JOHN VAN MAAREN

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Preface

This study started as a dissertation in the Department of Religious Studies at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. That dissertation eventually morphed into a study of Jewishness in antiquity that included a final chapter on the Gospel of Mark. The study of Jewishness was expanded chronologically and published as *The Boundaries of Jewishness in the Southern Levant: 200 BCE–132 CE* (de Gruyter, 2022) without reference to the Gospel of Mark. The current study, then, is a fully reworked investigation of the Gospel of Mark's Judaism and the focus of a three-year postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. While the current study is only a little more than four times as long as the dissertation chapter, almost none of the original treatment remains intact. While it reached some similar conclusions, this was only after a thorough revision of the method, choice of topics, and treatment of individual textual units and themes. Methodologically, rather than locate the Gospel of Mark in a specific time and place, the current study starts from what we have – the text – and only suggests hypotheses about the intended audience, purpose, etc., in appendix 1 (where they differ from the dissertation). While the topics of the written law and foreigners are still treated (and largely reworked), treatments of the history of scholarship, the writer's reuse of Israel's ancestral writings, and the role of Jesus's death in the writer's conceptual world have been added.

For me, the experience of revisiting the topic of the Gospel of Mark's Judaism convinced me of both how much of a dissertation involves learning the current state of scholarship (and so rehearsing much that has already been written) and the value of a second take on a topic for developing what is hopefully a lasting contribution to scholarship. Most of what I see as the new contributions of this study, apart from the overarching approach of arguing that the Gospel of Mark represents a form of Judaism, were developed in the second foray. The treatment of the written law in the Gospel of Mark (Ch. 3) is mostly a gathering up of otherwise scattered studies into a narrative-wide argument that the writer assumes the practical authority of the written law. Here my unique contribution to the interpretation of specific scenes is secondary to the collective argument produced by bringing existing studies together. The history of scholarship (Ch. 2) is the first treatment of past research filtered through the question of why the Gospel of Mark has been considered a "gentile" Gospel, while the treatment of the Kingdom of God (Ch. 5) is the first argument that the writer does not rework

the echoes of national restoration into something radically new and unexpected. The most significant new textual observations may be in the treatment of foreigners (i.e., gentiles) in the Gospel of Mark (Ch. 4). Here I found, often unexpectedly, that those features typically attributed to a purported interest in foreigners are more easily explained by the related themes of the regathering of scattered Israel and opposition to Roman occupation. So, for example, the man from whom Jesus drives out unclean spirits in the region of Gerasene (5:1–20) cannot be a foreigner without making Jesus duplicitous, since Jesus later objects to similarly driving out an unclean spirit from an explicitly Greek girl because she is a foreigner (7:24–30). Accordingly, Jesus sends the man to his Jewish kinsmen living throughout the Decapolis (5:19) and not the non-Jewish majority residents there. Similarly, the writer does not awkwardly (and uniquely) use the preposition εἰς to designate all nations as the disciples' future target audience (13:10) but alludes to Isaiah's expectation of sending a signal into (εἰς) the nations to announce the regathering of scattered Israel (Isa 11:12; 49:22; 62:10; 66:19). Further, the Roman Centurion's response to Jesus's death can only make sense of the (apparent) defeat of Jesus and its accompanying cosmic signs if the Centurion – as a representative of Roman power – is both (comically) triumphant and relieved at Jesus's death and is not – as a representative foreigner – confessing his trust in Jesus. These and other unexpected observations represent new interpretations and repeatedly coalesced around an expectation of national restoration which entails throwing off Roman occupation. The treatment of Jesus's death (Ch. 6) is more integrative and therefore somewhat suggestive, partly because it builds on prior arguments. Still, it has the advantage of reading the echoes of Israel's ancestral writings more straightforwardly than has previously been done. That my specific argument about the significance of Jesus's death is not wholly off base finds some confirmation from another study, referenced in the discussion below, that developed a similar argument simultaneously and independently.

For a project that started a decade ago, there are, of course, too many people to thank. To my original PhD supervisor at McMaster University, Anders Runesson, I benefited first from the encouragement to undertake this project with the cautious optimism, "I think scholarship might be ready for that," even if it at the time seemed like possibly a dead end. Without his enthusiasm, willingness to consider almost any idea (even those that for good reason he encouraged me to discard), and constant comparison with the Gospel of Matthew, this project would never have begun or contributed anything substantially new. I will remain always grateful for his willingness to continue co-supervising my project after taking a professorship at the University of Oslo. Matthew Thiessen, who agreed to co-supervise my original dissertation after joining the Department of Religious Studies at McMaster University, contributed deep knowledge of both the Gospel of Mark and other early Jewish literature, as well as ongoing encouragement. Eileen Schuller was the most helpfully engaged third committee member I could have imagined, and her detailed knowledge of early Jewish texts nuanced this project at many points.

If this project meaningfully addresses the main objections of current scholarship, it is especially because of the critical feedback of Matthias Konradt, who agreed to host my Humboldt fellowship at the University of Heidelberg. The constant pushback based on his near comprehensive knowledge of the primary and secondary sources caused me to adjust my conclusions at some points and develop more thorough arguments at many others. Just as significantly, he pushed me to move beyond negative arguments (i.e., the handwashing incident does not abrogate parts of the written law) to make positive arguments about how specific scenes contribute to the narrative development and the Gospel of Mark's Judaism. I count it as this project's greatest success to date that he has found my final argument compelling at many points.

The argument presented here benefited from many people and conferences. The participants in Matthias Konradt's graduate seminar in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Heidelberg provided invaluable feedback on most parts of the project. I especially thank Alida Euler and Carolin Ziethe for conversations and friendship throughout. Others who improved the project at different stages include Michael Azar, Maria Chen, Wally Cirafesi, Ryann Craig, Annette Dosch, Channah Fonseca-Quezada, Jutta Grühbaum, Karin Hedner Zetterholm, Jacob Mortensen, Karin Neutel, Matthew Pawlak, Adele Reinhartz, David Smith, David Sloan, Paul Sloan, Logan Williams, Eric Wyckoff, and Magnus Zetterholm. Different parts of the theoretical approach, interpretation of the Gospel of Mark, and its relation to other ancient texts were presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature sections on *The Gospel of Mark*, *Jewish-Christianity/Christian Judaism*, *Historical Paul*, *Pauline Epistles*, and *Johannine Literature*. The history of scholarship was sharpened through participation in *A Critical History of Exegesis since around 1900 Workshop* of the European Association of Biblical Studies. Other parts benefited from participation in a variety of seminars, symposia, and topical conferences including, *Rewriting Jesus: Forgotten Pasts and Possible Futures* (Münster, Germany, Sept 2024), *Judaism and Trajectories of Religious Interaction: From the New Testament to the Quran* (Lund, Sweden, Sept 2023), *The Animal in the New Testament and Graeco-Roman World* (Mainz, Germany, June 2023), *John within Judaism Virtual Enoch Seminar* (Mar 2023), *New Testament and Jewish Studies Joint Seminar* (Lund, Sweden, Oct 2022), *The Gospel of Mark and Genre: Micro and Macro* (Aarhus, Denmark, Jan 2020), *Negotiating Identities: Conflict, Conversion, and Consolidation in Early Judaism and Christianity (200 BCE–400 CE)* (Lund, Sweden, May 2019), *University of Oslo Faculty of Theology Seminar* (Oslo, Norway, Oct 2018), *Tantur Ecumenical Institute Fellows Seminar* (Jerusalem, Feb 2018); and the *Authoritative Texts and Their Reception Graduate Student Seminar* (Athens, Greece, Oct 2016). Jörg Frey, Markus Kirchner, Tobias Stäbler, Rebekka Zech, and Mohr Siebeck provided a smooth process from initial consideration through publication.

Any study like this takes up a decent amount of one's mental space, and I thank especially Allyson, my life partner, for constantly bringing me back to the more immediate realities of life, family, friends, and rest. It is to our three daughters, Amanda, Emory, and Lucia, from whom I am learning the sweetness of reorienting oneself around the well-being of others, whom I dedicate this book.

Vienna, Sept 2024 John Van Maaren

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Abbreviations

Ancient authors and works

Cicero	
Prov. Cons.	*De provinciis consularibus*
Dead Sea Scrolls	
1QS	*Rule of the Community*
1QSb	*Rule of Benedictions*
1QM	*War Scroll*
4Q492	*War Scroll*[b]
11Q19	*Temple Scroll*[a]
CD	*Cairo Genizah copy of the Damascus Document*
D	*Damascus Document*
Dionysius of Halicarnassus	
Ant. Rom.	*Antiquitates romanae*
Eusebius of Caesarea	
Eus.	Eusebius of Caesarea
Hist. Eccl.	*Ecclesiastical History*
Hippocrates	
Coac.	*Praenotiones coacae*
Josephus	
Jos.	Josephus
Ant.	*Jewish Antiquities*
J.W.	*Jewish War*
Life	*Life*
Philo	
Decalogue	*On the Decalogue*
Dreams	*On Dreams*
Drunkenness	*On Drunkeness*
Posterity	*On the Posterity of Cain*
Spec. Laws	*On the Special Laws*
Unchangeable	*That God is Unchangeable*
Virtues	*On the Virtues*

Polybius	
Poly.	Polybius
Hist.	*Historiae*
Pseudepigrapha and Related Texts	
1 En.	*1 Enoch*
2 Bar.	*2 Baruch*
4 Bar.	*4 Baruch*
4 Ezra	*4 Ezra*
Barn.	*Barnabas*
Jub.	*Jubilees*
Let. Aris.	*Letter of Aristeas*
Odes Sol.	*Odes of Solomon*
Pss. Sol.	*Psalms of Solomon*
Sib. Or.	*Sibylline Oracles*
Wis.	*Wisdom of Solomon*
Rabbinic Literature	
Ḥul.	*Ḥullin*
Kil.	*Kilʾayim*
Mek.	*Mekilta*
Menaḥ.	*Menaḥot*
Miqw.	*Miqwaʾot*
Moʾed Qaṭ.	*Moʾed Qaṭan*
Ned.	*Nedarim*
ʾOhal.	*Ohalot*
Pesaḥ.	*Pesaḥim*
Pesiq. Rab.	*Pesiqta Rabbati*
Šeb.	*Sebiʾit*
Šabb.	*Shabbat*
Sipra	*Sifra*
Sipre	*Sifre*
Yal.	*Yalquṭ*
Yoma	*Yoma*
Strabo	
Geogr.	*Geography*
Tacitus	
Hist.	*Historiae*

Journals, major reference works, and series

AASFDHL	Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Dissertationes humanarum litterarum
AB	Anchor Bible
ABG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums

ANTJ	Arbeiten zum Neuen Testament und Judentum
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BR	*Biblical Research*
BRLJ	Brill Reference Library of Judaism
BTB	*Biblical Theological Bulletin*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZNW	Beiträge zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZAW	Beiträge zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CGTC	Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
CurBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
CSHJ	Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism
DCH	*Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. Edited by David J.A. Clines. 9 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993
DRev	*Downside Review*
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
EBib	*Études bibliques*
EBR	*Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. Edited by Hans-Josef Klauck, et al. 22 vols. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009–)
EC	*Early Christianity*
ECL	Early Christian Literature
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
EH	Europäische Hochschulschriften
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ETS	Erfurter theologische Studien
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FCNTECW	Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FSBP	Fontes et Subsidia ad Bibliam Pertinentes

GELS	*Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint.* Edited by Takamitsu Muraoka. Leuven: Peeters, 2009
GNT	Grundrisse zum Neuen Testament
HAR	*Hebrew Annual Review*
HBS	History of Biblical Studies
HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
HOS	Handbook of Oriental Studies
HThKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HThKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
HvTSt	*Hervormde teologiese studies*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
INJ	*Israeli Numismatic Journal*
JAJ	*Journal of Ancient Judaism*
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplement Series
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JFSR	*Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*
JGRChJ	*Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*
JJMJS	*Journal of the Jesus Movement in Its Jewish Setting from the First to the Seventh Century*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods Supplement Series
JSHJ	*Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KBANT	Kommentare und Beiträge zum Alten und Neuen Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NEAEHL	*The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land.* Edited by Ephraim Stern. 4 vols. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993
NETS	A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title. Edited by Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G: Wright.Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007

NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplement Series
NSKAT	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar Altes Testament
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTTSD	New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/
OGIS	*Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*. Edited by Wilhelm Dittenberger. 2 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903
OTL	Old Testament Library
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBFLA	*Studii Biblici Franciscani Liber Annus*
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBS	Stuttgart Bibelstudien
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SCH	Studies in Church History
SJ	Studia Judaica
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
STDJ	Studes on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPB	Studia Post-biblica
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
SVTQ	*St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TKNT	Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TWNT	*Theologische Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament.* Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1932–1979
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplement Series
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WW	*Word and World*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

Chapter 1

Introduction

This book makes the argument that the Gospel of Mark is an expression of Judaism – that is, that the writer's vision of ideal belief, expectation, and practice – a vision the writer expects the intended audience to share – is a form of first century Judaism *rather than something else*. As such, it aims to overturn the near-consensus that the Gospel of Mark is an expression of a "gentile" form of Christ-adherence – often understood in contrast to the Gospel of Matthew as an expression of a "Jewish" form of Christ-adherence – and so provide a new framework for approaching the Gospel of Mark.[1]

The catalyst for this study was the conversation around reading the New Testament texts "within Judaism."[2] This approach promised to de-familiarize an all-too-familiar text, first, by questioning whether the writers of the texts now contained in the New Testament assumed a Jewish/Christian binary and suspecting that later interpreters are responsible for placing the binary onto the text and, second, by drawing out the implications for interpretation when no such binary is assumed. The reality that nearly all interpreters of the Gospel of Mark have worked within a social environment that assumed Jewish/Christian difference (and that the large majority have found themselves on the Christian side), meant that this approach also had a plausible explanation for why no one had approached the New Testament texts in this way before. In other words, the approach promised new insights into a text with an otherwise saturated secondary literature.

A further impetus came from contrasting reactions to the topic. On the one hand, scholars of Ancient Judaism have regularly found the thesis self-evident, sometimes expressing surprise that such a project might be worthwhile. As a common response goes, even a cursory reading of the Gospel of Mark makes clear that the writer constantly echoes Jewish expectations, disputes, and social

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[1] I refer to the text of the Gospel of Mark by its traditional name. I refer to the unknown person who authored it as "the writer," rather than "Mark," and avoid masculine pronouns to avoid reinforcing the likelihood that a man wrote it and to acknowledge the possibility that a female wrote it. Of course, it could also be the product of multiple writers.

[2] For this approach with other New Testament texts, see, for example, Anders Runesson and Daniel M. Gurtner, *Matthew within Judaism: Israel and the Nations in the First Gospel,* ECL 27 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020); Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm, eds., *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle*, Engagements with Abrahamic Religions (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015).

settings, among other things. On the other hand, New Testament scholars, especially those who specialize in the Gospel of Mark, have often reacted to my treatment of specific Markan texts by appealing to potentially contrasting interpretations of other Markan texts or broader narrative themes. Often, they acknowledge that a given reading might be possible in isolation but suggest that it does not cohere with the broader arc of the story. What scholars immersed in other Jewish literature see as an obviously Jewish text, those immersed in Markan scholarship find plenty of reasons for why it is not. I find myself partly in between. When in conversation with the former, I often feel compelled to emphasize that there are plausible textual reasons for regarding the Gospel of Mark as a "gentile" gospel. When in conversation with the latter, I find myself uncomfortable with how a broader framework controls specific readings. My approach to bringing these two together is to re-consider the framework.

The current state of Markan research seems well primed for such a re-consideration. A sample of 90 Markan monographs published since 2000 shows that the large majority adopt some version of the Gentile Mark paradigm as an assumption, but without a critical re-evaluation.[3] In contrast, only a few of these monographs react against this "gentile" descriptor, characterizing it vaguely as a Jewish text.[4] However, a whole series of isolated articles have re-evaluated nearly every aspect of the "gentile" Gospel of Mark.[5] These show that the text allows for other readings. However, these scattered studies have not been collected and integrated into a coherent, narrative-wide, argument. These studies have also largely refrained from considering what their interpretations might suggest about the meaning and purpose of the whole text as a piece of communication. This study, then, seeks to fill this void by collecting the pieces of scattered studies and building on their arguments to create a narrative-wide argument that resituates the story in a new socio-cultural setting. I seek to bridge this divide by combining an immersion in the Jewish literature of antiquity with detailed knowledge of Markan scholarship, informed by a methodologically rigorous approach to relating texts to social groups and their characteristic ways of being.

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[3] The following chapter addresses this sample of recent Markan monographs.

[4] James G. Crossley, *The Date of Mark's Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity*, JSNTSup 266 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 208; Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 7–8, 105, 171; Marie Noonan Sabin, *Reopening the Word: Reading Mark as Theology in the Context of Early Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 7–8.

[5] These include, for example, Logan Williams, "The Stomach Purifies All Foods: Jesus' Anatomical Argument in Mark 7.18–19," *NTS* 70 (2024): 371–91; Nathanael Vette, "The Omens at Jesus's Death (Mark 15:33–39) and the Divine Abandonment of the Temple before Its Destruction in 70 CE," *JBL* 142 (2023): 657–75; Arseny Ermakov, "The Salvific Significance of the Torah in Mark 10.17–22 and 12.28–34," in *The Torah in the New Testament: Papers Delivered at the Manchester-Lausanne Seminary of June 2008*, ed. Michael Tait and Peter Oakes, LNTS 401 (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 21–31; George D. Kilpatrick, "The Gentile Mission in Mark and Mark 13:9–11," in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, ed. Dennis E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 148–58.

1.1 When does a text depict a form of Judaism?

How, then, might one best approach this question? Past monographs that characterize the Gospel of Mark as "Jewish" either emphasize only continuity with Israel's ancestral memories,[6] argue for continuity with attested contemporary Jewish practices,[7] or, somewhat paradoxically, combine the assertion with a social setting in which the persons responsible for the Gospel of Mark have also broken with Jewish institutions.[8] Here and in the following section I try to clarify more precisely how a text might be evidence for Judaism, rather than something else, and how we might be able to evaluate this.

First, a note on terminology. This study seeks to describe "the Gospel of Mark's Judaism," rather than to situate the Gospel of Mark within Judaism. I avoid the terminology "Mark within Judaism" because of ambiguity whether this phrase refers only to the writer's (and perhaps intended audiences') self-conception or also to how other Jews categorized them. While I argue that the writer understands their preferred way of practice and belief to be within Judaism, there is no direct data on whether, or to what extent, other Jews agreed. Therefore, we can only gauge outsider classification through indirect evidence. I choose to focus on the perspective presented in the Gospel of Mark and "the Gospel of Mark's Judaism" maintains this focus.

I understand a text to depict a form of Judaism when its writer (1) assumes continuity with the Jewish ancestral customs (regardless of whether others would agree) and (2) when their most privileged in-group consists of members of the Jewish ethnic group.[9] For texts that advocate Christ-adherence, this second criterion means that Jewish Christ-followers are in some way privileged in comparison to Christ-followers from the nations. It does not necessarily mean that Jewishness is a more consequential category of identification than Christ-adherence.

Before explaining the rationale for these criteria, the following examples help to clarify what types of texts would, and would not, represent forms of Judaism. On the one hand, texts that retain no significance for Jewishness would not be described as a form of Judaism. This could be configured in a number of ways.

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[6] Dean W. Chapman, *The Orphan Gospel: Mark's Perspective on Jesus*, BibSem 16 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 214; Wolfgang Roth, *Hebrew Gospel: Cracking the Code of Mark* (Oak Brook, IL: Meyer-Stone, 1988), e.g., 123; Johannes Majoros-Danowski, *Elija im Markusevangelium: Ein Buch im Kontext des Judentums*, BWANT 180 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008), 243.

[7] Crossley, *Date of Mark's Gospel*, 204–5.

[8] Hendrika Nicoline Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in Its Historical and Social Context*, NovTSup 114 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 139–42.

[9] These issues are addressed in more detail in John Van Maaren, "How Can the New Testament Writings Be within Judaism? Distinguishing Ways of Asking and Answering the Question," *ZNW* 114 (2023): 264–303, esp. 294.

First, a text could depict the Jews as replaced with another group.[10] For example, Ulrich Luz argues that the Jewish writer of the Gospel of Matthew "keinen Appel an das Volk Israel mehr macht, an Christus zu glauben."[11] For Luz, the Gospel of Matthew is "eine christliche Antwort auf Israels Nein zu Jesus."[12] On this reading, Jewish identity is replaced with identity as a Christ-follower in such a way that Jewishness no longer matters, even as adherence to Christ is considered to be in continuity with Israel's ancestral writings. Luz's reading meets criteria one but not criterion two and so would not position the Gospel of Matthew as a form of Judaism. Second, a text might combine Jews and the nations into a third, new group based on some shared criterion such as adherence to Christ so that no consequential difference remains. For example, the writer of Ephesians' statement that Jesus has "built the two into one new humanity" (Eph 2:15; translation mine) is most often understood to combine Jews and the nations into a new, third category (whether understood to be ethnic or otherwise).[13] Unlike Luz's argument that Matthew replaces Israel with Christ-followers, the writer of Ephesians (on this interpretation) creates a new category that combines Jews and non-Jews. Insofar as such an emphasis on a new humanity would make Jewishness inconsequential, this would not be a form of Judaism. Both types of interpretations emphasize adherence to Christ in a way that Jewishness no longer matters, even if they conceive of the reworked categories differently.

On the other hand, texts that retain a significance for Jewishness even as some members are not Jewish, would depict a form of Judaism. For example, if Paul understands God's covenant with Israel to persist (Rom 11:28–29), and positions Jews as privileged in relation to foreigners within his communities (Rom 3:1–2) we can talk about Paul's Judaism, at least in his self-presentation to the Roman Christ-groups. On this reading, the most privileged in-group (Jewish Christ-adherents) is Jewish, even if the more consequential category is defined by Christ-adherence.[14] In a different way, if the writer of Matthew expected foreign Christ-

[10] Kelly R. Iverson, for example, argues that the Gospel of Mark depicts this type of replacement, stating "the kingdom, which was offered to Jews first, is handed over to the Gentiles at the death of Jesus." *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark: Even the Dogs under the Table Eat the Children's Crumbs*, LNTS 339 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 182.

[11] *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, EKKNT 1 (Düsseldorf: Benziger, 2002), 71. Cf. Ulrich Luz, "Spaltung in Israel: ein Gespräch mit Matthias Konradt," in *Evangelium Ecclesiasticum: Feschrift für Christoph Kähler zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Christfried Böttrich et al. (Frankfurt: Hansisches, 2009), 285–302.

[12] *Matthäus*, 71.

[13] For the various ways of understanding this statement, see J. Albert Harrill, "Ethnic Fluidity in Ephesians," *NTS* 60 (2014): 379–402. For a recent argument against the third race interpretation, see Andrew Rillera, "*Tertium Genus* or Dyadic Unity?: Investigating Sociopolitical Salvation in Ephesians," *BR* 66 (2021): 31–51. English translation of texts now contained in the Christian Bibles are, unless noted, from the New Revised Standard Version updated edition.

[14] These general features combine in most readings of Paul within Judaism. E.g., Anders Runesson, *Judaism for Gentiles: Reading Paul beyond the Parting of the Ways Paradigm*,

followers to convert and become Jewish, as especially David Sim has argued, then the Gospel of Matthew would depict a form of Judaism, since Jewishness would be a corollary of Christ-adherence.[15] In this case, the most significant group are Christ-followers, which is a subset of Jews (including those who adhere to Christ) and the ideal vision of the writer is a form of Judaism.

A given text's alternative to Judaism could be conceived as something more specific than what we might describe as Christianity (understood as adherence to Christ as the primary membership criterion). For example, Jason Staples argues that Paul anticipates that "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:26) only when the fullness of the nations has come *into Israel* (Rom 11:25; cf. Gal 3:8).[16] According to this understanding, the ingathering of the nations into Israel is a necessary part of Jeremiah's new covenant restoration (Jer 31:31), which encompasses the southern kingdom (Judah) and northern kingdom (Israel/Ephraim), for the northern kingdom "has been mixed among the peoples" (Hos. 7:8; cf. Hos. 8:8) through intermarriage. By welcoming "those who were not my people" (members of the nations) into "my people" (Israel; Rom 9:25–26; Hos 2:23), the intermingled descendants of the northern kingdom may be restored to Israel, and all Israel saved. Yet Israel's regathering necessarily brings members of the nations into Israel, thus fulfilling Jacob's blessing to Ephraim that his seed would become the fullness of the nations (Gen 48:19; Rom 11:25). Christ-adherents from the nations and the intermingled descendants of the northern kingdom, then, are joined with the descendants of the southern kingdom – both Jesus-following and otherwise – to form a restored Israel. Accordingly, Paul and his non-Jewish addressees are, for Paul, "Israel" in his present. This can be better described as Paul's "Israelitism" rather than Paul's Judaism, since the significance of Jewishness is subsumed by the significance of Israel, now made up of Jews, descendants of the scattered northern tribes, and even some others.[17] It is significant here that

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WUNT 1/494 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 195–205; Matthew Thiessen, *Paul and the Gentile Problem* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 7–11.

[15] *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 251–54. For updated bibliography, see Matthias Konradt, "Matthew within or Outside of Judaism? From the 'Parting of the Ways' Model to a Multifaceted Approach," in *Jews and Christians: Parting Ways in the First Two Centuries CE?*, ed. Jens Schröter, Benjamin A. Edsall, and Joseph Verheyden, BZNW 253 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2021), 121–50, esp. 136n50. The argument is that Jesus's instructions to the disciples at the great commission of "teaching them (all nations) to obey all that I have commanded you (disciples)" (Matt 28:19) included even the smallest parts of the written law (Matt 5:17–20) and that this suggests foreign Christ-followers were expected to convert to Judaism.

[16] *Paul and the Resurrection of Israel: Jews, Former Gentiles, Israelites*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2023), 303–22; Jason A. Staples, "What Do the Gentiles Have to Do with 'All Israel'? A Fresh Look at Romans 11:25–27," *JBL* 130 (2011): 371–90, esp. 388. In contrast to Staples's reading of Paul, I argue that the Gospel Mark's anticipation of regathered Israel is just those purportedly descended from the twelve tribes.

[17] Joel Marcus's interpretation of the "twelve tribes of the diaspora" (Jas 1:1) in the letter

the foreigners who are brought into Israel are almost an afterthought compared to the focus on restoring the twelve tribes. This is different than interpretations that understand the Jesus community as a reconstituted or redefined Israel where the common features of Jewishness are of no continuing significance.[18]

Writers who anticipate the restoration of all Israel in the future (unlike Staples' Paul, for whom their present communities represent Israel even as the full ingathering is future), may still be described as a form of Judaism rather than a form of Israelitism when the most privileged in-group in the present is Jewish.[19] This is because future restoration of all twelve tribes was a common Jewish expectation. For example, if Revelation's vision of the New Jerusalem is inhabited by a restored twelve tribes (Rev 21:12; cf. 7:4–17), while those members of the nation who submit to the lamb are forcibly subjugated and perhaps living outside the city walls, its future vision could be described as a form of Israelitism.[20] However, in such a case, I chose to retain the descriptor "Judaism" because the vision of twelve tribe restoration is a future expectation, rather than a present reality, and the writer seems to self-identify (Rev 1:1–2) as Jewish and presents the Jews as the preferred in-group in their present context (Rev 2:9; 3:9).[21] This relates to the present study which argues that the Gospel of Mark also anticipates the kingdom of God as a restored Israel while its compositional setting remains Jewish.[22]

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of James is similar. He argues that the twelve tribes refer to a Christ-following community made up of Jewish Christians (the two tribes of Judah) and gentile Christians (the ten scattered tribes of Israel) where gentile Christians, by their response to the gospel, show themselves to be the scattered ten tribes who had lost all awareness of their Israelite identity. "'The Twelve Tribes in the Diaspora' (James 1.1)," *NTS* 60 (2014): 433–47, esp. 447.

[18] Most interpretations of the Gospel of Mark that consider the role of Israel fit into this category. For example, Richard Hays understands the writer of Mark to advocate "an Israel reconfigured by allegiance to Jesus." *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 36.

[19] I understand a writer's future expectations, especially the distinctions separating people groups, to function for the writer's present at least partly to separate insiders and outsiders and to clarify criterion for inclusion, whether based on innate characteristics, behaviors, or choices of affiliation. For further discussion, see Anders Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew: The Narrative World of the First Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 2.

[20] For the New Jerusalem as a twelve-tribe restoration, see John Van Maaren, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel out from Every Nation, Tribe, People, and Language in Rev 7.9–17," *HTR* (forthcoming). For the nations as forcibly subjugated, see Sarah Emanuel, *Humor, Resistance, and Jewish Cultural Persistence in the Book of Revelation: Roasting Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 21–25, 189–91.

[21] For the positive and literal use of "Jews" in Revelation, see David Frankfurter, "Jews or Not? Reconstructing the 'other' in Rev. 2:9 and 3:9," *HTR* 94 (2001): 403–25. For the writer's probably pseudonymous self-presentation as Jewish, see Emanuel, *Humor, Resistance, and Jewish Cultural Persistence*, 21.

[22] The only real alternative inner-Israelite category of identification in the first century is Samaritan and nothing in the narrative suggests such an identity.

Finally, some texts could also be part of the process of negotiating Judaism in a way that places them in a liminal space. For example, Matthias Konradt's reading of the Gospel of Matthew concludes that, although the writer "does not abrogate Israel's special significance as God's chosen people," the writer still "transfers to the church central aspects that mark Israel as God's people in Israel's self-understanding."[23] On such a reading, the writer and/or recipients may not easily be classified either as a form of Judaism or as something else and they may have been unsure as well. For my project, this highlights the fact that describing the Gospel of Mark's Judaism requires a positive argument that it is a form of Judaism, and not simply a negative argument that it is not a form of Christianity. It is also possible that the writer's ideal vision of practice and belief is some place in the ambiguity of the margins.

1.2 Group categories and their boundaries in the Gospel of Mark

I use the English word "Judaism" to refer to the ways of thinking and behaving that are typically associated with those who call themselves Jews (or its equivalent in any other language). In antiquity, the category "Jews" (יהודים, Ἰουδαῖοι, Iudaei) was juxtaposed with other categories like Egyptians, Romans, Syrians, etc.[24] Each of these can appropriately be conceptualized by what we today call an ethnicity since each commonly exhibited the most common features associated with ethnicity. These common characteristics are (1) a myth of common ancestry, (2) shared memories of a common past, (3) elements of common culture that may include religion, customs, and language, (4) a link with a common homeland, and (5) a shared sense of solidarity.[25] These characteristics do not define the ethnicity, since no one feature – even claims to common descent – is shared by every co-ethnic and no single feature is sufficient for describing an individual as a member of an ethnicity in the absence of all others.[26] Rather, these features function as a

[23] "Matthew within or Outside of Judaism?" 143. Cf. Matthias Konradt, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 2nd ed., NTD 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023), 17–20.

[24] E.g., "four other nations (ἔθνη) are mixed up with these: Judaeans, Idumaeans, Gazaeans, and Azotians." Strabo, *Geogr.* 16.2.2 (Jones, LCL). "The war of the Jews against the Romans – the greatest […] that ever broke out between cities or nations (ἐθνῶν)." Josephus, *J. W.* 1.1 (Thackeray, LCL); "not only Jews, but many also of other nations (ἐθνῶν) were grieved." 2 Macc 4:35 (NRSV). "He handed them over as slaves to Jews and Syrians, themselves peoples (*nationibus*) born to be slaves." Cicero, *Prov. Cons.* 10.3 (Gardener, LCL).

[25] These are outlined by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, "Introduction," in *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, Oxford Readers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1–14, esp. 6–7. They include a common proper name in the list of characteristics. I separate this since, as the category of ascription, it is the closest thing to a defining characteristic.

[26] For a discussion of the necessity of multiple characteristics and the contingency of any one characteristic, see Van Maaren, "How Can the New Testament Writings Be within Judaism?" 272–73.

cluster to create a "family resemblance" between persons of the same ethnicity.[27] Individual ethnicity is not primarily defined by sharing this family resemblance, but rather by ascription to a common proper name (e.g., "Jew").[28] Thus, a person's ethnicity is first a matter of what that person understands themself to be (one's self-identification) and further how others (both insiders and outsiders) categorize the same person, although these do not necessarily agree.[29]

How then do we evaluate the unknown writer's and the earliest audiences' self-identification? When the evidence we have are texts produced by unknown people, like the Gospel of Mark, and not the direct interactions with living persons studied in ethnographies, the best evidence we have is often the way that the text categorizes people into groups and arranges these groups in relation to one another. That is, in the absence of direct statements about the ethnicity of the writer and or intended audience, the way that the writer groups people into categories, defines these categories (whether ethic or otherwise), and positions them in relation to one another provides the best estimate of the most privileged and most consequential categories of identification. My approach is that if the most privileged in-group is Jewish the text is best understood to depict a form of Judaism. This most privileged in-group can be only part of the larger Jewish ethnic group, or the ethnic group in its entirety. In addition, this most privileged in-group can be only part of a larger and more consequential grouping based on Christ-adherence (whether understood ethnically or otherwise), or all of it. What is most significant is that for the writer Jewishness remains a consequential (sub)category among or encompassing Christ-followers in some way.[30]

For narratives about the past like the Gospel of Mark, we can distinguish the group categories in the narrative setting, the compositional setting, and the future expectations. First, the categorization of peoples in the narrative setting primarily relates to the past time and only reflects the writer's ideal vision insofar

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[27] This represents a polythetic, rather than monothetic, definition of ethnicity.

[28] This is based on Fredrik Barth's famous observation that members of one ethnic group do not all share the same culture. "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), 9–38, esp. 13.

[29] Accordingly, ethnicity can be contested. Esp. Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997), 197–223. In most places in antiquity, it is fair to assume in the absence of comprehensive data, that the persons of most of these ethnicities also formed recognizable ethnic groups. For the distinction between an ethnicity and an ethnic group, see Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 7–27.

[30] For an outline of a theoretical model of how group boundaries form, change, and persist, including how texts may be used in this process, see John Van Maaren, "Mapping Jewishness in Antiquity: New Contributions from the Social Sciences," *JAJ* 9 (2018): 421–54. Also outlined in John Van Maaren, *The Boundaries of Jewishness in the Southern Levant 200 BCE–135 CE: Power, Strategies, and Ethnic Configurations*, SJ 118 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2022), 1–42.

as specific characters or groups might function paradigmatically for the writer's present. At the narrative setting of the Gospel of Mark, all the primary non-ethnic groups, including the primary in-group (disciples), the opposition (Pharisees, scribes, chief priests, elders, Herodians, and Sadducees), and – as I will argue in chapter three – the audience (crowds and multitudes), are positioned within the boundaries of Jewishness. However, this does not directly reflect the writer's present reality or ideal in-group, but only the setting for their story. Similarly, the fact that the three uses of τὰ ἔθνη ("the nations;" 10:33, 42; 11:17) at the narrative level designate alterity simply reflects the narrative setting and does not directly indicate that the writer also sees the other (non-Jewish) nations as foreigners in their present situation.[31] Still, when Jesus contrasts typical leadership practices among "the nations" (τῶν ἐθνῶν) with expected practice among his disciples ("it is not this way among you;" 10:42–43), the dichotomy may reflect the writer's ideal vision of the present insofar as ideal leadership behaviors of the disciples are paradigmatic for the writer's present. If so, the writer's primary in-group positions itself over-and-against the other nations. Still, it does not necessarily imply that the writer's preferred alternative to the nations is specifically Jewish, since it may be some other third identity such as Christ-adherence. However, the likelihood that the writer understands the preferred in-group (the one juxtaposed with the nations in, for example, 10:42–43) as specifically Jewish in their own present situation is strengthened by the encounter between the unnamed Greek Syrophoenician woman and Jesus, since she seems to function paradigmatically for the nations. She is the only character whom the writer explicitly identifies with ethnic categories other than Jewish ("Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician;" 7:26 [translation mine]) and hers is the only request that Jesus initially refuses ("it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs;" 7:27). Furthermore, she is able to have her request granted only after accepting Jesus's demeaning depiction of her and her daughter as dogs in comparison to Jews (or perhaps Israel) as children ("even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs;" 7:28). Insofar as this encounter is paradigmatic for the writer's present (even if it might hint at the future inclusion of the nations) it depicts the children as the primary in-group and the nations as, at best, subordinate. I discuss this scene in more detail in chapter four.

At a few points, the writer directly addresses the intended audience (e.g., "let the reader understand;" 13:14). This level of communication, unlike the narrative setting, directly reflects the writer's present reality. Most significantly for Markan scholarship, the writer pauses to provide the intended audience with background information about the washing practices of "the Pharisees, and all the Jews (οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι)" (7:3). This both seems to depict the Jews as the other, and to address an audience unfamiliar with Jewish customs, suggesting, according to many interpreters, a primarily non-Jewish audience unfamiliar with Jewish cus-

[31] τὰ ἔθνη also occurs in 13:8[2x], 10 in relation to the writer's future expectations, where it also designates alterity (discussed in chapter 4).

toms.[32] This is a possible implication of this parenthetical comment. However, two alterative understandings are also made possible by the observation that universal qualifiers like "all" most often carry implicit qualifiers that are assumed by the writer and intended audience, and so are not always universal.[33] Accordingly, the writer's reference to "all the Jews" could refer to all the Jews in Judea (the scribes and Pharisees had come from Jerusalem to Galilee, a distinction made elsewhere in the narrative; Mark 14:70).[34] In addition, if Mark is written to Jews in the diaspora – say, Rome – it could provide a generalized description of common Jewish handwashing practices in and around Roman Judea for diaspora Jews who do not share the same customs.[35] In appendix 1, I will return to reconsider the implications of these parenthetical comments for the communicative context of the Gospel of Mark.

Finally, a writer's future expectations may provide a revealing glimpse into their ideal arrangement of persons in their present and hence a sense of their preferred in-group – for our purposes whether it is distinctly Jewish. For apocalyptic texts that anticipate an impending divine judgment, such as the Gospel of Mark (esp. 13:1–37),[36] the distinction between those who are judged and those who are delivered – especially insofar as it overturns the existing power relations – provides a likely window into how the writer would prefer for peoples to be categorized and related to one another in the present. Further, the criteria that the writer uses to distinguish these two consequential groupings shows how they are related. In the fifth chapter, I argue that the writer's expectation of the final arrival of the kingdom of God – never defined but seemingly assuming some shared understanding – when the Son of Man comes in power (e.g., 13:26) is of a restored national Israel. This expectation – shared by many first-century Jews – and the vanishingly little interest in the inclusion of the nations, provides the strongest positive argument that the Gospel of Mark's ideal vision of behavior and belief is a form of Judaism. This is the case even if its expectation is broader than the Jews as it seems to anticipate the regathering of all Israel, since, as we have noted, the restoration of all Israel was a common first-century Jewish expectation.

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[32] Recently, Luca Marulli, *La reconfiguration épistémique du lecteur de Marc*, WUNT 2/569 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 8.

[33] Cf. Mark D. Nanos's argument that "all Israel" in Paul's letter to the Romans refers to the Jews in Rome. *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 239–88.

[34] This is argued, for example, by Daniel Haase, *Jesu Weg zu den Heiden: das geographische Konzept des Markusevangeliums*, ABG 63 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2019), 85.

[35] This is noted by Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion: Jesus' Davidic Suffering*, SNTSMS 142 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 28.

[36] E.g., Elizabeth E. Shively, *Apocalyptic Imagination in the Gospel of Mark: The Literary and Theological Role of Mark 3:22–30*, BZNW 189 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 21–22, 153–71; Brian K. Gamel, *Mark 15:39 as a Markan Theology of Revelation: The Centurion's Confession as Apocalyptic Unveiling*, LNTS 574 (London: T&T Clark, 2017), 139–42.

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