within the Empire, ravaged the resources of the whole Mediterranean world from Italy to Egypt (Desilva 2004:57). However, in 31 BCE, Marc Anthony was painted as a betrayer of Rome who sought to establish a monarchical rule over the Mediterranean with his illicit lover, Cleopatra of Egypt, and was defeated at the battle of Actium by Octavian and his forces (Desilva 2004:57). The Senate and the people of Rome then gave Octavian all the power through the constitutional, "Roman", means and given the title Augustus, which Denoted him both as pious and as "worthy of reverence", and named him *Pontifex Maximus*, the High Priest of the official religious life of the Greco-Roman world (Desilva 2004:57-58).

theatre, an amphitheatre and a hippodrome, where crowds would come watch sports and shows (Wenham & Walton 2001:14).[38] The Jews had mixed feelings about Herod's reign (37-4 BCE), as Herod was ruthless and taxed the Jews heavily, because he needed to pay for his building work and for his own lavish lifestyle (Wenham and Walton 2001:4). Culturally, Herod was more Greek than Jewish, as his building programmes demonstrated (it included building temples to the Roman imperial family), the use of Greek as the court language, and in his own lifestyle (Wenham & Walton 2001:14). As already mentioned in the previous section, the elite, who were patrons, had a network of clients (cf. Oakes 2010:180). Clients were persons of lesser status who are obligated and loyal to a patron over a period of time (Hanson & Oakman 2008:65). The clients, in turn, through their reciprocal relationship with the patron, build buildings and amphitheatres in honour for the patron by occupying key magistrate positions (cf. Oakes 2010:180). Hanson and Oakman (2008:65) further add that, in return for these benefits, patrons (who were men and women in the ancient Mediterranean) could expect to receive honour, information, and political support from clients.[39] Lastly, as Oakes (2010:181) stated earlier, the civic elite acted as brokers, on the town's behalf, in dealings with higher external patrons such as senators and emperors. A broker, according to Batten (2010:169), is the person who enable and manoeuvres patron-client exchanges. Brokers are types of social entrepreneurs – their role is to bring people together for the purpose of exchange, and in doing so they must be innovative in order that the entire enterprise not only serves the interests of each party, but also procures a benefit for the broker (Batten 2010:169).

Herod shows himself to being a client of the Roman Emperor, and also operates as a broker through his socio-political position, as Herod was appointed by Marc Anthony and Octavian to be this "King of the Judeans" (cf. Desilva 2004:63). This came after the Herodian family emerged from the scrutiny after the Hasmonean dynasty, after their rival, Antipater the Idumean, a proven administrator, was made procurator of Judea and Idumea (Desilva 2004:63). After the death of his sons, Herod and Phasel became joint "tetrarchs" rulers of parts rather than the whole of the province or ethnic group (Desilva 2004:63). However, Phasel was later killed when the last Hasmonean,

[38] Herod's work on the Jerusalem temple was the most striking for New Testament studies as it started around 19 BCE (Wenham & Walton 2001:14). The main part of the temple took about ten years to complete, but the whole work went on until 63 CE, just a few years before it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE (Wenham & Walton 2001:14).

[39] Hanson and Oakman (2008:65) affirm that patrons were elite persons (male and female) who can provide benefits to others on a personal basis because of a combination of superior power, influence, reputation, position, and wealth.

Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus II, and then Hycryanus gained support of the Parthians to the east and invaded Judea (cf. Desilva 2004:63). Antigonus then established himself in that position and attempted to take back the secular power that had been stripped from his uncle Pompey (cf. Desilva 2004:63). As a result, Herod fled to Rome for help and was faced with the choice between a loyal vassal in charge of Judea or a Parthian presence at the Parthian Kingdom's eastern border (cf. Desilva 2004:63). The Roman Consuls, Octavian and Marc Anthony, then appointed Herod as "King of the Judeans", and supported his recapture of Jerusalem making Herod the King of the Jews (Desilva 2004:63). It is clear that Herod chose the former option of being a loyal vassal to Rome so that he may have full charge over Judea.

Gafni (1988:17) indicates three ways in which Roman rule asserted itself in Palestine. Firstly, whoever rules Judea as a vassal king, prince or high priest, must bear total allegiance to Rome (Gafni 1988:17). Secondly, any autonomous Jewish state will rule only over territory populated primarily by Jews (this principle was established by Pompey, but modified in later periods) (Gafni 1988:17). Lastly, the natural base of Roman rule throughout the East, and in Palestine as well, were to be Greek cities, who were by Roman eyes the natural allies of Rome by virtue of the their obvious cultural affinity (Gafni 1988:17). The governing Jewish King also had a cultural challenge of Hellenisation. Thus, the affiliation with such a title of kingship that is aligned with the Roman Empire also has the challenge of contending with a Greco-Roman culture of Hellenism.

Hellenistic civilisation continues well through the time of the early empire, so that we accurately designate the most encompassing symbolic world of the New Testament as Greco-Roman culture (Johnson 1999:23). According to Johnson (1999:23), Hellenising of a city was the first tool of Hellenisation. This was the first symbol of Greek culture and its best expression, as it was the place where citizens could meet, market, debate and vote (cf. Johnson 1999:24).[40] The city was the centre for culture and played an integral role in the communication of that culture through education, gymnasium, and even offered an opportunity for the learning of both physical and intellectual virtue (Johnson 1999:24). Furthermore, the city was where religious activity primarily took place, as it was where rituals and liturgies occurred, and it gave citizens a sense of personal and communal identity (cf. Johnson 1999:24). As already indicated above, spaces were a key marker of identification and

[40] The second tool of Hellenisation was language, making it the most powerful tool as it is a symbol of culture (Johnson 1999:25). Greek became the common language until Latin became the language when the Romans took over (Johnson 1999:25). However, Greek was the language of trade, government of philosophy, and religion (Johnson 1999:25).

self-categorization of a group's identity. Identity and space were synonymous for people within the ancient Mediterranean world, as space may be physical space of operation (i.e. temple tax and tithing) or an ideological symbolic space of identity (i.e. the temple as a unifying symbol of Judaism) (cf. Moxnes 2010:95 & Cohen 1994:9-11). In terms of Herod's allegiance to Rome, the significance of identity with spaces, and Carter's rhetorical distance (2008:4), a connection can be made with Pilate's question to Yeshua in John 18:33, and Nathanael's identity claim concerning Yeshua in John 1:49.

Pilate's question of whether Yeshua is the "King of Jews" (18:33), and Nathanael's identity claim concerning Yeshua, "You are the King of Israel" (1:49), draws a socio-political contradiction between Yeshua's kingship and the allegiance of Herod. Carter (2008:192-193), speaking within the ancient Mediterranean context of Ephesus, indicates five significant reasons of differentiation that display the significance of Christ's Kingship, but this thesis will only make mention of four reasons. Firstly, the title signifies God's saving and judging role of establishing rule over all nations, which would be established fully and transformed in the future (Carter 2008:192). Furthermore, the image of God that King Jesus asserts is one of asserting God's sovereignty over the earth and nations (cf. Carter 2008:192). Secondly, God makes an eternal covenant with David that his descendants will be Israel's kings as representatives of God's sovereignty over earth and nations (Carter 2008:192). This, for Carter (2008:192), associates with the traditional kingship idea within Israel. The Deuteronomic history of Israel and Judah assess kings as "good" or "bad" according to their faithfulness to tasks – tasks such as: ruling justly, protecting the weak and poor, overcoming enemies, and ensuring fertility (Psalms 72 & 1-2 Kings) (Carter 2008:192). A popular kingship sought unsuccessfully to claim a place in this tradition (Carter 2008:192). Nathanael's inscription of the title "King of Israel" to Jesus evokes this sort of kingship, as does the people's welcome to Jesus as he enters Jerusalem (John 12:15) (Carter 2008:192). Kingship is, therefore, God-given (and Rome given) and cannot be enacted by the people (6:15) (Carter 2008:192).

Thirdly, the term "King" (βασιλεὺς) was used for various Gentile kings including the Roman king or Emperor (Carter 2008:192). This is important because anyone who set themselves to be a king was regarded as sedition by the Romans (cf. Carter 2008:192). The imperial order attacked and executed those in Judea and Galilee who attempted to set themselves up as kingship within this popular tradition (cf. Carter 2008:192). Therefore, according to Carter (2008:192), οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι show

themselves to be allies to the emperor in charging Jesus with setting himself up as a king, and they raise the question of Pilate's loyalty to the Roman Emperor/King if he releases Jesus: "If you release this man, you are not a friend of Caesar's friend; everyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar" (John 19:12 RSV). Fourthly, when Pilate asks Jesus if he is "King of the Jews", he makes a charge of sedition and insurrection (18:33) (Carter 2008:192). Yeshua's response in John 18:16, ""My Kingdom/Kingship/Empire" is not of this world", is an establishment and distinction of Yeshua's kingship origin. Carter (2008:192-193) explains that the statement does not mean that Jesus is apolitical or non-political, which is commonly asserted, and neither does Jesus deny being a king of an empire. Rather, Jesus repeats three times in John 18:36, which then places emphasis on his origin that his kingship is not from Rome, unlike Herod, but from God (cf. Carter 2008:192). On the other hand, Roman Consuls, Marc Anthony and Octavian instituted Herod's Kingship. Jesus then enacts this reign of God which is life giving, and not instituted to just benefit the elite class, rather, Jesus reign is rooted in his mission, which is to "bear witness to the truth in the world" (cf. John 3:17-19, John 18:37 RSV) (cf. Carter 2008:193).

The "truth" is the key word here for Carter's (2008:193) claim. The term "truth", a key Johannine word, expresses the Hebrew Scriptures' sense of God's faithfulness to God's commitment to redeem or save Israel (Exod 34:6; Pss 25:10, 40:10-11, 108:4, 146:7) (Carter 2008:193). For John, God is the "true God" (17:3) acting faithfully in Jesus to manifest God's purposes and reign (Carter 2008:193). In terms of John 8:12-59, "truth" is the statement in John 8:31 that evokes an identity protest by the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua (cf. John 8:32). Morris (1995:405) suggests that this "truth" in John 8:31 is about the person and work of Jesus. It is a saving truth; a truth that saves people from the darkness of sin, not that which saves them from darkness of error (though there is a sense in which those in Christ are delivered from gross error; this Gospel has a good deal to say about knowledge) (Morris 1995:405). Klink (2016:414), however, argues that this "truth" is the saving mission of God, the one who through grace and truth has come (1:17). Jesus is the one authoritative expression of the father and his love for the world (Klink 2016:414). In other words, truth is the gospel of Jesus Christ, meaning the juxtaposition of truth and freedom in John 8:31 is a freedom that belongs to God (cf. Klink 2016:414).

In terms of the patron-client system, Yeshua, then, becomes the social entrepreneur for God. Batten (2010:173), reflecting on Neyrey, explains that Jesus becomes a broker in John's gospel because

God has sent him (John 10:36) and authorised him (John 6:27) to do so; his brokerage is successful for a variety of reasons, including the fact that he mediates God's wondrous benefactions such as all of the "signs" that he performs, and maintains a lasting relationship with both the patron, God, and the clients, or disciples; he "remains" with both and they "remain" with him (John 14:10; 2:10; 4:40). Unlike Herod, who jeopardises the Jewish identity by facilitating Roman imperial Hellenisation, Yeshua offers a brokerage that is rooted in God. The call to Yeshua's "truth" in John 8:31 has a socio-political dimension if we considered the language within this historical context of Herod's allegiance, and patron client relationship with the Judean leaders and the Roman Empire. Indeed, many reject Jesus as broker, but this does not affect Jesus's relationship with either followers, who maintain their loyalty to him, or with God, to whom Jesus ascends at the end of the gospel (Batten 2010:173). The point, however, for Carter (2008:193), is that, the exchange between Pilate and Jesus clearly sets up Jesus' kingship at odds with that of Rome. Carter (2008:193), applying his "rhetorical distance", argues that Rome's rule is shown to be contrary to God's purposes and ways. The implication is that Jesus-believers cannot make a ready peace with such an empire (Carter 2008:193). Jesus' kingship, given by God and marked by different practices, requires their allegiance in an alternative community (Carter 2008:193).

Although Herod's reign cannot be understood within the same historical life ministry of Yeshua, the comparison serves as an introduction to understand the socio-political dimension of language within the context of the ancient Mediterranean world. The analysis ensures that an anachronistic reading does not occur, and neither a one-dimensional interpretation of John 8:12-59. The thematic idea of "truth" has a socio-political dimension, whereby the language used has implications within the social-political context of the implied audience (i.e. the Roman Empire). This rhetorical text was read orally with the emphasis of formulating the identity of the emerging Jewish sect that follows Yeshua. It is important to indicate again here that, Christianity was originally a Jewish messianic movement even though it later separated from Judaism, changed its structure and became independent from the Jewish religion (Flusser 2009:259). The point is that, in the beginning, the new movement, which was embryonic Christianity, was actually part of the diversity of the first century CE Second Temple Judaism (cf. Dunn 2009:17), just like the Pharisees. Ironically, the Pharisees are one of the opponents of Yeshua in John 8:12-59. In addition, Christianity was self-consciously Jewish in its self-designation and claims, and was perceived as such during that initial period (Dunn

2009:17).King (2003:39) takes it further by explaining that Christianity was an integral part of the ancient Mediterranean culture and, necessarily, shaped their identity within it. Their challenge was determining how to distinguish themselves clearly from the other, and yet at the same time not appear as a "new" group lacking an ancient and therefore respectable genealogy (King 2003:39).[41]

King's (2003:39) point is not far off considering that this culture was patriarchal and identity was perceived as collective (cf. Witherington 2009:17 & Malina 2010:17). In terms of John's Gospel, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι allegiance with Caesar suggests a kingship allegiance with Rome and not Yeshua's kingship, which for the implied author originates from God. Thus, the negative labelling in John 8:44 makes sense socio-politically, as failure to accept and behave in a manner that does not resemble Christ's Kingship, results in a negative cosmic/spiritual association (i.e. "the Devil"). Socio-political relations have cosmic/spiritual ramification due to the origin of a King's source, which for Yeshua, originates from God. Yeshua as "the Messiah" and "Son of God" further places emphasis on the significance of his identity, an identity that benefits the group's identity and contrasts them from other messianic movements that tried to overthrow the Roman Empire. The thematic boundary of "truth" is the key word in John 8:12-59 that establishes this social-political and cosmic/spiritual level of interpreting this biblical text. However, without going any further, it is important now for an understanding of how the above social-historical information would practically operate within the first century CE; particularly by accounting for the role Roman Emperor within this imperial economic system, and also the Jewish Temple Politics after Herod's reign.

The Emperor, Roman Empire and Jewish Temple Politics

Herod died in 4 BCE, and then split the various parts of his kingdom among his three sons (Wenham & Walton 2001:14). Judea and Samaria were given to Archelaus, Galilee and Perea to Antipas, and parts of Northern Transjordan and Gaulinits (the area of the Golan Heights) to Phillip (Wenham and Walton 2001:14). All three sons went to Rome to gain Roman support, and a delegation of Jews also went to ask that none of the Herodian sons be appointed (Wenham & Walton 2001:14). However, the Emperor allowed the Herodian family to reign but refused to give Archelaus the title of 'king' (Wenham & Walton 2001:14). The Roman emperor was the most powerful patron in the empire:

[41] Christian rhetoric tended to establish Judaism and Christianity as quite separate and distinguishable entities, but this formulation ignores both the internal multiformity of Judaism and Christianity in antiquity and the multiple ways in which they intersected (King 2003:40). It also tends to hide the ways in which Jewish and Christian self-identity construction had mutual and reciprocal effects (King 2003:40).

appointing to office, freeing slaves, raising status (from equestrian to senator), granting citizenship, endowing building projects, sponsoring athletic competitions, giving preference in legal cases, or granting exemption from taxation were among his prerogatives (Hanson & Oakman 2008:68). As indicated in the last section, the Emperor and his household were at the top of the hierarchy of the class system of the Roman Empire. The kinship/family perspective is important as it is connected to the politics within the leadership of the temple. Leadership in religious institutions was "ascribed", based upon heredity and family relationship (Hanson & Oakman 2008:126).

This power game is based on the upper and lower class system. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Temple had an economic function of taxation (cf. Hertzog 2004:104 and Hanson & Oakman 2008:125). The lower class was dependent on the Temple and its leadership for purification of sins and fertility for the lands (cf. Hanson & Oakman 2008:143).[42] This is because cities also had agricultural/rural areas. Peasants lived in villages, large and small, cultivating the land, raising livestock, and tending vines and olive trees (Hertzog 2000:98). Peasants are closely related to the rural artisan who share village life with them and scrape out a subsistence existence along with peasants villagers (Hertzog 2000:98).[43] Moreover, this class arrangement even had a theological justification in a group's identity through texts.

The focus of ancient religious institutions revolved around the group, as worship consisted of elaborate ritual actions (Hanson & Oakman 2008:126). "Theology" was the province of a small literate elite, and consisted in second-temple times primarily of apologetic histories (such as 1 Maccabees), textual divination techniques as in the *pesharim* ("prophetic" commentaries) of Qumran, detailed elaborations of cultic-civic rules and requirements in the rabbinic traditions, or elaborate cosmic speculations (apocalyptic scribal traditions like *1 Enoch*) (Hanson & Oakman 2008:126). Very often this theology was also a justification or rationalization of existing religious groups or institutions, that is, why they should continue in their positions of power and privileged or

[42] Because of the overarching political nature of ancient religious institutions, regular ritual participation was restricted to the functionaries; most other people had infrequent and occasional direct association with the institution, but continual indirect contact through taxation (Hanson & Oakman 2008:126)

[43] Hertzog (2000) situates this within his chapter of "the Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Quest for the Historical Galilee". The chapter looks at the setting of Jesus' context, which was the common era of Palestine from the 20s-30s CE. Hertzog (2000:98) goes on to explain that Jesus' father, Joseph, was such a village artisan, a *tekton*, which probably is better translated "handyman" or "jack-of-all-trades" rather than carpenter. Artisans were no better off than peasants and, if they lacked patrimonial plot of land, they could be even worse off (Hertzog 2000:98).

be restored to power and privilege (Hanson & Oakman 2008:126). This is interesting considering that rhetoric and education are synonymous (cf. Witherington 2009:5, 11). However, Meeks (1983) challenges this two class system of the Roman Empire, by looking at Pauline Christianity. Paul's profession placed him among the lower class but yet his Greek language, though seen as unliterary, should be assigned to a higher class (Meeks 1983:52). The prevailing viewpoint has been that the constituency of the early Christianity, the Pauline congregations included, came from the poor and dispossessed of the Roman provinces (Meeks 1983:52). Thus, Meeks (1983:52) suggests that Christianity was a movement sponsored by local patrons to their social dependents and that it should be viewed not as a proletarian[44] mass movement but, rather, as a relatively small cluster of more or less intense groups, largely middle class in origin (Meeks 1983:52).

However, this thesis will not debate the class arrangement of the ancient Mediterranean world. Rather, it is concerned with understanding the language of John 8:12-59 within its context: the Roman Empire. The main connection of John 8:12-59 to the temple is the narration that the author makes in John 8:20. The narration is significant as it refers to the temple treasury. This is linked particularly to the Second Temple destruction at the hands of the Roman Empire. Despite fanatical resistance, the temple compound steadily came into Roman control, by fire and sword, and in the final attack (August 30, 70) the Temple itself was set of fire and destroyed (Dunn 2009:1103). Also destroyed by fire were the Temple's treasury chambers, 'in which lay vast sums of money, vast piles of raiment and other valuables', since they were 'the general repository of Jewish wealth, to which the rich had consigned the contents of their dismantled houses' (Dunn 2009:1103). Dunn (2009:1103) goes as far as to say that the defences had been so reduced and the Romans were pressing so closely to the temple that daily sacrifice, which had been offered continually throughout, finally ceased.

In the years before the wars of 66-70 CE, people of Jewish and possibly Christian faith experienced terror and discrimination at the hands of the Roman officials (Selvidge 2003:21). The priestly aristocracy was pragmatic in politics and conservative in religion as the alliance created the Sadducees party, which then accepted the written law but rejected all innovation including belief after death, and this party was the one responsible for the Temple function prior to the destruction

[44] A social revolution where the working class attempts to overthrow the bourgeoisie (middle class).

(cf. Muddiman 1988:30).[45] The rural poor became aliens in their own country, as their property was confiscated and the creation of large estates owned by absentee landlord caused many to emigrate (Muddiman 1988:30). At the same time, on the Roman end political changes were being made. Augustus (or Octavian) organized the provinces in the Roman Empire, making the imperial provinces to be governed by members of the senatorial classes who were directly answerable to Augustus, while Judea and Egypt employed prefects or procurators drawn from the second tier of Roman society (the equestrians rather than senators) for administration of imperial affairs (cf. Desilva 2004:59). The smaller kingdoms, on the other hand, entered into an uneven partnership with Rome, making themselves clients and allies (Desilva 2004:59). In terms of Judea, Hertzog (2000:102) explains that, Archelaus governed for nine stormy years before he was disposed in 6 CE, and Augustus then converted Judea into a sub-province of the Roman province of Syria. Under the new arrangement, Judea would be overseen by a prefect of equestrian rank, who was responsible to the Legate (or governor) of Syria (Hertzog 2000:103).[46]

Internally within Jewish leadership, as indicated to earlier, the issue was corruption. The priestly houses anointed by Rome proved singularly ineffective addressing the problems facing the province of Judea (Hertzog 2000:104). The widening gap between rich and poor, typical of agrarian societies and aristocratic empires, led to unending enmity and hostility (Hertzog 2000:104). The high-priestly families tended to focus on the health of the economy of Jerusalem to the detriment of the wider economy of Judea (Hertzog 2000:104). Owing to the wealth accumulated in the Temple, the aristocratic families of Jerusalem had money to lend to peasants so they could plant their crops, but the "only logical reason to lend was thus the hope of winning the peasant's land by foreclosing on it when the debt was paid off" (Hertzog 2000:104). The corruption failed to fulfil the temple identification associated with the group's identity, a space that represented their symbolic unity. Thus, the use of debt to ruin peasants only increased the level of hostility as it concentrated wealth in fewer and fewer hands (Hertzog 2000:104). Although this thesis is not going into detail of the whole issue, what is important to note here is the corruption of the elite class of Judea in relation to the lower class. This evidently resulted in the first revolt in 66-70 CE, where the first messianic

[45] Grabbe (2010:58) explains that the Sadducees were an upper socio-economic class and seen as wealthy as they did not believe in Angels or the resurrection.

[46] During Jesus' public life, Pilate was prefect of the province of Judea, which included Samaria (26-36 CE.), but Pilate worked through the high-priestly houses that controlled the temple in Jerusalem (Hertzog 2000:103).

movement of Simon Bar Giora, was responding to the corruption of Israelite aristocracy. The corruption failed the nation of Judea, as these leaders did not prioritize the much needed unification against the Roman Empire, but rather, squandered wealth for their own benefit at the expense of their own national identity and peasantry class that was dependent on them.

This was a tragedy especially considering the social-political power that the Romans had within the ancient Mediterranean world and the religious arrogance some emperors had upon the Jews. The Romans were in control of seas and roads leading to the farthest points of the Empire, and if the emperor, who had the authority to close down ports, made a single order, it could result in a harmful economic situation and bring starvation to the region (Selvidge 2003:22).[47] Such power brought fear and also peace between the very ethnic groups (Selvidge 2003:22). For example, Caligula, known for emperor worship, had great disrespect and arrogance, which from a Jewish perspective was expressed through his attempt of erecting a statue of himself on the Jewish Temple (Desilva 2004:59). Faced with the ultimate desecration of their holy place with the erection of a graven image of a false god, the Jews made it clear to the governor of Syria that they would rather be slaughtered in masse than tolerate this sacrilege (Desilva 2004:59). Caligula's encouragement, however, provided the anti-Jewish Gentiles in Egypt with an opportunity to violate the synagogue of the Alexandrian Jews with busts of the emperor (Desilva 2004:59).[48]

Although this thesis will not evaluate in detail the disrespectful acts done by all Roman emperors upon Jews in the first century CE, a brief understanding of a Roman Emperor's attitude towards evolving Judaism, demonstrates how anti-Judaism is not just a phenomenon in the 21st Century but also was an issue already in the first century CE. Judaism and the Roman Empire had a complicated social-political relationship based on allegiance to the emperor, and attitudes from some emperors sparked anti-Judaism behaviour. However, this social-political relationship is rooted in the economic system of patronage, which contextually assists us in identifying the significance of the implied author's textual construction of Yeshua as God's social entrepreneur and broker. The construction displays a social-political level of interpretation within the Roman Empire, but also has a

[47] The Roman army occupied a land, it was accompanied by thousands of civilians (wives, children, doctors, merchants etc.) the army lived off the occupied country, pilfering its natural resources, enslaving members of its population, raping women, and generally terrorising the populace (Heard & Evans 2000:936).

[48] The first century was one of the most violent epochs of Jewish history, with the cauldron of unrest reaching its apex in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE (Heard & Evans 2000:936).

spiritual/cosmic ramification within the Gospel narrative. The socio-political context of the Roman Empire is often ignored when reading John's Gospel, but this chapter, thanks to the help of Carter (2008) and others, has demonstrated how πατήρ was a term used to refer to the emperor, hence highlighting the significance of the Roman Emperor and how he operated within this socio-political context. This socio-political dimension of interpreting John 8:12-59 evidently displayed Yeshua as God's broker, social entrepreneur, and having a kingship that originates from God. This understanding helps in making contemporary readers aware of the social location factors within the ancient Mediterranean world, a world where the Roman Empire is not invisible but rather very much part of the context in which emerging Christian communities are situated. In addition, discerning the Roman Emperor's relationship with evolving Judaism allows us to see what the language of John 8:12-59 could mean within its context.

Moreover, the continued understanding of the Jewish Second Temple and its relationship to Rome displays a significant social-political arrangement between Judaism and the Roman Empire. Accounting for this arrangement within the class economic system of patronage, has the potential to solve the problem of a literalistic or one-dimensional interpretation of John 8:12-59, since πατήρ in John 8:44 could be a rhetorical assertion towards the Roman Emperor. The social-history approach proved helpful, as the harsh language of John 8:44 then has a socio-political dimension. This social-political level of interpreting John 8:12-59, adds perspective to not only this biblical texts literary context, but its historical, sociological, and ideological context as well. The social-political level understands Yeshua's "truth" as a call to total allegiance towards God's kingship that is being established through Yeshua. This kingship is opposed to the Roman Empire and calls for in-group members to be loyal to God's social entrepreneur and broker, Yeshua of Nazareth. A present-day reader can, therefore, not anachronistically assume that οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι are "the Jews" of today, and neither can they cosmologically/spiritually suggest that their πατήρ is "the Devil", as this textual category could be referring to the Roman Emperor. Furthermore, Yeshua is speaking with the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in him, which makes the interpretation be focused on the group's identity rather than fellow Judeans in first century CE. Indeed, there is a clear social-political dichotomy at play here, one that could be alluding to the economic arrangement of patronage, which forms part of a larger class system within the Roman imperial context, or even a kingship cosmology that is directly challenging or even mocking the Roman class system under the emperor's headship. Thus,

the findings of this chapter will assist in placing the author's textual construction within the social location of the Roman Empire, and ensure that this thesis's interpretation of John 8:12-59 is read within its socio-political context.

Chapter Four: A Rhetorical Analysis of John 8:12-59 within its Socio-political Context

Key words: "I am" (Ἐγώ εἰμι), Fatherhood (or "Paternal Parenthood"), In-group identity, Identity formation, Messianic/Christology, Son of Man, Ethnic identity, Cosmology/Spirituality, and Abraham.

The previous two chapters have displayed dimensions and levels of interpreting John 8:12-59. Since this thesis is concerned with the problem of a one-dimensional reading of John 8:12-59, discovering different related yet distinguishable dimensions while using a social-history approach and rhetorical analysis, assisted in ensuring that our reading of John 8:12-59 is not literalistic, but also accounts for the context in which the language of the text is situated. The emerging Jewish sect within evolving Judaism uses language that not only has ethnic identity ramifications within its ancient Mediterranean context, but also socio-political implications within the social location of the Roman Empire. An exegetical analysis of John 8:12-59, using rhetorical analysis, is contextualised within this "world behind the text", in an attempt to avoid an anti-Judaistic attitude when reading this biblical text. A rhetorical analysis of John 8:12-59 within its social-political context will follow the steps that were mentioned in chapter 1, and further situate this analysis within the findings of the two previous chapters. A starting point is to situate the evident thematic ideas in this biblical text, in order to ensure a rhetorical thrust for the exegetical analysis. This will attempt to structure the dualistic categories in John 8:12-59, so that it prioritises the Jewishness in John 8:12-59 in a life-giving way that is not anti-Jewish. Therefore, various interpret levels that have been mentioned will be applied in this exegetical chapter. The exegetical analysis of John 8:12-59 within its socio-political context will attempt to assist contemporary readers to discern responsible and conscious hermeneutical ways of approaching this biblical text within their various contexts.

A Rhetorical Analysis of John 8:12-59

The second step of a rhetorical analysis, after having determined the situation in which the text is situated, is to determine the rhetoric (cf. Black 1995:261). As indicated in the first chapter, John 8:12-59 is placed within the context of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. The discourse of John 8:12-59 occurs between the events that proceed after questions pertaining to Yeshua's identity in

John 7:40-44, and culminates in identity confusion - which is the identity apex in John 7:45-52, with the Judean leaders' attitude towards Yeshua by wanting to arrest him.[49] John 8:12-59 precedes the events of Yeshua healing the man born blind in John 9:1-41. John 9:3-5, in particular, gives reason as to why Yeshua is the "light of the world". As already indicated above, "light" (τὸ φῶς) in Greco-Roman antiquity, was understood to be a substance that was in all human beings (cf. Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998:156). Therefore, Yeshua's exordium statement, "I am the light of world" (Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου) in John 8:12, is confirmed through the healing act of the man born blind in John 9:3-5, verifying that he is the "perceived source" that is within all humanity. Ironically, light was a major symbol at the Festival of Tabernacles (Von Wahlde 2010:379). However, we cannot fully comprehend this statement without first considering the metaphor significance of "light" within the Old Testament.

The phrase "light" is synonymous with the qualification of Yeshua's claim, that those who follow him will have the "light of life". Von Wahlde (2010:379) compares the "light of life" metaphor with Job 33:30, where we read that God brings mortals back from pit "so that they may see the light of life".[50] The light metaphor is steeped in Old Testament allusions, according to Carson (1991:337). For example, the glory of the very presence of God in the cloud led the people to the Promised Land (Exodus 13:21-22) and protected them from those who would destroy them (Exodus 14:19-25) (Carson 1991:3337). The word of God, the law of God, is a light to guide the path of those who cherish instruction (Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 6:23), God's light is shed abroad in revelation (Ezekiel 1:4, 13, 26-28) and salvation (Habakkuk 3:3-4) (Carson 1991:337-338). As indicated above, "light" (τὸ φῶς) appears in the prologue (John 1:4), and indicates that Yeshua is the Word of God, which then make him the "light" (τὸ φῶς) that is in all human beings.

However, this light is not significant without considering the self-identification attached to it, "I am" (Ἐγώ εἰμι). Ἐγώ εἰμι ("I am") appears in thirty-five instances in John's Gospel (Porter 2015:127).

[49] The story of the adulteress woman in John 7:53-8:11 is missing from the best manuscripts, and there is a universal consensus that it was not part of the original gospel (Hakola 2005:177). Therefore, John 8:12 had originally followed 7:52 (Hakola 2005:177). Although the *Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum Graece* version has John 7:53-8:11, this thesis will not include this section in its rhetorical analysis of the narrative, but rather prioritises the events pertaining to Yeshua's identity as a main concern in interpreting this passage.

[50] Von Wahlde (2010:379) also compares this light idea with two early Jewish literature texts, 1 Enoch 58:3 and the Psalm of Solomon 3:16. "The righteous ones shall be in the light of the sun and the elect ones in the light of eternal life that has no end" (1 Enoch 58:3). "…those who fear the Lord shall rise up to eternal life, and theirs shall be in the Lord's light, and it shall never end" (Psalm of Solomon 3:16).

Porter (2015:128) suggests a "formally based classification scheme" that defines three definable categories according to which these "I am" statements may be understood. First is its absolute usage, in which the "I am" (Ἐγώ εἰμι) construction stands on its own, as a class without adjuncts, modifiers, or adverbial modification (thus, "I am") (Porter 2015:128). An absolute construction is used in the Johannine context to affirm boldly that Jesus is the Messiah (the Christ), made especially clear in contrast to John the Baptist, who affirms equally that he is not the Christ (Porter 2015:128). Secondly, a locative usage, is when the "I am" (Ἐγώ εἰμι) construction has adjunctive attachments, or is part of an adverbial/locative structure (thus, "I am not from this world") (Porter 2015:128). Locative constructions are used to draw distinctions in place between God and humanity, such that the Messiah is the one who mediates between these two spheres, the divine and human (Porter 2015:128). Thirdly, a predicate usage is when "I am" (Ἐγώ εἰμι) construction is part of a predicate structure with a predicate complement (thus, "I am the light of the world") (Porter 2015:128). Predicate constructions are used to elucidate the Messianic Christology by appealing to examples (often vividly pictorial) that enlighten the notion of a messianic figure (Porter 2015:128).

All three "I am" (Ἐγώ εἰμι) constructions/usages occur in John 8:12-59. As already mentioned above, Ἐγώ εἰμι occurs seven times in John 8:12-59, i.e. John 8:12, 8:18, 8:23a, 8:23b, 8:24, 8:28, and 8:58. The connection of Ἐγώ εἰμι and τὸ φῶς ("Light") is paramount as it leads to an allusion to the Old Testament, and is a predicate construction that "elucidates the Messianic Christology" (cf. Bruner 2012:513) of Yeshua's identity. The invention is the author's attempt to use external proofs that give evidence to what he or she is trying to "artistically" proof through his or her written creation (cf. Kennedy 1984:14). In the New Testament there are three common proofs: quotations of scripture, the evidence of miracles, and the naming of witnesses such as John the Baptist or the disciples of Jesus (Kennedy 1984:14). John's Gospel demonstrates these proofs through the identification of who Yeshua is, already in the beginning of the Gospel narrative, with Phillip (John 1:41) and Nathaniel (John 1:49). The healing sign of the man born blind (John 9:1-41) confirms Yeshua's "Messianic Christological" claim through restoring his sight (cf. John 9:3-5). The final author also does this thematically by creating boundaries through means of dualism, whereby οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who do not understand, are confused about Yeshua's identity (cf. John 7:40-44), and those who oppose him look for ways to arrest him (cf. John 7:45-52).

The thematic assertions that demarcate Yeshua to his opponents, which in this passage are οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and the Pharisees, create boundaries that ultimately separate the opponents from Yeshua. However, within emerging Judaism, this early Christian movement, which at the time was a Jewish sect, uses language that is significant to the Roman Empire and their shared Jewish identity. As mentioned above, this thesis identifies the textual construction of boundaries as the implied author's identity formation. The identity formation is constructed using the dualistic categories, which construct the in-group's identity with Yeshua at the expense of the identity of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. In chapter 2b, the thesis attempted to construct and argue for an internal structure of the text based on thematic ideas that the implied author demarcates dualistically, by distinguishing between the identity of the in-group (an identification or "characteristic" that is modelled in Yeshua), and the out-group (an identification of the "out-group" modelled by the οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and Pharisees) (also see table 1). The pericope thus operates as a rhetorical text of identity formation for the in-group's identity within their socio-political context.

The internal structure will be the basic outline of the exegetical analysis (cf. addendum 1). The exegetical analysis will consult commentaries and other helpful sources. In addition, John 8:12-59 will be placed within its socio-political context using rhetorical analysis, in an attempt to understand how the implied author may be using the language in this biblical text rhetorically. This is important as the third step in our rhetorical analysis, according to Black (1995:261), is to identify the "species of rhetoric". The identification of the "species of rhetoric", as mentioned in the first chapter, is linked with the fourth step of identifying the arrangement of the discourse. The challenge is that there can be many "species of rhetoric" within the discourse or one predominant species (cf. Kennedy 1984:19). However, the importance of placing the biblical text within its socio-political context allows us to test what species of rhetoric the implied author is employing, so that the discourse is arranged responsibly and consciously within its language context. Thus, the findings from the previous two chapters are helpful in ensuring a responsible interpretation is formulated, as it ensures that there is a conscious understanding of the "world behind the text". The rhetorical analysis is placed within these findings to assess the rhetorical language within the ancient Mediterranean world. The evaluation is rhetorical, and interprets John 8:12-59 with a conscious understanding of the context in which the implied readers would have heard this biblical text; a

context whereby the textual construction of the implied author uses language and dualistic ideas that would have a social-political ramification in the first century CE.

John 8:12-59 within its Socio-political Context

The third and fourth step of my rhetorical analysis, as explained in chapter 1, is to ensure that the "species of rhetoric" are identified, which determine the arrangement of a discourse. According to Kennedy (1984:19), there may be different species in a discourse. The main concern, however, is to understand what these potential species may be within the socio-political context discovered in the two previous chapters. The exegetical analysis will not be evaluated according to these multiple levels for every verse, but rather within the confines of the internal structure described in chapter 2b and addendum 1. The main agenda is to ensure and provoke the reader to see potential multiple-dimensions and levels of interpreting John 8:12-59. A multiple dimensional approach prevents us from reading biblical texts anachronistically, but rather forces readers to be sensitive to the richness of the text within its language context first. Such an interpretive reading paves the way for a potential meaning for contemporary readers, through gaining significant insight into the social-political parameters that the text may have been involved in.

This is important because texts are constructed through changing social-political contexts', whereby the author uses texts to construct the in-groups identity through creating boundaries, which construct an identification for the groups' identity, as boundaries, in this thesis, construct "who we are" (cf. Lieu 2004:30). However, the socio-political context that this thesis will situate John 8:12-59, is the post Jewish Second Temple Destruction. Köstenberger (2009:61-63) connection to John's Gospel and the Second Temple Destruction, as well as the narration in John 8:20, leads me to place John 8:12-59 within this context. Furthermore, the language connection of πατήρ with the Roman Emperor and John's consistent use of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, suggest rhetorical clues that situate this biblical text within an identity construct of an emerging Jewish sect, which is trying to redefine or reimagine their identity within the diversity of evolving Judaism. However, they are situated within the social location of the ancient Mediterranean world, where the Temple has been destroyed by the Roman Empire. The text and context are not separate entities in this thesis, rather, the text functions as an identity formation that the implied author is trying to construct within the context of the ancient Mediterranean world. The text and context are connected, as the rhetorical analysis and social-history approach function as helpful methods that avoid a one-dimensional or literalistic

interpretive reading. Therefore, this emerging Jewish sect is formulating its identity within the Roman Empire, responding to the Temple Destruction, and trying to define its own identity through an ancient biography concerned with the person and work of Yeshua of Nazareth.

In this thesis, the dualism (or "binary categories") is connected to the textual boundaries that are constructed by the implied author. Boundaries function as markers of self-categorisation for the in-groups identity formation. This is important as this ancient biography is concerned with the identity of Yeshua, and uses polemic as a means to make Yeshua the main priority of the story, using a "two-tier" or level of approach to the narrative. In terms of John 8:12-59, the mentioning of Abraham (cf. John 8:33, 8:37, 8:39, 8:40, 8:52, 8:56, 8:57, & 8:58) display this polemic, as Judaism understood its ethnic identity originate from an ancestor (or "progenitor") (i.e. Abraham). This is important for a collectivist identity culture that takes seriously who one's father is, and where the Jewish identity was located within markers of geography and ethnicity. Additionally, this emerging Christian group is a sect within the Jewish nation, and has to justify its own ancestral origin within their messianic claim of believing in Yeshua, who for this group is the "Messiah" and "Son of God".

Therefore, the exegetical analysis of this thesis is sensitive to the fluidity of the emerging groups' identities that are mentioned in this focus text. The rhetorical analysis is concerned with solving the problem of reading and interpreting John 8:12-59 one-dimensionally. Such an interpretive reading perpetuates anti-Jewish attitudes and places the language of the text outside of its context. In what follows, this thesis will attempt to demonstrate the value of a multiple dimensions to reading and interpretation of John 8:12-59, whereby the socio-political context has a rhetorical function that helps identify the "species of rhetoric" that will ultimately give a "potential" arrangement of the discourse. The exegetical evaluation, however, will also take into account the fifth step of evaluating the "invention and style" of the discourse. This thesis will attempt to do that through determining the possible "proofs" that are crafted through the text, particularly, whether it is ethos, pathos, or logos. The style, which according to Witherington (2009:15), are stylistic devices such as: figures of speech, colourful metaphors, exclamation, apostrophes, wordplay, and epigrams. These sorts of rhetorical devices are not lacking in the New Testament, but they are used to serve a serious purpose about theological and ethical matters (Witherington 2009:15).

The major styles of rhetoric are, the more reserved and formal Atticizing style, and the more florid and luxurious Asiatic style (Witherington 2009:15). In general Asiatic style tended to be more emotional, involving more colourful, longer sentences, lots of hyperbole, metaphors, and the like (Witherington 2009:15). Attic style was seen more appropriate in some quarters but even Cicero preferred the Asiatic style for his Roman trials as it did a better job of stirring the emotions (Witherington 2009:15). The hermeneutical challenge of the style is rooted in the role of texts and boundaries. These texts were written for the in-groups' identity formation, and not for a vilification of outsiders. The rhetoric of these documents is specifically Christian in character (Witherington 2009:21). The writers know they are "preaching to the choir" (Witherington 2009:21). Witherington (2009:21), however, goes as far as to suggest that, we have no New Testament documents written purely for outsiders, although we get a sense of what that would look like from some of the material in Acts and from the Fourth Gospel, which was written for Christians to use with outsiders "so that you might begin to believe Jesus is the Son of God".

This last point is consistent with what Witherington (1995:4) says in his commentary on John's Gospel, which was already mentioned in the first chapter, that the genre is a dramatic biography written for believers to use for evangelism. However, considering that Christianity was an emerging sect within Judaism (cf. Dunn 2001 & 2009, King 2003, Bediako 1999, & Flusser 2009), that Christianity and Judaism were only beginning to be distinguished by the Romans as two separate religions during the reign of Nerva (96-98 CE) (cf. Köstenberger 2009:63), and that there was diversity within Judaism as an emerging group within the Roman Empire (cf. Lieu 2004), and also the possible rhetorical distance that the final author may or may not be alluding to by using language that refers to the Roman Emperor (cf. Carter 2008); this thesis will, therefore, prioritize interpreting John 8:12-59 within the national identity of an emerging Judean sect that was formulating their identity within evolving Judaism; an evolving Jewish sect that is attempting to define and formulate its Christian identity using identity constructs of Judaism (i.e. the Jewishness) within the social location of the Roman Empire. The approach will avoid an anachronistic reading of negatively labelling οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as "the Jews" of today, and ensure a responsible hermeneutic that situates the biblical text within its emerging ethnic-religious identity in first century CE. Therefore, the rhetorical implications will be evaluated within the evolving Jewish identity, in the hope that such an

exegetical enterprise provides for us a potential meaning that is not anti-Jewish, and does not ignore the significance of the biblical text within the context of the ancient Mediterranean world.

8:12-20 Yeshua's Identity Claim

As already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, light was a major symbol at the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. Von Wahlde 2010:379). Light within the Jewish tradition (i.e. Hebrew Bible, Old Testament, and early Jewish Literature) is linked to God's presence, and in Greco-Roman antiquity, it was the source of human beings' (cf. Von Wahlde 2010:397, Carson 1991:337, and Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:156). The Feast of Tabernacles had a custom where on the first night the court of the women was to be filled with bright lights from huge lamps that lit up the sky (Ray 2002:189). The light brought to mind the bright cloud of God's presence that guided Israel through the wilderness (Ray 2002:189). In the wilderness, people followed the light as it led from the land of slavery through perilous wilderness to the Promised Land (Beasley-Murray 1987:128). Bruner (2012:512), on the other hand, connects the light metaphor with Yeshua being Israel's water in John 7:37-39. Within the Feast of Tabernacle, celebration was rooted in God's providence during Israel's wandering in three dramatic ways: The manna (i.e. "I am the bread of life" in John 6:35), the water from the rock (i.e. John 7:37-39), and light of fiery cloud ("I am the light of the world" in John 8:12) (Bruner 2012:512). However, this light has a caveat, whereby, if anyone follows Yeshua they will have the "light of life". Thompson (2015:182) helps us here by explaining that, light in the Old Testament is an image for God's salvation, as well as for various divine gifts and attributes, such as God's guidance, salvation, truth, Word, or Torah.

In John, the light dispels the darkness (John 1:5, 9; 3:19-21; 12:35-36, 46) and is thus an image for salvation and truth, and even the object of faith (John 12:36, 46) (Thompson 2015:182). It provides illumination so that people may find their way (John 11:9-10) or is simply the sphere in which one lives (John 9:4; 12:35); thus the unusual phrase "light of life" has both soteriological and ethical dimensions: light confers life and illuminates the path of right conduct (Thompson 2015:182-183). According to Hakola, light here in John 8:12-59, functions in two ways: it refers to revelation as well as to judgement (2005:178-179). Jesus as the light is the revealer of God that shines in the darkness of the world (John 1:5, 11), but the coming of light also means judgement because people love darkness more than light and their works are evil (John 3:19-20) (Hakola 2005:179). This life-giving light was earlier identified with God's Word made flesh (1:4, 5, 7, 8, 9; 3:19), as the

incarnated Word, the one who comes from and is going to God; Jesus imparts salvation and illuminates the way that leads to life (Thompson 2015:183). Therefore, if the emerging sect within Judaism, who are formulating their identity within a post Jewish Second Temple destruction, Yeshua's identity as the "light of the world" becomes their refuge in the wilderness where there is now no Temple to identify with, making Yeshua's identity the locus of their identification. The festival, which took place within the Temple, is now redefined and fulfilled for the in-group within Yeshua's identity as the light at the Festival of Tabernacles.

However, the exordium statement could also function as a *propositio*. A *propositio* (or "proposition"), according to Witherington (2009:16), is a crucial statement that follows or comes before "the narration". In a forensic discourse the essential proposition of both the prosecutor and the defendant might be laid out by way of contrasts (Witherington 2009:16). The section, "Yeshua's identity Claim", begins with John 8:12-19, which is the proposition, and comes before the narration (John 8:20), but in this thesis is grouped together as one section (cf. addendum 1). The proposition and narration can rhetorically be seen as separate entities, by viewing the narration as standing on its own, occurring before the proposition. The exordium statement, however, is covered in the imagery of light, and serves as an ethos invention by the author to "appeal" and possibly reaffirm the in-group's identity in their dislocation. The appeal is rooted in the group's salvific claim of Yeshua being "the Son of God" and "Messiah of Israel" (cf. John 20:31), making the statement a messianic fulfilment, as Bruner (2012:513) suggested in chapter 2, correct. The importance of the group's identification is paramount if one considers Wilson's (1989:83) earlier remark that was mentioned in chapter 2, where Christians' were involvement in the second "messianic movement" and Jewish revolt against the Roman power, which was led by messianic leader, Simon Bar Kokhba. However, the forensic discourse would not be far-fetched considering the Pharisees "testimony" challenge in John 8:13. False testimony was concerned in nearly every area of life (business transactions, various kinds of contracts, including marriage contracts, etc.), not simply crime (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:156). The issue here is not crime, rather reputation, as reputation could be made or destroyed by the testimony of other; actually it consisted of the testimony of others (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:156).

In terms of a collectivistic identity and honour and shame culture, the statement of Yeshua's claim, is directly associated with and speaking to the in-group, which is definitely at core of the identity

claim of Yeshua. False testimony is that of a false prophet (Deuteronomy 18:22) seeking honour from fellow humans rather than from God (John 5:44) (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:156). Attempting to create one's own reputation by self-testimony (bragging) was considered shameful behaviour (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:156). Yeshua claims his father validates his testimony (cf. John 8:16), however, the Pharisees question (cf. John 8:13) is exactly in line with the collectivistic understanding of identity, concerning the question of "who your father is", which was important in the ancient Mediterranean context. In the progression of the story, this testimony is identified as Jesus' knowledge of his own origin and destiny, demonstrating his unique relationship with the Father, as only Jesus knows where he come from and where he is going (John 8:14) (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:157). "To know" someone in collectivist societies is to know where they come from (e.g. Jesus of Nazareth, Saul of Tarsus), especially to know the person's family background (cf. John 6:42) (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:157). Yeshua's identity claim is situated in his origin that he comes from God (cf. John 1:1). Light, which is already in the prologue (John 1:4-5 & 1:9), not only verifies Yeshua's identity claim as originating from God, but is also connected to human beings.

The Pharisees, also a sect within Judaism, perhaps situate their question in their concern of solidifying Judaism in a post-Second Temple Jewish context, by ensuring that the emerging Jewish sect has no Gnostic or other pagan tendencies. Ironically, the Pharisees were the foremost rivals of the followers of Jesus after the destruction of the Temple and much less so before then (Salmon 2006:86). The Pharisees were an innovative reform movement before the destruction of the Temple, and following 70 CE they succeeded in redefining Judaism in a radically historical context (Salmon 2006:103). Thus, this forensic rhetoric is not necessarily in response to actual out-group activity upon the in-group, but could rather be a defence of the in-groups' response to the out-group policy and reforming activity. The challenge then could be situated in the groups "acquired honour" within a post-Second Temple Jewish setting. Neyrey (2009:229), who views John 8 as one section with John 7 and as a forensic rhetoric, argues that John 8:12-20 is not only linked with Ch. 7 in terms of Jesus' claims to be the replacement of the Feast of Tabernacles, but is formally shaped like Ch. 7 according to elaborate forensic procedure. Put simply, Jesus is the accused and the assembled Jews are his judges (Neyrey 2009:229). In both texts, 1) Jesus makes a claim before the assembly of Israel in its most sacred location, the Temple: he is Israel's water (John 7:37-39) and its light (John 8:12)

(Neyrey 2009:229). 2) The Temple personnel examine the basis for his claim primarily in terms of the legitimacy of the claimant: a witness should have first-hand information (John 8:14) or be informed on the topic to which he witnesses (John 7:15) (Neyrey 2009:229-230).[51] Yeshua's statement, which has a salvific claim, needs to be validated and not open to suspicion.

The Pharisees do not have to be suspicious of this messianic movement as the Jewishness of Yeshua does not serve as an anti-Jewish assertion towards evolving Judaism, rather, it is particularly concerned in reaffirming the in-group's identity within the ethnic-religious group, as a sect, in a new and transformative way. If that is the case, it is no wonder the implied author begins with a prologue, and the ethnic-identification of Yeshua's identity, beginning already through Phillip and Nathanael provocations (cf. John 1:45, 49). Thus, the stylistic colourful device of "light", which is a salvation claim of Yeshua's messianic and Christological identification, serves as a justification for the in-group's identity claim. The "light" of Yeshua is the in-group's salvific claim that the group inherits through Yeshua's identity. Furthermore, Yeshua's identity claim serves as a replacement for the in-group's lost spatial identity of the Temple that has now been destroyed, making their ethnic-religious identity be redefined and transformed through Yeshua's messianic fulfilment within a post-Second Temple Jewish context. The Temple, a religious and socio-economic platform for emerging Judaism, is redefined through Yeshua's identification as the "light of the world"; the new light that now leads the nation without a Temple in the wilderness. Therefore, the Ἐγώ εἰμι ("I am") statement here serves a predicate constructions/usage, that "elucidates" Yeshua's "messianic Christology" (cf. Porter 2015:128), making the in-group a messianic movement that follows their messianic leader, which in this case is Yeshua of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. The Christians, who were affiliated to the second messianic movement under Simon ben Kosiba, contradicted the in-groups identity claim of Yeshua being the Messiah and King of Israel, through their participation in the second Jewish revolt against Rome. They denied their in-group identity claim of Yeshua being the "light of the world", and by implication their own "light of life" that they gained through believing in him. Perhaps then, the implied authors deliberate use of the Pharisees being the

[51] 3) Instructions are given to the judging public to justly and fairly; they should not judge with partiality according to the flesh or appearances (John 8:15; 7:24) (Neyrey 2009:230). 4) The Testimony of a single witness is not acceptable in Israel's court (Deuteronomy 19:15); yet two witnesses testify to Jesus' claims, Jesus and the one who sent him (John 8:16-18; 7:26-28) (Neyrey 2009:230). 5) Jesus claims to be valid witness, deputized by the most honourable person as his personal agent, and so he must be received as an acceptable witness (John 8:19; 7:18, 28) (Neyrey 2009:230). In the form, then, John 8:12-20 resembles the kind of forensic procedure typically found elsewhere in the fourth Gospel, in particular John 5:30-46 and John 7:13-52 (Neyrey 2009:230).

opponents of Yeshua in this section, further stresses the importance of group fidelity in the midst of other factions and sects that want to solidify Judaism in another way.

8:21-47 Dispute Over the identity of Yeshua and Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua

In addendum 1 and chapter 2b, I divided the section, "8:21-47 Dispute over the identity of Yeshua and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua", into two major sections: "8:21-30 Identity of Yeshua" and "8:31-47 Ethnic Identity Challenge for Believing in Yeshua (Cost of discipleship)". The latter is further divided into two subsections: "8:31-38 Sin and Slavery vs. Sonship and Freedom" and "8:39-47 The Question of Fatherhood: A Question of Election?" Again, in this thesis the text is particularly speaking to the in-group, using anti-language that creates an anti-society within a larger society (cf. Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:9). This thesis is arguing that the language is for the in-groups identity formation within a post-Second Temple Jewish context. The concern is rooted in how the language is being used to formulate Christian identity within the ancient Mediterranean world. Therefore, the anti-language is not an identity categorisation for the out-group; rather, the anti-language is a reality that the author creates as an "alternative reality" which in-group members will become part of if they do not collectively adhere to the group's identification that is associated with Yeshua's identity claim.[52] The anti-language could be the out-groups' perception of them (cf. Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:10), but boundaries in this thesis construct the groups identity. Thus, the dualism functions as textual boundaries, whereby, the in-group ought follow as they identify with Yeshua, and not with the opponents or perceived "out-group" who challenge him within the narrative; making the ancient biography function as a "dramatic biography" that rather solidifies the in-groups identity in Yeshua of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, and provokes a loyalty that is solely focused him. If loyalty is not accepted, an in-group member will fall into these negative dualistic categories. In other words, the "out-group" is a category created by the implied author, for in-group members who do not adhere to the self-categorisations that are associated with Yeshua in the narrative.

Failure to adhere to this loyalty, which is characterised by accepting Yeshua's word's as "truth" and believing in him, places an individual outside of the in-group's self-categorisation with Yeshua. The

[52] In John's anti-language we find the expression of an alternative to the society of first century Mediterranean Hellenism in general and of its Israelite version in particular (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:11). Thus, what is significant in John's anti-language is not its distance from the language of Hellenistic Judea, but the tension between the two (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:11).

collectivistic culture and identity, as already mentioned, live in an honour and shame culture where people have dyadic personalities (cf. Malina 2001:62). The in-group views themselves as individuals who perceive themselves as members of the same social category, and share in a common definition (cf. Malina 2010:20). The common definition here for an emerging Jewish sect within evolving Judaism in the first century CE, is Yeshua of Nazareth. These implied readers/hearers ascribe to Yeshua's messianic claim, who is their messianic leader, and is the very purpose of the Gospel (cf. John 20:31). Moreover, the exegetical analysis of this section is pertinent to be viewed within these lenses, as it can result in an anti-Judaism reading and interpretation. Reinhartz (2009:386-392) proposes four methods of reading the Gospel of John: 1) compliant, 2) resistant, 3) sympathetic, and 4) engaged.

The complaint reader has already been mentioned in chapter 1, but a resistant reader, on the other hand, reads the Gospel from the point of view of those vilified by the text, being the Johannine Jews (Reinhartz 2009:386). This reading then resist the negative statements the Gospel makes about οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι on a historical and cosmological planes, but results in rejecting the truth claims about Jesus (cf. Reinhartz 2009:387). The third reading that Reinhartz (2009:387) describes is a sympathetic reader. This reader then resists to comply with the message of the gospel, but tries to understand what the opposition between Jesus and οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, as emphasised (cf. Reinhartz 2009:387). A sympathetic reading assumes that the gospel is itself embedded in a historical, social and political context (Reinhartz 2009:388). This reading can give way to a historical construction that provides interpreters with reasonable defences against the chargers of anti-Judaism (cf. Reinhartz 2009:388). So for example based on the passages, the Johannine community was formed by Jewish believers' decades following the Easter event (cf. Reinhartz 2009:388). Then Gentiles and Samaritans joined these Jews, but the group relocated to Judea and to Asia Minor after Romans destroyed the Jerusalem temple during the first revolt in 66-74 CE (Reinhartz 2009:388). The group then joined to be part of the synagogue, to participate in Jewish life, and then experienced hostility (cf. Reinhartz 2009:388). This hostility then arose and in the mid-80s-90s the Johannine believers were expelled from the synagogue (cf. Reinhartz 2009:388).[53]

[53] An engaged reader takes the Gospel's negative passages about οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and would not only prompt consideration of the historical and sociological context, including the need to the Johannine community to differentiate itself from Judaism, but would also look at the central claim the Gospel is making: that Jesus is the unique son of God, the only path to salvation, the way and the truth and the life (Reinhartz 2009:392). An engaged reading, however, would look behind

However, the thesis's so-called "sympathetic reading" takes seriously the socio-political context of the ancient Mediterranean world, and interprets John 8:12-59 within this tentative social-political context, so that a reading of this text is not one-dimensional and neither perpetuates anti-Judaism. The emerging Jewish sect that believed and followed Messiah Yeshua, was formulating their identity following the Second Temple destruction by the Romans. This thesis's interest in Christian identity formation and what John's language would potentially mean within an ancient Mediterranean milieu is an attempt to solve the problem of an anti-Jewish attitude when interpreting John 8:12-59. For Reinhartz (2009:387-388), a "sympathetic reading" is rooted in the consideration of the historical, social, and political context, but this thesis goes further by taking into consideration how the language of John 8:12-59 is possibly involved in identity formation within the social-political context of the Roman Empire first century CE. This was important for an emerging Jewish sect within evolving Judaism, where King (2003:39) goes as far as to suggest that the early Christian communities would talk about becoming children of Abraham through faith, or belonging to the primordial seed of Seth or the undominated and kingless race. Ironically, blood, place, and language were of little use in Christian identity formation, but establishing a shared tradition and way of life was paramount (King 2003:39).[54] Thus, the concern of this thesis is looking at how the implied author is attempting to formulate a Christian identity within the first century CE Mediterranean world and how the Jewishness challenges group member's ethnicity.

This concern is not interested in placing John's Gospel within Ephesus, and arguing what the text would have meant within that context, rather, the argument of this thesis is situated in the final author's ideological use of language, that is informed by "identity constructs" and "social location

this claim to the more fundamental and perhaps disturbing question like: is there really only one path to God, only one way to be in covenantal relationship with God? (Reinhartz 2009:392).

[54] Klink (2009:179) supports this claim by explaining that, the evidence from the second to fifth century makes it apparent that Christians and Jews continued to have contact with each other well into the fifth century, and that both Christians and Jews devoted a good part of their exegetical, theological, and ecclesial endeavours to dealing with their continued shared existence. Klink (2009:179), who is challenging Martyn's expulsion theory in this article, further explains that this is a difference in kind from Martyn's thesis, which posits two distinct and unrelated entities in conflict during the first century: Judaism and Christianity.

factors" within the ancient Mediterranean world first century CE.[55] Already, through the help of Carter (2008:235), the thesis has been able to understand the Greek word πατήρ as a language term associated with the Roman Emperor. Though Carter (2008) situates this within the context of Ephesus, the social-history approach of understanding Judaism's relationship to the Roman Empire has assisted in understanding how the language in John 8:12-59 could have functioned rhetorically for the implied audience and its possible socio-political ramifications. Therefore, the exegetical analysis in the following section must be interpreted as a "sympathetic reader", as this thesis argues that the rhetorical implication of the text's language is for the in-group's identity formation and not a final judgement or vilification of the perceived "out-group" (i.e. οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι). Rather, in the thesis the "out-group" serves as a category that represents the implications of in-group members who do not adhere to the in-groups self-categorisation. Consequently, it is for this reason that the internal structure has been divided in these sections and with such titles.

8:21-30 Identity of Yeshua

The *probatio* (or "probation") enumerates the arguments for the proposition, supporting the speaker's case (Witherington 2009:16). This might be, but would not necessarily be followed by the *refutatio* (or "refutation") - the refutation of the opponent's arguments (Witherington 2009:16). This section, "8:21-30 Identity of Yeshua", is the probation, whereas the other section, "8:31-47 Ethnic Identity Challenge for Believing in Yeshua (Cost of discipleship)", functions as the refutation. In this case, however, the refutation reflects the in-group's ethnic identity challenge that is associated with believing in Yeshua. Such a position has an implication on what the "species of ancient rhetoric" that may be employed, and the "rhetorical proofs". On the other hand, the probation section, Ἐγώ εἰμι ("I am") is employed twice in John 8:23 and John 8:28. According to Porter (2015:128), as mentioned above, the Ἐγώ εἰμι ("I am") has various function, and in these two verses it functions as a locative usage/construction and an absolute usage/construction, respectively. Porter (2015:128) uses John 8:23b as an example to describe this usage where Yeshua says: "I am not of this world" (ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου). As Porter (2015:128) explained above, this

[55] The Johaninne Gospel is a first century Christian community founded on the testimony of a person it referred to as "the disciple whom Jesus loved", a disciple whom it claimed to be an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus (Von Wahlde 2010:1). However, the Gospel in its present form was not the work of a single individual but has gone through a series of three editions at the hands to which edition has a perennial problem for interpreters and has inevitably impeded the fullest understanding of the Gospel (Von Wahlde 2010:1). The situation is complicated by the need to understand the first letter of John in relation to the Gospel and to determine the nature of the conflict that divided the community at the time of 1 John was written (Von Wahlde 2010:1).

construction describes Yeshua's mediatory function as the Messiah, by further demonstrating him as the one who actively mediates between the divine and humanity. Thus, Yeshua contrasting his identity from the οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, who are from "below" and "of this world", where Yeshua is from "above" and "not of this world" (cf. John 8:23a), a revelation of Yeshua's identity is made through this "I am" construction.

The contrast between "this world" and the world "above" is a variation on the contrast found elsewhere in the New Testament between "this age" and "the age to come" (Thompson 2015:186). But the contrast in John is expressed in spatial rather than temporal terms: the one who brings life, the pathway out of sin and death, has in the present come from God (Thompson 2015:186). However, the question of "who are you?" by οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (cf. John 8:24), is a pertinent identity challenge within the ancient Mediterranean world. Identity in the ancient Mediterranean world was always a matter of the groups (especially family) in which one was embedded (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:159). In a sense, the hearers are asking to what group (s) Jesus belongs or where he is from (since family origin determined identity) (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:159). Klink (2016:410) suggests that, Jesus and the Jews belong to two different worlds, where the origin of Jesus is rooted in the identity of God, whereas the origin of the Jews is rooted in the identity of darkness, sin and death (John 8:21; cf. John 1:5). Although Klink (2016:410) is correct to assert the importance of the origin of Jesus' identity, the narrative contrast to the Jews origin would perpetuate an anti-Judaistic attitude. Rather, the in-group fall into such a category if they do not associate or accept the identification and self-categorization of believing in Yeshua. Furthermore, this is rooted in Yeshua's identity as "Son of Man" (cf. John 8:28), whereby Yeshua's "lifted up" reveals the truth of his identity in light of his origin, that is then demonstrated through his mission (cf. Köstenberger 2009:530).

The Johannine "Son of Man" is Jesus, the incarnate Logos, who came to reveal God with unique and ultimate authority and in the acceptance or refusal of this revelation the world judges itself (Köstenberger 2009:529). Köstenberger (2009:529), reflecting on George Mlakuhyil, explains that the Johannine "Son of Man" as fulfilling a bridge function between the titles "Messiah" and "Son of God", because "the Son of Man" has a mysterious heavenly origin (John 3:13; 6:62). This Christological title may be considered as a theological bridge between the messianic title "the Christ" and the divine title "the Son of God" (Köstenberger 2009:529). Ellens (2010:70-71) also

connects the "Son of Man" with the "lifting up". The lifting up of the Son of Man will give visible prominence to him, so that he (Jesus) will be hard to miss and hard to avoid (Ellens 2010:70). Jesus is declaring that the crowds will not understand his real identity until they have nailed him up the cross, with regard to the identity and role of the Son of Man…as his message is not of human origin, but divine (Ellens 2010:70). The cross, a Roman symbol of power and fear, demonstrates Yeshua's identity due to his divine origin and identity. Yeshua's identity as the Son of Man is supported by an "I am" (Ἐγώ εἰμι), which in this case has an absolute usage/construction. This usage/construction, according to Porter (2015:128), boldly claims Jesus as the Messiah.[56] The explicit and bold claim here is not only the implied authors attempt to verify Yeshua's identity claim, but also demonstrate the significant and fulfilment of that identity in terms of the Yeshua's mission.

The allusion in John 8:28 to Jesus being lifted up is in keeping with the Johannine idea that clarity and validity of everything Jesus does and says will be clear when the hour of his exaltation and glorification (public honour) comes (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:159). While the narrator and others speak of Jesus' death and dying, Jesus never uses these words in John's Gospel (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1998:159). This perspective, according to Malina and Rohrbaugh (1998:159), is the outsiders' perspective, the perspective of those not yet privy to where Jesus is really from. In terms of this then, the categorization of "the Jews" by Klink (2016:410) should rather be seen as the categories of the in-group members' consequence of not accepting Yeshua's identity. This is because, as explained already in the prologue, "those who received him" are given the "authority to become children of God" (cf. John 1:12). "Those who believe in his name" (cf. John 1:12) are "not born of blood, neither of the flesh, and neither of human will, but born of God" (cf. John 1:13). Thus, the consequences of believing in Yeshua's identity have implication on in-group member's ethnicity, as their kinship originates from God.

The in-group's kinship is "born of God" and not determined by humans, hence why the Pharisees judge by "human/flesh standards" (cf. John 8:14), and if they remain like how the Pharisees may perceive the in-group members to be, they "will die in their sins if they do not believe" (cf. John 8:24) in Yeshua and accept the ramifications that come with his identity. The identity of Yeshua

[56] Messiah comes from the Hebrew word, *Masiah*, meaning "the anointed one" (Köstenberger 2009:312). In the Greek translation the term is found forty-five times in the LXX and over five hundred times in the New Testament, as *Christos*, meaning the Christ or Messiah (originally an adjective, "anointed", from the verb *chrio*, "to smear with ointment or oil") (Köstenberger 2009:313).

enables the in-group to have an identity that is self-categorised as being "from above", liberating them from the "world/below"- which is associated with "sin, darkness, and death". The species of the rhetoric, if read and interpreted as speaking to the in-group identity formation, then serves to be an "epideictic rhetoric", which in this case wants to ensure that the in-group does not change their minds by not believing in Yeshua. Rather, the epideictic rhetoric reinforces Yeshua's identity by explicitly demonstrating and associating his identity as the "Son of Man", connecting the revelation of his identity with a Roman cross, and challenging the in-groups ethnicity through remaining in their belief in the man from Nazareth.

The dualistic category that is displayed by the "I am" statements, functions as "locative and absolute" usage here, and also has rhetorical proofs of "ethos" and "pathos". The ethos is embedded in the "I am" (cf. John 8:23, 28), which seek to persuade and reassure the in-groups' identification and self-categorisation with Yeshua. The pathos, which is the "the emotional response generated among the listeners" (Black 1995:262), are quite possibly the "out-groups'" perceptions of the in-group, that are then rhetorically categorised to contrast them from the in-group's identification, and it serves as an categorisation of vilification for the in-group members who fail to adhere to the group identification, as they accept the "out-groups" perceptions of them. In a post-Second Temple Jewish context, where individuals make messianic claims and revolts against the Roman Empire, it is no wonder that the implied author creates this alternative anti-social group, as an attempt to solidify the in-groups' identity and display the fallacy of not adhering to this identification with Yeshua. This then makes the style "Asiatic", whereby "darkness, sin, death, and world" serve as a metaphorical categorisation of the consequences of disassociating with the in-groups' identity in Yeshua. Yeshua's identity allows the in-group to be children of God, who are not born of human will, flesh, or blood, but "born of God" (cf. John 1:12-13). Only believing in Yeshua's identity can do this, and perhaps the in-group, which are οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua, are reminded in John 8:30 that there are "many who believed" in this message before. This indication could possibly be an attempt to persuade those who may be moving away towards the "out-group" perceptions, and trying to bring the doubters back to believing in Yeshua.

8:31-47 Ethnic Identity Challenge for Believing in Yeshua (Cost of discipleship)

Yeshua calls those who believe in him to discipleship by instructing them to remain in his word (cf. John 8:31). At the end of John 8:30 there are those who "believed" and then in John 8:31, Yeshua

speaks specifically to the Ἰουδαίους who "believe". This then suggests a third οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι group, but this involves those who believe in Yeshua's identity. Hakola (2005:179) suggests that, the mention of believing Jews in John 8:30-31 reopens the question concerning the potential faith among Jesus' Jewish audience. In v.30 the narrator says that Jesus spoke, and "many believed in him" (πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτόν) (Hakola 2005:179). In v.31 the narrator notes that Jesus was speaking to the Jews "who had believed him" (Ἔλεγεν… πρὸς τοὺς πεπιστευκότας αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίους) (Hakola 2005:179). These expressions are sometimes taken to mean that the narrator is speaking of two different groups, where John 8:30 would be referring to those who have a "deeper" faith than those mentioned in John 8:31 (cf. Hakola 2005:179). The difference is situated in the verbs ἐπίστευσαν and πεπιστευκότας, where the latter verb, a perfect participle (that can have a pluperfect meaning (cf. Addendum 1)) refers to those who believe but do not believe any longer (cf. Hakola 2005:179). However, according to Hakola (2005:179), the use of the perfect participle is hardly sensible in this connection unless there is some earlier indication of the group to which it refers.

The use of the aorist verb ἐπίστευσαν, with the preposition εἰς in John 8:30 and the dative αὐτῷ in John 8:31, does not indicate that the faith of many in v.30 is more authentic than the faith of the believing Jews in v.31 (Hakola 2005:179). Both these forms are used interchangeably for partial and authentic faith in the gospel, thus, there is no reason to think that the narrator is speaking in John 8:30-31 of two different groups (Hakola 2005:179). If then these terms function as "partial" and "authentic" faith in the gospel, then in terms of Christian identity formation, this section functions as a *peroratio* (or "peroration"). A peroration sums up or amplifies some major argument and/or makes a final appeal to the deeper emotions to ensure the argument is persuasive (Witherington 2009:16). This peroration is divided into two sections: "8:31-38 Sin and Slavery vs. Sonship and Freedom" and "8:39-47 The Question of Fatherhood: A Question of Election?" Here the thesis will argue that the in-group's loyalty is being tested as Yeshua calls them to discipleship by keeping his word and truth (cf. John 8:31-32), and provokes them in terms of the social-political allegiance of the Roman Empire, which also has a cosmologically effect within the spiritual association of their ethnic identity affiliation.

A Call to Discipleship

Firstly, in terms of social-political allegiance, the author does this by demarcating boundaries under the theme of sonship and freedom vs. sin and slavery in John 8:31-38. Yeshua begins with a

deliberative rhetoric for the in-group's identity formation where Yeshua explicitly states to the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe that: "If you remain in my word, truly you are my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32 & Addendum 1). Later in John 14:6, Yeshua explains to his disciple Thomas that: "I am the way and the truth and the life". As already indicated in the previous chapter, truth is an important key Johannine word, as it is connected to God's commitment to save Israel (cf. Carter 2008:193). In terms of Yeshua's identity, truth functions as a liberating tool of removing sinfulness and darkness from a person (cf. Morris 1995:405). Witherington (1995:176-177) connects it to the Wisdom of Solomon 3:9 and 6:22, which indicates having wisdom and knowing the truth, means knowing God's secret divine plan for humankind and its salvation. Knowing the truth refers to knowing the mysteries of the way God has chosen to deal with humankind and offer salvation (Witherington 1995:176). If then Yeshua is the "Truth" with an predicative usage/construction of "I am" (Ἐγώ εἰμι) in John 14:6, then Yeshua's ethos proof statement here serves as a call to discipleship and strengthening of one's faith in him, through means of accepting his identity as the truth that is embodied in his messianic identity and leadership. Truth has a human face in this case, and speaks of pilgrimage and incarnation of divine wisdom (Witherington 1995:177). The career of the "Son of Man", who came from above and returns to above, disclosing that revelation and salvation come to the world from the Father, but through his agent, the Son (Witherington 1995:177).

Therefore, if Yeshua as the truth functions as God's saving mission (cf. Klink 2016:414), then Yeshua acts as God the Father's broker. In terms of the economic system of patron-client system, as already mentioned in the social-political findings of chapter 2 and 3, Yeshua then becomes the social entrepreneur for God, where he alone mediates through the truth and is the origin of his mission. Yeshua's truth, unlike that of other messianic leaders or οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who have an allegiance to the Roman Empire like Herod, is a "saving truth". Accepting Yeshua's truth then results in three promises according to O'Day (1995:637-638): firstly, liberating power of truth is an unknowable apart from being Jesus' disciple, which in turn depends on one's relationship with Jesus' word; secondly, the truth and freedom that Jesus promises are not abstract principles, but like the "light of life", are bound to the word; thirdly, freedom can be interpreted in a variety of contexts in Jewish tradition as v.33 will show that its root context is the exodus to a freedom out of slavery. Yeshua's identity liberates as He is the Messiah whom ensures salvation to those who believe in him, resulting

in them obtaining an identity of being God's children and "born of God". However, the protest by the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua of not being slaves in John 8:34, misses the socio-economic and socio-political element that Yeshua may be alluding to rhetorically within the Roman Empire, as the broker for the Father. Yeshua as "King of the Judeans" provides life-giving work which origins from God, rather than from the Roman Emperor. Yeshua's identity and truth, therefore, frees the in-group from enslavement from Rome at the hands of a Judean King, who works in allegiance to the Roman Emperor. The in-group are not slaves; rather, they are free from such an association as they are representatives of God's kingdom, which is available to them through Christ's Kingship.

The ethnic-religious protest by the Ἰουδαῖοι that believe in Yeshua is a misinformed understanding of the significance of their in-groups identity. Yeshua does not deny that there are Abraham's seed (σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ) in John 8:37, instead it is a misunderstanding that is situated in an ideological differentiation that is not sensitive to the "identity constructs" and "social location" factors within the ancient Mediterranean world. Jesus first misunderstanding of freedom and slavery, where freedom is a gift that one cannot lay claim to by virtue of one's heritage (O'Day 1995:638).[57] Unlike the economic system that was based on classism within the ancient Mediterranean world, Yeshua's gift of freedom is not determined through loyalty to the Emperor; rather, Yeshua's freedom is rooted in believing in him and remaining in his word. In other words, ethnicity is not a determining factor of being God's child in Christ's Kingdom. In fact, a child is received through believing in Christ and once a person is "born again" (cf. John 3:3) they become "born of God", and have a new kinship identity. This identification is not determined by ancestral heritage of Abraham, which is an identity claim that Yeshua does not deny (cf. John 8:37); rather, kinship (or "sonship") is inherited through believing in Yeshua, and ensures freedom because the in-group accepts his truth and remains in his word. The un-denied claim of the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua, as Abraham's seed (σπέρμα), is at an ethnic-identity level, as the in-group are children (τέκνα) of God. Ethnicity is clearly not an issue for Yeshua, rather, it is believing in Yeshua and accepting his truth by remaining in his word

[57] Simmons (2008:311), reflecting on slavery in the Old Testament, explains that in all events, deliverance from bondage is the work of the Lord, symbolising his will to save from all that oppresses his people (Judges 6:12; Acts 7:10). Slavery in the scriptures, then, is presented as punishment for moral failure on a personal or national level or as the consequence of oppressive indebtness (Simmons 2008:311). It is no wonder then the "out-group" protest to not be slaves, as the oppression is a result of the Roman Empire, and perhaps they are not the one's responsible for the Israelite aristocratic corruption, which could be the "personal or national" level failure of the Judean elite's relationship to Rome; a corruption that other sects suffered from and was the reason to their first revolt against the Roman Empire between 66-74 CE.

that ensure this identification, as ethnicity alone cannot make you a disciple. In God's Kingdom it is Yeshua's truth and word that leads to an individual being a true disciple. Yeshua's interest is to deliberately make these followers who believe in him, disciples. One's identity as a slave or free is determined by what one does, not by whom one claims to be (O'Day 1995:638). Therefore, reading this statement within the context of the in-group, it is as if Yeshua deliberately shifts the discourse to display a logos rhetorical proof, which operates at a cosmological and spiritual level, and not just limit the in-groups identity to an ethnic-identity level alone.

Belief in Yeshua: An ethnic-identity challenge

Secondly, identification with the identity of Yeshua challenges one's human understanding of ethnicity. The understanding is transformed to a cosmological reality that is from "above" and bound in the blessing gained in receiving the "light of life" (i.e. salvation). Abrahamic paternity is held up to the standards of one's work, with the clear implication that the inheritance is conditional (O'Day 1995:640). However, the in-groups misunderstanding and ethnic identity protest remains at a level of ethnicity instead of a cosmological and spiritual level. The misunderstanding is bound to their deception of wanting to kill Yeshua and not commit to full allegiance to his discipleship call. For example, the Mishnah provides additional evidence of the importance of Abraham as a measure of discipleship: "a good eye and a humble spirit and lowly soul (they in who are these) are the disciples of Abraham our father" (O'Day 1995:640). The wanting to kill Yeshua then reveals two things for O'Day (1995:640): firstly, it is measured against God's truth, which Jesus speaks, and shows the Jews (who believe in Yeshua) do not meet these conditions; secondly, the model of Abraham reveals faithfulness to the truth of God but also intends a more specific contrast between the murderous actions of the Jews and the hospitality for which Abraham was renowned (O'Day 1995:640). Hakola (2005:180) suggests that, their refusal to accept the freedom Jesus offers shows that belonging to Abraham matters more to them more than becoming the disciple of Jesus. Accepting Yeshua above ethnic-identity affiliation is a cultural challenge for the emerging Jewish sect in the first century CE. The in-group need to model Abraham if they have any hope to become Yeshua's disciples, and failure to do so results in killing the in-groups very source of their identity. Jesus says that the Jews are seeking to kill him because they have no place for his word (cf. Hakola 2005:180), yet Yeshua's word is the very truth that the in-group must adhere to in order to be a disciple and remain in

Christ's freedom. Therefore, killing and sin are negative characteristics of going against the in-groups collective call of being Yeshua's disciples.

The result is a paternal parenthood with "the Devil". The characterisation of the devil as a liar is significant for the characterization of the believing Jews (Hakola 2005:181). For example, deceitfulness was thus among the primary characteristics of the devil, and it was also known that the devil could hide himself in different guises (Testament of Job 6:4; 17:2; 23:1) (Hakola 2005:181). Just like their father, these Jews hide their true nature and appear to believe in Jesus, although they in fact seeking to kill him (Hakola 2005:181). In terms of the in-group, these believers fall into an identification with the devil, as their sinfulness, which kills the in-group's identity and collective significance, results in a deceptive behaviour like that of "the Devil", as it goes against their dyadic personality and salvific freedom. However, this theme of fatherhood is closely connected to the dualistic distinction between God and the Devil, and it is imperative to ask how John and his readers understood this distinction (Hakola 2005:198). The importance of the "out-groups" ethnicity at the expense of accepting Yeshua's word and working to be disciples by the remaining in his word, misses the socio-political association with Yeshua's kingship, resulting in falling into the "out-group" categorisation of "sin, darkness, and death" - and now in this case, a Fatherhood or a paternal parenthood that is associated with "the Devil".

The Second Temple Judaism literature comparison in chapter 2b assists us here, particularly in terms of how these characteristics function as an ethical dualism. Von Wahlde's (2001:423-429) comparison of John 8:38-47 with 1 QS 3:13-4:26 text, demonstrated an ethical dualism; thus, the dualistic boundaries constructed are not fixed and rigid, but ethical, and function as the in-group behavioural grounds that they must change and emulate to become disciples. Ironically, the obvious similarities suggest that dualistic views were not distinctive only to 1 QS 3:13-4 and John, but were fairly widespread in certain Jewish circles at the beginning of the Common Era; this common background is enough to explain the affinities between these two writings (Hakola 2005:200). The difference for Hakola (2005:201), is that the dividing line was between those who accept Jesus and those who reject him (John 1:11-12), while in 1QS 4:23-24, the division is between the two spirits that keep struggling in the heart of a person till the day of judgement. But ethical, eschatological, and cosmic dualism appear in John, even though these have all been interpreted in light of John's basic conviction that Jesus is the final revealer of God (Hakola 2005:201). This feature is a

characteristic of John and distinguishes the Johannine dualism from other dualistic views of the time (Hakola 2005:201). In terms of eschatology, Jesus entering into the world marks the beginning of a new era, whereas in 1 QS 3:13-4:26 and other writings containing apocalyptic elements anticipate the coming of the new era in the future, one of the basic teachings of the gospel is that the hour of salvation has already come (4:23; 5:25) (Hakola 2005:202).

In terms of cosmology, Hakola (2005:202), describes how cosmic battles between God and the forces of evil especially developed in some apocalyptic writings. For example the "Testament of the Twelve" combined dualistic battle imagery and ethical exhortation and focused evil spirits into a single figure Beliar who controls those who are inclined to evil (Hakola 2005:203). Both the Lord and Beliar have their own laws and kingdoms that are characterized by the distinction between light and darkness (e.g. T. Levi 19:1; T. Dan 6:1-4; T. Naph. 2:6; T. Jos. 20:2) (Hakola 2005:203).[58] In John's Gospel this is not different, as besides God and angels (cf. John 1:5; 20:12), the supernatural being which features most prominently in the fourth gospel is "the Devil", or "Satan", also called "the ruler of the world" (Mathewson 2016:421). These three designations are used of one of Jesus' main antagonists in the fourth gospel: διάβολος (John 6:70; 8:44; 13:2); σατανάς (John 13:27); ἄρχων του κόσμου (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) (Mathewson 2016:421). Giving life and speaking truth characterize Jesus, and the Devil is a murderer and speaks lies (Mathewson 2016:423). For the in-group, this association with Yeshua is connected to God's Kingdom, where Yeshua is King, and acts as God's broker; this kingdom is life-giving and contrasted to other Jewish leaders within evolving Judaism. The cosmic dualism here in John 8:44 then contrasts the in-group category to characterisation of the devil and his cosmic identity as being the "ruler of the world", which falls into the categorisation of "sin, darkness, death, and slavery".

The mention of the devil is rather an implicit view of the world that John shares with some other writings, and that is taken more or less for granted by the readers of the gospel (Hakola 2005:204).[59] According to this worldview, the world is God's creation, but it is currently under the dominion of

[58] The most famous example is the War rule that presents a cosmic battle between "sons of light" led by angel Michael and the "sons of darkness" whose prince is Belial (Hakola 2005:203). The Qumran library also quite likely contains some pre-Essene writings that show that this kind of cosmic dualism was not the invention of the sect (Hakola 2005:203).

[59] The conflict between forces of light and darkness is always combined with the belief in one God who created the world in Jewish and Christian tradition (Hakola 2005:204). The power of the devil over the world is always restricted and the eschatological defeat of the evil is anticipated (Hakola 2005:204).

the devil, the ruler of this world; it is Jesus task as the Son of God to destroy the devil (Hakola 2005:204). Therefore, John does not only tell a historical tale or an ecclesiological tale of the Johannine community, but also a cosmological tale that opens a framework for interpreting the whole narrative in light of Jesus' battle against the devil (Hakola 2005:204). The dualistic categories are involved in a cosmic dualism that is contrary to the ethnic identity of the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua. Their failure to behave like true descendants of Abraham by embracing Yeshua, but then claiming to be God's children in John 8:41; completely misses the ethnic-identity challenge that Yeshua is deliberately alluding to in his call to discipleship. It is not a challenge of election, or covenantal nomisim, rather it is a call to sole allegiance to Yeshua's identity as "a man who speaks truth, truth he heard from God" (cf. John 8:41 & addendum 1). Fatherhood then becomes a call to allegiance to God's Kingdom that is being established through Christ's kingship. It is a Kingdom that is not negotiated with Rome, rather, it is a Kingdom that has a king who was not determined by humanity, blood, class, or ancestry, but by God. This king gives followers "the light of life", making the in-group a life-giving community that accepts God's word through Christ as their messianic leader. Therefore, this cosmic dualism challenges the ethnic identity of the "children of God" as they are "born of God", and their rebirth is situated within a cosmological reality of God's Kingdom under Christ's Kingship- which is categorised by "life, light, truth, and freedom". Behaviour that contradicts this community's characteristic kills the in-group's identity and results in groups members being negatively associated with "the Devil".

8:48-59 οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι who do not believe and their rejection of Yeshua's identity

The sole fidelity to Yeshua's identity is a call to believing and accepting his word as truth. The benefit of the in-group rests upon this identity as the in-group functions as Yeshua's clients. Rejection of Yeshua's identity results in unbelief, which evidently demarcates a person to the "out-group" categories of "darkness, sin, death, slavery and the Devil". Yeshua's "I am" statement in John 8:58 reveal another significant aspect of Yeshua's identity. The absolute usage/construction explicitly reveals Yeshua's divine origin as God's son. It brings out the meaning of pre-existence in a more striking fashion, before the great patriarch who lived centuries before Jesus existence went on (Morris 1995:419). When Jesus is asserting his existence in the time of Abraham there is no other way of understanding it, as it should be observed that he says "I am" not "I was" (Morris 1995:419). It is eternity of being and not simply being that lasted through centuries that the expression indicates

(Morris 1995:420). Yeshua's identity here is in direct contrast to the Roman Emperors identification as the "Son of God". As already indicated, the title had a political function (cf. Carter 2008:194-195). Unlike the Emperors, who were seen as equal to the gods', Christ's political kingship originates from God, as Yeshua was "with God from the beginning" (cf. John 1:1-2). Furthermore, the Emperor operated as the "High Priest" and "Father of the Country" (cf. Gill 2000:996 & Carter 2008:236). Yeshua as the Son submits to his Father and does what he hears from the Father (cf. John 8:16, 18, 28, 40). As high priest, Yeshua offers his own life as a sacrifice, further displaying his religious service to those who follow and believe in him (i.e. "lifted up").

Yeshua's identity as "Son of Man" verifies his identity and has direct benefit for the in-groups identity through their belief in him. The death on a Roman cross is Yeshua's priestly sacrifice for the in-group, which has a prerequisite to believe in Yeshua. According to John 3:16-19, within the final authors cosmic dualism, this offering is for the "world" but only received by those "who believe in him". Those who believe "will not perish" but have "eternal life", which then results in an individual falling within the category of "life, light, and freedom" (cf. John 3:16). Condemnation is a result of not believing in the "Son of God", because they "loved darkness rather than light" (cf. John 3:18). Frei's (2018:38) section on the "Son of Man" is helpful here. As the "Son of Man", Jesus is the representative of the Father in whom humans not only encounter God's eschatological agent but even God himself (Frei 2018:38). Thus, in John, the title is an expression of high Christology, linked with the titles "Son", "Logos", and "God" (Frei 2018:38). Being the "Son of Man" and again referring to the "lifted up" assessment of Yeshua on the Roman cross, Yeshua's mission and identity remain an inseparable reality that the in-group cannot ignore in their believing in him. The cross will confirm Jesus participation and role in the cosmological mission of God: "And I do nothing on my own but I declare the things just as the Father taught me" (Klink 2016:413). However, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι unbelief limits their ideological level to ethnicity; whereby, they attempt to dishonour Yeshua's identity by ethnically associating him with being a Samaritan, and spiritually (or cosmologically) identifying him as being "demon" possessed (cf. John 8:48).

Jesus then makes three points, according to Thompson (2015:195), (1) he knows God and seeks his Father's honour (or glory, δόξα; John 8:49-50, 50, 54-55). (2) His word can give life (8:51) because he himself keeps God's word (John 8:55) (Thompson 2015:195). (3) He offers eternal life, the life from God, because – in words reminiscent of the Gospel's opening verses – Jesus himself has been

before Abraham ever was (John 8:58; 1:1-3) (Thompson 2015:195). The point here is an allusion to the implied authors' Christological claim concerning Yeshua's identity, as all Christological claims are ultimately theological in a proper sense: as they have to do with the identity of God (Thompson 2015:198). In John, Jesus speaks the words of God because he is the incarnation of the revelatory and life-giving Word of God, itself intrinsic to the identity of God (Thompson 2015:198). However, dishonouring Yeshua's Christological identity reveals a misunderstanding to the significance of Yeshua's socio-political role as king and religious sacrifice on the cross as high priest. Yeshua's identity offers the in-group freedom, sonship, and Fatherhood with God. In terms of the diversity within evolving Judaism, Yeshua's identity is significant as his call from God is not rooted in socio-politically overthrowing the Roman Empire, like the other messianic movement leaders, as Yeshua's movement is a "kingdom not of the world", and belongs to a cosmological/spiritual kingdom that originates from God, facilitated under Christ's kingship, and social-politically realised through group members "life-giving" participation.

Yeshua's kingship and mission are inseparable, as Yeshua's identity benefits the in-groups identity in him. This life-giving kingdom is emulated through Christ's act and identity claim, which rhetorically offends οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and leads them to ideologically misunderstanding him. The realm of the world cannot heal a man born blind, but Yeshua's kingdom can and confirms Yeshua as the "light of the world" (cf. John 9:1-5). Jesus' claim that he can give eternal life (v. 51) leads to further unbelief, since all the great figures of the past – Abraham, the prophets – are dead (Thompson 2015:196). The misunderstanding lead to an assumption that denounces the value of what Yeshua's identity actually offers. Yeshua is the "light of the world" and his light gives people the "light of life", which is salvation. Thus, the misunderstanding rejects Yeshua's identity and evaluates Yeshua's claim as blasphemous based on their ethnic-identity level of unbelief. Thompson (2015:197) explains that, curiously, in those places, when Jesus uses the absolute "I am", he is not charged with blasphemy, nor does anyone seek to stone him. It is not until Jesus promises that whoever believes in him will "never taste death" (vv. 51-52) and claims to have existed before Abraham ever was (8:58), that anyone tries to stone him (Thompson 2015:197). This is ironic for Thompson (2015:197), as it seems to be ok for someone to make themselves equal to God, like in John 5:18 and John 10:33. Therefore, unbelief dishonours Yeshua's identity and rejects Yeshua's life-giving offer, which for the final author, is a rejection of God's son. The epideictic rhetoric here

reaffirms this point through emphasizing the result of rejecting Yeshua, and, by implication, indicates the consequences of in-group member's deciding to leave this messianic movement. Departure from the Believing Movement is a rejection of Yeshua's identity, which in turn, is a rejection of God's salvation that is established through God's son, Yeshua of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Chapter Five: The Hermeneutical Task for Reading John 8:12-59

Key words: Dimensions and Levels to reading and interpreting John 8:12-59, Language in Context, Christian Identity Formation, and a Hermeneutics of "othering".

My Rhetorical Assessment

A rhetorical analysis of John 8:12-59 is not an easy task. In the previous chapter, the exegetical analysis attempted to focus on what the language in the pericope could potentially mean rhetorically within the ancient Mediterranean first century CE context. The use of commentaries and other helpful sources proved valuable, and John 8:12-59 was again compared with early Jewish Literature. Although some of these sources may have been completed in later century, the comparisons serve as an exegetical enterprise that ensures the reading and interpretation of John 8:12-59 is not anti-Judaism. The exegetical analysis of John 8:12-59 is situated in the post Second Temple destruction setting. The narration in John 8:20 served as a rhetorical key for situating the exegesis within this social-political context. The Temple destruction by the Roman Empire happened. This historical understanding does not occur in speculation; rather, through this historical fact, the biblical text could be situated within its language context. The Greek word οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι served as a rhetorical phrase that refers to the "out-group" within the discourse. However, this thesis argues that the biblical text is written for the in-group, and the harsh language serves as a rhetorical "anti-language" or "anti-society" created by the implied author to convict members within the in-group to submission. The people in the first century CE had dyadic personalities and their understanding of identity was collectivistic and within a culture of honour and shame. Therefore, the exegetical attempt, using rhetorical analysis, was rather concerned with what would John 8:12-59 potentially mean for the in-group, in its socio-political context.

The rhetorical assessment of this thesis has various species of rhetoric, such as a forensic rhetoric in John 8:12-20 section, epideictic rhetoric in John 8:21-30 section, deliberate rhetoric in John 8:31-47 section, and epideictic rhetoric in the last section in John 8:48-59. Notice that in these sections a referral to certain sections or statements were labelled as "exordium", "narration", "proposition", "probation", and "peroration". These refer to, according to Witherington (2009:16), a normal rhetorical discourse, though elements could be rearranged or omitted in some cases. In the rhetorical

analysis an attempt was made to situate each section within these elements, whereby, the "species of rhetoric", "rhetorical proofs", and style, could be assessed within the arrangement of the discourse. This thesis arranged the discourse to exegetically focus on how the biblical text would affect the in-groups' identity formation. Therefore, the dualism operates as a distinguishing marker that categorises the in-groups identity, and creating an "out-group", which is ethically, eschatologically, and cosmologically, constructed through the implied authors metaphorical categories. These textual categories in John 8:12-59 are: "darkness, the world, sin, death, slavery and the Devil". Such an invention is not only found in John's Gospel alone but also within other Second Temple Jewish literature.

The comparative assessment of John 8:12-59 with the Qumran texts of Second Temple Jewish literature assisted in ensuring that an anachronism was avoided when reading and interpreting John 8:12-59. An anachronistic reading of John 8:12-59 results in labelling οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in the Gospel narrative as "the Jews" of today. This "complaint reader" approach to John 8:12-59 is unhelpful for our contemporary contexts, as Judaism has evolved since the first century CE, and, ironically, Christianity in the first Century CE was a Jewish sect. A more "sympathetic" reading approach can serve to be more helpful, as it is sensitive to the identity formation that the implied author may or may not be attempting to construct, through the genre of an ancient biography. Thus, this thesis was concerned with the problem of a one-dimensional, or "literalistic" interpretive reading of this biblical text. Avoiding this was paramount as such a reading perpetuates anti-Semitism and omits different levels/dimensions of interpreting John 8:12-59. The methods of social-history approach and rhetorical analysis displayed levels of ethnic-identity, social-political, and cosmological/spiritual dimensions when interpreting this biblical text within its context. Firstly, the ethnic-identity level challenges the in-group's ethnicity through mention of Abraham. The challenge of ethnicity is also displayed through Yeshua's identity claim, where the author constructs him as the Messiah of Israel, which results in his identity having ethnic identity significance within evolving Judaism first century CE; particularly, considering the two messianic movements that occurred within the Jewish community during this time. In addition, the collective culture and identity, honour and shame, and dualism being seen as textual boundaries that are constructed by the implied author, demonstrated the contextual identity constructs that this emerging in-group would have to contend within their

world. Thus, the dimension of ethnicity is a level present day readers can articulate in their various contexts.

Secondly, this ethnic-identity level of the text has a socio-political dimension. This dimension is because the Christian group who would have read and heard John 8:12-59, is a sect within Judaism. Yeshua being constructed as the Messiah of Israel contends directly with other sects and factions within Judaism that were birthed from such claims (i.e. The messianic Movement of Simon Bar Giora movement in 68-70 CE and the Simon ben Kosiba movement in 132-135 CE). Thus, the implied author's textual construction is part of an intra-Jewish conflict, and takes it further by constructing Yeshua as the "Son of God". This construction challenges other Jewish messianic movements and messianic leaders, who were opposed to Roman imperial rule following the Second Temple destruction, and creates an alternative cosmology that challenges the Empire by equating terms that are denoted to the Emperor to Yeshua. In terms of the economic system and temple factor in John 8:20, and the title πατήρ assisted in understanding this social-political significance of Yeshua's identity, where at a social-political level, Yeshua's truth reveals God's Kingdom, making the in-group part of a Kingdom that is opposed to the Roman Empire in a restorative way, with Yeshua acting as God's social entrepreneur and broker. The social-political level displays a cosmic and spiritual significance, where Yeshua's agency as God's social entrepreneur and broker, displays his kingship that origins from God. As "Son of God", Yeshua has a kingship that is not connected to the Roman Empire, but rather, opposes it in a "life-giving" way, as this kingdom is "not of this world".

Lastly, this social-political level of God's kingdom that is administered through Christ's kingship has a cosmological/spiritual dimension that differentiates between the in-group and out-group reality. The differentiation of this dimension is rooted in Yeshua's kingship and believing in him. Yeshua's identity originates from God and so to his kingship. Thus, those who associate with Yeshua social-politically through believing in him, belong to the cosmological/spiritual dimension of God's Kingdom. This cosmological/spiritual level served as an in-group category that attempts to distinguish between behaviours that ensure group solidarity and accountability. This is because the dualism is ethical and not absolute. In fact, it is ethical, ecclesial, and cosmological, and not a final eschatological judgement upon the Jews, as this dualistic constructions were common within Second Temple Jewish literature. Thus, these binary categories displayed through dualism operate as

in-group parameters that challenge the in-group to remain faithful to the group's identity and Yeshua's identity claim. Categories are identity markers that distinguish group identity. For example, Yeshua's "word" and "truth" in John 8:31, is a call to discipleship, that has ethnic-identity and social-political ramifications upon the in-group's identity, as discipleship is not inherited through one's ethnicity but is earned through fidelity to Yeshua, which by implications makes a group member part of the authors Asiatic cosmic/spiritual categories of "sonship, freedom, light, life, and God". Therefore, in this thesis, the cosmology/spirituality level is not a final judgement upon the Jews of today, rather, cosmology operates as in-group categorisation of behaviour, which represents the in-group member's self-categorisation if they do not acknowledge and believe in Yeshua's identity claim, by remaining and keeping his word as truth.

A rhetorical assessment and analysis of the social-historical background provided a contextual understanding of the "world behind the text". This was important because the language of John 8:12-59 needed to be assessed within its context first. The hermeneutical enterprise prioritised this so that "literalism" does not occur when reading John 8:12-59, and neither a hermeneutic of "othering", where οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in this biblical text are labelled as "the Jews" of today. The rhetorical assessment is situated within a world and context whereby the language of the text served as a potential meaning for the implied audience in the first century CE. Instead of attempting to display what John was trying to say to his followers, this thesis explored the kind of identity formation that John potentially constructed and formulated within the ancient Mediterranean world. This opens the door to multiple dimensions of reading and interpreting John 8:12-59, through placing the biblical text in its context first. Therefore, this biblical text cannot be used as an identity claim that vilifies Jews of today, as the dimensions displayed levels of interpreting John 8:12-59 within our various contemporary settings. The pericope can be used in processes of identity formation for Christians today, by interpreting John 8:12-59 rhetorically as a biblical text for the in-group. Such an interpretive reading forces the preacher and interpreter to find "meaning potentials" for Christians' identity formation, and not as final cosmological/spiritual judgement on all Jews today; thus, the levels formulated in this thesis can be used to ensure more accountable and life-giving hermeneutics when using this biblical text.

Summary

A more-dimensional reading of John 8:12-59 was meant to adequately address the problem of a one-dimensional (literalistic) perspective. A one-dimensional reading limits the diverse "meaning potentials" that John 8:12-59 could have in our contemporary contexts'. An interpretation that starts by understanding what the language meant within the first century CE context, invites an interpretation that is able to construct a "meaning potential" that does not anachronistically read the text as a final vilification of "the Jews" today. A one-dimensional interpretation misses the significance of the language within the Roman Empire: for example, πατήρ was a term associated with the emperor, as "Father of the Country". The word, πατήρ, served as a tool that assisted this thesis to have a deeper social-historical understanding of the role of the emperor within the Roman Empire. Such an investigation was concerned with the "social location" components that the implied author may or may not have been alluding to. As explained in chapter 1, referring to Ukpong (2001:149), that social location is determined by position in the social, economic and political ladder, education, and factors that are historical, geographical, psychological, and sociological. If then language comes from a specific "culture" or "history," as Osborne (1991:127) and Hong (2013:524) indicated, it became important for this thesis to understand what these "social location" factors were within the ancient Mediterranean world.

In chapter 3, "Social location of the Groups identity within the ancient Mediterranean World", the starting point was to reconstruct possible Roman imperial language in John's Gospel. The purpose of the Gospel, John 20:30-31, served as a rhetorical marker of investigation of whether such language was evident. Carter's (2008:4) rhetorical distance using the narrative criticism approach of "cultural intertextuality" and imperial term "Son of God" (cf. Carter 2008:194-195), led to this exploration, and the discovery resulted in language within the John 8:12-59 that may be alluding to the Roman Empire. The exploration produced an understanding of the role of the Emperor within the social, economic, and political ladder of the Roman Empire. The language in the biblical text led to this social-historical investigation of the Roman Emperor in this context, in an attempt to understand the potential ideology the implied author may have constructed using this imperial language. Furthermore, the chapter moved to an understanding of the Temple, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι complicated relationship with the Roman Empire, and the Jewish Temple politics within this imperial era. However, the two part chapter 2, "Identity constructs" within the Ancient

Mediterranean Context", was a starting point and displayed three factors readers and interpreters must understand before interpreting a New Testament text using rhetorical analysis(cf. Witherington 2009:16-19). The first part of the chapter (a) dealt with these three factors (i.e. Collectivistic culture and identity, Economic System and Temple, and Honour and Shame culture), while the second part (b) addressed the textual "binary categories" constructed by the authors dualism.

According to Ukpong (2001:149), the "identity constructs" are the "racial/ethnic identity, worldview, gender, belief system, religious affiliation, and the biases arising from all these". Thus, the "identity constructs" were situated and evaluated within Second Temple Judaism. Understanding these three New Testament factors in light of Second Temple Judaism allowed for a responsible reading that contextualises the text within its original setting. These New Testament factors were associated with the Second Temple Judaism socio-political challenges, in order to give the preacher and interpreter the tools for a responsible and conscious interpretation that does not perpetuate an anti-Jewish attitude. In terms of the text's dualism, Lieu (2004), Von Wahlde (2001) and Dunn (2001) were helpful sources to further link this potential contextual setting, within the function of textual identity construction, or formation, which operated within the Second Temple Jewish Literature. The comparative assessment was an attempt to display the similarities of John's dualism with Jewish literature, which then ultimately served as an interpretive tool in our exegetical analysis of John 8:12-59, in chapter 4 - "A rhetorical analysis of John 8:12-59 within its socio-political context". This comparison was important because John's dualism harshly labels the Ἰουδαῖοι who believe in Yeshua, as "children of Satan" in John 8:44 - which was a verse that the shooter of the Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh used violently to justify his own anti-Judaism. The shooter, who killed 11 members in the Synagogue massacre, cited John 8:44 on his social media profile (cf. Grieser 2018). This anti-Semitic behaviour towards a Jewish community and then citing a biblical text violently perpetuates anti-Judaism and takes John 8:44 outside of its language context. This literalism and one-dimensional reading ignores the possible social-political ramification of the biblical text within a first century CE, and anachronistically labels οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι as "the Jews" of today. Yet, texts, according to Lieu (2004:98), were used to construct identity through creating boundaries. The boundaries, which in John 8:12-59 are demonstrated through thematic ideas created by the dualism, is the implied author's attempt to construct the in-groups identity. These constructions may or may not be referring to the real life characters, but this thesis argued that the

categories are for the in-group identity formation, and demonstrated that the negative categories or "out-group" are for in-groups members who dishonour their group's identity.

An exegetical analysis that is focused on the in-groups identity formation surely allows for a more creative "potential meaning" for us today, that does not see John's Gospel, in this case John 8:12-59, as an anti-Jewish text. The interpersonal category, according to Blount (1995:8), can now be mediated through understanding the textual and ideational categories within the understanding of the "world behind the text". Such an appreciation produces a "meaning potential" that is responsibly informed by the language context of John 8:12-59, and consequently demonstrates a conscious interpretation that is sensitive to dangers of anti-Judaism. The meaning potential can be about understanding John's Christian Identity formation. This is crucial because literalism can serve as an identity claim. Therefore, a biblical text needs to be contextually assessed first, before any "meaning potential" for us today is articulated. A contextual understanding can assist us in participating in a more conscious hermeneutic, that allows for discerned "meaning potential's" that do not "other" the Jews of today. Instead, through a rhetorical analysis and social history approach, this thesis has attempted to avoid an interpretive reading that demonizes real life individuals and communities that exist today, by situating the biblical text outside of its language context. This hermeneutical task and priority avoids a demonisation of any group, by always interpreting sacred texts only for an in-group's identity formation. When the in-group is prioritised, the text's opponents become "metaphorical" symbols of characterization, where if individuals of the in-group do not adhere to the in-groups' identification, they fall into that characterisation, which does not mean it is referring to the actual people who bare that name today. Perhaps then, interpreters and preachers of the Bible can prioritise interpretive meanings that help members in their community to best live out the principles and values of their faith that are taught in their sacred texts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι being labelled as the "children of the devil" (cf. John 8:44) is a harsh and violent anachronism if it is seen as a theological claim upon "the Jews" of today. In fact, such a conclusion is anachronistic and ignores the identity claim of Yeshua that is creatively constructed and formulated by the implied author. Ironically, the author was writing to members of an emerging Christian movement that had its roots in Judaism. However, John's dualism is not a new invention; as such a dualism was also typically used in Second Temple Jewish literature. In fact, John's

dualism is a form of Christian identity formation, whereby, the implied author uses Jewish ideas to solidify the implied audience's identity within the confines of their messianic and Christological movement. The cosmological, eschatological, and ethical dualism that John uses demonstrates similarities with Second Temple literature. This is significant because boundaries are constructed to clearly categorize an in-group identity. The perceived "out-group" and its categories that define it are rhetorical stylistic devices that categorise disloyalty to the in-groups identity. If we read and interpret John 8:12-59 as a rhetorical document that is involved in Christian identity formation, then the "meaning potential" for us today is about contemporary Christians finding meaning possibilities from this biblical text for their own identity formation.

Authors within the first century CE context did not write to vilify all Jews; rather, they were involved and concerned with producing documents that would construct and formulate their identity within a changing social world. Identity formations occurred with texts and were spoken through oral speeches in the spaces where communities met and shared in their collective identity. Ironically, the implied readers/hearers of John 8:12-59 were quite possibly Jewish, as in the first century CE, Christianity was a Jewish sect. Therefore, sensitivity to this historical fact when reading and interpreting John 8:12-59 is essential, both to not perpetuate anti-Judaic/ anti-Semitic beliefs and behaviours, and also to increase our sensitivity towards the diversity of religions in the world and within communities. The implied author of John 8:12-59 did not live in a world where Judaism and Christianity were two separate religions; rather, they were situated within a socio-political context of the Roman Empire, where the author even uses language that would refer to the Roman Emperor. Biblical texts were situated in a diverse world whereby the implied audience was a sect within Judaism, using language that had socio-political ramifications within their context. Identities were not fixed and rigidly constructed; rather, they were emerging, evolving, and attempting to be formulated through texts. The sacred texts we have are not perfect picture of history, and neither are these textual identities rigid articulations of all truth. Rather, they function as a vision and/or a theological claim that solidifies or challenges the in-groups identity; an in-group who believes in a specific figure or leader.

John 8:12-59 is speaking to the in-groups who are formulating their emerging Christian identity within the Roman Empire. The implied author formulates that identity using harsh language. This language must be read in its context first before being understood as a meaning potential for

Christians today. Language must be read in context, to prevent its manipulation in order to justify acts of violence, including those inflicted upon the Jews of today. Language in sacred texts, such as the Bible, serves as people's religious truth and identity claim. It is dangerous when that language justifies people's actions to cause harm to another religious community. Within the African context, a similar strumentalisation of sacred texts has occurred, with violent labelling of black people as "descendants of Ham", and, therefore, labelled as "cursed" and "inferior". This interpretation was used ideologically by white communities in South Africa and in the Southern USA as a support in their subjugation of blacks (Ukpong 2001:16). The historical violence inflicted upon black Africans on the African continent and in America would constitute another thesis all together, but the point here is to demonstrate the task associated with this problem of a hermeneutics of "othering", which is an "othering" of real life people groups using a sacred text. It can be easily argued that this dangerous hermeneutic can cause harm upon other human beings. Furthermore, it leads to justifying murderous acts of violence, results in the construction of social systems of oppression, and it demonizes people using the very language found in a sacred text.

Ideologies that are constructed through such an irresponsible hermeneutical paradigm will not assist human relationships being constructed in our diverse world. Our world is diverse, pluralistic and fluid; whereas, our sacred texts have a world of their own, a world that is dualistic and uses metaphorical language to construct the in-groups identity within the ancient Mediterranean world. Therefore, the hermeneutical task of reading and interpreting a perceived "anti-Jewish" biblical text such as John 8:12-59, is to prioritise the "world behind the text" first, as a responsible and conscious hermeneutic, so that we can begin to find multi-dimensional meaning potentials for us today; meanings that are not anti-Jewish, but rather engraved in discovering how implied authors employ texts to formulate identity. Such a hermeneutical task can help avoiding the problem of a hermeneutic of "othering" and focuses on assisting the preacher and interpreter of the Bible to think creatively on how they can formulate their own emerging Christian identities within their own contexts today. This hermeneutical enterprise is a theologising that views the textual constructions in the Bible within their socio-political contexts first, before undertaking the present-day contextual concerns from a text. Perhaps, such a task can help us avoid an anti-Judaistic attitude when reading and interpreting John 8:12-59. This vision and hope could lead us to evaluate how language in the

New Testament is using Jewishness to formulate Christian identity; a formation that necessarily stems from the significant relationship between Christianity and Judaism.

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Addendum 1: Greek and my English Translation of John 8:12-59

Greek Text and Some Parsing of John 8:12-59 (Internal Structure)

The following Greek text is from the SBL Greek New Testament (SBLGNT) that I got from www.Biblegateway.com. See reference list for citation. I used Bible works to assist me in the parsing. The verbs parsed are footnoted below.

8:12-20 Yeshua's Identity Claim

12 Πάλιν οὖν αὐτοῖς [a]ἐλάλησεν[60] ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων· Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν [b]ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ περιπατήσῃ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἕξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς. **13** εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι· Σὺ περὶ σεαυτοῦ μαρτυρεῖς· ἡ μαρτυρία σου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής. **14** ἀπεκρίθη[61] Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Κἂν ἐγὼ μαρτυρῶ περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, ἀληθής ἐστιν ἡ μαρτυρία μου, ὅτι οἶδα πόθεν ἦλθον καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγω· ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ οἴδατε[62] πόθεν ἔρχομαι [c]ἢ ποῦ ὑπάγω. **15** ὑμεῖς κατὰ τὴν σάρκα κρίνετε[63], ἐγὼ οὐ κρίνω οὐδένα. **16** καὶ ἐὰν κρίνω δὲ ἐγώ, ἡ κρίσις ἡ ἐμὴ [d]ἀληθινή ἐστιν, ὅτι μόνος οὐκ εἰμί, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πέμψας[64] με πατήρ. **17** καὶ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ δὲ τῷ ὑμετέρῳ γέγραπται[65] ὅτι δύο ἀνθρώπων ἡ μαρτυρία ἀληθής ἐστιν. **18** ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ καὶ μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ. **19** ἔλεγον οὖν αὐτῷ· Ποῦ ἐστιν ὁ πατήρ σου; ἀπεκρίθη[66] Ἰησοῦς· Οὔτε ἐμὲ οἴδατε οὔτε τὸν πατέρα μου· εἰ ἐμὲ ᾔδειτε, καὶ τὸν πατέρα μου [e]ἂν ᾔδειτε[67]. **20** ταῦτα τὰ ῥήματα [f]ἐλάλησεν ἐν τῷ γαζοφυλακίῳ διδάσκων ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ· καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπίασεν[68] αὐτόν, ὅτι οὔπω ἐληλύθει[69] ἡ ὥρα αὐτοῦ.

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60 Aorist Indicative Active 3rd Person Singular of λαλέω

61 Aorist Indicative Passive 3rd Person Singular of ἀποκρίνομαι

62 Perfect indicative Active 2nd person Plural of οἶδα

63 Present Indicative active 2nd person Plural of κρίνω

64 Aorist Participle active Nominative Masculine singular of πέμπω

65 Perfect Indicative passive 3rd person singular of γράφω

66 Aorist Indicative passive 3rd person singular of ἀποκρίνομαι

67 Pluperfect Indicative active 2nd person plural of οἶδα

68 Aorist indicative active 3rd person singular of πιάξω

69 Pluperfect indicative active 3rd singular of ἔρχομαι

8:21-47 Dispute over the Identity of Yeshua and τοὺς Ἰουδαίους who believe in Yeshua

8:21-30 Identity of Yeshua

21 Εἶπεν[70] οὖν πάλιν [g]αὐτοῖς· Ἐγὼ ὑπάγω καὶ ζητήσετέ[71] με, καὶ ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ὑμῶν ἀποθανεῖσθε[72] · ὅπου ἐγὼ ὑπάγω ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε ἐλθεῖν[73]. **22** ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· Μήτι ἀποκτενεῖ[74] ἑαυτὸν ὅτι λέγει· Ὅπου ἐγὼ ὑπάγω ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε ἐλθεῖν; **23** καὶ [h]ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· Ὑμεῖς ἐκ τῶν κάτω ἐστέ, ἐγὼ ἐκ τῶν ἄνω εἰμί· ὑμεῖς ἐκ [i]τούτου τοῦ κόσμου ἐστέ, ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου. **24** εἶπον οὖν ὑμῖν ὅτι ἀποθανεῖσθε ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν· ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ πιστεύσητε[75] ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, ἀποθανεῖσθε[76] ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν.**25** ἔλεγον οὖν αὐτῷ· Σὺ τίς εἶ; [j]εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Τὴν ἀρχὴν [k]ὅ τι καὶ λαλῶ ὑμῖν; **26** πολλὰ ἔχω περὶ ὑμῶν λαλεῖν καὶ κρίνειν· ἀλλ᾽ ὁ πέμψας[77] με ἀληθής ἐστιν, κἀγὼ ἃ ἤκουσα παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα [l]λαλῶ εἰς τὸν κόσμον.**27** οὐκ ἔγνωσαν[78] ὅτι τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῖς ἔλεγεν. **28** εἶπεν [m]οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ὅταν ὑψώσητε[79] τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τότε γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, καὶ ἀπ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ ποιῶ οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἐδίδαξέν με ὁ [n]πατὴρ ταῦτα λαλῶ.**29** καὶ ὁ πέμψας με μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐστιν· οὐκ ἀφῆκέν[80] με [o]μόνον, ὅτι ἐγὼ τὰ ἀρεστὰ αὐτῷ ποιῶ πάντοτε. **30** ταῦτα αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος[81] πολλοὶ ἐπίστευσαν[82] εἰς αὐτόν.

8:31-47 Ethnic Identity Challenge of believing in Yeshua (Cost of Discipleship)

8:31-38 Sin and Slavery vs Sonship and Freedom

31 Ἔλεγεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πρὸς τοὺς πεπιστευκότας[83] αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίους· Ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μείνητε[84] ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, ἀληθῶς μαθηταί μού ἐστε, **32** καὶ γνώσεσθε[85] τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια

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70 Aorist Indicative active 3rd person Singular of λέγω
71 Future indicative active 2nd person plural of ζητέω
72 Future Indicative medium 2nd person plural of ἀποθνῆσκω
73 Aorist infinitive active of ερχομαι
74 Future indicative active 3rd person singular of ἀποκτεῖω
75 Aorist subjunctive medium 2nd person plural of πιστέυω
76 Future indicative medium 2nd person plural of ἀποθνέσχω
77 Aorist participle active nominative masculine singular of πέμπω
78 Aorist indicative active 3rd person plural of γιγνῶσκω
79 Aorist subjunctive active 2nd person plural of ὓψω
80 Aorist indicative active 3rd person singular of αφῖεμι
81 Present participle active genitive masculine singular of λαλέω
82 Aorist indicative active 3rd person plural of πίστευω
83 Perfect participle active accusative masculine plural of πίστευω
84 Aorist subjunctive active 2nd person plural of μένω
85 Future indicative medium 2nd person plural of γιγνῶσκω

ἐλευθερώσει[86] ὑμᾶς. **33** ἀπεκρίθησαν[87] [p]πρὸς αὐτόν· Σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἐσμεν καὶ οὐδενὶ δεδουλεύκαμεν[88] πώποτε· πῶς σὺ λέγεις ὅτι Ἐλεύθεροι γενήσεσθε[89];

34 Ἀπεκρίθη[90] αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν δοῦλός ἐστιν τῆς ἁμαρτίας· **35** ὁ δὲ δοῦλος οὐ μένει ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα· [q]ὁ υἱὸς μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. **36** ἐὰν οὖν ὁ υἱὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλευθερώσῃ[91], ὄντως ἐλεύθεροι ἔσεσθε. **37** οἶδα ὅτι σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἐστε· ἀλλὰ ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτεῖναι[92], ὅτι ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐμὸς οὐ χωρεῖ[93] ἐν ὑμῖν. **38** [r]ἃ ἐγὼ ἑώρακα[94] παρὰ τῷ [s]πατρὶ λαλῶ· καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν [t]ἃ ἠκούσατε[95] παρὰ [u]τοῦ πατρὸς ποιεῖτε[96].

8:39-47 The Question of Fatherhood: A question of Election?

39 Ἀπεκρίθησαν[97] καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ ἐστιν. λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Εἰ τέκνα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ [v]ἐστε, τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ [w]ἐποιεῖτε[98]·**40** νῦν δὲ ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτεῖναι, ἄνθρωπον ὃς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὑμῖν λελάληκα[99] ἣν ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ· τοῦτο Ἀβραὰμ οὐκ ἐποίησεν. **41** ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν. [x]εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Ἡμεῖς ἐκ πορνείας [y]οὐ γεγεννήμεθα[100]· ἕνα πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν θεόν. **42** [z]εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Εἰ ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἦν ἠγαπᾶτε ἂν ἐμέ, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθον καὶ ἥκω· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ ἐλήλυθα, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνός με ἀπέστειλεν[101]. **43** διὰ τί τὴν λαλιὰν τὴν ἐμὴν οὐ γινώσκετε; ὅτι οὐ δύνασθε ἀκούειν τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐμόν. **44** ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ καὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν. ἐκεῖνος ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἦν[102] ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς, καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ [aa]οὐκ ἔστηκεν, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλήθεια ἐν αὐτῷ. ὅταν λαλῇ τὸ ψεῦδος, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, ὅτι ψεύστης ἐστὶν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ. **45** ἐγὼ δὲ ὅτι τὴν

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86 Future indicative active 3rd person singular of ἐλευθερόω
87 Aorist indicative passive 3rd person plural of ἀποκρίνομαι
88 Perfect indicative active 1st person plural of δουλεύω
89 Future indicative medium 2nd person plural of ἀποκρίνομαι
90 Aorist indicative passive 3rd person singular of ἐλευθερόω
91 Aorist subjunctive active 3rd person singular of ἀποκτεῖνω
92 Aorist infinitive active of χωρεω
93 Present indicative active 3rd person singular of ἀκούω
94 Perfect indicative active 1st person singular of ποῖεω
95 Aorist indicative active 2nd person plural of ἀποκρίνομαι
96 Present Indicative active 2nd person plural of ποῖεω
97 Aorist indicative passive 3rd person plural of λαλέω
98 Aorist Indicative active 3rd person singular of γενναω
99 Perfect indicative active 1st person singular of ἀποστέλλω
100 Perfect indicative passive 1st person plural of εἶμι
101 Aorist indicative active 3rd person singular of εἶμι
102 Imperfect indicative active 3rd person singular of ἀποκρίνομαι

ἀλήθειαν λέγω, οὐ πιστεύετέ μοι. 46 τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐλέγχει με περὶ ἁμαρτίας; [ab]εἰ ἀλήθειαν λέγω, διὰ τί ὑμεῖς οὐ πιστεύετέ μοι; 47 ὁ ὢν[103] ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀκούει· διὰ τοῦτο ὑμεῖς οὐκ ἀκούετε ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἐστέ.

8:48-59 οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι's rejection of Yeshua's identity

48 [ac]Ἀπεκρίθησαν[104] οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Οὐ καλῶς λέγομεν ἡμεῖς ὅτι Σαμαρίτης εἶ σὺ καὶ δαιμόνιον ἔχεις; 49 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· Ἐγὼ δαιμόνιον οὐκ ἔχω, ἀλλὰ τιμῶ τὸν πατέρα μου, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀτιμάζετέ[105] με. 50 ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ ζητῶ[106] τὴν δόξαν μου· ἔστιν ὁ ζητῶν καὶ κρίνων. 51 ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐάν τις τὸν [ad]ἐμὸν λόγον τηρήσῃ[107], θάνατον οὐ μὴ θεωρήσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.52 [ae]εἶπον αὐτῷ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· Νῦν ἐγνώκαμεν[108] ὅτι δαιμόνιον ἔχεις. Ἀβραὰμ ἀπέθανεν[109] καὶ οἱ προφῆται, καὶ σὺ λέγεις· Ἐάν τις τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσῃ, οὐ μὴ γεύσηται θανάτου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα· 53 μὴ σὺ μείζων εἶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ, ὅστις ἀπέθανεν; καὶ οἱ προφῆται ἀπέθανον· τίνα [af]σεαυτὸν ποιεῖς; 54 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· Ἐὰν ἐγὼ [ag]δοξάσω[110] ἐμαυτόν, ἡ δόξα μου οὐδέν ἐστιν· ἔστιν ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ δοξάζων[111] με, ὃν ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι θεὸς [ah]ἡμῶν ἐστιν, **55** καὶ οὐκ ἐγνώκατε αὐτόν, ἐγὼ δὲ οἶδα αὐτόν· κἂν εἴπω[112] ὅτι οὐκ οἶδα αὐτόν, ἔσομαι ὅμοιος [ai]ὑμῖν ψεύστης· ἀλλὰ οἶδα αὐτὸν καὶ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ τηρῶ. **56** Ἀβραὰμ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἠγαλλιάσατο[113] ἵνα ἴδῃ[114] τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἐμήν, καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐχάρη[115]. 57 εἶπον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι πρὸς αὐτόν· Πεντήκοντα ἔτη οὔπω ἔχεις καὶ Ἀβραὰμ ἑώρακας[116]; 58 εἶπεν [aj]αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς· Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ

103 Present participle active nominative masculine singular of ἀτιμάζω
104 Aorist indicative passive 3rd person plural of ζητέω
105 Present indicative active 2nd person plural of τερέω
106 Present Participle active Nominative Masculine Singular of γιγνῶσκω
107 Aorist subjunctive active 3rd person singular of ἀποθνέσκω
108 Perfect indicative active 1st person plural of δοξάσω
109 Aorist indicative active 3rd person singular of δοξάσω
110 Aorist subjunctive active 1st person singular of λέγω
111 Present Participle active nominative masculine of ἀγαλλίαω
112 Aorist subjunctive active 1st person singular of ὅράω
113 Aorist indicative medium 3rd person singular of χαίρω
114 Aorist subjunctive active 3rd person singular of ὀράω
115 Aorist indicative passive 3rd person singular of χαῖρω
116 Perfect indicative active 2nd person singular of ὀράω

εἰμί. **59** ἦραν[117] οὖν λίθους ἵνα βάλωσιν ἐπ᾽ αὐτόν· Ἰησοῦς δὲ ἐκρύβη[118] καὶ ἐξῆλθεν[119] ἐκ τοῦ [ak]ἱεροῦ.

117 Aorist indicative active 3rd person plural of αἶρω

118 Aorist indicative passive 3rd person singular of κρύπτω

119 Aorist indicative active 3rd person singular of ἐξηρχομαι

English Translation of the Greek Text of John 8:12-59 (Internal Structure)

The English translation below is my own translation of John 8:12-59. As mentioned above, I used Bible works to assist me in my parsing (in the footnotes above) of the Greek words, a Greek-English dictionary, and then my own Greek knowledge further assisted me in translating the texts.

8:12-20 Yeshua's Identity Claim

Again, Yeshua spoke to them saying: "I am the light of the world. Those who follow me do not walk in darkness but have the light of life." Then the Pharisees said to him: "Your Testimony concerning yourself, is not true." Yeshua answered them saying: "If I testify about myself, my testimony is true, because I know where I come from and where I am going. But you do not know where I come from and where I am going. You judge according to the flesh. I do not judge anyone. But if I judge, my judgement is true because I am not alone, but my father who sent me is with me. Even in your law it is written that: 'The testimony of two men is true.' My Father, the one who sent me, testifies concerning me and bears witness concerning me." Then they said to him: "Where is your Father?" Yeshua replied: "You do not know me neither my Father. If you knew me, you would also know my Father." These words he spoke in the treasury while teaching in the temple. And no one arrested him, because his hour had not come yet.

8:21-47 Dispute over the Identity of Yeshua and τοὺς Ἰουδαίους who believe in Yeshua

8:21-30 Identity of Yeshua

Again, then he said to them: "I depart and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come." Then the Judeans said: "Surely he will kill himself because he said: 'Where I depart you all cannot come.'" And he (Yeshua) said to them: "You are from below, I am from above; You are from this world, and I am not from this world. I said that: 'you will die in your sins if you do not believe that I am', You will die in your sins." Then they said to him: "Who are you?" Yeshua said to them: "What have I been saying to you from the beginning? I have much to say and judge/decide concerning you, but he who sent me is true. That which I heard from him I speak to the world." They did not come to realise that He was speaking to them of the Father. Then Yeshua said: "when you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realise that I am, and that I do nothing from myself, but I speak things the Father taught me. Also, He who sent me (the Father) is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to Him." As he spoke these things many believed.

8:31-47 Ethnic Identity Challenge of believing in Yeshua (Cost of Discipleship)

8:31-38 Sin and Slavery vs. Sonship and Freedom

Then Yeshua said to the Judeans who believed in him: "If you remain in the word, truly you are my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him: "We are Abraham's seed, and neither are we slaves to anyone. How is it you say that: 'you will become free?'" Yeshua answered: "Verily, verily I say to you that all who sin are slaves to sin. A slave does not remain in the house forever, but the son remains forever. Therefore, when the Son sets you free, then you are free indeed. I know you are Abraham's seed, but you seek to kill me, for my word (has) no place in you. I speak what I hear from the Father and then you do what you hear from your Father."

8:39-47 The Question of Fatherhood: A question of Election?

They answered and said to him: "Our Father is Abraham." Yeshua said to them: "If you are Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But you seek to kill me, a man who speaks truth to you. A man who hears from God. This Abraham would not do. You are doing the deeds/works of your Father." They said to him: "we are not born of fornication. We have one Father, God." Yeshua said to them: "If God was your Father, you would love me, for I came from God. Neither have I come for myself but for he who sent me. Why do you not understand my words? For you cannot hear my words. You are from your Father the devil and you do your Father's desires/wishes. He was a murderer/liar from the beginning, and does not stand in truth. For there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks it is lies, for He is the Father of lies. For I speak truth, yet you do not believe me. Who out of you can convict me concerning sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe me? He who hears from God hears God's words. You do not hear for you are not from God."

8:48-59 οἰ'Ιο υ δ αῖο ι 's rejection of Yeshua's identity

The Judeans answered and said to him: "Well we say that you are a Samaritan and you have a demon." Yeshua answered: "I have no demon. But I honour my Father and you dishonour me. Truly, Truly I say to you, if anyone keeps my word they will never see death." The Judeans said to him: "Now we know that you are demon possessed. Abraham died and the prophets and you say: 'if anyone keeps your word, He will never see death.' You are not greater than our Father Abraham

who died and the Prophets who died. Who do you think you are?" Yeshua answered: "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. My Father is the one who glorifies me, who you say, that: 'He is our God.' And you do not know him, but I know him. If I say that I know him not, I will be a liar like you. But I know him and I keep his word. Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and he was glad." And the Judeans said to him: "You are not yet fifty years old and you have seen Abraham?" Yeshua said to them: "Verily, Verily I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. Then they picked up stones to throw at him, but Yeshua hid and came out from the temple