The *Shema* in John’s Gospel Against its Backgrounds in Second Temple Judaism

by

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Graduate Program in Religion
Duke University

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Laura S. Lieber

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Graduate Program in
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

In John’s Gospel, Jesus does not cite the Shema as the greatest commandment in the Law as he does in the Synoptic Gospels (“Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” [Deut 6:4-5]; only Deut 6:5 appears in Matthew and Luke). This dissertation, however, argues that, rather than quoting the Shema, John incorporates it into his Christological portrait of Jesus’ unity with the Father and of the disciples’ unity with the Father, the Son, and one another.

This study employs historical-critical methodology and literary analysis to provide an exegetical interpretation of the key passages relevant to the Shema in John (John 5:1-47; 8:31-59; 10:1-42; 13:34; 14, 15, 17). After examining the Shema in its Deuteronomistic context and throughout the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Jewish literature, the study considers how John’s understanding of the divine unity has been shaped by some of these writings. Just as some of the OT prophets and authors such as Philo and Josephus interpret the Shema within their historical settings, John, in turn, interprets the divine unity within the socio-historical realities of his community.
According to John, Jesus does not violate the unity of God as it is proclaimed in the *Shema*. Rather, Jesus resides within that unity (10:30); he is therefore uniquely able to speak the words of God and perform the works of God. John depicts the unity of the Father, Jesus, and the disciples as the fulfillment of OT prophecies of restoration. Zechariah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel envision Israel as one people regathered in the Land, worshiping the one God of Israel (11:52; 17:11, 21-23). John filters this eschatological understanding of the *Shema* through a Christological lens: disciples of Jesus are the one flock gathered to the one Shepherd and testifying to Jesus’ unity with the Father (10:16). The Farewell Discourse material confirms this thesis; Jesus models obedience to the *Shema* and also commands that he receive the love normally reserved for YHWH (14:15, 21, 23, 24). He issues his own commandment of love (13:34; 15:12), which has far-ranging implications for John’s view of the Mosaic Law.

This reading of the *Shema* coheres with the Martyn-Brown hypothesis that some Jewish leaders during the late first century excluded believers in Jesus from the synagogue. The author of the Fourth Gospel reverses the situation, composing a narrative of empowerment for his embattled community. His rendering of the *Shema* provides legitimation for the Christological claims of the
Johannine community, while at the same time excluding unbelieving Jews from God’s eschatological people. John’s high Christology, intertwined with his expulsion of unbelieving Jews from Israel’s covenantal life and eschatological hopes, constitutes a form of theological anti-Judaism which defies mitigation. The Johannine crucifixion and Prologue bear this out: “the Jews” reject Jesus’ unity with the Father and thereby cut themselves off from the people of God (19:15; 1:11).

John’s language has all-too-often been used in a pernicious manner against Jewish people in the post-biblical era. One of the aims of this study is to properly situate John’s reinterpretation of the Shema in its social and historical setting and thereby to apprehend fully its anti-Jewish potential. In so doing, it sheds fresh light on the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity and creates new opportunities for dialogue and reconciliation.
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Chapter One: Introduction

The Shema is the centerpiece of Jewish prayer, a call to listen to and obey God alone, a summons to loyalty and service that demands the fullest response of the whole person. Abraham Joshua Heschel has written:

Nothing in Jewish life is more hallowed than the saying of the Shema: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.” All over the world “the people acclaim His Oneness evening and morning, twice every day, and with tender affection recite the Shema”... The voice that calls: “Hear, He is One,” is recalled, revived. It is the climax of devotion at the close of the Day of Atonement. It is the last word to come from the lips of the dying Jew and from the lips of those who are present at that moment.¹

The proclamation of the divine unity along with the injunction to love God with all one’s heart, soul, and strength (Deut 6:4-5), captures the essence of what it means to be Jewish, to be called into a unique covenant with the one God, and as one people, to take seriously the responsibilities of that relationship.

Although the biblical context does not deny the existence of other gods, but rather affirms Israel’s loyalty to her God alone, in subsequent tradition the Shema would be construed in new ways: as the watchword of monotheism, as a

call to martyrdom, and as “the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven”: the recognition of God’s kingship. Throughout its history, the Shema has evolved and taken on new meanings as Jews have found themselves in new political and social settings, living among different nations and their gods. In the face of the challenges posed by these settings, the Shema did not only take on new theological nuances, but also acquired polemical and social functions. The Shema was used to define and sharpen Jewish identities in social settings that challenged God’s oneness and the uniqueness of Israel’s relationship with God. One such threat, certainly the most enduring one, came from Christianity.

The Shema is a significant text not only in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature, but also in the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, and Luke cite the Shema as the epitome of Jesus’ teaching, the Great Commandment, and Paul and other writers also allude to it. The absence of the Great Commandment in John is not surprising, as the Fourth Gospel tends to go its own way in its distinctive narrative of Jesus’ life, ministry, death, and resurrection. And yet, the

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2 E.g. m. Ber 2:2, 5.
present study will argue that the Shema is more central to the Christology and historical setting of John’s Gospel than to any other New Testament writing, that John makes more of the Shema than do the Synoptic authors who cite it.

In a 1947 study, C. K. Barrett makes the intriguing suggestion that John takes the theme of God’s oneness, along with the command to love God and neighbor, and develops them into the movement at the very heart of the Fourth Gospel, weaving these themes throughout the narrative.\(^5\) Joel Marcus takes note of Barrett’s article and observes that in both Mark and John, tensions between Jesus and Jewish authorities seem to reflect late first-century conflicts in which Christians are accused of blasphemy for their claims about Jesus.\(^6\) The present study combines the observations of both Marcus and Barrett in an effort to demonstrate that (1) themes of the Shema are presented in a novel way in John’s Gospel, and (2) these Johannine innovations have resulted from a bitter conflict between believers in Jesus in the late first century and non-Christian Jews, a conflict over Jesus’ identity that is expressed through a novel interpretation of one of the most sacred Jewish texts. John’s use of the Shema provides a lens

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through which the reader is able to witness the painful process of self-definition and separation of two groups: the Johannine community and the larger community of Jews to which its members once belonged.

This study identifies prominent themes found in the Shema (Deut 6:4-9) and tracks them in John’s Gospel. Chapter Two discusses the Shema in its Deuteronomic context and identifies its key motifs of hearing, oneness, love for God, and life. It also follows these themes throughout Deuteronomy and identifies secondary motifs that often accompany them, e.g. keeping the commandments, blessings and curses, and witness to the nations. These themes frequently cluster together as features of the Deuteronomic covenant.

Chapter Three lays out a methodology by which allusions to the Shema are identified and observes where these allusions crop up in the Hebrew Bible outside of Deuteronomy. Because the Shema is at the heart of the covenant, allusions to it tend to be found in passages that depict a new or renewed covenant, and in descriptions of faithful leaders who keep the commandments and encourage Israel to do so. In Wisdom literature, both canonical and non-canonical, the sages draw upon the Shema to show that the Torah is the source of wisdom. The Shema also plays a key role in prophetic oracles of eschatological
restoration, where the one God promises to re-gather Israel in the Land and
create one, unified people. Whenever possible, the social and historical context is
considered in the interpretation of each text.

Chapter Four explores the use of the *Shema* in the Apocrypha,
Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, and Josephus. As with the Hebrew
prophets, some writers blame the Exile on Israel’s disobedience and call for a
return to the covenant using the language and motifs of the *Shema*. Some
describe the ritual practices of placing words of the Law upon their hands and
foreheads and upon their doorposts and gates in accordance with Deut 6:6-9. The
sectarian writings at Qumran describe an exclusive covenant with God in terms
of the *Shema* and use its language to depict personal piety. Other writers, in
conversation with the Greco-Roman culture of diaspora Jewish communities, use
the *Shema* to bridge the gap between Jewish thought and Greek philosophy.

The *Shema* in the New Testament is the topic of Chapter Five. The
Synoptic Gospels each contain a version of the Great Commandment, along with
other echoes of the *Shema*. Paul reworks the *Shema* with a remarkable
Christological twist in 1 Cor 8:4-6. His case for the unity of Jew and Gentile in
Christ, apart from the Law, has the *Shema* as its cornerstone. Like the oracles of
restoration in the Hebrew Bible, Paul draws upon an eschatological interpretation of the *Shema* to demonstrate that the unity of God and Christ must result in a unity among believers.

In Chapter Six, the themes of the *Shema* are traced John’s Gospel, in scenes that involve conflict between Jesus and Jewish authorities, where Jesus is charged with making himself equal to God (John 5, 8, and 10). Jesus’ unity with the Father is discussed in relation to the *Shema*. Intertextual echoes of OT prophecies of eschatological restoration demonstrate that for John, Jesus is the messianic ruler of the new age and his disciples are the unified people of God. John’s rhetoric is considered in relation to the historical situation outlined by J. Louis Martyn, according to which Jewish Christians were excommunicated from the Jewish community because of their belief that Jesus is the Messiah.7

Chapter Seven outlines John’s use of the *Shema* in the Farewell Discourse. In this material, Jesus is portrayed in the same terms as YHWH in Deuteronomy: he chooses a people, loves them, gives commandments, and is the source of life. Resonances with prophecies of eschatological restoration are strong in John 17,

where the author emphasizes unity between Father, Son, and disciples as a witness to the world. Finally, the new commandment of John 13:34 is discussed as a reinterpretation of the *Shema* and the Law of Moses for the eschatological age.

Chapter Eight examines the Johannine crucifixion scene and the Prologue in light of the *Shema*. Because the reading proposed here involves a rhetorical strategy that is highly inflammatory and potentially dangerous in terms of its treatment of “the Jews,” it will be necessary to broach the topic of anti-Judaism in John. Various solutions to John’s anti-Jewish passages are surveyed, including awareness of the social and historical context, rhetorical features of ancient polemic, and the use of prophetic critique in intra-Jewish conflict. Ultimately, the text’s high Christology leads to a theological anti-Judaism that denies the validity of Judaism apart from Christ. The goal in this section is to maintain the integrity of the text while also advocating that John’s contentious rhetoric be understood as descriptive of a particular historical and cultural setting, rather than prescriptive for the Church.
Chapter Two: The *Shema* in Deuteronomy

**Introduction**

The primary focus of this chapter is what the *Shema* means and how it functions within the book of Deuteronomy, with particular attention paid to elements shared by both Deuteronomy and the Fourth Gospel. The broad context of Deut 6:4-9 has two exegetically significant points of contact with John’s Gospel. First, the text is composed of older material that is reworked by an editor (or editors) to present the material as a witness for a new generation. The core of Deuteronomy is generally dated to the seventh century BCE for a variety of reasons, including: (1) its emphasis on the centralization of the cult and the discovery of a book of law in the Temple during the reign of Josiah (622 BCE); (2) rhetoric and style; and (3) affinities with the VTE (Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon) in which a sovereign imposes a loyalty oath on his vassal.¹ For these reasons, Moshe Weinfeld writes: “Although the book of Deuteronomy is addressed to the generation entering the land of Canaan, the actual audience of the book belongs

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to the Josianic period.”

According to Martyn, the Fourth Evangelist reworks older material so that his Gospel might speak to a new audience facing its own, unique set of circumstances in the late first century. Both Deuteronomy and the Fourth Gospel address people whose identity is in transition, in order to articulate what is enduring in their experience and vital to their continuing existence. Both books confront their contemporary audiences, along with future generations, with the question of whether or not they will participate as part of the people of God. Both books maintain that heeding the message contained within is a matter of life and death.

A second way in which the broader context of Deuteronomy is analogous to the Gospel of John is in its use of the literary convention of the farewell speech. The bulk of Deuteronomy consists of Moses’ farewell address to Israel as the nation prepares to enter the Land just before Moses’ death. In the Gospel of John, chapters 13-17 depict Jesus’ farewell address to his disciples prior to his return to

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his heavenly Father. This formal similarity suggests that the reader might expect to find some formal and conceptual affinities between the two works.

Additionally, the significance of the figure of Moses throughout the Fourth Gospel heightens the potential significance of the *Shema* in John.¹

A quick comparison of the vocabulary of Deut 6:4-5 LXX with portions of the Fourth Gospel yields the following results:

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Table 1. Some Vocabulary of the Shema in John’s Gospel

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Deut 6:4-5 LXX</th>
<th>Gospel of John</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>άκουε Ἰσραὴλ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἰς ἐστιν</strong> (Deut 6:4).</td>
<td>Αμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ τὸν λόγον μου <strong>ἀκούων</strong> καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντί με ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται, ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωήν (John 5:24; cf. 5:25, 28, 37; 6:45; 7:40; 8:43; 8:47; 10:3, 8, 16; 14:24; 18:37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καὶ ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεὸν σου εξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ εξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου καὶ εξ ὅλης τῆς δυνάμεως σου (Deut 6:5).</td>
<td>ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἑν ἐσμεν (John 10:30; cf. 17:11, 21, 22).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is not an exhaustive list of verbal correspondences between Deut 6:4-9 and the Fourth Gospel, but it is introduced at this point to highlight key words and concepts common to both texts: hearing, oneness, and love for God; later, a fourth theme, life, will be added. Chapters Six and Seven will take up these themes of the Shema in an exegetical analysis of John’s Gospel.

Moses’ First Speech (Deut 1-4:43)

Deuteronomy is framed as a series of three speeches which comprise Moses’ farewell address (Deut 1:3-4:40; 4:44-28:68; 28:69-30:20). In the first speech, Moses recounts the events of the wilderness wanderings leading up to the entrance into and occupation of the Land. Four important themes emerge in this oration: (1) hearing or obedience; (2) the uniqueness of YHWH, (3) love; and (4) life. All four themes are connected to the injunction to keep the commandments. These key themes, laid out in the first speech, resurface in the second and third speeches and are woven throughout Deuteronomy. These

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6 The spelling YHWH will be used to represent the Tetragrammaton, usually translated “LORD” in English, to distinguish the name of Israel’s God from the more general terms “gods” or “God,” אלהים in Hebrew.
motifs form a kind of covenantal cluster that represents the ideal relationship between God and Israel. These themes will converge with particular clarity and force in the *Shema*.

The first speech begins with a summary of the events that took place between Horeb and the plains of Moab; the historical experience of the Israelites is the basis for their obligation to serve YHWH (e.g. 4:1, 20, 37-40). This account corresponds to the historical prologue of VTE treaties, which recount the past benefactions of a king to his subjects, often including deliverance from enemies. These acts obligated the vassals to the suzerain. Since the discovery of the VTE, there has been a growing scholarly consensus that the Deuteronomic covenant is patterned on ancient loyalty oaths of vassals to their suzerains. These treaties, which spanned two millennia and multiple cultures, contain numerous similarities to the Deuteronomic covenant, such as the command for exclusive loyalty to the suzerain, the command to love the suzerain, the requirement to keep the treaty stipulations and to teach them to one’s children, the invocation of heaven and earth as witnesses, and the blessings and curses for compliance and

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noncompliance with the terms of the treaty. In Moses’ first speech, the deliverance from Egypt serves as a historical prologue, binding the people into the exclusive service of YHWH.

**Hearing or obedience**

Deuteronomy 4 begins with Moses exhorting the people to hear YHWH’s teaching: “And now, Israel, hear the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to do in order that you might live; and go in and possess the land that YHWH, the God of your ancestors is giving to you” (Deut 4:1; translation and emphasis mine; cf. 4:10, 12, 30, 33, 36). Although the words appear here in reverse order from Deut 6:4, the imperative יִשְׂרָאֵל שָׁמַע anticipates the solemn call of 6:4. The command confronts the people with divine revelation, with an obligation to hear and obey YHWH’s voice, which is concretized in Israel’s life in the statutes and ordinances of the covenant.

**The Uniqueness of YHWH**

YHWH’s uniqueness is demonstrated here in that YHWH alone rescued the nation from Egypt with signs and wonders and gave them his statues and

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8 All citations of the OT, OT Apocrypha, and NT will be from the NRSV except where noted. For the implicit link between hearing and obeying, see BDB 8085.
ordinances (4:32-40). These unique events point to a unique God: “To you it was shown so that you would acknowledge that YHWH is God; there is no other besides him” (4:35). The text underscores this point: “there is no other” (4:39), emphasizing YHWH’s singular role in Israel’s life. Weinfeld maintains that the exclusivity of Deut 4:35 and 39 “corresponds ideologically to the Shema proclamation in Deut 6:4.”

If YHWH was to be Israel’s only God, then it followed that Israel would be YHWH’s unique people. Israel was to be a singular people, bound to YHWH by YHWH’s nearness (4:7) and by the privilege of being the sole recipients of YHWH’s just teaching, the Torah (4:8). YHWH’s uniqueness was inextricably linked to Israel’s uniqueness as YHWH’s people; the idea that the divine unity creates a unity among God’s people is central to prophetic oracles of restoration and will be taken up in John’s Gospel as well. In Deuteronomy the people, in order to maintain the covenantal relationship, are required to hear and obey YHWH’s commandments (4:5-8).

The consequence of idol worship will be exile (4:25-28; cf. 30:17-18), which will endanger Israel’s existence as a people. This section ends with the message

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9 Weinfeld, Deut 1-11, 229.
that YHWH will take the people back if they return to him (4:29-31). The two-
level drama of Deuteronomy is thinly disguised here; an audience that has
already experienced exile is reminded of the hope of restoration if they “hear”
and return to YHWH.  

Love

YHWH’s love for Israel and Israel’s ancestors is put forth as the basis for
Israel’s election: “And because he loved your ancestors, he chose their
descendants after them. He brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by
his great power” (Deut 4:37; cf. 5:10; 7:7-8; 10:15; 23:5). As mentioned earlier, the
recolleciton of benefits bestowed on the people recalls the historical prologue
section of Hittite treaties, which recount the benevolent acts the suzerain has
performed on behalf of his vassal. Deut 4:37 serves to ground the command to
love YHWH (6:5) in YHWH’s prior love for Israel: the deliverance from Egypt,
along with the giving of the Law, is put forth as evidence of this love.  

In ancient Near Eastern suzerainty treaties, the benefits of an overlord
come with a cost: a series of stipulations which govern the lives of the vassals.

10 Weinfeld, Deuteronomy 1-11, 216.
The promise of protection and other benefits is accompanied by threats of
destruction should the vassal disobey the covenant stipulations. In
Deuteronomy, YHWH’s stipulations come with curses for disobedience,
although the threat is mitigated should Israel have a change of heart and return
to YHWH: “From there you will seek YHWH your God, and you will find him if
you search for him with all your heart and soul” (Deut 4:29; emphasis added). Just
as the command to hear in Deut 4:1 anticipates Deut 6:4, so also the phrase “with
all your heart and soul” attunes the hearer to the commitment of an Israelite’s
whole self to YHWH in 6:5.

**Life**

Hearing and obeying the commandments leads to life: “And now, Israel,
*hear* the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to do *in order that you
*might live*” (4:1 emphasis added; cf. 4:4; 6:24; 8:1). On the other hand, neglecting
the covenant, whether by worshiping idols or disregarding the commandments,
brings death and destruction: “For YHWH your God is a devouring fire, a
jealous God” (4:26; cf. 4:3, 24). The choice of life or death is presented in stark
terms; life is closely connected with keeping the commandments, while idolatry
is linked to death. This theme completes the pattern of hearing/oneness/love/life evinced in Deuteronomy.

**Moses’ Second Speech (Deut 4:44-28:68)**

Moses’ second speech repeats and amplifies the themes introduced in the first. These motifs are especially concentrated in the Decalogue (Deut 5:1-21) and in the *Shema* (Deut 6:4-9; cf. 11:13-21). The close relationship between the Decalogue (Deut 5:1-21) and the *Shema* has been widely recognized. The two passages occur close to one another within the book of Deuteronomy and both came to function as Israelite creeds containing a declaration of the unity of God. According to the Mishnah, the Decalogue and the *Shema* were read together daily in the Temple (*m. Tamid* 5:1; cf. *b. Ber* 12a). The Nash Papyrus, dating to the first or second century BCE, contains a Hebrew text of the Decalogue followed by the

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13 Paul Foster has recently argued that this statement is a retrojection of later practice into a Second Temple setting in “Why Did Matthew Get the *Shema* Wrong? A Study of Matthew 22:37,” *JBL* 122 (2003): 326. Some of the prayers mentioned in the Mishnah, however, do not belong to the later rabbinic period, i.e. the Decalogue and the benediction on the outgoing course of priests. See also Kimelman, 13, n. 13; Joel Marcus, *Mark 8-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27A; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009), 837; Reif, 118, n. 30.
first verse of the Shema. The fact that these two portions of scripture are found upon a single sheet rather than a scroll makes it likely that the papyrus was used for liturgical or didactic purposes. Moreover, tefillin and mezuzot found at Qumran include the Decalogue along with the first two paragraphs of the Shema. The four themes in both the Decalogue and the Shema will be compared below in order to draw out the literary and theological affinities of both passages. The use of these motifs in the Decalogue, particularly in relation to the first and second commandments, will help to interpret the meaning of Deut 6:4-5.

The Four Themes in the Decalogue (Deut 5:1-21)

Hearing

The prologue to the Decalogue begins with שמע ישראל, a summons to hear the divine revelation and obey: “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and ordinances that I am speaking in your ears today; learn them and keep them that you may do
them” (Deut 5:1; translation mine; cf. 4:1). The prefatory שָׁמַע אֵלֶּה links the Decalogue verbally and conceptually with Deut 6:4-9; both passages call the people to attention, to hear and obey the command of YHWH mediated through Moses. Deut 5 then reaffirms the covenant with the new generation on the plains of Moab: “Not with our ancestors did YHWH make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today” (Deut 5:3). This first-person gloss attempts to solve the problem created by the death of the Exodus generation in the wilderness; in order to make the Sinaitic covenant binding for the present generation, it is denied to the old generation (cf. 11:2, 7). This two-level literary device, which Weinfeld calls a “blurring of generations,” is part of a solution to the problem of the continuing validity of the covenant. This phenomenon parallels Martyn’s two-level drama in John, where there is a collapsing of time between the generation that witnessed Jesus in the flesh and those in the late first century who did not, but saw themselves as inheritors of the covenant promises. For John, however, the covenant is denied – not to the previous generation, but to anyone past or present who would deny that Jesus is the Messiah.

17 Weinfeld, 237-38.
18 Ibid., 238.
The other part of the solution to the problem of the continuing validity of the covenant is that thereafter the Sinai theophany was not understood as a one-time event, but was actualized annually during festival assemblies when the Decalogue was read and the people renewed the covenant by swearing allegiance to YHWH.  

The Uniqueness of YHWH

The first commandment states, “I am YHWH your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me” (Deut 5:6-7). Deut 5:6a is a self-presentation formula common to the openings of royal inscriptions in the ancient Near East, and as such, constitutes a motive clause for the injunction against worshiping other gods in 5:7 and as an

19 Weinfeld, 257-60, 266. In rabbinic thought, each generation receives the revelation afresh and recommits itself to God’s covenant (b. Shab 146a). In contemporary Judaism, this idea is found in the Torah service: “Taking out the Torah becomes a moment of affirming Israel’s most fundamental creed, as if we are standing before our sovereign, God, and affirming our loyalty,” Mahzor Lev Shalem for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 2010), 98. In addition, there is a tradition that requires worshipers to stand during the reading of the Torah portion in which the Ten Commandments are recited as a reenactment of the events at Sinai (based on Ex 20:18; cf. b. Meg 21a).

20 There is some question as to where the first commandment ends and the second begins (Weinfeld, 243-45; Tigay, 63, 342). Along with Philo (Decal. 50-51), Josephus (A.J. 3.91-92), and some of the Church Fathers, this study will count Deut 5:6-7, on the unity of God, as the first commandment, and the prohibition against idol worship (Deut 5:8-10) as the second. Deut 5:6-7 is a unit that concisely expresses the unity of God and demands exclusive worship of YHWH.
introduction to the Decalogue as a whole. The formula, “I am YHWH your God,” also appears in Deut 5:9, Lev 19:4, and Ps 81:9-11, where it is linked to prohibitions against idolatry. This expression, along with the identification of YHWH as the one who brought Israel out of Egypt, is the basis for recognizing the sovereignty of YHWH alone and for prohibiting the worship of other gods (cf. Deut 6:12-15; Judg 6:8-10; Hos 13:4).

The command against worshipping foreign gods in Deut 5:7 is not unique to this passage (cf. Ex 20:3; 22:20; 23:13, 23-24; 34:14; Deut 4:23; Ps 81:10). It stands out prominently here, however, in its immediate connection to the divine self-proclamation and in its position at the head of the Ten Commandments. It is made concrete in the second commandment, which prohibits the making and worship of idols (5:8-10) and it foreshadows Deut 6:4-5. The chief concern does not seem to be a kind of theoretical monotheism which insists that only one God exists. Rather, the point emphasized here and throughout Deuteronomy is the uniqueness of YHWH for Israel: only YHWH has acted on behalf of Israel and only YHWH, therefore, has a claim on Israel.

21 Weinfeld, 285-86.
There is pervasive sense of foreboding throughout Deuteronomy, however, generated by the knowledge that apostasy has already occurred and will occur again (Deut 4:25-31; 7:4; 8:19; 11:16, 28, 13:3, 7, 14; 17:3; 18:20; 28:14, 36, 64; 29:25; cf. 6:14; 7:16). These passages do not merely call for absolute loyalty to Israel’s God; they also serve as an explanation for the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile.

Love

The second commandment characterizes YHWH as a god who is jealous of Israel’s affections and, at the same time, as one who is ever ready to show kindness and mercy to those who love him (Deut 5:8-10; cf. Deut 6:5; 7:9; Ex 20:6; 34:6-7). YHWH’s demand for Israel’s love (“showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments” 5:10; cf. 6:5), is grounded in YHWH’s prior love for Israel: “[Y]et YHWH set his heart in love on your ancestors alone and chose you, their descendants after them, out of all the peoples, as it is today” (Deut 10:15; cf. 4:37; 23:6). There is thus an explicit link between the first commandment, the prohibition against the worship of foreign gods, and the second commandment, the kind of exclusive loyalty which YHWH’s acts on Israel’s behalf should elicit. Chapter Six will show that
Jesus’ allusion to Deut 5:10 (John 14:15, 21) is an important piece of evidence linking Johannine Christology to the *Shema*’s broader Deuteronomistic context.

**Life**

Following his recitation of the Decalogue (cf. Ex 20:2-17), Moses reminds the people of the solemnity of their confession – only hearing and obeying the one YHWH will lead to life: “You must follow exactly the path that YHWH your God has commanded you, so that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you are to possess” (Deut 5:33; cf. 6:2). Throughout Deuteronomy, loyalty to the one YHWH leads to life, while the worship of foreign gods leads to death.

Following his recital of the Decalogue in the hearing of all the people, Moses returns to YHWH for more detailed instructions. He then recounts these to the people, beginning with the weighty introduction, “Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them [the statues and ordinances] diligently” (6:3; emphasis added). Deut 6:4-9 follows.

**The Shema: Deut 6:4-9 in its Biblical Context**

The beginning of Deuteronomy 6 serves as a formal introduction to the additional instruction that YHWH gives Moses at Horeb, referred to fourteen
times in Deut as החקים והמשׁפטים. Both the LXX and the Nash Papyrus accentuate this point by including a prefatory remark at the beginning of 6:4: καὶ ταῦτα τὰ δικαιώματα καὶ τὰ κρίματα ὅσα ἐνετείλατο κύριος τοῖς υἱοῖς Ισραηλ ἐν τῇ ἑρήμῳ ἐξελθόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου (the Nash Papyrus uses מִשָּׁה instead of κύριος). According to the majority of scholars, in its context in the Nash Papyrus, this statement serves as a liturgical introduction to the Shema. This provides support for the idea that the Shema had a liturgical function at an early date. The additional statement also witnesses to the connection between the Shema and the keeping of the commandments.

The singular מצוה, found at 6:1 and thirteen other times in Deuteronomy, is an important key to this passage. It is first put into the mouth of YHWH: “But you, stand here by me, and I will tell you all the commandment (הַכְּלָלָמָּה), the

23 E.g. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy 1-11, 337; Reif, Problems with Prayers, 115-16; Sweeney, 43-48, 77; Emanuel Tov, Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible (3d ed.; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2012), 111; cf. E. P. Sanders, 196. Melvin K. Peters, however, argues that the statement, also present in Deut 6:4 LXX, may represent an earlier textual tradition than that of the Leningrad codex, in “Translating a Translation: Some Final Reflections on the Production of the New English Translation of Greek Deuteronomy,” Translation Is Required: The Septuagint in Retrospect and Prospect (SBLCS 56; ed. R. J. V. Hiebert; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 119-34, esp. 124-25. The Nash Papyrus and LXX may have shared a similar Vorlage, as the Hebrew text was still quite fluid at this time. This is readily apparent in the Nash Papyrus, where the text of the Decalogue is sometimes closer to the Exodus version, sometimes closer to the Deuteronomic version, and sometimes varies from both.
statutes and the ordinances, that you shall teach them, so that they may do them in the land that I am giving them to possess” (5:31). Then Moses begins to expound YHWH’s instruction: “Now this is the commandment (וֹזַת הַמִּצְוָת) -- the statutes and the ordinances-- that YHWH your God charged me to teach you” (6:1a). The various statutes and ordinances are set forth beginning in Deut 12, but the singular מצוה to which 5:31 and 6:1 immediately point is 6:4-5, the command to hear and love YHWH. The singular מצוה is often understood to refer to the entire law, but it will be argued below that it points more specifically to the basic covenantal demand to love and obey YHWH. The singular commandment – the Shema – forms the centerpiece of Mosaic legislation and summarizes the covenantal obligation of the Israelite toward YHWH. 

**Hearing:** שָמַע שָׂרָאֵל

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25 Emphasis added; the NRSV reads “commandments,” thus obscuring this point.
28 In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus teaches that the entire Law hangs upon the Great Commandment (singular) to love God (Deut 6:5) and neighbor (Lev 19:18); see Chapter Five, 214-27.
Hear, O Israel! YHWH our God, YHWH is one; and you shall love YHWH your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall repeat them to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit in your house, and when you go on the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates (Deut 6:4-9; translation mine).

“Hear, O Israel” is the fourth in a series of seven similar commands (4:1; 5:1; 6:3; 6:4; 9:1; 20:3; 27:9), where the imperative to hear appears along with the vocative “Israel.” Elsewhere, Israel is the implied recipient of the command (1:13; 13:4; 27:10; 30:2; 30:10; 30:20). The command to hear may have originally signaled the opening of a tribal worship assembly.²⁹ It also may have origins in Wisdom literature where, as Weinfeld observes, it frequently appears as a formula that begins a didactic address, as the wise teacher instructs his student to listen obediently (e.g. Prov 1:8; 4:10; Ps 34:12).³⁰ The education of the child in YHWH’s


commandments is central to the *Shema*: “Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise up” (Deut 6:7).

In Deuteronomy, the call to hear precedes divine revelation. S. Dean McBride observes:

So emphasized by the Deuteronomists, hearing is an act of initiation and assent. It defines Israel as a truly transcendent community, forming a link between the nation then and now, between those who initially heard the Mosaic legacy, and those who later receive it. ‘Hear O Israel!’ The opening words of Deuteronomy 6:4 are a summons to those who would be Israel in any age.31

The call to hear anticipates a response on the part of Israel to acknowledge that YHWH is one, to crown YHWH as its sovereign and accept his statues and ordinances.

In the broad context of Deuteronomy, the object of Israel’s hearing is often the voice of God, which in turn is linked with the commandments, e.g.

“Therefore hear the voice of YHWH your God and do his commandments”

(Deut 27:10; translation mine; cf. 30:2, 10).\textsuperscript{32} Other times it is the ordinances themselves, e.g. “And now, Israel, hear the laws and ordinances that I am teaching you” (Deut 4:1; translation mine; cf. 5:1; 6:3; 11:13). In Deut 6:4: the command to hear points to the divine unity along with imperatives related to the commandments: “and you shall love,” “and you shall teach,” “and you shall speak,” “and you shall bind,” “and you shall write.” As elsewhere in Deuteronomy, the summons to hear in Deut 6:4 is closely connected to obedience to the Mosaic Law.

**The Uniqueness of God**

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד: Each of these words is relatively easy to identify and define individually: “YHWH, our God, YHWH, one.” As a unit however, their meaning is obscure.\textsuperscript{33} McBride writes that “no statement in the bible has provoked more discussion with less agreement than this one.”\textsuperscript{34} What follows is a brief presentation of the four most widely accepted paraphrases, with a particular focus on the meaning of echad. It will not be possible or necessary to

\textsuperscript{32} Of the seven instances in Deuteronomy where שָׁמַע occurs with the vocative “Israel,” only two are not directly connected with law observance (9:1; 20:3).


\textsuperscript{34} McBride, 291.
solve all of the grammatical and syntactical difficulties of Deut 6:4 in order to arrive at the crux of the meaning of echad: YHWH’s oneness is his uniqueness and incomparability as Israel’s only King.

1) YHWH is our God, YHWH alone.

2) YHWH is our God, YHWH is one.

3) YHWH our God is one YHWH.

4) YHWH our God, YHWH is one.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these options and there is no scholarly consensus as to which best interprets the Hebrew text. Each will be considered in turn and an option chosen that best takes into account both grammatical and contextual issues.

(1) *YHWH is our God, YHWH alone* 35

This reading understands Deut 6:4 as a demand for Israel to acknowledge only YHWH as their God. The advantage of this interpretation is that unlike the other options, it renders Deut 6:4 into a clear statement about the necessity of an

exclusive commitment to YHWH, rather than a declaration of theoretical monotheism, which would be anachronistic in this setting. Recognition of YHWH alone is consistent with the warnings against worshipping other gods throughout Deuteronomy (e.g. 5:8; 29:16; 32:21).

One problem with this formulation is that the copula seems to belong logically to the second half of the sentence; elsewhere in Deuteronomy, אלהים stands in apposition to יהוה rather than functioning as its predicate.36 Another difficulty with this translation is that Hebrew characteristically uses לבד or לבדו to mean “alone” (e.g. Deut 4:35; 32:12).37 As J. Gerald Janzen observes, “The degree of indirectness of this construal [YHWH is our God, YHWH alone] is indicated by the fact that other instances of echad meaning ‘alone’ have yet to be adduced in the Hebrew Bible.”38 Walter Moberly acknowledges that even though “YHWH alone” may not make the best sense of the Hebrew syntax, this translation

36 Weinfeld, Deut 1-11, 337; so also Moberly, “‘Yahweh is One,’” 213; Lohfink and Bergman, TDOT 1:194-95; Tigay, 439.

37 Tigay, 439; cf. Nathan MacDonald, Deuteronomy and the Meaning of ‘Monotheism’ (FAT 2/1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 69-70; but see Weinfeld, Deuteronomy 1-11, 337-38, who, with A. B. Ehrlich, argues that לבדו is an adverb and would be inappropriate in the context of Deut 6:4.

is more obviously in keeping with the central concerns of Deuteronomic covenant theology than is a statement about the oneness of Yahweh whose precise sense is not immediately apparent and which is all too easily interpreted in the light of the monotheistic concerns of later periods. The obviously appropriate sense of ‘Yahweh alone’ is recognized even by those who do not think it is the correct rendering. 39

Translating אֶחָד as “alone” makes sense of Deut 6:4 in context, but it glosses over the unusual use of אֶחָד in 6:4, which calls for further explanation.

(2) YHWH is our God, YHWH is one

Although Waltke and O’Connor view this as “this simplest solution,” 40 very few scholars have adopted this translation. 41 Like the previous option, it has the problematic copula in 6:4a. The advantages of the interpretation “YHWH is one” are also available in the fourth option, without the difficulties of “YHWH is our God.”

39 Moberly, “Yahweh is One,” 211.
(3) *YHWH our God is one YHWH* 42

The translation “YHWH our God is one YHWH” is usually interpreted as a slogan of the Deuteronomic movement that rallied against the worship of multiple manifestations of YHWH at multiple sanctuaries. In support of this idea, inscriptions from Kuntillet Ajrud in the eighth and ninth centuries BCE attest to manifestations such as “YHWH of Samaria” and “YHWH of Teman.” 43 Read in light of these inscriptions, Deut 6:4 is a polemic against the proliferation of YHWH deities, declaring instead that there is a single YHWH who is to be worshiped at a single sanctuary.

The problem with this option, as Tigay argues, is that there is no evidence within Deuteronomy that the multiplication of YHWH into various local deities is a serious concern. 44 Weinfeld concurs that in Deuteronomy “this phenomenon is never brought up as an argument in the issue of unification of worship, and


44 Tigay, 439; so also Miller, 22; Bord and Hamidović, 20-21; McBride, 295; Lohfink and Bergman, 197.
the fragmentation of YHWH into numerous deities is never explicitly recognized as a problem.”

(4) YHWH our God, YHWH is one

There are two advantages to this interpretation: first, “YHWH is one” places the copula where it properly belongs. Second, and more significant, the expression “YHWH is one” allows the text to retain the ancient vocabulary of divine kingship. In ancient Near Eastern inscriptions and literature, the language of oneness was used of both kings and gods to connote aloneness, uniqueness, and incomparability. In a Ugaritic inscription, for example, Baal states “I am one [Ugaritic: akhdy] who rules over the gods.” In Egypt, a god could be called

45 Weinfeld, Deuteronomy 1-11, 350.


48 Weinfeld, Deuteronomy 1-11, 350-51.
“The One, The Only,” and his role in creation was emphasized. In Akkadian, the word “one” was applied both to gods and to kings to mean “unique” or “outstanding.” To proclaim a god or king to be “one” could imply a sense of supremacy over a divine retinue or that a god’s rule was in competition with another god’s.

With the above in mind, “YHWH our God, YHWH is one” is equivalent in meaning to “YHWH our God, YWHW is unique.” In Deut 6:4, the proclamation of YHWH’s oneness is best understood within the context YHWH’s kingship: reflecting the language of ANE kingship, יְהוָה יָהּ proclaims YHWH the supreme Ruler to whom Israel owes its existence and therefore its wholehearted loyalty. The translation “YHWH is one” is appropriate both within its ANE background and within the immediate context of Deut 6:4, as well as the broader Deuteronomic context, where YHWH assumes the role of divine suzerain. On the surface, “YHWH is one” may lack the connotations of aloneness, uniqueness, and incomparability cited above. But for the purposes of this study, it will be

49 Lohfink and Bergman, “echādh,” 194-95.
50 M. Smith, 145.
51 Lohfink and Bergman, 196.
52 Similarly P. Miller, “Most Important Word,” who understands “the Lord is one” and “the Lord alone” to mean essentially the same thing, 21-22.
helpful to retain the more literal reading “YHWH is one” with the understanding that it is an ancient and superlative way of expressing YHWH’s uniqueness that has royal connotations.

Some have argued against the reading “YHWH our God, YHWH is one” because it renders the second “YHWH” superfluous; the phrase could be put more simply: “YHWH our God is one.” This argument discounts the possibility that the author is doubling YHWH for emphasis, or using Hebrew parallelism to similar effect. A second point against “YHWH is one” is that to the modern ear, it sounds like a monotheistic confession. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* entry on the *Shema* reflects the assumption that “YHWH is one” is about monotheism:

The original meaning of the first verse [of the *Shema*] may have been that, unlike the pagan gods who have different guises and localities, God is one. At first the main emphasis in the *Shema* was seen to be in opposition to polytheism; there is only one God, not many gods.

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53 Tigay, 439; Weinfeld, *Deut 1-11*, 337.


While an earlier generation of scholars tended to view monotheism as a feature of ancient Israelite worship, more recent scholarship dates the emergence of monotheism to the Exilic and post-Exilic periods.\textsuperscript{56} Jeffrey H. Tigay remarks:

\begin{quote}
The present translation [referring to “the Lord alone”] indicates that the verse is a description of the proper relationship between YHWH and Israel: He alone is Israel’s God. This is not a declaration of monotheism, meaning that there is only one God.” \textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

Many scholars, along with Tigay, have preferred the translation “YHWH is our God, YHWH alone” in order to circumvent the confusion surrounding the word

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{56} The development of monotheism in ancient Israel has a complicated history and is the subject of a number of important works. Mark S. Smith summarizes the development of monotheism within Israelite religion and reviews secondary literature on the subject in The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002), 182-99; idem, The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), esp. 149-66. For a recent study on the Enlightenment origins of the term “monotheism” and the relevance of the term for the study of the OT, see MacDonald, 1-57; cf. idem, “The Origins of ‘Monotheism’,” in Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism (JSNTSupp 263; eds. Loren T. Struckenbruck and Wendy E. S. North; London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 204-15. In the same volume, see also R. W. L. Moberly’s “How Appropriate is ‘Monotheism’ as a Category for Biblical Interpretation?” (216-234, esp. 227-231 on the Shema). Michael Wyschogrod traces the notion of theoretical monotheism back to medieval Jewish philosophy, where it was mediated through the Greek metaphysical tradition of Parmenides, in “The One God of Abraham,” in Abraham’s Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2004), 29-42.

\textsuperscript{57} Tigay, Deuteronomy, 76, “Excursus 10: The Shema (6:4),” 438-41; cf. Von Rad, 63. So also Lohfink and Bergman: “The idea that 6:4 can be interpreted in the sense of a theoretical monotheism is out of the question. Deuteronomy does not even consider the existence of other gods until in late strata in the book (e.g. 4:10),” 197. Janzen (“The Most Important Word,” 287), Weinfeld (Deut 1-11, 351), Moberly (“Toward an Interpretation of the Shema,” 132), and MacDonald (74-75) seek to understand echad as a relational term, rather than as a reference to numerical oneness.
\end{quote}
and its post-Enlightenment monotheistic connotations. But while “YHWH alone” may succeed in avoiding misleading monotheistic overtones, it loses the rich connotations of kingship and incomparability intrinsic to “YHWH is one.”

Weinfeld points out that the demand for exclusive loyalty to YHWH, along with the concept of the Kingdom of God, made it both possible and desirable for Israel to pattern its relations with YHWH after the model of diplomatic relations found in ancient political treaties: “The pattern of a state treaty based on the demand for exclusive allegiance is well suited to a book in which the concept of the unity of God reaches the apogee of expression.”

The language of “bearing the yoke” in ANE literature refers to fulfilling one’s duty by taking an oath of loyalty to the king or the deity. So, too, the Tannaitic rabbis understood reciting the Shema as “accepting the yoke of the kingdom of heaven,” a pledge of wholehearted loyalty to God as King (Ber 2:2; 5).

In summary, in its Deuteronomic context, Deut 6:4 is not a monotheistic statement that denies the existence of other gods. Rather, it is an

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58 Weinfeld, Deuteronomic School, 83.
59 Weinfeld, Deuteronomy 1-11, 352-53.
60 Reif, 118.
acknowledgement that although there may be rival claimants for Israel’s allegiance, YHWH is the King of Israel, unique, incomparable, the one and only. Although the word \( \text{אחד} \) is never again predicated of YHWH in Deuteronomy, this interpretation fits the context of the imminent crossing of the Jordan: the question at that moment is not how many gods exist but whether or not the people will remain loyal to YHWH or be seduced by the gods of the Land they are about to enter.  

This was also the question posed by the Deuteronomic author to the later Israelites in exile.

Apart from its appearance in Zech 14:9, the phrase “YHWH is one” is conspicuously absent from the rest of the OT corpus. It is all the more striking, then, when the expression \( \text{εἷς ὁ θεός} \) appears in Hellenistic Jewish literature and in the New Testament. \( \text{εἷς ὁ θεός} \) is a catchphrase that captivated the imagination of a number of Jewish writers during the Second Temple period, pointing readers back to the ancient covenant with YHWH. These words continue to be understood and used to express, explain, and argue for YHWH’s supremacy over the gods of other peoples and for adherence to the Mosaic Law. These

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words took on new shades of meaning as Jews found themselves in new historical situations and faced new challenges to their faith and identity.

**Love**

“You shall love YHWH your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deut 6:5). The study of political treaties from the ancient Near East shows that the language of love is standard in the wording of loyalty oaths. William Moran demonstrates in an oft-cited article that ancient Near Eastern sovereigns demand “an oath of allegiance from their vassals expressed in terms of love.”\(^{62}\) As evidenced by these treaties, love is not primarily understood as an emotion, but an expression of absolute loyalty and obedience to the king; love could be commanded. In one example from the VTE, the suzerain Esarhaddon, in order to secure loyalty to his successor Assurbanipal, adjures his vassals, “You will love as yourselves Assurbanipal,” and they respond, “The king of Assyria, our lord, we will love.”\(^{63}\)


\(^{63}\) Moran, 80; cf. Weinfeld, *Deut 1-11*, 351. The expression “to love as yourselves” is reminiscent of Lev 19:18 and may shed some light on that verse.
Furthermore, Deut 6:5 recalls specific phrases used in treaties to describe loyalty to the suzerain: love “with all the heart” connotes exclusive fidelity and obedience to the king and cutting off alliances with other political powers, “with all the soul” demands readiness to die for the king, “with all one’s might or ability” requires coming to the king’s aid with a person’s military force or wealth.\(^6\)

In *m. Ber* 9:5, the rabbis expound upon the meaning of each phrase of Deut 6:5: “*With all thy heart* – with both thine impulses, thy good impulse and thine evil impulse; *and with all thy soul* – even if he take away thy soul; *and with all thy might* – with all thy wealth.” The interpretation of loving God with all the soul and might is similar to what is found in the political treaties. The notion of loving God with all of one’s soul would become a cipher for martyrdom and is associated especially with Rabbi Akiba, who is said to have fulfilled the command while he was being tortured to death by Roman soldiers (*y. Ber* 9:7, 14b; *b. Ber* 61b; *Sifre Deut, Piskha* 32). Israel thus borrows the language of political

\(^6\) For examples found in treaties of Hittite and Assyrian origin and into the Hellenistic and Roman periods, see Weinfeld, 351-52; idem, “The Loyalty Oath,” 383-86.
loyalty to serve its theological purposes: Israel is the vassal of YHWH the King who has redeemed Israel and, in turn, demands Israel’s exclusive loyalty.

Where Deuteronomy seems to differ from the pattern of the loyalty oath is in its insistence that God loved the patriarchs (4:37; 10:15), or Israel (7:8), prior to demanding love in return. Ancient suzerains are never mentioned as the subject of the verb “to love;” they may have performed favors for the vassal, but love is not specified as the motivation for their actions. In Deuteronomy, however, YHWH’s prior love for Israel is the basis for the command to love YHWH and keep his commandments:

> It was because YHWH loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Deut 7:8; cf. 7:7, 13; 4:37; 10:15).

Deuteronomy not only draws upon features of contemporary political treaties in constructing Israel’s covenant with its divine suzerain, it also invests the form

65 Weinfeld observes that in the contemporary Shema liturgy, the Ahavah benediction precedes the Shema (Deuteronomy 1-11, 211). This benediction (“Who has chosen his people Israel with love”) focuses on God’s election of Israel. Similarly, Kimelman says: “By positioning this blessing about God’s love before the Shema’s demand to love God, the point is made that we are to love the god who loved us first” (50); “[T]his b’rakah emphasizes God’s antecedent love of human beings and the people Israel,” Mahzor Lev Shalem, 6; cf. 1 John 4:19, “We love because he first loved us.”
with its own historical and theological agenda. Deuteronomy serves, at least in part, as a counter-narrative for an exiled people, subjected to a foreign power and its deities. The love and allegiance of the people rightly belongs to YHWH, who loved them and delivered them from Egyptian bondage and who alone has the power to sustain them and deliver them again.

What it means to love God with all one’s heart, soul, and strength is further clarified by the way in which these key words are used elsewhere in the OT. לֵבָב in the OT usually denotes the mind or the will. לֵבָב has a range of meaning that encompasses soul, living being, life, self, and passion. מָאָד is an adverb meaning “very,” and is used substantivally in the Hebrew Scriptures only here and in 2 Kgs 23:25, an echo of Deut 6:5. The combination of these three words points to the idea that “covenant commitment must be rooted in the heart, but then extend to every level of one’s being and existence.”

The three-fold expression in Deut 6:5 constitutes a formula that the Deuteronomist uses to express the totality of focus with which Israel is to love its

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66 BDB 3824; καρδία is used for לֵבָב in LXX A and διανοία in LXX B.
67 BDB 5315.
68 Weinfeld, Deuteronomy, 339.
69 Block, 204.
divine suzerain. A shortened form “with all your heart and with all your soul” occurs eighteen times in Deuteronomic literature, and the expression, “with all your heart,” is found twice there and once in Proverbs. These expressions sometimes qualify a command to love God (Deut 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 30:6; Josh 22:5), but they also qualify other imperatives, such as to “seek” God (4:29; 2 Chron 15:12), to “serve” God (10:12; 11:13; Josh 22:5), to “observe” or “keep” the commandments (26:16; Josh 22:5; 2 Kgs 23:3; 2 Chron 34:31), to “hear” or “obey” God (30:2), to “turn” to God (30:10; 1 Kgs 8:48; 2 Kgs 23:25; 2 Chron 6:38), to “walk before” God (1 Kgs 2:4; 8:23), and to “hold fast” to God (Josh 22:5). In each instance, the people are summoned to renew their covenant commitment with all their heart and soul (and in 2 Kings 23:25, “with all their might” as well).

Israel was commanded to express its covenant love for God by keeping God’s commandments (e.g. Deut 11:1: “You shall love YHWH your God, therefore, and keep his charge, his decrees, his ordinances, and his

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70 So McBride, 303. Kimelman concludes: “The result is the total mobilization of the human being toward a love of God that is unreserved, all-demanding, at all times, in every place, whatever the bodily posture,” 21.


72 1 Kings 8:23; 2 Chron 6:14; Prov 3:5.
commandments always”) and by resisting the allure of foreign gods (e.g. Deut 4:25-31; 12:1-4; 16:21-22; 28:14). The imperative to teach the commandments to one’s children guarantees the continuity of the covenant in future generations (Deut 6:7). Later, the wearing of phylacteries and the posting of the commands on one’s property (Deut 6:8-9) would serve as devices for keeping the commandments in mind.73

Life

The motif of life is not explicit in Deut 6:4-9, but throughout Deuteronomy, life is the chief blessing an Israelite receives for loving YHWH and keeping his commandments. The clearest example in Moses’ second speech is Deut 8:1: “This entire commandment that I command you today you must diligently observe, so that you may live and increase, and go in and occupy the land

73 The language of Deut 6:8-9 (cf. Deut 11:13-21; Ex 13: 9, 16) can be interpreted figuratively or literally. Weinfeld observes that Prov 6:21 and Deut 6:8 LXX understand them figuratively, but argues for a literal interpretation in Deut 6, based on the ancient practice of wearing bracelets and amulets for apotropaic purposes and as religious identity markers. Similarly, sacred words were written on doorposts in ancient Egypt (Deuteronomy 1-11, 341-42). Rabbic discussions of the laws governing the wearing phylacteries (e.g. Sanh. 88b; Men. 34b; Zeb. 37b; Sanh. 4b) and posting mezuzot on doorposts and gates (e.g. Men. 43b; Pes. 113b) are preceded by the evidence of Aristeas (158-59), Josephus (A.J. 4:213), and Matthew 23:5; see Benjamin G. Wright III, “Three Jewish Ritual Practices in Aristeas §§158-160,” in Heavenly Tablets: Interpretation, Identity, and Tradition in Ancient Judaism (eds. L. Lidonnici and A. Lieber; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 11-29; Stephen Reed, “Physical Features of Excerpted Torah Texts,” in Jewish and Christian Scripture as Artifact and Canon (eds. C. A. Evans and D. H. Zacharias; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 82-104; cf. evidence of phylacteries and mezuzot at Qumran in Chapter Four, 153, n. 98, 154, n. 99.
that YHWH promised on oath to your ancestors” (emphasis added; cf. 6:2, 24).

Life includes length of days as well as progeny.

Deut 11:13-21 evinces strong verbal affinities with Deut 6:4-9, as it carries over the key themes of that section: hearing (11:13), loving YHWH with all the heart and soul (11:13, 18), YHWH’s uniqueness (11:16), binding the commandments upon the hand and as a sign upon the forehead (11:18), teaching the commandments to one’s children and speaking of them at all times (11:19), and writing them upon the doorposts of the home and upon the gates (11:20).

Not coincidentally, Deut 11:13-21 is the second paragraph in Keriat Shema, the liturgical recitation of the Shema in the contemporary synagogue service. Material evidence suggests that the connection between these two passages had been made by the first century CE.\textsuperscript{74} The verbal link with the doubling of the word שמע (שמע ע”ש) – along with the repetition of the themes enumerated above – makes for a natural connection with Deut 6:4-9.\textsuperscript{75} What is missing in Deut 6:4-9 and spelled out in this paragraph are the consequences for obedience and

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\textsuperscript{74} Tefillin and mezuzot found at Qumran contain both paragraphs along with the Decalogue (Reif, 116).
\textsuperscript{75} Rabbinic teaching emphasizes that Deut 11:13-21 follows Deut 6:4-9 in the Shema liturgy because one must accept the yoke of the kingdom of God (Deut 6) before one takes upon oneself the yoke of the commandments (Deut 11; m. Ber 2:2; cf. b. Ber 13b; 61b; Mekhilla de R. Ishmael, Bakhodesh 6).
\end{flushright}
disobedience: rain, fruitfulness, and length of days (life) for obedience; drought, barrenness, and ultimately death for disobedience.

**Deut 13: Warning against Hearing the False Prophet**

Deut 13 further extends the themes of Deut 6:4-9 in its characterization of the false prophet, who would lead Israel astray to worship other gods:

If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a portent, and the sign or the wonder that he spoke to you comes to pass, and he says, "Let us go after other gods, whom you have not known, and let us serve them": You must not hear (לא תשמע) the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for YHWH your God is testing you, to know whether you love YHWH your God with all your hearts and with all your souls. You shall go after YHWH your God, and him you shall fear, and his commandments you shall keep, and his voice you shall hear (תשמעו), and him you shall serve, and to him you shall cleave (Deut 13:1-4; translation mine).

This section is, in a sense, an anti-שמע, warning the people not to hear the word of one who would direct them away from YHWH and into idolatry. Only single-minded devotion to YHWH and keeping his commandments will lead to life; turning to other gods will lead to death and destruction (13:6-18).
Deuteronomy 13 is analogous to a section found in suzerain-vassal
treaties, which typically include instructions on seizing and punishing those who
would instigate rebellion against the king.\textsuperscript{76} The language of “following after”
other gods (אחרי הלך) is legal terminology which concerns a vassal’s
disobedience to his master (cf. Deut 6:14).\textsuperscript{77} To “follow after” another lord was
treasonous; therefore, treaty clauses demand immediate pursuit of rebels, who
are to be seized and killed. Deut 13 shows an analogous concern for maintaining
loyalty to YHWH and calls for the harshest possible punishment for anyone who
would foment rebellion against him.

Deuteronomy 13 demonstrates how the religious and political spheres
were interconnected in the ancient world. Weinfeld comments:

\begin{quote}
Political and religious aspects, particularly in the
Israelite covenant, were fused to such an extent,
however, that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish
between them. Therefore, it must be said that,
although the passage in Deut. 13 seems to be
concerned only with religious loyalty to the God of
Israel, the laws actually served to guarantee the
political-national allegiance of the people no less than
their religious allegiance.\textsuperscript{78}
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{76} Weinfeld, “Loyalty Oath,” 387-391; Deuteronomic School, 92.
\textsuperscript{77} Moran, 82-83, n. 35.
\textsuperscript{78} Deuteronomic School, 100.
\end{flushright}
This is particularly true if, as R. Frankena suggests, Josiah’s reforms were designed to replace the former treaty with Assyria. The complex interplay between political and religious ideas gives Deuteronomy much of its unique flavor; the notion of YHWH as Israel’s King makes a lasting mark upon the Hebrew Scriptures and will continue to have an important influence on rabbinic discourse and Jewish liturgical traditions.

**Deut 26-28: Blessings and Curses**

At the conclusion of Moses’ second speech, the key themes of the Shema coalesce with an added emphasis on life and death, the consequences of obedience and disobedience. Deut 12-26 has spelled out the specific statutes and ordinances of the (singular) commandment, the loyalty oath between YHWH and Israel. At the end of the recitation of all the specific laws, the covenant is ratified. Moses now charges the people to hear and observe the commandments “with all their heart and soul” and to make YHWH their God (Deut 26:16-17; cf. 79)

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79 R. Frankena, “The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy,” in Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland (ed. P. A. H. de Boer; Leiden: Brill, 1965), 122-54, esp. 150-53. Frankena argues that the Josianic reforms of 622 BCE were able to take place because of the death of the Assyrian potentate Ashurbanipal, with whom Manasseh had a loyalty oath. After 622, Assyria was weakened and Judah was able to regain its independence, replacing the treaty with Assyria with a covenant with YHWH.
27:9-10). In turn, Israel will be YHWH’s treasured possession, the foremost among the nations (26:18-19).

Chapter 28 lists the covenantal blessings and curses, beginning with an echo of Deut 11:13: “If you will only hear (והיה אם־שׁמוע תשׁמע) YHWH your God, by diligently observing all his commandments that I am commanding you today” (28:1; alt. trans.). Like Deut 11, 28:1-14 expounds numerous tangible blessings, many related to progeny and the wealth of the Land, which YHWH will lavish upon Israel if they only remain true to him and eschew other gods. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to a litany of curses for disobedience, threatening ruin and destruction in scope and magnitude equal to the blessings for obedience. The curses reflect the structure and wording of the ancient loyalty oaths. Moses’ second speech thus concludes by enumerating the grave consequences of failing to acknowledge YHWH as Israel’s one and only King.

Moses’ Third Speech (Deut 29-30)

In Deut 29-30, the themes of hearing, the uniqueness of YHWH, love, and life come together in a final appeal to Israel to maintain covenant loyalty and keep the commandments. From the Deuteronomist’s point of view, exile is a fait

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accompli, as the text assumes that Israel has already abandoned the covenant by serving other gods and being driven from the Land: “YHWH uprooted them from their land in anger, fury, and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as is now the case (29:28, emphasis added; cf. 29:18-29; 30:3-5). This section provides strong support for the idea that Deuteronomy was shaped by the perspective of those in exile, where YHWH’s uniqueness was measured against claims made for the kings and gods of Israel’s oppressors.

In spite of Israel’s disobedience, the text contains a promise that to return to YHWH and “love YHWH your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live” (30:6; cf. 30:2, 10, 20), a clear echo of Deut 6:5, will avert the severity of the curses against Israel. Life is predicated upon loving YHWH alone, which is mentioned twice in this section (30:6, 20), and hearing YHWH’s voice: “Then you shall return and hear the voice of YHWH, observing all his commandments that I am commanding you today” (30:8; translation mine; cf. 30:2, 10, 20). Hearing YHWH is again associated with keeping YHWH’s commandments (30:8, 10, 16).

Finally, for Israel, to choose to love YHWH alone, to hear his voice, and to obey his commandments, is to choose life:
See, I have set before you today *life and prosperity*, death and adversity. For I command you today to *love YHWH your God*, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, his laws, and his ordinances, *that you may live* and become numerous, and YHWH your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and *you do not hear*, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you will surely perish; *you shall not live* long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have put before you *life* and death, blessing and curse. *Choose life* so that you and your descendants may *live*, *loving YHWH your God, hearing his voice*, and holding fast to him; for *he is your life* and your length of days, *that you may live* in the land that YHWH swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. (Deut 30:15-20; translation mine.)

This section is quoted at length because it marks the high point and conclusion of the Mosaic orations in Deuteronomy; it sums up the message of the book and binds together tightly the themes of hearing, the uniqueness of YHWH, love, and life. The key motifs of Deut 6:4-9 are spelled out here in a way that emphasizes the consequences of hearing, of acknowledging YHWH’s unique claim upon Israel, of loving YHWH and keeping his commandments – *life and prosperity in the Land*. The text also spells out the consequences of not hearing, of rejecting YHWH’s love for Israel and serving other gods – devastation and exile. The
speech ends on a poignant note, with a plea from Israel’s beloved leader, imploring the people to choose wisely.

**Summary and Conclusions**

The thematic cluster of hearing, the uniqueness of YHWH, love, and life denotes a Deuteronomic formulation for Israel’s covenantal relationship with YHWH and lays the foundation for Israel’s obligation to keep the Mosaic commandments. The author of Deuteronomy places the epitome of this relation on the lips of Moses: “Hear O Israel, YHWH our God, YHWH is one. And you shall love YHWH your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” The language of Deut 6:4-9 reflects elements of ancient treaties that call for strict allegiance to a king in terms of love and devotion. For the Deuteronomist, these themes are not only relevant to the Mosaic generation; they speak primarily to the people of a later generation, who seek to redefine their relationship with their God and with other nations and their gods. Later writers will find the key themes of Deut 6 useful, as these motifs resurface in other OT writings, especially where there is a need or desire for covenant renewal.
Chapter Three: The *Shema* in the Hebrew Bible beyond Deuteronomy

Introduction

Chapter Two concluded that within its biblical context, Deut 6:4-9 is not concerned with the monotheistic idea that YHWH is the only god that exists. Rather, this passage, with its emphasis on hearing/obedience, divine unity, and love, establishes YHWH as Israel’s one and only king, who alone is worthy of Israel’s wholehearted allegiance, and whose commandments Israel must keep. The relationship between YHWH and Israel is described using the language of ANE political treaties, which demands exclusive loyalty to the suzerain. It is likely that the historical situation of the Exile made the use of this language meaningful in a new way: the kingdom of God is a fusion of political and religious realities, and Israel is not to consider itself subject to a foreign power, but the vassal of the one God, the King of heaven and earth. This chapter will demonstrate that Deut 6:4-9 has continuing significance in the OT canon. The methodological issue to address before proceeding is how to determine whether or not an intertextual relation exists between Deut 6:4-5 and another text.
Methodology

What constitutes a genuine allusion to the Shema and why might a reader of the Hebrew Bible, Second Temple Jewish literature, or the New Testament expect to find references to it? To answer the second question first, Deuteronomy was already well known by authors of later OT books. As the fifth book in the Torah, it is part of the literary bedrock whose statutes and ordinances have been interpreted for over two millennia by Jews seeking to live according to the will of their God. Because the Shema stands at the head of the repetition of the Law in Deuteronomy, and indeed, is the chief commandment of the Law, one should expect to find later references to it. This is especially true with respect to other books within the Deuteronomistic history, which bear the stamp of Deuteronomic ideas and vocabulary, and where a high concentration of allusions to Deut 6:4-5 is found.

The Shema was not only a widely-known text during the Second Temple period, but as noted above, it was also a widely-known prayer. In addition to the evidence already presented, it is worth noting that the Mishna itself begins

1 Chapter Two, 25-26; Chapter Seven, 389-94.
2 Chapter Two, 18-19.
with a discussion of the *Shema* and assumes the reader knows it; no definition or explanation is given. It is therefore likely that, along with the Decalogue, the *Shema* was a portion of Deuteronomy familiar to most Jews and to which their ears would have been attuned. It therefore satisfies the criterion of availability, one of the tests put forth by Richard B. Hays for identifying intertextual echoes.\(^4\)

In order to determine whether or not an intertextual connection exists between Deut 6:4-9 and a later passage, this study will focus on the key themes of the *Shema* discussed in Chapter Two: hearing, YHWH’s oneness, love for YHWH, and life. The level of agreement between Deut 6:4-9 and another passage will be dependent upon the following factors:

1. Any time the adjective “one” is used of YHWH, the likelihood is extremely high that there is a relationship with *Shema*, whether or not other themes are present. Hays uses Deut 6:4 as an example of the

\(^3\) This point was suggested to me by Laura S. Lieber.

criterion of volume in 1 Cor 8:4. He notes that the volume of an echo depends, not only on verbatim agreement, but also

on the distinctiveness, prominence, or popular familiarity of the precursor text…Even though the number of words repeated [in 1 Cor 8:4] is small, the Shema is such a familiar and foundational text within Judaism that only a slight verbal cue is needed to trigger the full-volume echo (emphasis original).5

This is particularly true of the word “one” (εἷς/אחד), which is only used of YHWH in Deut 6:4 and Zech 14:9 in the Hebrew Bible (cf. “one Father,” Mal 2:10).

(2) Love for YHWH sometimes appears in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature, along with the expression “with all one’s heart, soul, and might” or a variation of that phrase. Every reference to love for YHWH need not and probably does not always constitute an echo of Deut 6:4, but this possibility is strengthened when it is accompanied by “with all one’s heart.” It also becomes more likely that “love for YHWH” alludes to the Shema when additional references to the Shema

5 Ibid., 214.
occur within the same work, and/or when the context is one of covenant renewal.⁶

Verbs other than “love” are sometimes used, such as “to obey” YHWH with all the heart and soul (Deut 30:2) or “to turn” to YHWH with all the heart and soul (Deut 30:10). In these instances, the demand to keep YHWH’s commandments (30:8, 10), and the promise of life (30:6) – which belong to the cluster of covenant images surrounding the Shema – signal that the Shema is being elicited.

(3) The themes of hearing and life play more of a supportive role and require the presence of at least one other theme in order for a passage to be considered an echo of the Shema. In other words, an imperative to hear is not sufficient by itself, but would qualify for consideration if accompanied by a declaration of YHWH’s oneness or a statement about loving YHWH. In addition, the use of the literary device of the two-level drama will be pointed out, along with the secondary theme of witness to the nations. Because Deut 6:4-9 encapsulates the larger, covenantal pattern of exclusive loyalty between YHWH and Israel, and

⁶ See Hays’s criterion of “recurrence or clustering,” “Who Has Believed,” 215-16.
because of its familiarity to Jews of the Second Temple period, the presence of features and themes of the larger pattern serve to reinforce the link between the Shema and later texts.

(4) Descriptions of the requirement of teaching, binding, and affixing the commands, described in Deut 6:6-9, will be considered allusions to the Shema, especially when there is verbatim agreement with Deut 6:6-9 present and/or when the description is accompanied by affirmations of YHWH’s oneness, love for YHWH, or supporting themes.

It will be shown below that not only in Deuteronomy, but also throughout the Hebrew Bible, Second Temple literature, and the New Testament, writers appeal to various aspects of the Shema, often reinterpreting them for new social and historical situations. Writers tend to blame Israel’s woes – particularly the Exile, which is foreshadowed in Deuteronomy – on Israel’s failure to abide by the terms of the covenant. Because the Shema is at the core of the covenant, it is evoked as a cipher for covenant faithfulness, to remind Israel of her relationship to YHWH, and to exhort the people to return to the covenant. Prophetic oracles of restoration allude to the Shema as they envision one God and one, united people in the eschatological age. This use of the Shema is particularly relevant to
the Gospel of John, which – it will be argued – draws upon the *Shema* as it is interpreted in prophetic oracles of restoration.

**Joshua**

A series of farewell addresses at the end of Joshua recalls in detail Moses’ final words to Israel. Joshua exhorts the various tribes to keep the commandment (singular), the loyalty oath YHWH had made with Israel: “Take good care to observe the commandment (המצוה) and instruction (התורה) that Moses the servant of YHWH commanded you, *to love YHWH your God*, to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments, and to hold fast to him, and to serve him *with all your heart and with all your soul*” (Josh 22:5; emphasis added). Thus the author tells the story of the renewal of the covenant in the Land under Joshua’s leadership using the language of the *Shema*. This passage also makes clear the distinction between the singular commandment, the *Shema*, and the plural, the statutes and ordinances of the covenant.

The command to love YHWH is reiterated emphatically in 23:11: “Be very careful, therefore, to *love YHWH your God*” (emphasis added). As was the case in Deuteronomy, this command is grounded upon YHWH’s actions on Israel’s behalf; YHWH’s saving action includes the defeat of the conquered nations in the
Land. The larger passage affirms the uniqueness of YHWH for Israel, warning the people against serving the gods of the defeated nations (23:6-16; cf. 24:14-28). Disobedience will bring about destruction and expulsion from the Land (23:13, 15, 16). The people then reaffirm the covenant at Shechem and pledge their undivided loyalty to YHWH: “Far be it from us that we should forsake YHWH to serve other gods; for it is YHWH our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt...Therefore, we also will serve YHWH, for he is our God” (24:16-17a, 18b). This statement recalls the ratification of the covenant in Moab and the life-giving implications of exclusive loyalty to and love for YHWH. Although the language of YHWH’s oneness is absent, the setting of covenant renewal evokes an affirmation of YHWH’s uniqueness and Israel’s obligation to love YHWH alone. The final chapters of Joshua, with their emphasis upon covenant renewal, thus exhibit strong verbal and thematic affinities with Deuteronomy in general and with 6:4-5 in particular. The author stresses the continuity of the new generation with the old, a continuity rooted in the Mosaic covenant.
1 and 2 Kings/2 Chronicles

1 Kings 2:1-9 comprises David’s farewell speech to Solomon. As was the case with Moses’ farewell address in Deuteronomy and with Joshua’s subsequent speech, this is an occasion in which the addressee is exhorted to renew the covenant with YHWH: “[K]eep the charge of YHWH your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statues, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn” (1 Kings 2:3). The idea that prosperity is conditional upon obedience echoes Deuteronomistic language (cf. Deut 29:9/29:8 MT). As 1 Kings continues, David states that Solomon’s dynasty will be eternal if his heirs walk before YHWH “with all their heart and with all their soul” (1 Kings 2:4), an allusion Deut 6:5. As in Deuteronomy, the author appears to be writing a theological justification for subsequent events, in this case, to show that the disobedience of kings in the line of David and their worship of gods other than YHWH led to the divided kingdom and, ultimately, to exile from the Land.

In 1 Kings 8:22-53, a prayer in dedication of the Temple, Solomon reiterates some of the themes of Shema: “‘YHWH, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and steadfast love for your servants who walk before you with all their heart” (1 Kings 8:23/2 Chron
6:14; emphasis added; cf. 1 Kings 8:60; Deut 4:39; 5:10; 33:29). According to this speech, the Exile is the result of Israel’s sin (1Ki 8:46; cf. 44-53), but YHWH will have mercy upon Israel “if they repent with all their heart and soul” (ברכל־לבבם ובכל־נפשם; 8:48/2 Chron 6:38; emphasis added). This language recalls the demand for wholehearted loyalty of the Shema and summarizes the renewal of the covenant, which is at the core of Deuteronomy. Moreover, Solomon prays that the Temple will be a witness to the nations: “so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel” (1 Kings 8:43; cf. Deut 4:6-8). This theme will be central to the use of the Shema in Ezekiel’s oracles of restoration and in John 17.

In Solomon’s blessing of the assembly (8:54-66), he proclaims the essence of the Shema again: “YHWH is God; there is no other” (8:60) and pleads with the people to incline their hearts to YHWH and keep YHWH’s commandments (8:58, 61; cf. 11:2). The language of the heart and love is also evoked in the recounting of Solomon’s errors; his marriage to foreign wives “turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not true to YHWH his God” (11:4). Instead, “Solomon clung to these in love” (11:2) and “did not completely follow YHWH” (11:6). Thus in 1 Kings, the themes of Deut 6:4-5 reflect the language of the
Deuteronomic covenant. An analysis of two verses of 2 Kings corroborates the influence of Deut 6:4-5 on this material.

2 Kings 23 describes Josiah’s reading of the book of the Law that had been found in the Temple, followed by his reform of Judean religion. The essence of this reform is Josiah’s commitment to the covenant: “to follow YHWH, keeping his commandments, his decrees, and his statues, with all his heart and soul” (2 Kings 23:3/2 Chron 34:31; emphasis added). The language of oneness is absent, but the passage goes on to describe Josiah’s thoroughgoing destruction of idols in the Land, implying that the uniqueness of YHWH is of utmost concern. The curses of Deuteronomy will be incurred by abandoning YHWH and worshiping other gods (2 Kings 22:16-17; 23:19). The writer eulogizes Josiah, declaring that “[b]efore him there was no king like him, who turned to YHWH with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him” (23:25). This is the only threefold repetition of the terms of Deut 6:5 outside of that passage, signaling Josiah’s singular loyalty to YHWH and the covenant. This passage also

7 So also Moberly: “[I]t is clear from the wording that Josiah is portrayed as a prime example of what it means to fulfill the Shema” (“Toward an Interpretation,” 137).
makes explicit the connection between wholehearted commitment to YHWH and adherence to the Law of Moses. Finally, this encomium of Josiah contains an implicit critique of the rest of Israel’s kings; Deut 6:4-5 is used as a standard by which both Israel and its kings are judged. Here, the reader is warned not to hold out any hope that future kings will live up to the same standard.

**Nehemiah**

The prayer of Nehemiah contains conventional Deuteronomistic language:

“I said, ‘O YHWH God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments’” (Neh 1:5; emphasis added; cf. 1:9). This verse resonates strongly with Deut 5:10, where YHWH vows to punish those who hate him: “but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.” As noted above, the concept of love for YHWH in 5:10 anticipates its full expression in 6:5. This does not mean that this verse alludes directly to 6:4; it reinforces the idea that the Deuteronomistic themes of YHWH’s uniqueness and love for YHWH continue to be important beyond the Pentateuch, especially where the affirmation and renewal of the covenant are

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8 Chapter Two, 23.
concerned. The author of Nehemiah acknowledges that the Exile was due to Israel’s failure to keep the commandments and prays for the regathering in the Land and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Nehemiah’s plea for renewal of the covenant resonates with the context of Deut 5-6.

**Psalms**

In Psalm 86:8-12, the psalmist praises God using the language of the **Shema**:

> There is none like you among the gods, YHWH, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and bow down before you, YHWH, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. Teach me your way, YHWH, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name. I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart and I will glorify your name forever (Psalm 86:8-12; emphasis added).

God’s uniqueness is not expressed in terms of oneness, but rather reflects the wording of Deut 4:35, 39. The language of “wholeheartedness,” however, is strongly reminiscent of the **Shema**, as **יחד** agrees verbatim with Deut 6:5, transposed to the first person, and **יחד** is a cognate of **אחד** (Deut 6:4; 86:11). The psalmist thus expresses devotion to YHWH in times of trouble using the
language of the Shema (cf. Ps 119:2, 10, 34, 58, 69, 145). The idea that the nations will worship YHWH witnesses to the YHWH’s universal kingship and the eschatological expectation of Zech 14:9; 16-21 (cf. 1 Kings 8:43, 60 cited above).

The cases of Psalm 50:7 and 81:8/81:9 MT are more complex. Quotations from the opening of the Decalogue and references to the giving of the Law have led scholars to conclude that these psalms were recited at festivals that reenacted the Sinai event. Psalm 50:7 reads: “Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God”; and Psalm 81:9-10: “Hear, O my people, while I admonish you; O Israel, if you would but listen to me! There shall be no strange god among you; you shall not bow down to a foreign god.” The command to hear, along with the vocative “Israel,” evokes Deut 6:4. Weinfeld suggests that the festival of Shavuot, where the covenant was renewed, may provide the background to these psalms. It is possible that these psalms echo Deut 5 rather than Deut 6. The expression “Hear, O Israel” also precedes the

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9 See the reference to Mowinckel’s Le Décalogue in Weinfeld, Deuteronomy 1-11, 257-58.
10 Cf. Isa 48:12: “Hear me, O Jacob, and Israel, my called one: I am the first and I am the last” (translation mine). This statement not only includes the command to hear along with the vocative “Israel,” but is also a robust expression of the uniqueness of YHWH.
11 Weinfeld, Deuteronomy 1-11, 260-63.
Decalogue (Deut 5:1), and Psalm 81:9-10 quotes parts of the Decalogue (Deut 5:7 and 6). Furthermore, Ps 50 contains references to stealing, adultery, and lying (50:18-19), while Psalm 81 echoes the prohibition against the worship of foreign deities located in the second commandment.

There are a few psalms that mention love for YHWH or the importance of having an undivided heart: Ps 31:23/31:24MT; 116:1; 145:20. These cannot be considered allusions to Deut 6 with complete certainty; however, the idea of love for YHWH is epitomized in Deut 6:5. This motif makes its way into a variety of genres and settings in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature as will be shown below. The multitude of references to love for YHWH, especially in relation to Israel’s covenant and other themes of the Shema, will add weight to the thesis that “loving YHWH” is a catchphrase for covenant faithfulness.

Proverbs

Proverbs 3:1-12 reflects the vocabulary and ideas of Deut 6:4-9, cast in the mold of Jewish wisdom traditions:

My child (נָתַן), do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare they will give you. Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them (נָתַן) around your neck, write them (הָעַבְדָם) on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good
repute in the sight of God and of people. Trust in YHWH with all your heart (בכל לבך) and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways (בכל דרכי) acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear YHWH, and turn away from evil. It will be a healing for your flesh and a refreshment for your body. Honor YHWH with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. My child, do not despise YHWH's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for YHWH reproves the one he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights (Prov 3:1-12; emphasis added).

Deuteronomistic themes in this passage include the following: the parental role of teaching the commandments to the children, which frames the whole passage (Prov 3:1-12/Deut 6:7), the link between keeping the commandments and life (Prov 3:2, 8, 10/Deut 6:24), the binding of commandments on the body and writing them down (Prov 3:3/Deut 6:8-9), the expression “with all your heart” (Deut 6:5), attending to YHWH or the commandments while on one’s way (Prov 3:6/Deut 6:7), and YWHW’s love (Prov 3:12/Deut 5:10; 7:9).

Michael V. Fox surmises that Prov 1-9 was the last section of the book to be written, finalized during the Hellenistic period, when Jewish traditions competed with Greek thought and ideas: “The subtext of Part I [Prov 1-9]... is
that Jews need not look outside their own intellectual traditions (*hokmah*) to find the kind of thought so esteemed among the gentiles.” The sages thus engage and reinterpret the Deuteronomic tradition to appeal to an audience aware of and attracted to contemporary Greek culture and thought.

In Prov 3, the key theme of YHWH’s uniqueness is implied throughout the passage, even though דומא is not used. YHWH’s uniqueness is emphasized in the exhortation to loyalty and faithfulness (3:3) and a wholehearted commitment to YHWH (3:5). The phrase (בכלי לבך) is drawn from Deut 6:5 (בכלי לבך), differing by only one letter and modifying the verb בטוח rather than אהב. Paul Overland notes that Proverbs does not use the language of loving YHWH and only twice describes YHWH’s love for humans (3:12; 15:9). Rather, “the attitudes which he [the sage] sought to foster toward God were reverence (1:7, 3:7) and trust (3:5).” The verb בטוח (3:5) is used 14 times in Proverbs, four times in reference to human trust in YHWH (3:5; 16:20; 28:26; 29:25), and by contrast, of the fool who trusts instead in riches (11:28) and in his own heart (28:26). Fox


writes that Diğer implies danger: in Proverbs, trusting in anything other than YHWH is foolish, as one’s own heart or wealth is incapable of providing real protection.14 The idea of protection coheres with the amulet-like security that is implicit in the binding of the commandments around the neck.

In Prov 3:1, 3, the heart is mentioned three times in connection with faithfulness to the commandments. This three-fold reference to the heart strengthens the link with Deut 6:5-9, where loving YHWH with the whole heart is explicitly connected to keeping the commandments. Prov 3:6 subtly reinforces this idea with its reference to acknowledging YHWH “in all your ways” (圊לחתינ ובורא; cf. Deut 6:7: ובלתך וב老師ך). It is significant that Prov 3:9 speaks of honoring YHWH with one’s wealth, which corresponds to the rabbinic interpretation of loving YHWH with all one’s material abundance (בכלמאדך).15

After surveying the similarities between Deut 6:4-9 and Prov 3:1-12, the volume of resonance between the two passages appears to be quite high.

There are also some important distinctions between these passages. The description of “binding” (קשׁר) and “writing” (כתב) differs in two significant

14 Fox, 148-49.
15 See p.Chapter Two, 41. So also Overland, 431-32, 438.
ways. First, in Prov 3, the binding (קִשׁר) is to be done around the neck rather than upon the hand (Deut 6:8). Literary and material evidence indicates that the Deuteronomistic description reflects the ancient custom of wearing objects on the arms and forehead in order to display a person’s affiliation to his or her deity. By contrast, Prov 3:3, along with other verses in the Proverbs (1:9; 3:22; 6:21), uses the images of a necklace and tablet. According to Fox, these are metaphors for learning and its rewards, which exhort the hearer to pursue wisdom, i.e., to remember and follow YHWH’s instruction. The sage thus reinforces the link between Deut 6 and wisdom traditions.

Prov 3:3 also differs from Deut 6:9 in that the activity of writing (כתב) is to be done on the tablet of the heart, as opposed to the doorposts of the home and gates. Fox compares this verse to Jer 31:33b: “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (cf. Jer 17:1), where writing on the heart is a metaphor that connotes

16 Weinfeld, Deut 1-11, 342.

17 Fox, 84. Bernard Couroyer argues that the binding around the neck refers to pierced tablets found in Egypt which were worn about a pupil’s neck, in “La Tablette du Coeur,” RB 90 (1983): 426-28.
permanence and “the notion of education as character formation.” The sage thus focuses on the inner transformation of the student who obeys the commandment not only externally, but internally.

Similar parallels with Deut 6 are found in Prov 6:20-23:

My child (בָּנוֹ), keep your father’s commandment, and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. Bind them (כָּשְׁרוּ) upon your heart always; tie them around your neck. When you walk (הלָכָה), they will lead you; when you lie down (שָׁכֵב), they will watch over you; and when you awaken (יָרֵא), they will talk with you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life (emphasis added).

This passage is another address from parents to a child, typical of Wisdom literature, on the topic of Torah. Here, the commands are to be bound, not upon the hand (Deut 6:7), but on the heart, and tied (עָנַד) around the neck (Prov 3:3). The binding in this case has the apotropaic function of guarding the wearer against adultery, “to preserve you from the wife of another, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress” (Prov 6:24; cf. 25-33). Michael Fishbane observes that,

18 Fox, 146.
19 See Overland, 436, and Veijola, “Höre Israel!” 537, who focus on the internal aspect of the commandment.
20 Fox, 228-29.
on another level, “the theme of adultery and seduction provides the root metaphor for a wisdom tradition admonition to beware of the temptations of falsehood.” 21 The binding of the commandments thus protects the wearer from sexual immorality and the kind of foolish thinking that can lead a person in an unwise direction, away from Torah.

The actions of walking, lying down, and rising up of Deut 6:7 are repeated here in order; the first two agree verbatim with Deut 6, whereas the third substitutes קוא for קים. It is striking that, in 6:22, the commandment (מצוה) has an active role in leading, watching, and speaking to the individual: “When you walk (הלך) it will lead you; When you lie down (שׁכב) it will watch over you; And when you are awake (קום) it will talk with you” (JPS). This suggests that this verse also has in mind personified Wisdom, who was introduced in Prov 1:26-33 (cf. 3:13-18; 8:1-36) and is closely associated with the commandments (e.g. 4:4-5; 10:8) and with life (4:10; 8:35).

These passages of Proverbs are best understood as adaptations of Deuteronomy 6 using the language and themes of the sapiential wisdom.

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Proverbs 3 and 6 affirm the central covenental relation of Deut 6: the importance of uncompromising loyalty to YHWH and of keeping the commandments constantly in mind. The end result of obedience to the one God in both Deuteronomy and Proverbs is life and abundance (Deut 6:24; Prov 3:2, 10; 6:23). This adaptation of Deut 6 in Proverbs is an example of what Fishbane has called “the inner-biblical dynamic of Torah and tradition,” which both preserves ancient teaching and applies it afresh in new contexts. True wisdom and life are to be found within the Jewish tradition by renewing the sacred teaching – trusting in YHWH and keeping the commandments.

**Jeremiah**

Jeremiah uses the language of the *Shema* when he writes of the eschatological restoration of Israel. Jer 32:17-22 (Jer 39 LXX) functions as a historical prologue, proclaiming YHWH’s uniqueness as Creator and recounting YHWH’s beneficent acts as Israel’s Redeemer. But, Jeremiah laments, Israel did not *hear* YHWH after entering the Land (32:23) and committed idolatry; therefore Jerusalem will be given over to the King of Babylon (32:32-36).

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22 Fishbane, 286.
Jeremiah then foretells the re-gathering of Israel in the Land (32:37-44). Following the covenantal affirmation, “They shall be my people, and I will be their God” (Jer 32:38; cf. Ezek 37:27), YHWH proclaims that Israel will be אחד, undivided in its faithfulness to YHWH: “I will give them one heart and one way (לב אחד ודרך אחד) that they may fear me for all time” (Jer 32:39a; cf. Ezek 11:19; Ps 86:11). In a remarkable twist, the adjective واحد is now applied to Israel. The idea of “one heart” is comparable to the sense of undividedness implied in the expression בכל לבבך (Deut 6:5); even though Israel has not been faithful, YHWH will give them the unity they need to follow him steadfastly. The unity of Israel implicit in this description is also an eschatological feature of Ezekiel and Zechariah and will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven as it relates to the Johannine community.

Even more remarkable is that YHWH responds to Israel’s renewed faithfulness with another surprising reversal: “I will rejoice in doing good to them, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my

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soul” (בכל־לבי ובכל־נפשׁי; Jer 32:41; emphasis added).\textsuperscript{24} YHWH will invest his whole self in Israel to the same degree that Israel was commanded to love YHWH in Deut 6:5. In spite of Israel’s faithlessness, YHWH reaffirms his covenant faithfulness toward Israel, reversing the terms of the Shema in the process. This turnaround mimics the reversal of fortune that Israel is about to experience: YHWH’s new covenant with Israel warrants a renewed Shema.\textsuperscript{25} It will be shown in Chapters Six and Seven that Ezekiel’s oracles of eschatological restoration also include a renewed Shema, and that John’s Gospel reworks these interpretations of the Shema Christologically.

Zechariah

In what is arguably the clearest echo of Deut 6:4 in the OT, Second Zechariah ascribes oneness to YHWH: “And YHWH will be king over all the earth; on that day YHWH will be one and his name one” (יהוה אחד ושׁמו אחד; Zech 14:9). The last two words of the Hebrew text of this verse (יהוה אחד) agree verbatim with the last two words of Deut 6:4. It is particularly striking that this

\textsuperscript{24} This echo of Deut 6:5 is discussed at length by J. Gerald Janzen, “On the Most Important Word in the Shema (Deuteronomy VI 4-5),” \textit{VT} 37 (1987): 288-91; cf. Lundbom, 521.

\textsuperscript{25} Jeremiah 3:10; 24:7; 29:13 also speak of returning to YHWH or seeking YHWH with all one’s heart.

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expression irrupts into the prophetic narrative here, as it occurs nowhere else in
the OT corpus outside of Deut 6:4. In Zech 14, the meaning of the phrase reflects
its earlier use in Deuteronomy and at the same time is transformed under the
pressure of new historical circumstances.

Zechariah 14 marks the eschatological apex of Zechariah 9-14.26 After the
great eschatological battle, YHWH will be crowned King of all creation in
Jerusalem. In Zech 14:9, YHWH’s oneness is a future reality, in contrast to Deut
6:4, where it seems to be already present. This raises the question: How is it that
YHWH will be one if YHWH is already one? As we noted above, “oneness” is a
common ancient descriptor for kingship; YHWH is ָ one when he alone is
sovereign. This was the point of Deut 6:4: Israel was to crown YHWH as its one
and only king, to love and obey him exclusively and unreservedly. In Zech 14:9,
the vision of YHWH’s kingship is expanded to include the nations; they, too,
must now acknowledge YHWH as their only King.27 Zech 14:16 affirms this
point, “Then all who survive of the nations that have come against Jerusalem

26 On the eschatological features of Zech 14, see Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers in Zechariah
407-507, esp. 408-12.

27 So also Meyers and Meyers, 440; cf. Michael Wyschogrod, “The One God of Abraham and the
Unity of the God of Jewish Philosophy,” in Abraham’s Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian
shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the festival of booths.”\textsuperscript{28} The boundaries of those who proclaim YHWH as God and King are expanded to the ends of the earth, as all of humanity will recognize the God of Israel as the only God. The vision of YHWH’s worldwide kingship thus transposes Deut 6:4 into a universal key (cf. 1 Kings 8:43, 60 above).

“And his name one” ( одном). This statement alludes to the divine presence in the Jerusalem Temple. Eric and Carol Meyers explain: “Such an allusion is appropriate to the focus of this chapter on Jerusalem, as the center of the universe, wherein the Temple symbolizes the meeting place between heaven and earth as the essential characteristic of Zion.”\textsuperscript{29} Israel’s God will prevail over the idols in the Land, whose names will be cut off in the eschatological era (Zech 13:2); thus YHWH will become the sole cult-name invoked by all people.\textsuperscript{30} The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} Both Deut 6:4 and Zech 14:9 are prominent in the contemporary Jewish liturgy. Deut 6:4-9 comprises the first of three paragraphs that form the core of the \textit{Shema} liturgy, and Zech 14:9 is the final line of the \textit{Aleinu} prayer.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 440. Konrad R. Schaeffer observes that the idea of one sanctuary is a corollary to the declaration of one God and king, conforming to the Deuteronomic idea of a single sanctuary, in “The Ending of the Book of Zechariah: A Commentary,” \textit{RB} 100 (1993): 201. Chapter Seven will show that in John, Jesus has become the place where God dwells.
\item \textsuperscript{30} So also Henning G. Reventlow: “Mit der Aussage, dass Jahwe einer sei und sein Name allein gottesdienstlich angerufen wird, wird das Grundkenntnis Israels Dtn 6,4 aufgenommen (vgl. Auch Dtn 4,35; Jes 45,6), jetzt aber mit universalem Bezug,” \textit{Die Propheten Haggai, Sacharja und Maleachi} (ATD 25, 2d ed.; O. Kaiser and L. Perlit; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 126. The Canaanites, whose status will not change in the eschaton and who seem to represent a
\end{itemize}
subsequent focus on the house of YHWH (14:20-21) confirms this point. The name of YHWH represents YHWH’s presence for the people centered in one place, the Jerusalem Temple.

The eschatological worldview of Zechariah 14 may reflect an effort to cope with a sense of hopelessness generated by political and economic currents in the fifth century BCE. Jerusalem had failed to regain its former glory and continued to be a small, struggling community. The visions of earlier exilic prophets of a restored Jerusalem remained substantially unfulfilled. The prophetic response transferred these expectations to the eschatological realm, where YHWH would intervene and bring back the exiles, restore Israel with Jerusalem and the Temple as its center, and cause all of the nations to recognize YHWH as King. This chapter thus envisions a sharp reversal from the political and economic situation of the day, when it was perceived that the nations and their gods controlled present threat to Israel’s survival, may constitute a possible exception to the inclusion of all nations (Zech 14:21). See Meyers and Meyers, however, for the possibility that the Canaanites will be integrated into Israel (489-92).

31 On the historic and economic circumstances surrounding Zech 9-14, see Meyers and Meyers, 15-29.
Israel’s fortunes. Zechariah responds by interpreting YHWH’s oneness in a way that goes beyond Israel’s particularistic loyalty to YHWH; Israel and her God are at the center of the universe and the nations will soon fall in line behind them.

Zechariah 14:9 is perhaps the most significant echo of Deut 6:4 in the Hebrew Bible: it repeats and reinforces the centrality of YHWH’s oneness, which connotes YHWH’s uniqueness and kingship, and the absolute prohibition of idolatry. In Zechariah, however, this idea is given a universal application: now it is not only Israel but also the nations who owe exclusive allegiance to YHWH. Whereas many of the other allusions to Deut 6:4-5 in the Hebrew Bible take place in the narrative context of covenant renewal ceremonies, Zech 14 takes place during the final apocalyptic battle in which YHWH intervenes in human history and restores Israel and Jerusalem as the religious capital of the world. By invoking Deut 6:4 in this way, the author resolves the disparity between earlier prophetic hopes and the disappointing realities of post-exilic life in the Land. Other kings and kingdoms may wield power in the present, but one day soon,

“YHWH will become king over all the earth; on that day YHWH will be one and his name one.”

**Malachi**

Malachi 2:10 and 15 both refer to God as אחד, making this passage worthy of consideration as an allusion to Deut 6:4 (אחד occurs twice in each verse). In this section, the prophet, himself from priestly circles (Mal 2:4-6), rails against the priests, who have not been faithful teachers or practitioners of Torah:

> But you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble in the Torah...Have we not all one father (אב אחד)? Has not one God (אל אחד) created us? Why then are we faithless, a man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our ancestors? (Mal 2:8a, 10-11; translation mine).

The translation “one God” is derived from אל אחד rather than יהוה אלהי אחד. This is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where the expressions אלהי אחד and אב אחד are used of God (see also Malachi 1:6, where YHWH is Israel’s father; cf. Deut 32:6).³³

The historical setting of the book illumines the author’s references to divine oneness. Malachi is usually dated to the postexilic period, between the

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³³ Mal 2:10 is also the only instance in the LXX in which the expression θεὸς εἷς appears. Matt 23:9 and John 8:41, where the words “one” and “father” are also applied to God, provide striking parallels to this verse (see Chapter Five and Six respectively).
late sixth and early fifth century BCE.\(^{34}\) Malachi 1:2-5 suggests that the people are suffering economic hardship, perhaps due to drought or other poor agricultural conditions (3:9-11). They accuse YHWH of violating the covenant and understand themselves to be under a curse. Covenant is a key theme in Malachi and the language of blessing and cursing ties the book to Deuteronomy (e.g. Mal 3:6-12; Deut 28).\(^{35}\) Malachi shifts the blame to the people themselves, specifically, the priests. The author castigates the latter for offering unacceptable sacrifices, which demonstrate their faithlessness to YHWH and the covenant.

In Malachi 2, the prophet takes on the issue of divorce and intermarriage. In his view, such acts evince faithlessness both to YHWH and to fellow Israelites. Covenant (ברית) is mentioned twice in this chapter (Mal 2:10, 15). For the author, fidelity to YHWH is inextricably bound to the issue of divorce: YHWH does not accept the priestly sacrifices because some priests (and perhaps non-priests as well)\(^{36}\) have divorced their Israelite wives and married foreign wives, “the


\(^{35}\) Several studies have argued that Deuteronomic traditions underlie Malachi; see Peterson, 32-33, 197.

\(^{36}\) Petersen maintains that all Israelites, not just priests are involved, 195.
daughter of a foreign god” (Mal 2:11b; cf. vv. 14-16). This reference to foreign
gods equates intermarriage with idolatry.\footnote{So also Hill: “[T]he ‘abomination’ of intermarriage with non-Hebrews has implications of religious compromise with the idolatrous cults of these aliens,” 229. This idea is made explicit in Mal 2:11 LXX: καὶ ἐπετήδευσεν εἰς θεοὺς ἀλλοτρίους.}

The language of divine oneness breaks suddenly into this prophetic
remonstrance against the Temple priesthood. Malachi appeals to YHWH’s
oneness in his condemnation of the people’s actions, implying that faithfulness to
the one YHWH is inseparable from faithfulness to one’s covenant companion.\footnote{חברתך ואשׁת בריתך (Mal 2:14). The structure of the Decalogue itself links the commandments concerning one’s relationship with God to those concerning one’s relationship to other Israelites. On the pairing of love of God and love of neighbor in Second Temple literature, see Dale C. Allison Jr., Resurrecting Jesus: The Earliest Christian Tradition and its Interpreters (New York and London: T & T Clark, 2005), 149-65.}

Instead of behaving as family members who share the same father, the Israelites
are dealing treacherously with one another. Israelite marriage is correlated with
the divine covenant: just as YHWH is the unique one for Israel, so each spouse is
uniquely bound to the other in the marriage covenant.\footnote{On the importance of the covenant in Malachi, see Steven L. MacKenzie and Howard N. Wallace, “Covenant Themes in Malachi,” CBQ 45 (1984): 549-63.}

Malachi views
undivided loyalty as essential both to YHWH and to one’s human covenant
partner. As a corollary, faithlessness in the human sphere is understood to
constitute faithlessness to God as well. Malachi connects covenant faithfulness to YHWH’s oneness.

Malachi 2:15 contains the language of oneness as well: “Did not one (תָּהָא) [God] make her? Both flesh and spirit are his. And what does the one (תָּהָא) [God] desire? Godly offspring. So look to yourselves, and do not let anyone be faithless to the wife of his youth.”  

Interpreters have understood both instances of תָּהָא in 2:15 to refer either to a human unity or to God; grammatically, תָּהָא could be the subject or the object of the verb עָשָׂה. It seems likely, however, given the proximity of 2:10, where תָּהָא is used twice of God, that God is the subject of the act of creation in 2:15a. It is also possible that תָּהָא in 2:15 bears a double meaning: the one God who created male and female also intended them to be one (Gen 2:24). This idea coheres with the sense of 2:10, where the author correlates exclusive allegiance to the one YHWH with fidelity to the marriage


41 One God (NRSV, NJPS; Hill; Petersen); one humanity (ASV); one God (15a) and one humanity (15b; ESV). Markus Zehnder argues at length that both linguistic and contextual considerations point to תָּהָא referring to God in both instances; see “A Fresh Look at Malachi II, 13-16,” VT 53 (2003): 224-250; so also Anthony J. Guerra, Romans and the Apologetic Tradition: The Purpose, Genre and Audience of Paul’s Letter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 88-94.

42 Zehnder points out the possibility of a double meaning here (246).
covenant. Malachi stresses bilateral loyalty; exclusive faithfulness to YHWH is mirrored in marriage, and faithlessness on the human level is equated with faithlessness to God.

Mal 2:2 supports the idea that the author has the *Shema* in mind, as refusing to hear YHWH or honor YHWH with one’s heart will bring the covenant curses upon the people: “If you will not *hear*, if you will not put it on the *heart* to give glory to my name, says YHWH of hosts, then I will send the *curse* on you and I will curse your blessings; indeed I have cursed them, because you do not put it on the *heart*” (Mal 2:2; translation mine). Divorce from Israelite wives and marriage to daughters of foreign gods has severely damaged the covenant with YHWH. YHWH will turn the curse into a blessing if the people repent (Mal 3:6-12), echoing the promise of Deut 28.

In sum, Malachi draws upon the unity of God in Deut 6:4 to link intermarriage with idolatry, as he chastens the people for violating the covenant with YHWH. If an Israelite cannot be loyal to his one spouse, then he is not loyal to the one YHWH. By invoking Deut 6:4 in this way, Malachi also demonstrates an understanding of the Decalogue that says that loyalty to the one God has
implications for relations in the human sphere.\textsuperscript{43} As was the case in Jeremiah and Zechariah, unity among the people is relevant to the covenant with YHWH. This will be a significant factor in the oneness of John’s community of disciples as well.

\textbf{Summary and Conclusions}

Biblical writers respond to new challenges to the covenant by drawing upon the language and themes of the \textit{Shema}. The notion of YHWH’s uniqueness and the command to love YHWH and keep his commandments are honored as the core message of the Deuteronomistic history and many of the prophetic writings. In Joshua and 1 and 2 Kings, farewell speeches of Joshua and David mirror that of Moses in Deuteronomy, with their exhortations to stand firm in the covenant with YHWH. These speeches emphasize YHWH’s uniqueness and the necessity to love or turn to YHWH with all of one’s heart and soul. 2 Kings 23 holds up Josiah as a model for what it means to turn to YHWH with all the heart, soul, and strength. Some psalms reflect the centrality of love for YHWH. Proverbs 3:1-12 and 6:20-23 interpret the \textit{Shema} in the language of wisdom traditions.

\textsuperscript{43} See n. 38, this chapter.
Jeremiah and Zechariah both construe Deut 6:4 eschatologically and anticipate a time when Israel will be regathered in the Land. Jer 31-32 envisions Israel united as one under a new covenant while Zech 14:9 looks forward to a time when YHWH’s oneness will be acknowledged by both Jews and Gentiles. Both of these passages will play a key role in John’s Gospel. In Zechariah, the restoration of Israel will be complete when the exiles return and when all people recognize and worship YHWH in the Jerusalem Temple as King over all the earth. Zechariah universalizes the message of YHWH’s oneness to include all people while restricting YHWH’s presence to Jerusalem. The author thus enlarges YHWH’s reign and transforms Israel’s social and economic woes into religious and political triumph.

Malachi’s use of the language of YHWH’s oneness transforms it along interpersonal lines. When the people complain that YHWH is responsible for their social and economic hardship, the prophet reverses the blame, laying it at the feet of the priests who have divorced their Israelite wives to marry foreigners. Malachi’s message communicates that a people for whom YHWH is one ought to be faithful to one another. To do otherwise will ensure that they continue under the curses of the covenant.
The themes of the *Shema* – hearing/obedience, the uniqueness of YHWH, love, and life – continue to be paramount to those who chronicle and interpret Israel’s history and theology within the OT canon. Various OT authors in various settings turn to this text to exhort the people to maintain the covenant with YHWH. Throughout the course of Israel’s history, in new historical, political, and economic circumstances, various authors apply Deut 6 to new situations to encourage, admonish, and fan the hope that Israel will someday be restored as a nation in the Land. The *Shema* was thus a living text, central to Israel’s identity, throughout the period in which the Hebrew Bible was written.
Chapter Four: The Shema in Second Temple Literature

Introduction

This chapter will examine the use of the Shema in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period. The methodology developed in the previous chapter will be applied to this literature, in passages that share one or more of the key words and themes of Deut 6:4-5: hearing/obedience, God’s oneness, love or some form of devotion to God with all the heart, soul, or strength. It will also be noted when an author’s use of the Shema is linked to secondary themes that often accompany the Shema in the Hebrew Bible: life, keeping the commandments, covenant renewal, witness to the nations, or the literary device of the two-level drama, in which the Shema is reinterpreted for new social or historical circumstances. Texts that refer to the practice of binding commandments on the arm and forehead or upon the doorposts and gates (Deut 6:6-9) will be discussed as well.

Writings will be studied within the following categories in the following order: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, and Josephus. In the conclusion of this chapter, general observations will be made in regard to these writings as a whole. Because many works within the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, as well as all the writings of Philo and Josephus, were
composed in Greek or are only extant in a Greek translation, questions about
verbatim agreement with the text of the Hebrew Bible will have to depend
largely on versions of the LXX. It is often impossible to know whether the
authors of these writings were consulting a particular version of the LXX or
relying upon their memory of a Hebrew text. These uncertainties will be pointed
out along the way, acknowledging that some allusions are more secure than
others.

The Shema in the Apocrypha

Tobit

Tobit contains several key features of Deut 6:4-9 and draws upon some of
the broader themes of the Deuteronomic covenant. The book was composed in
the second or third century BCE while reflecting events of the Assyrian captivity
of the eighth century BCE, and shows an awareness of Jewish wisdom traditions
(e.g. 4:5-19; 12:8-10; 14:8-11).¹ The author portrays the main character, Tobit, as a
righteous sufferer who is ultimately healed and vindicated by a just God. Tobit’s
piety is expressed in terms of his obedience to the commandments of the Torah,

such as providing for the poor and burying the dead, and the reader is encouraged to follow Tobit’s example. On one level, the book describes the fate of an individual; on another, the main character represents the nation of Israel as a whole and the suffering of the people during their exile and dispersion among the nations (esp. Tobit 13 and 14, discussed below). Thus Tobit, like John’s Gospel, is a two-level drama. Following in the Deuteronomic covenantal tradition (e.g Deut 30:1-5), the author of Tobit writes to explain his own suffering and the suffering of the nation as God’s just punishment for disobedience to the covenant and to encourage his readers with the hope that God will vindicate them as a nation if they repent and keep the commandments.

There are five discernable echoes of Deut 6:5 in Tobit, words or phrases that refer to loving God or being mindful of God with all one’s heart, soul, or strength. What is most impressive is not so much each individual allusion to Deut 6, but the cumulative force of all five passages coupled with the literary and theological context of Deut 6. In a description of his own exemplary piety – here, his adherence to the dietary laws even when his fellow Jews eat the food of the Gentiles – Tobit declares, “And I remembered God with all my soul” (ἐμεμνήμην 2 Nickelsburg, 33.)
τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ μου; Tobit 1:12; translation mine). Similarly, when Tobit sets out to invite a needy Israelite to his Pentecost banquet, he commands his son to search for someone “who is mindful of God with all his heart and bring him and he shall eat together with me” (ὅς μέμνηται ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄγαγε αὐτόν καὶ φάγεται κοινῶς μετ’ ἐμοῦ; Tobit 2:2; translation mine; emphasis added). Tobit’s religious devotion along with the piety he seeks in others is described in the language of Deut 6:5, and he is rewarded with favor and prosperity according to the blessings of Deuteronomy 28-30 (Tobit 1:13; cf. Deut 7:12-14). Thus in the first two chapters of Tobit, the author employs the first two terms of Deut 6:5, demonstrating that his idea of covenantal piety is closely linked to the Shema.

3 Citations of Tobit will be drawn from the longer recension found in Codex Sinaiticus and translations will come from the NRSV unless otherwise noted. For discussion of the priority of Sinaiticus and the complicated history of the manuscript transmission of Tobit, see Fitzmyer, 3-17, and Robert J. Littman, Tobit: The Book of Tobit in Codex Sinaiticus (Leiden: Brill, 2008), esp. xix-xxv.

Note that the NRSV translates ψυχή as “heart” in Tobit 1:12. As discussed above (47-48), the three terms in Deut 6:5 have a broad range of meaning. Fitzmyer’s translation obscures the allusion altogether: “Because I was duly mindful of my God,” 99.

Littman points out the reference to Deut 6: “Deuteronomy 6:4 [sic] begins ‘And you love Yahweh, your God, with all your heart,’” (56) but he does not elaborate on how this illuminates this passage of Tobit; cf. his comment on 2:2: “This is a translation of the sentiment in the shema “You shall love your God with all your heart,” 64.

4 Fitzmyer points out that Tobit’s actions are in compliance with Deut 16:9-12, which requires an Israelite to invite a poor person to share in the Pentecost meal (133). This underscores the importance of Deuteronomy for the author; cf. Fitzmyer, 36, 47.
Toward the end of the book, after Tobit’s blindness is healed, he recites a hymn of praise to God, directing his fellow Israelites: “[T]urn to him [God] with all your heart and with all your soul, to do what is true before him, then he will turn to you and will no longer hide his face from you” (ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ; Tobit 13:6; emphasis added).

Here, Tobit’s use of the Shema reflects the author’s belief that the traumatic circumstances of the Exile were a direct result of failure to honor the covenant on a national level. Repentance, a renewed pledge of allegiance to the divine king, and obedience to his commands, will usher in a new age of divine favor and restore the nation to the Land.

The final reference to Deuteronomy 6 comes during Tobit’s farewell speech, delivered to his sons before his death (14:3-11). As was the case in the final orations of both Moses and Joshua, Tobit emphasizes the life-or-death consequences of keeping or forsaking the covenant with Israel’s God. The setting, however, is new: it is not the entrance into the Land, marking the end of Egyptian bondage and wilderness wanderings, but rather the end of the Exile

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5 Littman writes, “[ὅταν ἐπιστρέψητε] …This phrase is reminiscent of the words in Deut 30:2-3, as well as the word of the shema in Deut 6:5,” 150.

Tobit’s piety has been rewarded with healing and long life; Israel’s healing is also a present hope, envisioned as a return from the Diaspora and the presence of a glorified Temple. Israel’s restoration will result in the turning of the nations to God (14:6-7). The conversion of the nations is reminiscent of Zechariah’s universalism: “And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day, the Lord will be one and his name one” (Zech 14:9). Although Tobit does not use the language of oneness, it is clear that, for him, the God of Israel is the only true deity, while the gods of the nations are idols (14:6). Like Zechariah, Tobit uses Deut 6 eschatologically:

All the Israelites who are saved in those days and are truly mindful of God will be gathered together; they will go to Jerusalem and live in safety forever in the land of Abraham, and it will be given over to them. Those who sincerely love God (οἱ ἀγαπῶντες τὸν θεὸν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ) will rejoice, but those who commit sin and injustice will vanish from all the earth (Tobit 14:7; emphasis added).

Here, the phrase “in those days” evokes the eschatological language of the prophets. For Tobit, in the eschatological era, prosperity and life will flow to those who love God whereas death and destruction will follow those who forsake God and God’s laws. Fitzmyer observes that “Tobit’s thinking sums up
'the great Deuteronomic equation,' viz. that those who love God and fear him will be rewarded, whereas those who do not will suffer.”⁷ R. J. Littman identifies Deut 6:4-5 as the heart of this equation, which is reflected in Tobit 14: “This sentence [Tob 14:7] relates the fundamental theology of Deuteronomy and the *shema*: Love and obey God and he will bestow blessings; disobey and he will pour curses on you.”⁸ The expression “those who love God” appears not only in Tobit, but in other Jewish literature of the Second Temple period, where it denotes those faithful Jews who are committed to the covenant. Examples include Sir 1:10, 2:15, 16; Bel 1:38; 1 Macc 4:33; Jub 23:31; Ps Sol 4:28; 6:6; 10:3; 14:1: cf. Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; James 1:12; 2:5; and 1 John 4:20, 21; 5:2. In many instances where this phrase is used, other features of the *Shema* and/or the Deuteronomic covenant are also present. Surveying a broad sample of the literature of this period, “those who love God” is a kind of shorthand for an author’s view of individuals and groups who are faithful to the covenant.

⁷ E.g. Deut 6:13; 10:12; 28:58, 63; Fitzmyer, 332. Similarly, A. Di Lella: “[I]t is appropriate and accurate to speak of the great Deuteronomic equation: To love Yahweh = to fear him = to keep his commandments. This same equation is reflected in Tob 14:6-7, 9,” 384.
Further links with Deuteronomy 6 reinforce the argument that the *Shema* is of special significance to the author. Tobit instructs his sons to teach their children the commandments (cf. Deut 6:7), and to be mindful of God and bless his name with all their strength (ὅλῃ τῇ ἰσχύι αὐτῶν, 14:8). It is striking that the expression ὅλῃ τῇ ἰσχύι αὐτῶν occurs here, as it completes the author’s use of the three terms of Deut 6:5 (cf. 13:6, cited above). The only other occurrence of all three terms in the OT outside of Deut 6:5 is found in 2 Kings 23:25, where ἰσχύς is used in place of δύναμις (Deut 6:5 LXX; cf. Mark 12:30, 33; Luke 10:27). The use of all three terms reinforces the importance of Deut 6 for the author and shows Tobit to be a person of exemplary piety.

After a long life, Tobit receives an honorable funeral (14:11). Tobit’s piety is thus rewarded; his commitment to the covenant, to the commandments, to the love of God with heart, soul, and strength, and to teaching the commandments to his children, vindicates him in his death. His son Tobias lives to hear of the destruction of Nineveh, and thus Israel as a nation is vindicated as well.

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9 The idea of being mindful of God (ὡςιν μεμνητέον τοῦ θεοῦ, 14:8) appears twice elsewhere in Tobit and functions as a kind of cipher for covenant obedience (4:5; 14:19). Di Lella observes that the author of Tobit borrows his “theology of remembering” from Deuteronomy, where the verb זכר is used 14 times in a religious sense (384-85).
In summary, the author of Tobit interprets the Exile as the result of Israel’s failure to keep the Mosaic commandments in his own day. He takes up the language of Deuteronomy 6 to urge the people to return to YHWH and renew their allegiance to the covenant. The author uses the key themes of Deut 6:5 in an exhortation to Jews of the Diaspora to remain faithful to their covenantal obligations in the midst of a Gentile world and to foster hope for a return to the Land.

Judith

Several of Deuteronomy’s key themes are present in the book of Judith, along with one clear allusion to Deut 6:5. The story itself, written in Greek during Hasmonean times,\(^{10}\) dramatizes the idea that God is Israel’s protector, as long as the people serve him only. God’s uniqueness is challenged by Nebuchadnezzar, who demands worship as a god (Judith 3:8; cf. 6:2). The author writes that the priests “cried out to the Lord with all their might (ἐκ πάσης δυνάμεως) to look with favor on the whole house of Israel” (Judith 4:15; emphasis added). The phrase ἐκ

πάσης δυνάμεως is similar to the third term of Deut 6:5 LXX, substituting πάσης for ὅλης.\textsuperscript{11}

The narrative setting of this expression supports its identification as an echo of Deut 6:5; not only is it a response to a specific challenge to God’s uniqueness, it appears in a key moment in the narrative, when obedience to the covenant will prove essential for the ongoing survival of the people (cf. Judith 5:17-20). As was the case in Tobit, the nation’s troubles are due to sin (5:17, 18; 11:10). In accord with Deut 6:4-5, the author affirms God’s uniqueness and exhorts his readers during a time of trial to direct their worship to God alone (8:20; 9:14).

**Sirach**

Three echoes of the *Shema* are clustered in Sirach 1, a poem about personified Wisdom. After the author discusses Wisdom’s divine origins, he states: “One is wise, greatly to be feared, sitting upon his throne – the Lord” (ἐἷς ἐστιν σοφός φοβερὸς σφόδρα καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ κύριος; 1:8; translation

\textsuperscript{11} The fact that the wording does not correspond exactly to the LXX may indicate that the author knows another Greek version, or that he is recalling the Hebrew text from memory and translating it on his own. The LXX tradition itself contains variants of the first term, καρδία in LXX A and διάνοια in LXX B.
There is strong evidence to suggest that this use of εἷς constitutes an allusion to Deut 6:4. First, in Sirach 1:8, εἷς modifies κύριος as it does in Deut 6:4 LXX: κύριος εἷς ἐστιν. Second, both in Deuteronomy and in its ancient Near Eastern context, oneness is linked to divine kingship. This is also the case in Sirach 1:8b, where “the one” is king over all creation and lavishes wisdom “upon those who love him” (τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν; Sir 1:10b); the Shema also speaks about loving God (Deut 6:5). In this passage, God is uniquely wise, the One who created and is sovereign over Wisdom itself. Finally, and quite significantly, the word אחד appears again in a Hebrew manuscript of Sirach 42:21 from the first half of the second century BCE, found at Masada: “The might of His wisdom is

\[\text{12}^\text{According to the Prologue, the author wrote the book in Hebrew and his grandson translated it into Greek, probably toward the end of the second century BCE (Nickelsburg, 64). While there are Hebrew manuscripts extant for much of Sirach, there is none for Sir 1-3:5, so it is impossible to know if the wordUnity was present. Some Greek mss place κύριος with the next clause, resulting in the following reading: “The Lord, he created her…” (Sir 1:9a; my translation). Even if one were to divide the sentence this way, κύριος is still the most likely antecedent of εἷς. The NRSV, Skehan and Di Lella, and Box and Oesterley use the division proposed here; see Patrick W. Skehan, The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes, Introduction and Commentary by Alexander A. Di Lella (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987), 136, and Box and Oesterley, APOT 1.318.}

\[\text{13}^\text{See Chapter Two, 34-36.} \]
established, from everlasting He is the same [one] (אחד הוא מעולם).” 14 Like Sirach 1:8, 42:21 expresses God’s unique sovereignty over Wisdom and all creation.

The second allusion to the Shema in Sirach 1 strengthens the connection with the Shema: “He lavished her [wisdom] upon those who love him” (τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν; Sir 1:10b; emphasis added). The command to love God is found in the Shema (Deut 6:5) and the proximity of this phrase to the theme of God’s oneness (Sirach 1:8) creates a strong link between Sirach 1 and the Shema. As in Tobit, those who love the one God are those Israelites who are faithful to the covenant and keep God’s commandments.15 According to the author, they will receive an abundance of wisdom, which Sirach aligns closely with the Torah: “If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the Lord will lavish her upon you” (Sirach 1:26; cf. 24:23); “The whole of wisdom is fear of the Lord, and in all wisdom there is the fulfillment of the law” (Sirach 19:20). For Sirach, the


15 So also Skehan and Di Lella, 139. Some Greek mss read “those who fear him” instead of “those who love him.” Skehan and Di Lella observe that the reading suggested here better explains the addition of the following sentence at this point in some Greek mss: “Love of the Lord is ennobling wisdom; to those to whom he appears he apportions it, that they may see him” (ibid., 136, 139).
commandments of Torah are the source of true wisdom and the wise will obey them. The importance of keeping the commandments links Sirach 1 even more closely with the Shema, where loving God is to be expressed by obedience to the statutes of Torah (Deut 6:6-9).

The third echo of Deut 6 in this passage comes in the admonition at the end of Sirach 1: “Do not disobey the fear of the Lord; do not approach him with a divided heart” (μὴ ἀπειθήσῃς φόβῳ κυρίου καὶ μὴ προσέλθης αὐτῷ ἐν καρδίᾳ δισσῇ (Sir 1:28; alt. trans.; emphasis added). It seems highly probable here, that – given the previous references to God’s oneness and love for God – the idea of approaching God with a divided heart expresses the antithesis of loving YHWH with one’s whole heart, as spoken of in the Shema (cf. Sir 2:2, 13). To approach God with a divided heart is to reject Wisdom, whose full expression is found in the Torah: Wisdom is found in loving the one God and keeping the commandments.

The link between Wisdom and Deut 6:5 is also manifest in Sirach 2, where the author twice associates those who fear the Lord – those who are wise – with

16 Skehan and De Lella (146) speculate that the idea comes from Ps 12:3 MT/12:2 NRSV: “They utter lies to each other; with flattering lips and a double heart (בלב ולב) they speak.” But the context of Sir 1:28 and of Deut 6 favors the interpretation presented here.
those who love the Lord (οἱ ἀγαπῶντες αὐτὸν; Sir 2:15, 16). Sirach 2:15-16 states:

“Those who fear the Lord do not disobey his words, and those who love him keep his ways. Those who fear the Lord seek to please him, and those who love him are filled with his law” (emphasis added). Those who love God keep the commandments: this is precisely what is found in the Shema, where loving God is not an expression of emotion but a pledge of whole hearted loyalty and obedience to Israel’s king. To be wise is not only to fear the Lord, but to love the Lord, and to love the Lord is to keep his commandments.

In Sirach 6:24-26, the author beckons the reader to take up Wisdom’s yoke, putting Wisdom in the place that God occupies in Deut 6:5:

Put your feet into her fetters, and your neck into her collar. Bend your shoulders and carry her, and do not fret under her bonds. Come to her with all your soul, and keep her ways with all your might (ἐν πάσῃ ψυχή σου πρόσελθε αὐτῇ καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ δυνάμει σου συντήρησον τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτῆς; Sir 6:26, emphasis added).17

In rabbinic literature, the notion of taking up the yoke of the Torah is commonplace (e.g. m. Avot 3:6; cf. Sir 51:26; Matt 11:29-30). In fact, m. Ber 2:2 states that the reference to reciting the Shema precedes the reference to the

17 See Skehan and Di Lella, 194, and Box and Oesterley, APOT 1.336, who also recognize the allusion to Deut 6:5.
requirement to keep the commandments so that a person “may first take upon him the yoke of the kingdom of heaven and afterward take upon him the yoke of the commandments.” To recite the Shema is to take up the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, to make God King. Only after doing so is one obligated to take upon oneself the king’s commands. For Sirach, one takes up the yoke of Wisdom by studying and keeping the Mosaic commandments (e.g. Sir 6:37). Like the Shema, Sir 6 also emphasizes the importance of teaching future generations (Deut 6:7; Sir 6:34-37). The link between Wisdom and Torah may reflect a Sitz im Leben not unlike that of Prov 3, where Israelite sages translate the covenantal idea into the language of popular discourse in order to exhort fellow Israelites in a contemporary way not to abandon ancient traditions.18

Sirach 7 contains an extended allusion to Deut 6:5:

*With all your heart* (ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ σου) honor your father,
and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother...

*With all your soul* (ἐν ὅλῃ ψυχῇ σου) fear YHWH,
and revere his priests.

*With all your might* (ἐν ὅλῃ δυνάμει) love (ἀγάπησον)
your Maker,

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18 Pp. 68-73.
and do not neglect his ministers (Sir 7:27, 29-30; emphasis added).19

These lines appear in a section on relations with members of one’s household, including friends, wives, slaves, cattle, daughters, parents, priests, the poor, and the sick. All three terms from Deut 6:5 LXX – καρδία, ψυχή, and δύναμις – appear in order. καρδία is used in reference to one’s parents, while ψυχή and δύναμις relate to God and the priests. The way that Sirach applies a term for God to parents coincides with his view in that “whoever forsakes a father is like a blasphemer, and whoever angers a mother is cursed by the Lord” (3:16). Reverence for one’s heavenly Father is inextricably bound to the stipulation in the Decalogue that pertains to honoring one’s earthly parents.

The command to love appears only with the third term, the imperative to love with all one’s strength. It is parallel to the command to fear the Lord in the previous line; this juxtaposition reflects the author’s fusion of wisdom tradition and Torah. It is significant that the third term relates to provision for the priests, as this coheres with the rabbinic interpretation that loving YHWH with all one’s

19 Sir 7:27 is missing from the Hebrew mss. Box and Oesterley (APOT 1.340) along with Skehan and Di Lella (206) consider this a case of homoioarchton.
strength signifies with one’s wealth or possessions. It seems likely that, in this passage, Sirach is adapting his teaching to the literary form of the wisdom poem and concretizing the injunction in Deut 6:5.

There are two other single verses in Sirach that echo Deut 6:4-5. The first is found in an encomium of David, whom the writer eulogizes along with other biblical figures: “In all that he did he gave thanks to the Holy One, the Most High, proclaiming his glory; he sang praise with all his heart (ἐν πάσῃ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ), and he loved (ἠγάπησεν) his Maker” (Sir 47:8; emphasis added). This statement acknowledges David as a king who fulfilled the command of Deut 6:5, and is thus a role model for the wise. Finally, in praise of Josiah, Ben Sira proclaims: “He kept his heart fixed on the Lord (κατεύθυνεν πρὸς κύριον τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ); in lawless times he made godliness prevail” (Sir 49:3; emphasis added).

20 Pp. 45-46. It is also possible, as Nickelsburg suggests, that Sirach taught the children of the Jerusalem aristocracy, who would have approved of the idea of honoring and providing for the priests (56). Note that Sirach 43:30 uses ἰσχύς instead of δύναμις (Deut 6:5 LXX): “When you exalt him, summon all your strength (ἐν ἰσχύι), and do not grow weary, for you cannot praise him enough” (emphasis added). The presence of ἰσχύς here and in Tobit 14:8 witnesses to its use in interpreting Deut 6:5 prior to the New Testament and provides a precedent for its appearance in Mark 12:30, 33 and Luke 10:27.

21 Skehan and Di Lella note the connection with Deut 6:5 without any discussion of the way the allusion functions in Sirach (206-7).

22 Box and Oesterley (APOT 1.496) and Skehan and Di Lella (526) also acknowledge this as a reference to Deut 6:5.
added). The use of καρδία here certainly lacks the volume of the other allusion discussed above. It is striking, however, that 2 Kings 23:25 the account of Josiah, is perhaps the strongest echo of Deut 6:5 in the OT: “Before him there was no king like him, who turned to YHWH with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him” (emphasis added). For this reason, it is possible that here in Sirach’s eulogy of Josiah, he assumes his readers will recall the Shema and its echo in 2 Kings 23.23

To summarize, Sirach draws upon the themes of Deut 6:4-5 to instruct the youth of his generation. The Shema is at the center of the author’s understanding of the covenant and is adapted to his didactic purposes. For the author, true wisdom is found in the covenant, and loving one’s Maker is lived out in honoring one’s parents, supporting the priests, and keeping the Mosaic commandments. Wisdom is thus fused with Torah in a way that is both cosmic in scope – ranging back to the time of creation (1:4; 24:3) – and yet is also able to guide the obedient Israelite, the one who loves God, in the affairs of the present day. At a time when Greek culture and philosophy were beginning to attract the

23 So also, Skehan and Di Lella, 543.
hearts and minds of some Jews, the author appeals to his readers to hold fast to their ancestral way of life.

**Baruch**

The core of Baruch’s message is a reframing of Deut 6:4-5, a renewed call to Israel to hear, to worship YHWH only, and to obey the commandments of life that were given by Moses. In a passage bearing some affinities with Sirach 24, Baruch 3:9-4:4 describes the Torah as God’s gift of Wisdom (esp. Baruch 4:1; cf. Sir 24:23). The poem begins: “*Hear O Israel* (ἀκούε Ισραηλ’) the commandments of life; hearken to learn wisdom!” (Bar 3:9; translation and emphasis mine). As noted previously, the imperative “Hear O Israel” is not unique to Deut 6:4, but the connection between hearing and the commandments here is striking, and seems to evoke the context of Deut 6:4-9 and the covenant. This link is reinforced when the author goes on to describe the death and destruction that follow, because the people had abandoned the life-giving commandments of the covenant (e.g. 3:10; 4:1).

24 Chapter One, 27.
Hearing plays a key role throughout Baruch. Baruch 1 and 2 contain numerous references to the people’s refusal to hear the voice of the Lord (1:18, 19, 21; 2:5, 10, 22, 24, 29); the author attributes the present suffering of the nation to the Deuteronomistic curses that subsequently befall them (1:20). The author admonishes the people for serving other gods (1:22) and rejecting YHWH’s unique claim upon them, the claim epitomized in Deut 6:4. As noted above, this reflects a common theme in the literature of this period, that rebellion against the covenant has resulted in God’s just punishment – the Exile – but that repentance and a return to Torah, the true source of Wisdom, will restore Israel’s relationship with God.

In regard to the historical setting of the book, Nebuchadnezzar (1:9, 11, 12) may be a cryptic reference to Antiochus IV, which would date the book to 164 BCE, following the rededication of the Temple.  

Like Tobit, Baruch is a two-level drama: current events are interpreted in light of an earlier, seminal period in Israel’s history. The setting reflects the author’s perspective that Torah obedience will lead to national restoration for Israel and judgment upon her oppressors.

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Prayer of Azariah

The core message of Israelite covenant theology resurfaces in an addition to the Greek and Latin versions of Daniel, in which the pseudonymous author, Azariah, recognizes that the sin of the people has resulted in the Exile, but that confession of sin and reestablishing the covenant with God will restore the nation. As part of his plea to reinstate the covenant, Azariah prays: “And now with all our heart (ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ) we follow you; we fear you and seek your presence” (1:18). Although the author speaks of following, not loving with the whole heart, it is instructive to recall that, in the Hebrew Bible, expressions utilizing “the whole heart” are linked with a range of verbs related to seeking or serving God, or to keeping the commandments or entering the covenant. The context of 1:18, that is, the re-commitment to the Mosaic covenant, ties this verse to Deut 6:4-9. Significantly, the verse is followed by a proclamation of God’s uniqueness in 1:22: “Let them know that you alone are the Lord God, glorious over the whole world.”

Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature, 28-30. There are no indications in the work that allow dating with any precision. W. H. Bennett speculates that the original setting may have been early in the Maccabean Revolt, *APOT* 1.625-37 (629).

Chapter Two, 44.
Bel and the Dragon

In this short addition to the Greek version of Daniel, which is primarily a parodic polemic against idol worship, Daniel seeks to demonstrate the folly of idolatry to King Cyrus of Persia and the Babylonians. When Daniel receives a miraculous gift of food in the lion’s den, he prays, "You have remembered me, O God, and have not forsaken those who love you (τοὺς ἀγαπῶντάς σε; Bel 1:38; emphasis added). Expressions such as “those who love you” also appear in Tobit and Sirach, where it was noted that they function as shorthand for those faithful Israelites who adhere to the Mosaic covenant. This conclusion is applicable to the presentation of Daniel, who strictly upholds Jewish piety (v. 5, 25). There is no mention in this book, however, of the Law or of specific practices or beliefs, other than God’s absoluteness. After finding Daniel still alive after seven days, the king proclaims the uniqueness of Daniel’s God: “You are great, O Lord, the God of Daniel, and there is no other besides you!” (Bel 1:41). This last phrase, while not an echo of the Shema, recalls Deut 4:35: “YHWH is God, there is no other besides him.” Bel and the Dragon emphasizes God’s uniqueness in

29 In other mss, Daniel speaks of God in the third person; see W. Davies, *APOT* 1.652-64 (663, n. 38).

30 *APOT* 1.652-64, esp. 656-57.
contrast to the gods of the Diaspora, and underscores the importance of remaining faithful to the covenant for those in Exile.

1 Maccabees

Composed in Hebrew between 104-63 BCE, 1 Maccabees champions the Hasmonean dynasty. A possible allusion to Deut 6:5 is placed in the mouth of Judas Maccabeus as he prays to God before battle: “Strike them [the Gentile armies] down with the sword of those who love you (ἀγαπώντων σε), and let all who know your name praise you with hymns” (1 Maccabees 4:33; emphasis added). Immediately after praying, Judas’s army wins the battle and Judas and his brothers cleanse and rededicate the Temple to God. As noted above, the expression “those who love God” originates in Deut 6:5 and refers to those Jews whom an author considers to be faithful to God and the Mosaic covenant. In 1 Maccabees, “those who love God” are those who stand with the Hasmonean dynasty, whom the author credits for restoring peace and independence to Israel. But they are also those who are committed to the religious ideals that demand wholehearted allegiance to the one God and the proper worship of him.

31 For introductory matters, see Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature, 114-117.
32 On First Maccabees as Hasmonean propaganda, see Nickelsburg, 117.
The politics of the revolt are framed in religious terms, specifically, those of the
Shema and its broader, covenantal context.

4 Ezra

In 4 Ezra, which was written in the aftermath of the destruction of
Jerusalem toward the end of the first century CE, there are faint echoes of Deut
6:4. In 4 Ezra 9, Ezra recalls the deliverance from Egypt and the revelation of the
Law. Before receiving his fourth vision, Ezra prays: “[A]nd you said, ‘Hear me, O
Israel, and give heed to my words, O descendants of Jacob. For I sow my law in
you, and it shall bring forth fruit in you, and you shall be glorified through it
forever’” (4 Ezra 9:30-31; emphasis mine). Michael E. Stone suggests that “my
words” refers back to 4 Ezra 3:19-20:

Your glory passed through the four gates of fire and
earthquake and wind and ice, to give the law to the
descendants of Jacob, and your commandments to the
posterity of Israel. Yet you did not take away their

33 On dating and other introductory matters, see B. M. Metzger, “The Fourth Book of Ezra,” in
OTP 1.517-559 (520); cf. Michael E. Stone, Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra
(Hermeneia; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1990), 9-10. The destruction of Jerusalem seems
to have been the catalyst for the main character’s struggle with questions of theodicy.

34 Although 4 Ezra was probably written in Hebrew and then translated into Greek, there is no
Greek or Hebrew version of these verses extant by which to compare precise verbal

35 Stone, 306.
evil heart from them, so that your law might produce fruit in them.

The problem is that 4 Ezra 9:30 purports to quote the words of God to Ezra, whereas the speech in 4 Ezra 3 quotes Ezra’s words to God. This makes the passage in 4 Ezra 3 an unlikely candidate for the reference.

Deut 6:4 better serves the author’s purposes. Stone observes that “Hear, O Israel” is a common expression in Deuteronomy, which the present study has also pointed out, but he fails to note the relationship between Deut 6:4-9 and 4 Ezra 9:30-31: the former passage marks the moment that establishes the importance of obedience to YHWH and YHWH’s commandments, while the latter looks back at that same moment and laments Israel’s disobedience. This is a pattern manifest in much of the Apocryphal literature: the present suffering (Exile and foreign rule) is God’s just punishment for Israel’s disobedience. Like other writings, 4 Ezra expresses this pattern in Deuteronomic terms: (1) using the language “Hear, O Israel” in connection with the Law, and (2) expounding upon the deadly consequences of Israel’s disobedience (e.g. 9:32-37), which recalls the curses of Deut 27-28.

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36 Chapter One, 27.
This pattern is repeated in 4 Ezra 14, where Ezra is portrayed as a second Moses in a narrative styled in imitation of the call of Moses. Ezra is told to disappear for forty days and return with new tablets upon which the Law will be written (the old Law has been burned). Before departing, Ezra gathers the people and addresses them: “Hear these words, O Israel. At first our ancestors lived as aliens in Egypt, and they were liberated from there and received the law of life, which they did not keep, which you also have transgressed after them” (4 Ezra 14:28-30; emphasis added). He goes on to reprove his generation for their sin, which he blames for the destruction that the nation has recently experienced. From the author’s point of view, the present-day Jewish community is suffering the consequences of the Deuteronomic curses, which they incurred by their disobedience to the Law. Ezra, however, offers hope to the people: “If you, then, will rule over your minds and discipline your hearts, you shall be kept alive, and after death you shall obtain mercy” (4 Ezra 14:34; emphasis added).

This reference to hearts and minds may have its origins in Deut 6:5, as the words καρδία and διάνοια both appear in the LXX tradition. This is merely a

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Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature, 292.
tentative suggestion, since there are no extant Greek manuscripts to consult for verbal similitude. It is not unreasonable, however, to conjecture that 14:34 is a loose paraphrase of Deut 6:5.\textsuperscript{38} The fact that these words constitute an exhortation to keep the Law (14:30) strengthens the association with the \textit{Shema}. The call to hear, the reference to the heart and mind, the strong covenantal overtones, and the promise of life for obedience and death for disobedience make it is possible to speak of this passage as evocative of the \textit{Shema} and the concomitant call to keep the commandments. For 4 Ezra, the answer to the question of theodicy in the wake of the second destruction in 70 CE is similar to that of the first in 586 BCE: in order to reverse the curse for breaking the covenant, the people of Israel must hear and obey the Law, as called for in the \textit{Shema}, while they await the new Zion.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{4 Maccabees}

In this work, written in Greek during the mid-first century CE,\textsuperscript{40} the author emphasizes the triumph of reason over the emotions: divine reason

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{38} καρδία in LXX A; διανοία in LXX B.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Cf. Nickelsburg, 294.
\item \textsuperscript{40} See Nickelsburg (226), on the location as Syrian Antioch. Nickelsburg sees 4 Maccabees as a response to Caligula’s efforts to install a statue in the Temple.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
undergirds a steadfast commitment to Jewish law and customs, even in the face of death. There are two possible allusions to Deut 6:5. The first follows the narrator’s encomium on the martyr Eleazar: “But as many as attend to religion \((\varepsilonυσεβεια)\) with a whole heart \((\epsilonξ \, \omegaλης \, \kappaαρδιας)\), these alone are able to control the passions of the flesh, since they believe that they, like our patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, do not die to God, but live to God”” (4 Maccabees 7:18-19; emphasis added). Although the reference is not to loving God with the whole heart but commitment to religious piety, the author immediately links the expression to the martyrs’ commitment to God. The language of piety \((\varepsilonυσεβεια)\) is typical of this author,\(^{41}\) who has combined the traditional Deuteronomic idea of absolute allegiance to God with the Greek ideal of self-control.

The second possible reference to Deut 6:5 follows the martyrdom of the seven brothers (4 Macc 8-12). The author summarizes: “Each of them and all of them together looking at one another, cheerful and undaunted, said, ‘Let us with all our hearts \((\epsilonξ \, \omegaλης \, \tauης \, \kαρδιας)\) consecrate ourselves to God, who gave us our lives \((\tauω \, \deltaοντι \, \tauας \, \psiυχας)\), and let us use our bodies as a bulwark for the law’”” (4 Maccabees 13:13; emphasis added). In both 4 Macc 7:18 and 13:13, the author

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\(^{41}\) 42 of the 72 occurrences of the word in all of biblical and apocryphal literature occur in 4 Macc.
interprets the expression “with all the heart” as a willingness to die as a martyr rather than apostatize from the Jewish faith. In 13:13, it is possible that the use of ψυχή reflects the notion of loving God with all one’s soul. The use of the Shema as the last words of a dying martyr became well known in rabbinic literature, beginning with the famous episode of the death of R. Akiba in the middle of the 2nd century CE.42 The story Akiba’s death focuses specifically on loving God with all one’s soul. If 4 Macc 7:18 and 13:13 are indeed allusions to Deut 6:5, it marks the first literary use of the Shema in the context of martyrdom and predates the death of R. Akiba by a generation or two; it predates the rabbinic accounts of Akiba’s death by even more. It also paves the way for the Johannine Jesus to fulfill the Shema by laying down his life in obedience to the commandment of God (John 10:11, 15, 17-18; 15:13; cf. 1 John 3:16).

Summary: The Shema in the Apocrypha

Several apocryphal works reinterpret the message of Deut 6:4-5 within a new historical situation – often the Exile or the destruction of Jerusalem. The authors frequently attribute the nation’s woes to Israel’s failure to keep the commandments. They express the hope that repentance and obedience to the

42 On the use of the Shema in reference to the death of R. Akiba, see Chapter Two, 41.
Law will reverse the Deuteronomic curses rightly imposed upon the nation and restore the people’s fortunes.

Tobit and Sirach draw upon Deut 6:4-5 more extensively than the other apocryphal writings. While Sirach contains the only references to God’s oneness, both speak of “those who love God,” denoting those who fulfill their covenantal obligations, a phrase that appears in other works as well. Many writers struggle with the problem of theodicy arising from the Exile and see the nation’s sin as its chief cause. They exhort their readers to repent and return to Torah observance in order to mitigate God’s punishment and restore the nation to the Land.

Writers use key features of Deut 6:4-5 – hearing, love for God, the whole heart, soul, and strength – to motivate their fellow Jews to renew their commitment to God and the covenant wherever they reside. Sirach and Baruch draw upon traditions which associate wisdom with Torah. 4 Ezra’s apocalyptic visions include a forceful call to the people to hear and obey the commandments. By utilizing the Shema and its connection to the Mosaic covenant, some seek to bring about an end to the Dispersion. In the case of 4 Ezra and 4 Maccabees, the concern is to make sense of and alleviate the suffering incurred by the Destruction of 70 CE.
The *Shema* is used to stimulate the corporate memory of the people, as it encapsulates their past, present, and future. In the past, YHWH had loved and redeemed Israel and required absolute fidelity to the commandments. In the present, the people suffer the consequences of disobedience to this requirement – exile and rule by foreign powers. In the future, if Israel will hear and obey the ancient message and return to YHWH their King with all their heart, soul, and strength, there is hope that they will be restored and renewed, that they will receive the promise of life once again.

Like many writers of apocryphal works, the author of John also reinterprets the *Shema* for new historical circumstances: the exile of Johannine disciples from the Jewish community after 70 CE. As discussed in Chapters Six and Seven, however, the Johannine *Shema* focuses the themes of Deut 6:4-5 upon the person of Jesus. At stake is not a return to the Mosaic Law, but rather obedience to Jesus’ commandments. Jesus is the true source of life, not the Law.

**The Shema in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha**

**Introduction**

What is immediately striking about the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (OTP) as a whole is the relatively extensive use of εἷς to describe or stand for
God: while there are two uses of εἷς in reference to God in Sirach – the only such references in all of the Apocrypha – it occurs 20 times in the OTP in eight different writings. The idea of a God being “one” is not unique to Judaism; it is also present in Hellenistic religion, where there is a tendency to unify the pantheon under one highest deity or to speak of one of the gods as εἷς θεός. As early as the 6th century BCE, Xenophanes of Colophon wrote: “There is one God (εἷς θεός), greatest among gods and men, unlike mortals in either shape or thought.” The writer continues to acknowledge other gods alongside the one god. Similarly, the acclamation Εἷς Ζεὺς Σαράπις, which is attested in the first century CE, is accompanied by other expressions that demonstrate belief in the existence of other members within a pantheon of deities.

Nicole Belayche, scholar of pagan religion in the Roman Empire, writes:

43 Apoc. El. 2:12, 50 and Odes Sol. 41:15-16 are not included here, because they are too late to have been an influence upon the Fourth Gospel.

44 Erik Peterson’s oft-cited study, Heis Theos: Epigraphische, forgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur antiken “Ein-Gott”-Akklamation (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926), maintains that the use of the formula εἷς θεός in Jewish apologetic literature of this period is not dependent upon Deut 6:4, but upon Hellenistic religious language. His sources, however, are Christian, not Jewish, and are late, dating from the 2nd to 6th century CE.

45 In Eusebius, Praeparatio Evangelica XIII, 13.36.

The term *heis theos*, “alone/unique,” signifies that the divinity was alone of its type, unmatched…, capable of achieving the impossible, but not one god as such. It is the equivalent of a relative superlative form, like *hypsistos*, designed to affirm the unequalled characteristics of the god celebrated.47

This use of the word *heis* is similar to the use of *echad* in Deut 6:4, where, as discussed in Chapter Two, *echad* refers to YHWH’s uniqueness and incomparability, not to numerical oneness.

For Stoics, the manifold gods worshipped as different beings are all manifestations of one divine power. One could argue that Stoicism approaches monotheism, since the Logos and other manifestations (πνεύμα, πρόνοια) are divine agents who execute the divine will.48 Ramsay MacMullen summarizes: “It


47 Belayche, 166.

appears thus to be a part of the intellectual heritage of the times that god might be one; all 'gods,' simply his will at work in various spheres of action.”\textsuperscript{49}

MacMullen goes on to observe that Jews, Christians, and adherents of Greco-Roman religion all perceived a pyramid of powers above them. Whereas polytheists believed that these entities all had different degrees of power, for Jews in the Second Temple period, powers such as angelic beings or the Logos of Philo were not independent deities, but subordinate to God.

While Deut 6:4-9 was a text that affirmed loyalty to YHWH only, Jewish belief in God’s uniqueness was also able to accommodate belief in intermediary beings. Larry W. Hurtado catalogues a number of quasi-divine figures in Second Temple literature, including personified divine attributes (e.g. Logos, Wisdom), exalted patriarchs (e.g. Enoch, Moses), and principal angels (e.g. Michael, Yahoel, Melchizedek).\textsuperscript{50} Hurtado concludes that, although none of these figures was worshiped, speculation about angels and other divine agents provided a conceptual framework in Christianity for accommodating the veneration of Jesus

\textsuperscript{49} MacMullen, 87.

alongside God without compromising monotheism.\textsuperscript{51} Hurtado argues that the worship of Jesus was therefore a Christian mutation in Jewish monotheistic tradition, a novel development based on the religious experience of early Christians.\textsuperscript{52} This innovation resulted in what Hurtado calls the binitarian shape of early Christian devotion, the worship of God’s chief agent, the exalted Christ, alongside of God. According to Hurtado, early Jewish believers in Jesus squared this devotion with their monotheistic commitment by explaining Jesus’ exaltation in terms of divine agency, or more precisely, a principal agent.

Daniel Boyarin argues the opposite point, that binitarian worship of various divine beings was itself acceptable within ancient Judaism until the rabbis later rejected the idea of such intermediaries altogether.\textsuperscript{53} Basing his case


\textsuperscript{52} Hurtado, 99-124

upon rabbinic texts that condemn the presence of two powers in heaven (e.g. b. *San. 38b; m. Meg. 4:9*), Boyarin contends that because binitarian prayer is prohibited in these passages, it therefore must have existed; worship of “second gods” such as the Logos, Memra, and Metatron was only extinguished as a response to Christian claims about Jesus.

Boyarin’s evidence points to the possibility that some Jewish beliefs and practices prior to the codification of the Mishnah involved worship of an entity alongside God. Second Temple Jewish literature, however, does not apply the “one God” topos to any intermediary figure. The closest approach to such a transfer is Philo’s reference to the Logos as δεύτερος θεός (QG 2:62).\(^5^4\) YHWH is the only deity whom Philo and other Jewish writers describe as εἷς.\(^5^5\) This explains the volatile reaction in John’s Gospel when Jesus applies the word εἷς to

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55 John Barclay notes that one of key factor distinguishing Jews in the Mediterranean diaspora from non-Jews is their rejection of Gentile cults, even those centered upon one God, in *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan* (323 BCE – 117 CE) (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1996), 429.
himself (John 10:30): in spite of the acceptance of Jewish agents and intermediaries, no one is “one” but God.

It is significant for the present study that much of the Jewish literature that survives the Second Temple period, when Greek and Jewish worlds come into close contact, campaigns against polytheism and idolatry, often arguing at the same time that Moses and the Hebrew scriptures are the source of Greek wisdom. During this period, Jewish writers employed the *Shema* to argue both points: the superiority of the worship of the one God over polytheistic worship, and the derivation of Greek ideals from the Hebrew Scriptures. The *Shema* is used to exhort Jews to remain faithful to the Mosaic covenant and commandments and to commend Judaism to their Gentile neighbors. For Jewish pseudepigraphal writers of the Second Temple period, the εἷς θεός formula and its variations serve as a bridge between Jewish and pagan beliefs. Both Jews and Gentiles speak of one God; for pagans, εἷς θεός communicates that a divinity is *sui generis* among the gods, but for Jews, the one God is King, the sole Creator of the world, the only God who should be heeded and loved, and in whose commandments is life. For Jewish writers, the God of Israel is the only εἷς θεός.
This section will focus on passages in OTP writings that share one or more of the key words or themes found in the *Shema*: hearing/obedience, God’s oneness or kingship, and love for God with all the heart, soul, or strength. If one of these themes relates to keeping the commandments, covenant renewal, or the promise of life, it strengthens the connection to the *Shema*, which is linked to these themes in its Deuteronomic context.

**Sibylline Oracles**

The *Sibylline Oracles* (*Sib. Or.*) mention εἷς θεός eleven times, which amounts to nearly half of its occurrences in the OTP. In the *Sib. Or.*, εἷς θεός is primarily used in warnings against idolatry. It is frequently aligned with the themes of creation and life (Prologue 1:94-95; 3:11; 23:3). In *Sib. Or.* 3:11-12, εἷς θεός reflects the notion of divine kingship: “There is one God, sole ruler, ineffable, who lives in the sky (εἷς θεός ἐστι μόναρχος ἀθέσφατος αἰθέρι ναίων), self-begotten, invisible, who himself sees all things.” In addition to aligning God’s oneness with his kingship, this passage also highlights God as Creator within a

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polemic against idolatry (3:11-35). This kind of polemic is typical of Jewish writings of this time; in the case of Oracle 3, Egypt in the 2nd century BCE.57

The theme of creation is associated with God’s oneness throughout the OTP and Philo. In the examples cited below, it becomes clear that for some Jewish writers, God’s oneness is especially revealed in God’s role as Creator, as it places God above the pagan deities. εἷς θεός also appears in passages resembling wisdom literature (Sib. Or. 2:126), in messages of judgment (2:219), and in warnings against idolatry (3:11; 4:30; 5:284; 21:7, 32).

In addition to these references to the one God, there is an allusion to Deut 6:5: “Be humble in heart, hate bitter power, and, above all, love your neighbor as yourself, and love God from the soul and serve him” (καὶ θεὸν ἐκ ψυχῆς φιλέειν, αὐτῷ δὲ λατρεύειν; Sib. Or. 8:480-482; emphasis added). The command to love God paired with love of neighbor creates a strong link with the ancient tradition connecting the two.58 This passage may be part of a Christological interpolation

57 On the date, provenance, and theological significance of the Sibylline Oracles, see John J. Collins, OTP 1.317-34; on Sib. Or. 3, see 1.354-61; cf. Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature, 162-65.

in the text.\textsuperscript{59} If so, its presence demonstrates that not only Jews, but also some early Christians valued the \textit{Shema} as a text used to promote love of God and neighbor and to combat polytheism.

**Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs**

The \textit{Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (T. 12 Patr.)}, written in Syria in Greek, contain numerous references to loving God and to devotion to God with all one’s heart and with all one’s strength.\textsuperscript{60} These tend to appear in sections in which one of the sons of Jacob, in his final words, exhorts his children to remain faithful to the covenant. These farewell speeches recall both the Deuteronomic setting of the \textit{Shema} and Tobit 14:3-11.

The following represent the clearest references to the \textit{Shema}: “Now, my children, love the Lord God (ἀγαπήσατε κύριον τὸν θεὸν) of heaven and earth; keep His commandments” \textit{(T. Benj. 3:1; emphasis added)}. Here, the importance of keeping the commandments along with the reference to God as both κύριος and

\textsuperscript{59} J. J. Collins, \textit{OTP} 1.417.

\textsuperscript{60} On issues of dating, see H. C. Kee, \textit{OTP} 1.775-81, who takes the traditional view that the \textit{T. 12 Patr.} are Jewish in origin with later Christian interpolations; but for a third century CE dating, and a view that the \textit{T. 12 Patr.} have a Jewish Christian origin, see Joel Marcus, “The \textit{Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs} and the \textit{Didascalia Apostolorum}: A Common Jewish Christian Milieu?” \textit{JTS} 61 (2010): 596-626, esp. 596-98.
θεός creates a strong link with Deut 6:5. “And now, my children, I command you: 

_Fear the Lord your God with your whole heart_ (φοβεῖσθε τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας), and walk according to his Law with integrity” (T. Levi 13:1; emphasis added). Again, the connection with the Law reinforces the link to the _Shema_.

“The Lord I loved _with all my strength_ (τὸν κύριον ἠγάπησα ἐν πάσῃ τῇ ἰσχύι μου); likewise, I loved every human being as I love my children” (T. Iss. 7:6; emphasis added; cf. T. Zeb. 10:5; T. Ash. 5:4). Although _ἰσχύς_ is not found in the manuscript tradition of Deut 6:5 LXX, it is used in 2 Kings 23:25, Tobit 14:8, and the Markan _Shema_ (Mark 12:30; cf. Luke 10:27). It is possible that the author of _T. Iss._ knows of a tradition that contains _ἰσχύς_. Finally: “Throughout all your life _love the Lord_ (ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κύριον), and one another with a true heart” (ἐν ἀληθινῇ καρδίᾳ; T. Dan 5:3; emphasis added). These last two quotations both focus on love of neighbor alongside love of God, and the reference to the heart in _T. Dan_ adds an additional element of Deut 6:5.

The pairing of love of God with love of neighbor appears in Jewish literature from the Maccabean period and beyond and is used often in the _T. 12 Patr_. It also comprises the core of Jesus’ teaching, the Great Commandment. The

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61 Chapter Five, 203-05.
special emphasis upon this theme in the *T. 12 Patr.* supports the argument that they may have originated in a Jewish Christian milieu.\(^6^2\) The *T. 12 Patr.* are not apologetic literature, which tends to affirm monotheism and the divine unity (Deut 6:4); rather, their ethical and eschatological instruction exhorts the reader to love God and neighbor in fulfillment of the commandments, which the writer sees as the embodiment of wisdom.\(^6^3\)

**Aristeas**

The *Letter of Aristeas*, written in Greek between the 3\(^{rd}\) century BCE - 1\(^{st}\) century CE, contains the earliest references to phylacteries and *mezuzot* (Deut 6:8-9), along with an exhortation to meditate while lying down and rising (Deut 6:7), all of which are based upon the *Shema*. References to the *Shema* occur in a section in which the high priest, Eleazar, presents a critique of idol worship and a commendation of Jewish law (1:128-171). Throughout this section, Jewish laws, especially food laws, are presented as allegorical interpretations, symbols, and reminders of deeper truths. This is part of the author’s broader agenda to build

\(^{62}\) On the possibility that the *Testaments* are written for a Torah-observant, Jewish Christian audience, see Marcus, “Testaments,” 602-6.

\(^{63}\) Kee, *OTP* 1.780.
ideological links between Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors, and may have been inspired by Antiochus IV’s anti-Jewish policies.\textsuperscript{64} The author writes:

Moreover, upon our garments he has given us a symbol of remembrance, and in like manner he has ordered us to put the divine oracles upon our gates and doors (ἐπὶ τῶν πυλῶν καὶ θυρῶν) as a remembrance of God. And upon our hands (ἐπὶ τῶν χειρῶν), too, he expressly orders the symbol (τὸ σημεῖον) to be fastened, clearly showing that we ought to perform every act in righteousness (δικαιοσύνης), remembering our own creation, and above all the fear of God (\textit{Let. Arist.} 1:158-159; trans. H. T. Andrews, \textit{APOT} 2.109).

The symbol to be placed upon the garments probably describes the fringes that are commanded to be worn on Israelite clothing (Num 15:38-39; cf. Deut 22:12).\textsuperscript{65} In \textit{Aristeas}, the fringes function as a reminder of God, and in Numbers, of God’s commandments.\textsuperscript{66} It is significant that \textit{Aristeas} comments on a passage that is part of the \textit{Shema} liturgy, especially since Num 15 was the last of the portions of scripture to be added to the liturgy.\textsuperscript{67} Its presence here, however, along with its

\textsuperscript{64} So R. J. H. Shutt, \textit{OTP} 2.8-9.

\textsuperscript{65} So Moses Hadas, \textit{Aristeas to Philocrates} (Philadelphia: Dropsie College, 1953), 162.


mention in *Tamid* 5:1, may suggest that Num 15:37-41 was associated with Deut 6:4-9 and Deut 11:13-21 quite early.

Deut 6:9 and 11:18 mention that “these words” (הדברים האלה/τὰ ρήματα ταῦτα; Deut 6:6) are to be attached to one’s doorposts and gates. The language in *Aristeas* differs, with the divine oracles or “sayings” (τὰ λόγια) placed upon the gates and doors. The author does not specify which texts are to be used. The Qumran *mezuzot*, which will be discussed later, demonstrate the usage of a variety of texts encased in amulets, but the evidence of *Aristeas* fails to provide any clues. What does seem clear from the text is that, wherever the letter originated (probably in Alexandria), the Jewish residents affixed biblical texts to their gates and doors, probably in fulfillment of Deut 6:9. Thus for *Aristeas*, Deut 6:6-9 has meaning as both metaphor and ritual practice.

*Aristeas* also mentions attaching a sign or symbol (τὸ σημεῖον) to the hands. In Deut 6:8, the binding of words to the hand is also called a sign (καὶ ἀφάψεις αὐτὰ εἰς σημεῖον ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς σου; cf. Deut 11:18). There is no mention in *Aristeas*, however, of frontlets between the eyes. It is possible that this practice did not

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68 For the range of meaning of τὰ λόγια, see Wright, 14-21.

exist at the time and place of the writing. Benjamin G. Wright suggests that the reference to the hands in *Aristeas* may function as shorthand for the entire commandment.\textsuperscript{70} It is also possible that the author mentions the hand in particular, because he is emphasizing the act of “doing” the commandment:

“…that we ought to perform every act in righteousness (ὅτι πᾶσαν ἐνέργειαν μετὰ δικαιοσύνης ἐπιτελεῖν δεῖ).” *Aristeas* tends to emphasize the allegorical meaning behind various laws, at the same time insisting upon keeping them literally.

Here, the focus of the wearing of phylacteries is about the performing of righteousness or justice (δικαιοσύνη). Philo, Josephus, and the Dead Sea Scrolls also stress the observance of the commandments as acts of justice, where δικαιοσύνη – a word common to both the OT and Greek political philosophy – functions as a technical term for keeping the commandments; this topic will be discussed in more detail under Philo. Both *Aristeas* and Philo present the Mosaic Law in such a way that it might be viewed favorably by both Jewish and non-Jewish readers.

The author of *Aristeas* completes his discussion of the *Shema* with a reference to contemplating God while lying down and rising:

\textsuperscript{70} Wright, 23.
He commands humans also, when lying down to sleep and rising up again (καὶ κοιταζόμενος καὶ διανιστάμενος), to meditate upon the works of God (μελετᾷν τὰς τοῦ θεοῦ κατασκευάς), not only in word, but by observing distinctly the change and impression produced waking, how divine and incomprehensible the change from one of these states to the other is (Let. Arist. 1:160).

The participles in this passage are plural, but otherwise identical to those in Deut 6:7 LXX (καὶ κοιταζόμενος καὶ διανιστάμενος). In Deuteronomy, lying down and rising refers to the importance of speaking of the commandments in all times and places. In Aristeas, however, it refers to meditating (μελετάω) upon the works (lit. “preparations”) of God (κατασκεύαι). It is possible that, as Wright argues, κατασκεύη is best translated “provisions” and refers to the commandments. 71

This would tie the statement in Aristeas more closely with the biblical injunction.

In sum, Aristeas witnesses to the importance of the Shema in the 2nd century BCE, not only as a text that refers to the Shema, but also as a witness to practices which are rooted in the Shema. Aristeas presents the Mosaic Law in a manner that is compatible with Hellenistic values, such as justice. Such an apologia would have been useful to Jews who straddled two worlds.

71 Wright, 24. The reference to the change from the waking and sleeping is somewhat puzzling in this context, but may refer to the ongoing discussion of dreams in Greek philosophy, e.g. Aristotle’s “On Dreams” (cf. Philo, De Somniis).
Jubilees

Originally written in Hebrew in Palestine, mid-2nd century BCE, possibly as a response to the policies of Antiochus IV, *Jubilees (Jub.*) recapitulates the Mosaic Law in hopes that contemporary Jews will return to strict Torah observance.\(^72\) Echoes of the *Shema* in *Jubilees* focus on loving or turning to God with all one’s heart and soul. In one instance, all three of the terms for loving God in Deut 6:5 are used:

> And afterward they will turn to me from among the nations *with all their heart and with all their soul and with all their might*. And I shall gather them from the midst of all the nations. And they will seek me so that I might be found by them. When they seek me *with all their heart and with all their soul*, I shall reveal to them an abundance of peace in righteousness (*Jub.* 1:15).

The text of *Jubilees* at this point is not extant in Greek or Hebrew, making it impossible to determine verbatim agreement in this case.\(^73\) Nevertheless, the above passage seems to contain a clear reference to Deut 6:5; in the Hebrew Bible, only Deut 6:5 and 2 Kgs 23:25 include the three terms together.

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\(^72\) For background on *Jubilees*, see O.S. Wintermute, *OTP* 2.35-50; Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 73-80.

\(^73\) On the text of *Jubilees*, see Wintermute, *OTP* 2.41-43.
It is significant that this echo of the Shema is found in Jubilees in an oracle of eschatological renewal reminiscent of the Hebrew prophets. Chapters Six and Seven will discuss the centrality of the Shema in OT prophecies of restoration: a new or renewed covenant lies at the center of these texts, and the Shema is at the core of the covenant. Jubilees reads: “And with all my heart and with all my soul I shall transplant them as a righteous plant. And they will be a blessing and not a curse. And they will be the head and not the tail. And I shall build my sanctuary in their midst, and I shall dwell with them” (Jub. 1:16-17; cf. “And I shall love them,” 1:25). The promise that YHWH will love Israel with all his heart and soul, a reversal of Deut 6:5, also appears in Jer 32:41: “I will rejoice in doing good to them, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.”

Jubilees evokes the Shema in a way that indicates the author’s awareness, not only of the Shema itself, but also of its echoes in Jeremiah, reversing the terms of Deut 6:5 so that now YHWH promises to love Israel and to manifest that love in the gathering of Israel from among the nations. The notion that YHWH’s sanctuary and dwelling would be among his people (Jub. 1:17) is also found in prophecies of eschatological restoration (e.g. Ezek 37:26-28; cf. John 1:14).

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74 Chapter Three, 75-77.
In *Jub.* 1:15-25, the author writes of a return to God after a period of apostasy. This return is characterized by keeping the commandments: “And their souls will cleave to me and to all my commandments. And they will do my commandments” (*Jub.* 1:24). The emphasis on keeping the commandments further links this passage of *Jubilees* with the *Shema*: the author deploys the *Shema* as part of an appeal to his contemporaries to return to strict obedience to God’s covenant and Law.75

The author of *Jubilees* goes on to retroject the expression “with all the heart and with all the soul” into his retelling of the patriarchal narratives. Abraham, a model of covenant obedience, celebrates the Feast of Booths “rejoicing *with all his heart and with all his soul*, he and all of those who were in his house” (*Jub.* 16:25; emphasis added). On his deathbed, Abraham says to Isaac, “Behold I am one hundred and seventy-five years old, and throughout all of the days of my life I have been remembering YHWH and sought *with all my heart* to do his will and walk uprightly in all his ways” (*Jub.* 21:2; emphasis added). Abraham blesses Jacob “*with all his heart*” (*Jub.* 22:27, 28). Jacob’s parents also bless him “*with all their heart and with all their soul*” (*Jub.* 29:20; cf. 35:12) and Jacob honors them

75 Chapter Two, passim.
“with all his heart” (35:13). Jacob is thus pictured following Abraham’s example in obeying the Law: “And he [Jacob] worshiped the LORD with all of his heart and according to the commands which were revealed” (Jub. 36:20b; emphasis added).

There are other instances in Jubilees in which love “with all the heart and soul” is used of love between humans; for example, Rebecca loves Jacob “with all her heart and with all her soul, very much more than Esau; but Isaac loved Esau much more than Jacob” (Jub. 19:31). When Leah dies, Jacob laments because “he loved her with all his heart and soul” (Jub. 36:24; emphasis added). These examples complicate the picture somewhat, as here the language of the Shema is descriptive of interactions between humans, rather than between humans and God. It is possible that author feels free to employ language generally reserved for God to describe these relationships, because they mirror the covenantal relationship with God (cf. Malachi 2:10). It is also possible that, through the influence of the Shema, “with all the heart and all the soul” became stereotyped language that was applied to all sorts of situations.

This language is also twice used negatively of Esau: Rebecca tells Isaac that Esau “abandoned us with all his heart and did evil with us” (Jub. 35:10). Jacob saw that Esau “had planned evil against him from his heart and from his whole
being so that he might kill him” (Jub. 37:24). Esau’s actions are the antithesis of proper obedience to the Law, and the author uses the language of the Shema to illustrate this point. The author uses the expression “with all the heart and soul” as part of his overall project to promote strict adherence to Jewish Law in an age of increasing Hellenization. For the author of Jubilees, turning to God with all the heart and soul, i.e. keeping the commandments, is the right response to the challenges of the day.

**Pseudo-Philo**

Like Jubilees, Pseudo-Philo (Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum or L.A.B.) was most likely composed in Hebrew in the first century CE and retells parts of the biblical story. The text, originally written in Hebrew, survives only in Latin mss derived from a Greek translation. There is one mention of the one God; it occurs when some Hebrews, including Abram, are questioned about their refusal to make bricks for the tower of Babel. They respond: “We are not casting in bricks, nor are we joining in your scheme. We know the one LORD (unum Dominum novimus), and him we worship” (L.A.B. 6:4). “One LORD” seems likely to refer to

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76 R. H. Charles translates “with his heart, and with all his soul,” *APOT* 2.69.

the Shema: the context affirms exclusive loyalty to God, and the expression “one Lord” agrees with Deut 6:4.

In the retelling of the conquest, Joshua says, “Hear O Israel. Behold I am establishing with you a covenant of this Law that the LORD established for your fathers on Horeb” (L.A.B. 23:2; emphasis added). D. J. Harrington sees this as an allusion to Deut 6:4, which is certainly possible.78 As noted in Chapter Two, however, there is more than one שמע ישראל in Deuteronomy that points to the giving of the Law and/or its strict observance.79 Certainly, by the first century, Deut 6:4 was the best known שמע ישראל in the Hebrew Bible, which increases the likelihood that this author had Deut 6:4 in mind.

Psalms of Solomon

The Psalms of Solomon (Pss. Sol.) reflect the historical crisis of Pompey’s invasion of Jerusalem in 63 BCE and the subsequent theological crisis of theodicy.80 It is likely to have been composed in Hebrew and translated into


79 Chapter Two, 27.

80 Introductory material for Pss. Sol. is found in R. B. Wright, OTP 2.640-650; cf. Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature, 203-14.
Greek and then Syriac; no Hebrew manuscripts survive. As the product of a devout community with an apocalyptic and dualistic mindset, *Pss. Sol.* places Israel’s hope in a coming Messiah who will relieve Israel’s suffering and restore her to her rightful place above the other nations. Some suffering in the present may be God’s chastening, but those whom the author deems faithful, “those who love God” (Deut 6:5), will be justified when the Messiah appears.

“Those who love God” is used four times in *Pss. Sol.* and is the only reference to the *Shema*. At the end of a scathing diatribe against those who live their lives to impress other humans, the author prays: “Lord, let your mercy be upon all those who love you” (ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀγαπῶντάς σε; *Pss. Sol.* 4:25), encouraging his readers to live to please God. In an encomium for those Jews who are faithful, the author writes “And the Lord fulfills every request from the soul that hopes in him; praised is the Lord, who shows mercy to those who love him in truth” (τοῖς ἀγαπῶντας αὐτὸν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ; *Pss. Sol.* 6:6 alt.). Similarly: “For he will straighten the ways of the righteous, and will not bend (them) by discipline; and the mercy of the Lord is upon those who love him in truth” (ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας αὐτὸν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ; *Pss. Sol.* 10:3 alt.).
The fourth instance links love for God with the commandments, strengthening its connection to the *Shema*. It also mentions life, the chief Deuteronomic blessing for obedience to the Law. The reference to life appears again in the last verse, forming an *inclusio*:

The Lord is faithful to those who love him in truth (τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀληθείᾳ),

to those who endure his discipline,
To those who live in the righteousness of his commandments,
    in the Law, which he has commanded for our life....

...The devout of the Lord will inherit life in happiness *(Pss. Sol. 14: 1, 10 alt.)*.

The author uses the expression “those who love God” to separate those Jews he deems faithful from the unfaithful; with the appearance of the Messiah, those who love God and keep his commandments will be vindicated and find relief from the suffering of the present age. Based upon the wide use of this expression in a variety of texts, often alongside other allusions to the *Shema* and to keeping the commandments, it is highly probable that “those who love God” has its origins in the *Shema*. 
Orphica

The Orphica is a Jewish work (2nd century BCE – 1st century CE) in the genre of the Greek Orphic hymns, representing Orpheus’ instructions to his son, Musaeus. This work refers to God as εἷς six times in its textual tradition:

There is an ancient saying about him:
He is one” – self-completing, and all things completed by him (Εἷς ἔστ᾽ αὐτοτελής, αὐτοῦ δ᾽ ὑπὸ πάντα τελεῖται; Orphica 1:9-10).

He is one, self-generating; all things are brought forth generated from this one (Εἷς ἔστ, αὐτογενής, ἑνὸς ἐκγονα πάντα τέτυκται; Orphica 2:6).

Therefore, though you might be inclined to say that Orpheus is part of your polytheism, he became the first teacher, proclaiming to his son Musaeus, and later to the other genuine hearers, such things concerning the one and only God (περὶ ἑνὸς καὶ μόνου θεοῦ; Orphica 3:1; cf. 3:8).

Both the shorter version (J) and the longer version use εἷς to refer to God. In the shorter version, M. Lafargue notes that “one finds familiar themes of Hellenistic

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81 On textual history and dating, see M. Lafargue, OTP 2:795-98.
82 This text is taken from the longer version of the text, using mss E and T. This same line appears in Aristobulus, Fragment 4, in a section in which the author claims that Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato “follow him [Moses] in all respects.” A. Yarbro Collins writes, “In this fragment, Aristobulus cites verses from Orpheus and Aratus to show how similar their ideas are to those of Moses” (A. Y. Collins, OTP 2:831).
83 This is the same as 1:9-10, taken from the short version (J and C).
Jewish theology: the oneness of God, who is the invisible creator and ruler of everything and who has some good purpose for the evils he brings upon people.”

It is also likely that, as with other Jewish apologies and in particular in Philo, the use of ἕις has resonances with Greek philosophy. Its use here would highlight God as Creator and promote Moses as the source of Orphic wisdom.

**Fragments of Pseudo-Greek Poets**

During the 3rd – 2nd centuries BCE, Jewish writers imitated and reworked classic Greek poetry. Their work was collected into anthologies and circulated widely as apologetic literature to demonstrate, as Harold Attridge puts it, “that Jewish tradition was the source of Greek wisdom and that the best in Greek literature was in harmony with Jewish belief.” Attridge goes on to say: “These brief fragments illustrate some of the most important themes of Jewish apologetic theology: the unity and transcendence of God, the inferiority of pagan worship and mythology, and the reality of divine justice.” A few examples are illustrative:

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84 *OTP* 2.796.
85 Attridge, *OTP* 2.821.
86 Ibid., 2.822.
If anyone says, “I am God,” apart from the One, he should set up a world equal to this and say, “This is mine.” He should not only set it up and call it “mine,” but also should himself dwell in that which he has made. For it has been made by this one (Pseudo-Pythagoras, found in Pseudo-Justin, De Monarchia 2; emphasis added).

God is one, one in very truth who fashioned heaven and the broad earth, the depth’s gray swell and the winds’ might. But many of us mortals, erring in our heart, have set up consolation for calamities, statues of gods made of stone, or figures of bronze, wrought gold or ivory (Pseudo-Sophocles, a.k.a. Pseudo-Hecateus; found in Clement of Alexandria, Protrepticus 7.74.2; Stromata 5.14.113, 2, cited by Eusebius, Praeparatio Evangelica 13.13.40; emphasis added; cf. Pseudo-Justin, De Monarchia 2 and Cohortatio ad Gentiles 18).87

These lines proclaim the unity of God, the Creator, while condemning idolatry.

Attridge comments: “The monotheistic affirmation of this first line certainly recalls Deut 6:4, although similar monotheistic affirmations can be found in syncretistic pagan sources from the hellenistic and Roman periods.”88

87 Pseudo-Justin’s introduction states: “Not only was he (Aeschylus) initiated into the knowledge of God, but also Sophocles gives an account of the sole creation of the universe and the one God thusly…”

88 Attridge, OTP 2.825, n. b.
Proclamation of the one God is used to combat polytheism while at the same time echoing popular religion. For these Jewish apologists, Deut 6:4 is the “source” of these Hellenistic religious traditions.

**Summary: The Shema in the OT Pseudepigrapha**

In studying the uses of the *Shema* in Jewish pseudepigrapha, a pattern emerges that evinces the tensions of Jewish existence in Greco-Roman society: Jewish writers rail against the worship of dead idols and impotent gods, while at the same time claiming Moses as the source of the highest Greek ideals. They battle on two fronts: to warn their fellow Jews of the dangers of idolatry, while trying impress them and their Gentile neighbors of the compatibility between Jewish and Greek values. So Jewish writers of the Second Temple period refer to God as εἷς θεός (e.g. *Sib. Or.*, *Pseudo-Philo, Orphica*) often alongside acclamations of God as Creator. εἷς θεός is coupled with exhortations to love God, keep the commandments, and love one’s neighbor; these accompanying themes strengthen the connection to the *Shema*. These authors attempt to demonstrate the superiority of the exclusive worship of their God to the polytheism prevalent in the broader culture, and to encourage Jews enamored with Greek philosophical and religious ideas to live as “those who love God,” those who are
faithful to Jewish practice and belief. So the author of *Aristeas* couches the
injunctions of the *Shema* in the metaphoric language of the broader culture, while
providing a philosophical basis for his fellow Jews to continue the ritual practices
based upon their Scriptures (Deut 6:6-9).

Writers describe Jewish religious ideals in ways they hope might find
favor in the larger society. They not only create possibilities for Jews to see that
their own laws and traditions are equal to Greek wisdom, but also allow Gentile
readers to consider Jewish tradition as amenable to the values of their world,
such as unity and justice. The *Shema* serves as a rhetorical bridge between the
two worlds: the one God of the Jews is the Creator of the world and Lord of all
people.

**The Shema in the Dead Sea Scrolls**

The sectarian literature found at Qumran is unconcerned with making a
favorable impression upon non-Jews; written primarily for insiders, it evinces a
close connection to the covenantal aspects of the *Shema*, perhaps the closest in all
of the Second Temple literature investigated in this study thus far. In
Community Rule (1QS), the Damascus Document (CD), and other writings, an
explicit link is made between entering the covenant and keeping the
commandments, phrased in terms of returning to God with all one’s heart and with all one’s soul. In the previous chapters, it was noted that beginning in Joshua and 2 Kings and extending beyond the biblical canon, scenes of covenant renewal resonate with the *Shema*, which represents the basic loyalty oath between YHWH and Israel. Similarly, entrance into the *יחד*, the Qumran community, is understood in the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) as a renewal of the Mosaic covenant, which is re-enacted twice daily.

The *Shema* is prominent in the opening lines of 1QS, which take on a programmatic character in outlining the rules of conduct for the *יחד*:  

For [the Instructor…] … for his life, [book of the Rule of the Community: in order to seek God with [all (one’s) heart and] with all (one’s) soul (נפש ובכול לב ובכול); in order to do what is good and just (ישר) in his presence, as he commanded by the hand of Moses and by the hand of all his servants the Prophets (1QS 1.1-3). 

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89 Note that the expression to “return to God (שׁוב) with the whole heart and soul also appears in Deuteronomy as an echo of Deut 6:5 (e.g. Deut 30:2, 10); cf. Chapter Two, 44.


The author of 1QS explicitly connects joining the community with seeking God with all one’s heart and soul (Deut 6:5). He also links community membership with keeping the commandments and with entering a covenant, themes related to the Shema: “And all those who enter in the Rule of the community (חרות יהוה) shall establish a covenant before God in order to carry out all that he commanded” (1QS 1.16-17a). 

The following passage illustrates how the language and themes of the Shema come together to describe membership in the covenant of the יהוה:

Whoever enters the council of the Community enters the covenant of God in the presence of all who freely volunteer. He shall swear with a binding oath to revert to the Law of Moses (תורת משה), according to all that he commanded, with whole heart and whole soul (נפש ובכול לב ובכול), in compliance with all that has been revealed of it to the sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the covenant and interpret his will and to the multitude of the men of their covenant who freely volunteer together for this truth and to walk according to his will (1QS 5.7b-10a; emphasis added; cf. 1.2-10).


93 Repetitions of this passage along with other references to the whole heart and soul include 4Q255 1.1-5; 4Q256 9.6-7; 4Q258 1.5-8; CD-A 15.7-13; 4Q306 1.10-12; 4Q375 1.1-4; 4Q385 4.1-2; 4Q397 14.13-14; 4Q398 14-17; 4Q498 6.1; 4Q504 Frags. 1-2, 2.11-14; 11Q19 54.12-13, 59.8-13.
The collocation of covenant (ברית), the Law of Moses (תורת מoses), and returning with the whole heart and the whole soul (בכל לב ובסך נפש) is strikingly evocative of the Shema and its Deuteronomic context: to join the ויה is to enter the Mosaic covenant.

The expression “those who love God” (similarly, “those who love you,” “those who love YHWH,” or “those who love YHWH’s name”), appears eleven times in the DSS. Elsewhere in Second Temple literature, this expression, derived from Deut 6:5, refers to those whom the author deems faithful to the covenant. The same is true in the DSS, where loving YHWH is bound up with keeping the commandments, as in the following example:

[...] I love you (ואהבcai) lavishly, with (my) whole heart and with all (my) soul (והבלי לב ובכל נפש) I have purified [...] [I have] imposé[d on myself not] to turn aside from all that you have commanded (1QH 7.12-14; emphasis added; cf. 8.21: for those who love you, and for those who keep your precepts…]; cf. 8.25).

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94 Instances of אהבcai include 1QHa 6.26; 4Q393 3.2; 4Q525 Frag 5.13; 11Q11 6.12; 11Q19 54.12-13; 11Q22.

95 E.g. Tobit 14:7; Sir 1:10; 2:15-16; Bel 1.38; 1 Macc 4:33; Sib. Or. 8:480-482; T. Benj. 3:1; T. Iss. 7:6; T. Zeb. 10:5; T. Ash. 5:4; T. Dan 5:3.
References to יהוה are thus closely bound to the Deuteronomic context of the Shema, which involves a pledge of loyalty to YHWH and YHWH’s commandments.

The writer emphasizes that this covenant is restricted to members of the community, “the sons of Zadok” (see 1QS 5.9 above), who alone have interpreted the Law correctly. Love for one’s neighbor, frequently paired with love for God and obedience to the Law in Second Temple literature, is limited here to other members of the sect. Initiates are to seek God with all the heart and soul “in order to love all the sons of light, each one according to his lot in God’s plan, and to detest all the sons of darkness, each one in accordance with his guilt in God’s vindication” (1QS 1.9-11; cf. CD-A 6.20-21). The covenant bond thus excludes those Israelites who are not members of the יחד. This dualism provides a link to Johannine literature, where love is generally restricted to the Father, Jesus, and Jesus’ disciples.96

The practice of blessing God at sunrise and sunset in 1QS represents another connection to the Shema:

96 E.g. John 17:23; 1 John 2:15.
At the onset of day and night I shall enter the covenant of God, and when evening and morning depart I shall repeat his precepts; ... When I start to stretch out my hands and my feet I shall bless his name; when I start to go out and to come in, to sit and to stand up (וַקִום לֶשְׁבֵּת), and lying down (לֶשְׁכַּב) in my bed I shall extol him... (1QS 10.10-11, 13b-14a; cf. 4Q256 10.1-2; 4Q258 9.9-10; 4Q260 3.2-3; 1QM 14.12-14). 97

The notion of entering the covenant of God in the morning and evening comports with rabbinic dicta concerning recitation of the *Shema* in the morning and evening, which the rabbis call “taking upon oneself the yoke of the kingdom of heaven” (m. Ber. 2:2). Moreover, three of the verbs in 1QS 10.14 – שׁכָּב, יִשָּׁב, קִום – agree with Deut 6:7, with the last two verbs in reverse order. This verbal agreement cements the link between 1QS and the *Shema*. The finding of numerous *tefillin* at Qumran containing the *Shema* attests that the *Shema* was not only central to the sectarian notion of covenant, but also that rituals associated with Deut 6:6-9 were observed (cf. Jos. A.J. 4.212-13 and Let. Aris. 158-60). 98

97 Daniel K. Falk suggests that there was a liturgy at Qumran adapted and developed from traditions associated with the Temple, where the *Shema* was recited, in *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 27; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 47-52; 123-24.

98 On *tefillin* from Qumran, see Yigael Yadin, *Tefillin from Qumran* (XQPhil 1-4) (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1969); R. Fagen, “Phylacteries,” *ABD* 5.368-71; Geza Vermes, “Pre-Mishnaic
addition, the Shema may have been recited in the morning and evening as a prayer in the יחד.99

Another significant link between 1QS and the Shema is found in the early lines of Col. 1:

All those who submit freely to his truth will convey all their knowledge (דעתם), their energies (כוחם), and their riches (הונם) to the Community of God in order to refine their knowledge in the truth of God’s decrees and marshal their energies in accordance with his perfect paths and all their riches in accordance with his just counsel (1QS 1.11-13; emphasis added; cf. 3.2).

It is highly suggestive, as some scholars have noted, that two of the three terms used above, energies (قوة) and riches (זるのは), correspond to early Jewish interpretations of מאה, the third term in Deut 6:5.100 For example, m. Ber 9:5


99 Falk argues that the presence of tefillin at Qumran, in which the Shema appears along with the Decalogue (as is also the case with the Nash papyrus, cf. Deut 6:4 LXX, and m. Tamid 5:1), indicates the inclusion of the Decalogue with the Shema in prayer (112-16). He also maintains that the mention of blessing God’s name suggests that blessings were recited along with the Shema; cf. Jos. A.J. 4.212.

100 Ruzer, 92-94; so also C. T. R. Hayward, “‘The Lord is One’: Reflections on the Theme of Unity in John’s Gospel from a Jewish Perspective,” in Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism, 138-154.
interprets the phrase "and with all thy might – with all thy wealth."\(^{101}\)

The passage in 1QS may suggest that the communal sharing of property at Qumran had its origins in an interpretation of the Shema’s command to love God with all one’s material possessions. In addition, the use of כוח may represent another interpretation of מאד as loving God with all one’s strength. The LXX reflects this view by translating מאד as δύναμις.\(^{102}\)

Serge Ruzer also suggests that the reference to knowledge in 1QS 1.11-12 (דעת) corresponds to the appearance of διάνοια in the Synoptic tradition (Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30, 33; Luke 10:27).\(^{103}\) The LXX tradition attests to διάνοια for the first term of Deut 6:5, לאב (LXX B); the Synoptic Gospels, however, use διάνοια to explicate the final term of Deut 6:5. It is possible that the Synoptics attest to an earlier Jewish tradition, found in the DSS, in which διάνοια is used to interpret מאד. As Ruzer puts it: “[T]his passage [1QS 1.11-13] … provides an explanation

\(^{101}\) For a more detailed discussion of the terms of Deut 6:5, see Chapter Two, 41-45

\(^{102}\) So Ruzer; however, he incorrectly states that “The LXX uses the word ἰσχύς here meaning ‘strength’ or ‘might’” (93, n. 38), whereas Deut 6:5 LXX A and B have δύναμις.

\(^{103}\) Ruzer, 93-94.
for the appearance of דעת (διάνοια) and כח (ἰσχύς) side by side in the citation of Deuteronomy 6:5 preserved in the Gospel record.”

A final point about the Shema in the DSS concerns the community’s self-designation, יחד, which illustrates the importance of unity for the group at Qumran. יחד is a cognate of the adjective רוח, which is only used as a noun twice in the OT (Deut 33:5; 1 Chron 12:18). C. T. R. Hayward suggests that the oneness of the יחד is linked to the Shema; as a יחד, the Qumran community is gathered as one in obedience to their one king, YHWH. Hayward bases his argument on targumic interpretations of Deut 33:5: “There arose a king in Jeshurun [ישׁר], when the leaders of the people assembled -- the united [יחד] tribes of Israel.” Hayward writes: “What this verse suggests [to the Targumic interpreters] is that the rulership of God or Moses over Israel is in some sense dependent on the leaders of Israel and its tribes being at one.” In other words, Israel’s oneness brings about YHWH’s kingship.

104 Ibid., 94.

105 On the biblical origins of the noun יחד, see Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Sectarian יחד – A Biblical Noun,” VT 3 (1953): 133-40, where he argues that יחד is the equivalent of ברית or קהל.

106 Hayward, esp. 143-49 (see n. 101 above).

107 Ibid., 144. Hayward’s Targumic references are found on 144-45.
Hayward also points out that some targumim of Gen 49:1-2 demonstrate the oneness of the tribes of Israel alongside a proclamation of the Shema. In these passages, the patriarch Jacob is on his deathbed and calls his sons to bless them. When Jacob expresses anxiety that one of them may fall into idolatry, as did Ishmael and Esau, the twelve answer as one (כחדא כולהון), reciting Deut 6:4: שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד. This passage thus enacts the gathering of Israel together as one, presaged in Deut 33:5. Hayward sees a similar move being made in 1QS. The ייחד is to be one, corresponding to the one YHWH who is to be sought with the whole heart and soul. So also, the ייחד is to be יישר, seeing itself as the true יישר蟠:

The Yahad is explicitly commanded here [1QS 1.1-3] to do what is yashar, “upright”, before God, perhaps as befits a group which is conscious of being yeshurun = Jeshurun, Israel as that nation over whom the Divine Kingship is exercised when it is truly a Yahad…Thus Yahad at Qumran refers at one level to a particular mode of organization of the group as Israel, gathered together with their “heads” to make effective the words of the Shema…From the very outset, their foundational Rule makes their primary aim explicit: they are so ordered so as to make

effective in the world the central commands of the 
Shema: to love the One God with a whole heart, soul, 
and strength, so as to manifest his Unity, his Oneness, 
which is nothing less than Israel’s duty. To this end 
they apply to themselves the Hebrew word Yachad, a 
noun rare in the Scriptures, but which they make very 
much their own.109

The attractiveness of Hayward’s interpretation is that it coheres with the idea 
found in the Hebrew prophets, Philo, and Josephus that the one God creates one 
people (e.g. Jer 32:37-41; A.J. 4.200-201; Spec. 1:52; Virt. 1:35). Hayward’s 
argument, however, never clearly establishes a connection between targumic 
readings of Deut 33:5 and the Qumran community. It is uncertain whether or not 
these interpretations existed when the sect flourished or that the covenanters had 
access to them. Moreover, it is unclear whether the king in Deut 33:5, the main 
text upon which Hayward’s argument relies, is God or Moses. If the latter, it 
seriously diminishes the connection between this verse and the Shema, where יחד 
signifies YHWH’s kingship.110 Hayward’s solution is imaginative, but it does not 
adequately explain the choice of יחד for the name of the DSS community, nor 
does it link the יחד to the Shema.

109 Hayward, 146, 148.
110 Hayward discounts the significance of this point, 144.
The absence of a solid link between the Ḥad and the Shema does not detract from the importance of the Shema at Qumran. Those who entered the community entered a covenant and used the language of the Shema to do so, returning to God “with all the heart and soul.” Adherence to the covenant meant keeping the commandments as interpreted by their own leaders (e.g. “sons of Zadok,” 1QS 5.7b-10a). Ritual piety included praying morning and evening, and is described in a way that agrees verbatim with Deut 6:6-9. Interpretations of the Shema known also from rabbinic writings demonstrate that some of these traditions pre-dated the rabbis by centuries. And finally, the group designates itself as Ḥad.

Whatever its genealogy, this idea of corporate unity alongside the divine unity recalls similar statements in the Hebrew prophets, Philo, and Josephus. The close relationship between divine and corporate unity will emerge again in the writings of Philo and Josephus.

**The Shema in Philo**

Harry A. Wolfson opines that Philo never quotes Deut 6:4 as a proof text because he does not need to: the Shema was well known, as it was confessed
twice a day in prayer.\textsuperscript{111} Wolfson’s statement is problematic, however; while Philo may not cite Deut 6:4, his works contain over 80 allusions to the \textit{Shema}. Many of these refer to God as \(\varepsilon \iota\zeta \theta\varepsilon\omicron\omicron\zeta\). As mentioned earlier, Erik Peterson claimed nearly a century ago that the use of \(\varepsilon \iota\zeta \theta\varepsilon\omicron\omicron\zeta\) in Hellenistic Jewish apologetic literature was not dependent upon Deut 6:4, but upon Hellenistic religious language.\textsuperscript{112} The present study will contend that Philo’s use of \(\varepsilon \iota\zeta \theta\varepsilon\omicron\omicron\zeta\) and similar formulas is, in fact, rooted in Deut 6:4. Philo deploys the trope of God’s oneness for two major purposes: (1) to denounce atheism, pantheism, and polytheism, and declare the one Creator alone to be worthy of worship, and (2) to commend Judaism and the Mosaic Law to his readers as superior to all other religious systems and political philosophies.\textsuperscript{113} Philo’s comments on loving God (Deut 6:5) and his description of Jewish practices related to the \textit{Shema} (Deut 6:7-9)

\textsuperscript{111} Harry A. Wolfson, \textit{Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam} (2 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), 2.95. Against Wolfson, Alan Mendelson argues that the \textit{Shema} was not known to Philo as the centerpiece of Jewish Prayer, in “‘Did Philo Say the Shema?’ And Other Reflections on E. P. Sanders’ [sic] \textit{Judaism: Practice and Belief},” \textit{SPhilo Annual} 6 (1994): 160-70, esp. 165-67. The main point for the present study is the importance of the \textit{Shema} to Philo as a text, not as a prayer.

\textsuperscript{112} P. 121 above, n. 44.

\textsuperscript{113} So also Anthony J. Guerra, “The One God Topos in Spec. Leg. 1.52,” \textit{SBL Seminar Papers} 29 (1990): 149. Guerra notes that Aristobulus, Philo, and Josephus were able to join the chorus of Greek philosophers such as Xenophanes and Plato, who critiqued the anthropomorphism and polytheism prevalent in their day.
serve these two ends as well. These foci would have been particularly relevant to Philo’s main audience, Jews like himself, well educated in both Judaism and Greek philosophy.114

Philo’s references to the *Shema* are divided here into five categories for the sake of analysis. In the first category, which comprises the majority of Philo’s allusions to the *Shema*, the adjective ἕν (and occasionally ἕν)115 is used to stand for or modify θεός (and twice κύριος). In the second, Philo uses ἕν to modify some other substantive that stands for God, e.g. one Father, one Husband, one Cause. Third, on several occasions, Philo aligns the one God with another “one,” e.g. one individual, one Temple, one Law. Fourth, there are a few references to loving God or to other features of Deut 6:5. And fifth, in *Spec.* 4:137-42, Philo discusses at some length the Jewish practices of his day which are rooted in Deut 6:6-9.

The first category includes references to the *Shema* in which Philo incorporates the formula εἷς θεός or simply εἷς. The clearest example is given first

114 On Philo’s audience, see David T. Runia, “Philo, Alexandrian and Jew” in *Exegesis and Philosophy: Studies on Philo of Alexandria* (Hampshire, Great Britain: Variorum, 1990), 3-5. Runia notes that while Philo had his own people in mind, Greek and Roman intellectuals were attracted to Judaism and were also in his purview; cf. Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974-80).

115 E.g. *Leg.* 2:2; *De Cher.* 1:87; *Deus* 1:11; *Mut.* 1:57.
and is quoted in its entirety; it comes toward the beginning of *De Decalogo*, after a lengthy condemnation of those who worship created things rather than the Creator. Philo calls them impious, who with their blasphemy attempt to silence “those who love God” (τοὺς φιλοθέους; *Decal.* 1:63; my translation; cf. Deut 6:5):

Let us then reject all such imposture and refrain from worshipping those who by nature are our brothers, even though they have been given a substance purer and more immortal than ours, for created things, in so far as they are created, are brothers, since they have all one Father (πατὴρ ἁπάντων εἷς), the Maker of the universe. Let us instead *in mind and speech and every faculty* (καὶ διανοίᾳ καὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ δυνάμει) gird ourselves up with vigour and activity to do the service of the Uncreated, the Eternal, the Cause of all, not submitting nor abasing ourselves to do the pleasure of the many who work the destruction even of those who might be saved. Let us, then, engrave deep in our hearts this as the first and most sacred of commandments, to acknowledge and honor *one God* (ἕνα...θεόν) Who is above all, and let the idea that gods are many never even reach the ears of the man whose rule of life is to seek for truth in purity and guilelessness (*Decal.* 1.64-65; trans. C. D. Yonge; emphasis added).
As Philo prepares to expound the Ten Commandments, he turns to the Shema, arguing against idolatry in its many forms.\footnote{Naomi G. Cohen, \textit{Philo Judaeus: His Universe of Discourse} (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995), 72-85, shows that for Philo and his contemporaries, the entirety of the Torah is contained within in the Decalogue.} Although Philo’s language is not identical to Deut 6:4-5, it is readily identifiable as an adaptation of the LXX: he uses εἷς twice in reference to God (once as Father; cf. Mal 2:10) and includes three terms related to love for God (cf. Deut 6:5), two of which, διάνοια and δύναμις, appear in the LXX tradition.\footnote{διάνοια appears in LXX B instead of καρδία, which is in LXX A.} Instead of ὅλος, which appears before each of the three terms in Deut 6:5, Philo uses πᾶς, and places it before the third term only. Philo’s use of λόγος for ψυχή is intriguing; the λόγος is one of Philo’s favorite concepts, which he uses 1,413 times. Naomi G. Cohen suggests that, in general, Philo draws his use of λόγος from the LXX, where λόγος often refers to the Decalogue (οἱ δέκα λόγοι; e.g. \textit{Decal.} 1:32, 154, 176) and to other commandments.\footnote{Cohen, 195-96.} Juxtaposed with διάνοια, λόγος seems to connote reason.\footnote{On the λόγος in Philo, see Wolfson 1.226-89.} Interjecting the λόγος into the Shema thus links the most important principle of Judaism, the unity of God, with Greek philosophy, which would have been an effective way to
contextualize the message of the *Shema* for an audience steeped in both Judaism and Stoic and Platonic thought. The differences in wording between Deut 6:4-5 and Philo are easily explained in terms of adaptation to Philo’s argument and audience. The *Shema*, in association with the formula εἷς θεός, is central to this passage and to Philo’s presentation of the first commandment: he uses it to critique polytheism and to enhance the appeal of Judaism to his readers.¹²⁰

Another feature of *Decal. 1*:64-65 is Philo’s association of the One God topos with the theme of God as Creator.¹²¹ Philo uses this correlation both to affirm monotheism and to fight polytheism: the unity of Creation is traced back to the unity of God.¹²² The one God/one creation motif will appear again in other passages.

A few more examples help to fill out the picture of Philo’s use of εἷς θεός:

> For he [Gaius] looked with disfavour on the Jews alone because they alone opposed him on principle, trained as they were we may say even from the

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¹²⁰ For the idea that the *Shema* is a recapitulation of the first commandment in its OT context, see Chapter Two, 25. Cohen observes that the Decalogue was Philo’s framework for classifying all of the commandments in the Mosaic Law, 72-85.

¹²¹ So also Guerra, 151.

¹²² *Opif. 1*:171, 172; *Leg. 2*:3; 3:7; *Cher. 1*:119; *Conf. 1*:144, 169, 170; *Fug. 1*:71; *Spec. 1*:30; *Virt. 1*:34, 213; *Legat. 1*:115; *QE 2*:66.
cradle, by parents and tutors and instructors and by the far higher authority of the sacred laws and also the unwritten customs, to acknowledge one God who is the Father and Maker of the world (ἕνα νομίζειν τὸν πατέρα καὶ ποιητὴν τοῦ κόσμου θεόν; Legat. 1:115; emphasis added).\(^{123}\)

Here again, Philo associates God’s oneness with God’s role as Creator. The reference to teaching and instruction harkens back to Deut 6:7, the command to teach YHWH’s commandments to one’s children. The proximity of the emphasis on teaching to the affirmation of God’s unity increases the volume of this echo.

In the following passage, Philo draws upon philosophical concepts such as imperishability and impassibility to argue for the existence of the one God and against idolatry and atheism:

For he that thinks either that God belongs to a type, or that He is not one (μὴ ἕνα εἶναι), or that He is not unoriginate and incorruptible, or that He is not incapable of change, wrongs himself not God; for it says "to yourselves ye shall not make"; for we must deem that He belongs to no type, and that he is One (ἕνα) and incorruptible and unchangeable. He that does not so conceive infects his own soul with a false and godless opinion (Leg. 1:51; emphasis added).\(^{123}\)

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\(^{123}\) All translations are from the LCL unless otherwise noted.
Philo thus challenges his readers to consider the compatibility of Jewish theology with contemporary thought.

Philo commonly uses other modifiers alongside εἷς. A frequent expression is “the one truly existing God” (τὸν ἕνα ὄντως ὄντα θεὸν; Spec. 1:65; 1:313, 331, 332, 344; Cher. 1:27; Virt. 1:34, 40, 102; QE 1:14). Echoes of the Shema may seem faint in this particular phrase, but because Philo’s use of εἷς explicitly alludes to the Shema in so many other cases, it is likely that most if not all of Philo’s expressions of God’s oneness are linked to Deut 6:4. The use of εἷς thus provides a bridge between the Jewish scriptures and Greek philosophy which Philo can deploy against polytheism and in support of Jewish practice and belief. 124

The second category of Philo’s uses of the Shema is instances in which εἷς modifies a descriptor instead of θεός: “one Cause” (ἐνὸς ὄντος αἰτίου; Leg. 3:7; Virt. 1:216, 221; Decal. 1:155); “one [Being]” (ἐνὸς ὄντος; Cher. 1:109; cf. Migr. 1:134); “one lord and master of all” (κύριος εἷς ἁπάντων καὶ δεσπότης ἐστίν; Cher. 1:119; QE 1:16); “One Grower, the Uncreate Artificer” (εἷς ὁ ἀγένητος τεχνίτης; Plant. 1:31); “one Maker and Father of all” (τὸν ἕνα ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τῶν ὅλων; Conf. 1:144; cf.

124 Guerra cites evidence showing that Philo’s critique of polytheism also aligns him with Greek philosophers who sought rational theories of unity apart from mythology (149).
Q&A on Exodus 2:2; Spec. 1:14); “one sovereign and ruler and king (εἷς ἄρχων καὶ ἡγεμὼν καὶ βασιλεύς)... For [the universe] being one, it must have one maker and father and master” (enuous ὡρ ἐνα ποιητήν τε καὶ πατέρα πάλιν καὶ δεσπότην ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι; Conf. 1:170; Decal. 1:155); “one Husband and Father, God the All-sovereign” (τὴν ἕνα ἄνδρα καὶ πατέρα τὸν ἡγεμόνα θεὸν; Fug. 1:114, 205; cf. Mut. 1:205; “one Father,” Decal. 1:8, 64); “one Ruler of the universe” (ἐνα τὸν ἡγεμόνα τὸν ὅλων; Mos. 2:168); “One, the Primal, the Uncreated and Maker of all” (τοῦ ἕνος καὶ πρεσβυτάτου καὶ ἀγενήτου καὶ ποιητοῦ τὸν ὅλων; Virt. 1:213); “the one only and true ruler” (τοῦ ἕνος καὶ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἄρχοντος; Praem. 1:123). Note that the expression “one Maker” or “Creator” occurs four times in this list, further supporting Philo’s linking of εἷς with God as Creator.

These diverse epithets for God modified by εἷς appear to be derived from both the language of the Bible (e.g. κύριος, βασιλεύς, πατήρ) and from philosophical terminology (e.g. αἴτιος, ἀγένητος). The intertwining of biblical and philosophical language strengthens the thesis that Philo is using the Shema as a bridge between Greek and Jewish forms of discourse.

As a final word on the topic of εἷς modifying descriptors other than θεός,

Philo writes an encomium on the number seven in relation to God resting on the seventh day, drawing from both biblical and philosophical concepts:

There is only one thing that neither causes motion nor experiences it, the original Ruler, and Sovereign. Of Him, it may be fitly said to be a symbol. Evidence of what I say is supplied by Philolaus in these words: “There is, he says, a supreme Ruler of all things, God, ever one (θεὸς εἷς), abiding, without motion, Himself (alone) like unto Himself, different from all others” (Opif. 1:100).

Although Philo’s attribution of this quote to Philolaus is probably mistaken;\(^\text{126}\) the entire passage nevertheless shows Philo’s willingness to ascribe philosophical concepts such as lack of generation (ἀγένεσις) and immovability (ἀκίνητος), to God, and to use these philosophical concepts to support the biblical notion of divine unity.

In the third category of allusions to the Shema, Philo uses εἷς to refer both to God and to another corresponding entity. For example, while expounding five lessons that Moses taught, Philo writes that the one God created one world:

\(^{126}\) For a discussion of the Philolaus text found in Philo, along with similar fragments from other Greek authors, see Carl A. Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton: Pythagorean and Presocratic: A Commentary on the Fragments and Testimonia with Interpretive Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 334-39.
Moses teaches that God is one (θεὸς εἷς ἐστι). This with a view to the propounders of polytheism; who do not blush to transfer from earth to heaven mob-rule, that worst of evil polities... [T]he world too is one as well as its Maker (εἷς ἐστιν ὁ κόσμος, ἐπειδὴ καὶ εἷς ὁ δημιουργὸς), who made His work like Himself in its uniqueness” (Opif. 1:171; emphasis added; cf. 1:172).127

This passage is explicitly apologetic. Again, the εἷς θεός formula is connected to the unity of creation and used to combat polytheism.128

In another example, Philo quotes Deut 32:34: “Is not this laid up in store with me, sealed up in my treasuries?” He writes that there are multiple storehouses of evil things, but God is slow in bringing evil from them upon those who are disobedient. By contrast, there is only one storehouse of good things:

“And the treasury of good things is one, for since God is One, there is likewise one treasury of good things” (ὁ θεὸς εἷς, καὶ ἀγαθῶν θησαυρὸς εἷς; Leg. 3:105; cf. Deut 28:12). Philo thus correlates God’s unity with God’s grace.

127 The Pre-Socratic philosopher Philolaus is also quoted as saying: ὁ κόσμος εἷς ἐστιν (Fragment 17, in Stobaeus, Eclogae 1.157). In Philolaus’s cosmology, the universe is a unity that grows up around a central fire (cf. Fragment 7). From the previous quote it is clear that Philo is familiar with Philolaus. It is possible that Philo is engaging with Philolaus’s assertion that the world is one and reframing that statement to attribute the unity to the one Creator.

128 Other references to the one God in a polemic against polytheism include Decal. 1:8; 1:65; Fug. 1:114; Spec. 1:332; 2:258; 4:178; Virt. 1:40; Praem. 1:162; QE 2:2.
Philo also states that there is one temple corresponding to the one God:

“[S]ince God is one, there should be also only one temple” (ἐἷς ἐστιν ὁ θεός, καὶ ἱερὸν ἐν εἶναι μόνον; Spec. 1:67). Philo’s description of the centralization of worship in this section is dependent upon Deuteronomy (e.g. Deut 12:5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26). Implicit within Philo’s discussion is a critique of the many temples of polytheism; Philo’s statement about the one Temple is preceded by a section in which he speaks of the Mosaic proscription against divination and the worship of idols (Spec. 1:58-64). For Philo, a centralized place of worship demonstrates the truth of the one God for all people.

The final example in this category pairs the one God with one constitution and Law. Philo understands the Law as what binds Israel together, “the kinship of having one citizenship and the same law and one God (πολιτεία μία καὶ νόμος ὁ ἄντος καὶ εἷς θεός) who has taken all members of the nation for His portion” (Spec. 4:159). This is a parenthetical remark in the middle of a broader discussion of the Jewish ideal of government and constitution; Philo argues that the ideal ruler, like Moses, honors equality and avoids corruption, in imitation of God’s kingly rule. This correlation of one law and one God reflects the setting of Deut 6:4-9, where the Shema represents the basic loyalty oath between YHWH, the one King,
and Israel. Fidelity to God means, above all, keeping the Mosaic commandments. It is possible that Philo had this sense of the Shema in mind when composing his description of the ideal, benevolent ruler (he has just discussed the Shema in Spec. 4:137-42, which will be treated below). Philo’s archetypical leader, who rules according to the Law, is also reminiscent of the Greek philosopher-king; this similarity would commend Jewish rule and Law to readers steeped in both cultures.

In the fourth category are references to love of God (Deut 6:5). There are nine instances in which ἀγαπάω is used to speak of love for God, where the context bears some resemblance to that of the Shema. A few of the clearest examples follow:

But Moses will lay down for his pupils a charge most noble “to love God and hearken to and cleave to him (ἀγαπᾶν τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἰσακούειν καὶ ἔχεσθαι αὐτοῦ)” (Deut. xxx. 20); assuring them that this is the life that brings true prosperity and length of days. And his way of inviting them to honour Him Who is the

129 Chapter Two, 25-26; Chapter Seven, 389-94.

130 On Philo’s political theory, derived from Plato, Aristotle, and Stoicism, in which the Mosaic Law is identified as the ideal constitution and Moses as the ideal philosopher-king, see Wolfson, 2:322-439.

131 Post. 1:12, 69; Deus 1:69; Fug. 1:58, 114; Abr. 1:50; Spec. 1:300; QE 2:21. There are also 48 uses of φιλόθεος in Philo’s works and 73 uses of θεοφιλής, but these tend to denote a rather general sense of devotion to God and are not included here.
worthy object of strong yearning and devoted love is vivid and expressive (Post. 1:12; emphasis added).

The Loeb editor’s reference to Deut 30:20 is apt, but as noted in Chapter Two,\textsuperscript{132} Deut 30:20 is an echo of Deut 6:5, and it is found in a passage that reinforces the Shema’s command to love and obey God and thus to obtain the blessing of life. Love for God and the blessing of life are bound together similarly in two other Philonic passages associated with Deut 30:20. The first expresses love for God in terms of rationality: “[H]e that lives an irrational life has been cut off from the life of God. Now Moses defines living in accordance with God as consisting in loving Him (ἀγαπᾶν αὐτὸν), for he says, ‘thy life is to love Him that is (τὸ ἀγαπᾶν τὸν ὄντα)’” (Deut. 30:19 f.; Post. 1:69; emphasis added). The second also connects love of God with life:

“This is thy life and length of days, to love the Lord thy God (ἀγαπᾶν κύριον τὸν θεόν σου)” (Deut. xxx. 20.) This is a most noble definition of deathless life, to be possessed by a love of God… (Fug. 1:58; emphasis added).

In the following passage, love for God with all one’s soul is expressed through keeping the commandments:

\textsuperscript{132} Chapter Two, 51-52.
And this is just to love Him (ἀγαπᾶν αὐτὸν) as a benefactor, or failing this to fear Him at least as a ruler and lord, and to tread in every way that will lead thee to please Him, to serve Him not halfheartedly but with thy whole soul (ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ) filled with the determination to love Him and to cling to His commandments and to honor justice (τὰ δίκαια; Spec. 1:300; emphasis added).

The expression with one’s whole soul (ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ) is identical to Deut 6:5 LXX. It is significant that Philo emphasizes justice in this passage (τὰ δίκαια), as it is a key concept in his most extended discussion of the Shema.

The term “justice” does not appear in the Shema itself, but it is a central concern in Philo’s works; along with prudence (φρόνησις) and piety (θεοσέβεια), Philo avers that justice (δικαιοσύνη) is a virtue at the heart of the Decalogue and is found at the core of a faultless and harmonious life (Spec. 4:134). Justice oversees all human relationships:

But among the vast number of particular truths and principles there [i.e., in the Law] studied, there stand out practically high above the others two main heads: one of duty to God as shewn by piety and holiness, one of duty to men as shewn by humanity and justice

133 Philo mentions τὰ δίκαια 44 times, about half of which are in Spec., five in the present passage; δικαιοσύνη appears 123 times, 26 times in Spec., twice in the present passage, and acting unjustly (ἀδικέω) 136 times, 29 times in Spec., twice in the present passage.
(δικαιοσύνης), each of them splitting up into multiform branches, all highly laudable (Spec. 2:63).

Naomi Cohen argues that in Hellenistic Judaism, under the influence of the LXX, δικαιοσύνη is often used as a technical term for keeping the commandments of the Torah, and that Philo often uses it as such.\textsuperscript{134} τὰ δίκαια refer to the commandments themselves.\textsuperscript{135} In Spec. 4:136-42, Philo expounds upon the topic of justice (δικαιοσύνη), tying individual practices associated with the Shema – the wearing of phylacteries, the teaching of the commandments to one’s children, and affixing the commandments to one’s house and gates – to the principle of justice (Deut 6:6-9; cf. 11:18). On the subject of phylacteries (Deut 6:8), Philo writes:

\begin{quote}
The law tells us that we must set the rules of justice (τὰ δίκαια) in the heart (τῇ καρδίᾳ) and fasten them for a sign upon the hand and have them shaking before the eyes (ἐξάπτειν εἰς σημεῖον ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς καὶ εἶναι σειόμενα πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν). The first of these is a parable indicating that the rules of justice (τὰ δίκαια) must not be committed to untrustworthy ears since no trust can be placed in the sense of hearing but that these best of all lessons must be impressed upon our lordliest part, stamped too with genuine seals…for the hand is the
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{134} Cohen, \textit{Philo Judaeus}, 113-128. Cohen cites evidence found in Second Temple Jewish literature, including the NT.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 189-91. This usage is also derived from the LXX.
\end{footnotes}
symbol of action, and on this the law bids us fasten and hang the rules of justice (τὰ δίκαια) for a sign...The third means that always and everywhere we must have the vision of the rules of justice (τὰ δίκαια) as it were close to our eyes (Spec. 4:137-39; alt. trans; emphasis added; cf. Deut 6:5, 6, 8).

Phylacteries are thus interpreted as a visible reminder of the precepts of justice, τὰ δίκαια, Philo’s expression for the ordinances of the Torah (more examples below).136 The reference to the heart (καρδία) in this context clearly echoes Deut 6:5.

Philo then writes about teaching the commandments to one’s children (בני/υἱοί; Deut 6:7) and goes even further, including all of one’s relatives and acquaintances. Philo again interprets the commandments (τὰ δίκαια) in terms of justice. Justice (δικαιοσύνη), moreover, is to fill the whole soul, where it seems to stand for love of God (Deut 6:5):

Indeed he must be forward to teach the principles of justice (τὰ δίκαια) to kinsfolk and friends and all the young people at home and in the street, both when they go to their beds and when they arise (οἶκοι καὶ ἐν ὁδῷ καὶ πρὸς κοίτην ἱόντας καὶ ἀνισταμένους), so that in every posture and every motion, in every place both private and public, not only when they are awake but when

136 On Philo’s phylacteries, see Cohen, Philo Judaeus, 144-55.
they are asleep, they may be gladdened by visions of the just (τῶν δικαίων). For there is no sweeter delight than that the soul (lit: the whole soul; τὴν ψυχὴν ὅλην) should be charged through and through with justice (δικαιοσύνης), exercising itself in her eternal principles and doctrines and leaving no vacant place into which injustice (ἀδικία) can make its way (Spec. 4:141; emphasis added).137

Finally, Philo explains the affixing of the commandments (τὰ δίκαια) to one’s gates (Deut 6:9; cf. 11:20):

He bids them also write and set them forth in front of the door posts of each house and the gates in their walls (τῶν φλιῶν οἰκίας ἑκάστης προτιθέναι καὶ πυλῶν), so that those who leave or remain at home, citizens and strangers alike, may read the inscriptions engraved on the face of the gates and keep in perpetual memory what they should say and do, careful alike to do and to allow no injustice (ἀδικεῖν μήτε ἀδικεῖσθαι), and when they enter their houses and again when they go forth men and women and children and servants alike may act as is due and fitting both for others and for themselves (Spec. 4:142).

The engraving of τὰ δίκαια on the home serves as a reminder to avoid all forms of injustice (ἀδικεῖν μήτε ἀδικεῖσθαι) in one’s relations with others.

137 F. H. Colson also understands this passage as an echo of Deut 6:7 (LCL; vol. VIII; 97, n. a).
Philo’s linking of justice and the *Shema* reinforces the connection between the *Shema* and the Mosaic commandments found in Deuteronomy. It also allows Philo to take up the topos of δικαιοσύνη, which is ubiquitous in the writings of Greek political philosophers from Cephalus to Plato, and to recast it as a virtue central to Judaism and its “constitution.” Philo thus frames his expressions of God’s oneness and Jewish practices in a way that coheres with Greek political philosophical ideals. He explains the *Shema* in terms of δικαιοσύνη, a concept that, like the λόγος, bridges the Jewish and Greek worlds straddled by his readers. As Cohen observes:

> One of Philo’s major objects was to convince the reader to remain loyal to the commitment to the practice and observance of the traditional Jewish way of life, as defined and delineated in the Pentateuch and understood via “the traditions of the fathers.” At the same time, Philo’s constant Herculean endeavor to assign the highest Greek philosophical value to what he considered important in Judaism, heightens the awareness of the reader of the overwhelming degree to which he was both a product of, and a protagonist in, the Hellenistic culture of his day.\(^{138}\)

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Philo’s intertwining of Jewish scripture, its interpretive tradition, and the Jewish way of life, together with Greek philosophy, evinces the two major ways in which he employs the *Shema*: to combat polytheism and to promote Judaism as the pinnacle of Greek ideals.

There is one less frequent, but nevertheless significant way in which Philo uses εἷς θεός to put forth the social equality of proselytes. In a study of *Spec.* 1:52, Anthony J. Guerra observes that, for Philo, “the real basis of kinship is not ethnic identity but the law and the One God who is described as having ‘designated’ all members of the nation.”\(^{139}\) Philo puts these words onto Moses’ lips:

> They [proselytes] have left, he says, their country, their kinsfolk and their friends for the sake of virtue and religion. Let them not be denied another citizenship or other ties of family and friendship, and let them find places of shelter standing ready for refugees to the camp of piety. For the most effectual love-charm, the chain which binds indissolubly the goodwill which makes us one [ἐνωτικῆς, from εἷς] is to honour the one God” (*ἡ τοῦ ἑνὸς θεοῦ τιμή*; *Spec.* 1:52; emphasis added).

Based on this passage, Guerra posits that Jews in Alexandria may have been reticent to accept converts fully; Philo’s rationale for treating them as equals is

\(^{139}\) Guerra, 156.
that proselytes and natural-born Jews are united as one under the one God. Their unity is also guaranteed by the sharing of “one citizenship and the same law and one God” (πολιτεία μία καὶ νόμος ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ εἷς θεός; Spec. 4:159; cited above). It will be shown in Chapter Five that Paul also uses the Shema to argue for the unity of Jew and Gentile under the one God.

Apart from the topic of proselytes, Philo proclaims that the one God creates unity among the Jewish people:

You see how unlimited is the number of the Hebrews, but their number is not so dangerous and menacing a weapon as their unanimity and mutual attachment. And the highest and greatest source of this unanimity is their creed of a single God (τοῦ ἑνὸς θεοῦ), through which, as from a fountain, they feel a united and indissoluble love for one another (ἑνωτικῇ καὶ ἀδιαλύτῳ φιλίᾳ κέχρηνται πρὸς ἀλλήλους; Virt. 1:35; alt. trans.; emphasis added; cf. Decal. 1:64-65, cited above).

Philo thus declares that the worship of the one God (εἷς θεός) creates a united (ἑνωτικός) people. This correlation between the unity of God and the unity of the people of God is also found in the New Testament, especially in Paul and John.
The *Shema* in Josephus

There are ten references to God’s oneness in the works of Josephus, eight in *The Antiquities of the Jews* (*A.J.*) and two in *Against Apion* (*Ag. Ap.*). The practices of praying in the morning and evening are mentioned (Deut. 6:7), along with the customs of laying *tefillin* or phylacteries (Deut. 6:8), and affixing commandments upon ones doorposts (Deut. 6:9). Like the *Letter of Aristeas*, Josephus’s work is a key witness to the importance of the *Shema*, not only as a text that was read and studied, but also as one that was enacted in ritual observance. Josephus writes primarily to a Gentile audience with an interest in Jewish culture, and to gain favor for Jews and Judaism from his Roman audience. Josephus’s references to God’s oneness and to Jewish practices derived from the *Shema* help him to explain Jewish rejection of polytheism, Jewish unity, and the compatibility of Judaism with the philosophical ideas of his contemporaries.

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140 *A.J.* 1.155; 3.91; 4.201, 212, 213; 5.97, 112; 8.343; *Ag. Ap.* 2.167, 193.


142 On Josephus’s portrayal of Judaism as an alternative philosophy, see Feldman, *Judean Antiquities 1-4*, xxix-xxxii. For a full discussion of factors influencing Josephus’s rewriting of the Bible, see Feldman’s *Studies In Josephus’ Rewritten Bible* (ed. John J. Collins; JSJSup 58; Leiden: 180
The first reference to God’s oneness in *Antiquities* is typical of Josephus’s efforts to frame Judaism in terms that are compatible with Greco-Roman ideas:

For this reason, he [Abraham] also began to have loftier thoughts than others with regard to virtue, and he determined to innovate and change the conception concerning God that everyone happened to have. He therefore was the first who dared to declare that God was the one craftsman of the universe (θεὸν ἀποφήνασθαι δημιουργόν τῶν ὅλων ἕνα) and that if some other being contributes something to [man’s] happiness, each one supplies something in accordance with His command and not by virtue of this own strength (*A.J.* 1.155; cf. 8.343).

Josephus attributes the concept of divine unity to Abraham. Jubilees does something similar in the well-known midrash in which Abraham destroys his father’s idols and thus becomes the first monotheist (*Jub.* 12:12; cf. *Apoc. Ab.* 1-8; *Gen. Rab.* 38:13). So, too, Josephus projects the concept of divine unity back in time into the story of Abraham; Abraham’s virtue (ἀρετή) is his determination to

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reform polytheistic conceptions of God. This projection serves Josephus’s agenda of stressing the antiquity of the Jewish people and their ideas and institutions.\footnote{144} Josephus’s frequent use of ἀρετή (290 times) is an example of his framing of biblical figures, the Torah, and various Jewish concepts in terms of the philosophy of his day.

There is a significant collocation of references to the Shema in the context of the Deuteronomic covenant in \textit{A.J.} 4.200-213. Beginning in 4.119 and continuing through 4.301, Josephus speaks in the person of Moses and summarizes the Law. This speech resembles Moses’ farewell address in Deuteronomy: at the end of the account of Moses’s life, Josephus’s Moses speaks about the imminent possession of the land of Canaan (4.119). Moses exhorts the children of Israel, before they enter the Land, to obey the “one cause” of happiness:

\begin{quote}
O children of Israel, for all humanity there is \textit{one cause} of the possession of good things – God (μία...αἰτία ὁ θεὸς), who is benevolent... [L]isten to (κατήκοοι) and guard the laws that I arranged upon God’s dictation to me, and if you will study their understanding (\textit{A.J.} 4.180a, 183b; emphasis added).
\end{quote}

\footnote{144} On the importance of ἀρχαιολογία to Greek and Roman readers, see Feldman, \textit{Judean Antiquities} 1-4, xxiii-xxiv.
Both the context and themes of this passage recall the *Shema*: a vocative call to Israel connected to a verb of hearing, a reference to God as “one,” and an exhortation to keep the Mosaic Law in order to receive blessing. The universal note in the first line, directed to all humanity (πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις) is indicative of Josephus’ apologetic program and will be discussed further below.

Finally, Josephus focuses on the centralization of worship in the Land:

> Let there be, in the fairest part of the land of the Chananaians, one holy city (πόλις ἔστω μία) that is renowned for its excellence, whichever God selects for Himself through prophecy; and let there be one Temple (νεὼς εἷς) and in it one altar (βωμὸς εἷς) of stones that are not hewn but chosen and joined together, which, smeared with whitewash, will be appealing and clean to view.... In another city let there be neither an altar nor a temple, for God is one, and the stock of the Hebrews one (ἔστω θεὸς γὰρ εἷς καὶ τὸ Ἑβραίων γένος ἕν; A.J. 4.200-201; emphasis added).

The word εἷς appears five times in these few lines: one city, one temple, one altar, one God, one people. The idea that God chooses one location for his dwelling has thematic and verbal similitude with the emphasis on centralized worship in Deuteronomy: “But you shall seek the place that YHWH your God will choose out of all your tribes as his habitation to put his name there” (Deut. 12:5; cf. 12:
11, 14, 18, 21, 26). Josephus explicates a connection he believes is implicit in Deuteronomy: because there is only one God, there can be only one city, one temple, one altar, and one people corresponding to the one God. So Louis H. Feldman suggests that Josephus’s Moses applies the word “one” to each object in order to stress the concept of monotheism. It is also likely that Josephus emphasizes these various “ones” as part of his ongoing polemic against polytheism and its many temples and altars, and to stress the election of the Jews, the “one people.”

The statement that “the stock of the Hebrews is one” is particularly intriguing, as it uses the word “one” to refer, not only to God, but also to Israel (ἕις for God; ἕν for Israel). Some rabbinic passages also correlate God’s oneness with Israel’s. For example: “Israel says: ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one’ (Deut. 6.4). And the Holy Spirit calls aloud from heaven and says: ‘And who is like Thy people Israel, a nation one in the earth (גוי אחד בארץ)’” (1 Chron. 17.21; Mekhîltâ, Shirâta III, 14; cf. Sîfîr Deût, Pîska 355). This idea is

145 Feldman, Judean Antiquities 1-4, 399, n. 583.
146 So also Kohler, Judean Antiquities 1-4, 399, n. 583.
similar to what is found in Philo (Spec. 1.52; Virt. 1.35; cf. Decal. 1.64-65) and will be discussed as it relates to the Gospel of John in Chapters Six and Seven.

Reinforcing the importance of the Shema in this section, Josephus goes on to provide three additional points of contact. The first is an exhortation to teach the laws to one’s children: “Let your children also, in the first place, learn the laws, the lesson most beautiful and productive of happiness (A.J. 4.211b; cf. Deut. 6:7; 11:19). Josephus follows with another allusion to Deut. 6:7:

*Twice each day, both at its beginning and when the time comes for turning to sleep, bear witness to God of the gifts that He granted them when they were delivered from the land of the Egyptians, since gratitude is proper by nature: it is given in return for those things that have already occurred and as a stimulus for what will be (A.J. 4.212; emphasis added).*

The reference to the beginning and end of the day recalls the idea that the words of Torah were to be spoken “when you lie down and when you rise up.” In addition, Feldman understands the reference to the deliverance from Egypt as an

allusion to the third paragraph of the *Shema* (Num 15:41): “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God.” 148

Paul Spilsbury argues that the language of this passage “is a classic statement of the workings of a patron-client relationship:”149

God is the ultimate patron whose goodwill and providence ensure the Jews’ continued existence and welfare. As a favoured client of this patron, the Jews are required to live under the constitution God provides. Their whole-hearted commitment to the law, a feature of the national character that Josephus emphasizes, is a sure guarantee, under the terms of the patron-client system, of the Jews’ ultimate prosperity.150

In the patron-client system of the Roman world, gratitude was the proper response for receiving the benefactions of the patron. Josephus would have found the language of patron-client relations amenable to expressing the concepts of covenant derived from ancient political treaties in Deuteronomy.


150 Ibid., 191.
Harold W. Attridge sees “the terminology of benefactor and ally” as a replacement for the concept of covenant, but the covenant concept, with its background in ANE suzerainty treaties, is itself based on the idea of patronage. Josephus’s use of the language of ancient patronage renders the notion of covenant intelligible to his readers; he employs it more as a lens than as a replacement.

Immediately after this passage, Josephus includes references to Deut. 6:8 (phylacteries) and 6:9 (mezuzot), in reverse order:

They shall also inscribe on their doorways the greatest of the benefits that God has bestowed upon them, and each shall display them on his arms; and as many things as are able to show forth the power of God and His good will toward them let them display on the head and the arm, so that the favor of God with regard to them may be readily visible from all sides (A.J. 4.213; emphasis added; cf. Let. Aris. 158-59).

The language of God’s beneficence, found within both covenant and ancient patronage, elucidates this passage. A.J. 4.200-213 thus contains many of the key elements of Deut. 6:4-9: God’s oneness, teaching the laws to one’s children, speaking of them upon rising and retiring, and binding the commandments

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upon one’s arms and forehead, and upon one’s doors. Josephus’s intimate knowledge of this Deuteronomistic passage and of the practices corresponding to it reaffirms that the *Shema* and its practices were central to Jewish life in the first century. By employing the language of patron-client relations, Josephus frames the Mosaic Law as the benefits received from God, Israel’s ultimate patron. Again, Josephus uses the *Shema* to cast Judaism in a positive light for his Gentile readers.

There are three more references to “one God” in *Antiquities*. In Josephus’s account of the conquest of the Land, as Joshua dismisses the tribes which are about to cross the Jordan, he reminds them that they are still united to the tribes staying on the near side: “For we are all, whether living on this side or that, [descendants] of Abraham; *there is one God* (θεός εἷς) who brought our ancestors and yours to life” (*A.J.* 5.97b).\(^{152}\) The one God who created and gave life to all Israel binds them together (cf. *A.J.* 4.200, where one people corresponds to the one God).

\(^{152}\) Christopher Begg notes that θεός εἷς and “similar formulas [are] inspired by the *Shema* of Deut 6:4,” in *Judean Antiquities Books 5-7* (vol. 4; ed. Steve Mason; trans. and comm. by Christopher Begg; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), 24, n. 259. For a listing of Josephus’ expressions derived from Deut 6:4, see Adolf von Schlatter, *Wie Sprach Josephus von Gott?* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1910), 16-20.
Later, the tribes that have not passed over the Jordan hear that the tribes on the other side have built an altar and fear that these Israelites are engaged in wicked, Canaanite practices. The wayward tribes respond that they know that “there is one God (θεόν ἕνα), common to all the Hebrews” (A.J. 5.112a; cf. 5.97 above), and pledge their faithfulness to God. Again, evoking the one God expresses the unity of the people and their commitment to God and the commandments.

The final reference to “one God” in Antiquities falls in Josephus’s narration of the Elijah cycle (1 Kings 18). Elijah calls upon God to manifest his power and consume a sacrifice, thereby showing the people that God has real power and the “strange gods” of the prophets of Baal do not: “When the Israelites saw this, they fell on the ground and paid homage to the one God (ἕνα θεὸν), calling him the greatest and the only true one, whereas the others [were but names], made by false and foolish opinion” (A.J. 8.343a). By contrast, in the Hebrew Bible, the Israelites respond: “YHWH is God; YHWH is God (1 Kings 18:39; יהוה הוא אלהים הוה אלהים). Josephus reframes the Israelites’ response using the language of the Shema, further emphasizing the merits of monotheism over polytheism.
Throughout *Antiquities*, Josephus is concerned to portray the dangers of idolatry and involvement with all things foreign (ξενικός) which would draw Jews away from acknowledging the one true God and keeping his commandments.\(^{153}\) Living as a minority in a Gentile culture presented challenges to Jews on multiple fronts, and Roman writers frequently criticized Jews and their practices, judging them especially harshly for abstaining from public pagan ceremonies.\(^{154}\) E. P. Sanders notes that one of Josephus’s purposes for writing *Antiquities* is to show that “Judaism is an ancient and noble culture and religion, of no pernicious effect on civilization as a whole, but rather an elevating and benevolent force.”\(^{155}\) Josephus walks a fine line between criticizing the dominant culture and at the same time, striving to gain acceptance for Jewish practices.

In *Against Apion*, Josephus states explicitly that his work is an apology for Judaism (*Ag. Ap. 2:147*); he is writing to counter the false claims of Apion and

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\(^{154}\) Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974-80). Josephus, for example, reports that Jews are accused of being atheists (ἀθέους) and misanthropes (μισανθρώπους; *Ag. Ap.* 2.148).

other Greco-Roman authors against the Jewish people and their religious customs.\textsuperscript{156} Josephus describes Moses as a legislator who “exceeds in antiquity the legislators referred to anywhere else” (\textit{Ag. Ap.} 2.154), thereby appealing to his audience’s love of all things ancient and established. He also writes that Moses governed with piety and a great degree of virtue (\textit{Ag. Ap.} 2.159), ascribing contemporary Greek values to Moses.

According to Josephus, for example, Moses “represented him [God] one (ἕνα) and uncreated and immutable through all eternity, more beautiful than any mortal form, known to us by his power, but as to what he is like in essence, unknown” (\textit{Ag. Ap.} 2.167 alt.). εἷς is in an emphatic position, stressing God’s oneness: ἑνα γοῦν αὐτὸν ἀπέφηνε καὶ ἀγένητον καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἀίδιον χρόνον ἀναλλοίωτον πάσης ἰδέας θνητῆς.\textsuperscript{157} Anthony J. Guerra notes that this description “implies rejection of the Stoic view that a number of forms are warranted to accommodate the particular characteristics of the various local societies.”\textsuperscript{158} Furthermore, John Barclay observes that

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\textsuperscript{156} See \textit{Ag. Ap.} 2:1-144.
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\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 152.
\end{flushleft}
Josephus would be likely to include a monotheistic note in this philosophical depiction of God (cf. 2.193; A.J. 4.180), especially as he now describes the transcendence of God in terms that evoke the Judean aniconic tradition (cf. 2.190-92). His definition of the nature of God (2.166-67, 190-92) prepares the ground for the later ridicule of Greek mythology (2.234-54).\(^{159}\)

Josephus goes on to claim that the wisest of the philosophers share Moses’ view of the nature of God (2.168) and that “all must follow him, and worship him by exercising virtue (ἀσκοῦντας ἀρετήν); for this is the form of worship of God that is most holy” (2.192). Josephus conflates Moses’ view of God with that of the philosophers in a way that exaggerates the similarities between Greek and Jewish notions of the divine. This coheres with Josephus’s broader agenda of commending the Jewish religion to his Roman audience.

Josephus then reiterates what he stated in Antiquities, that corresponding to the one God is one temple: “One temple for one God (Εἷς ναὸς ἑνὸς θεοῦ) – for like is always attracted to like – common to all people as belonging to the common God of all” (Ag. Ap. 2.193). Arguing on the basis of the universality of the one God for all people, Josephus appeals to his audience to understand the

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\(^{159}\) Barclay, Diaspora, 263, n. 643.
Jewish God and his laws to be compatible with virtue and reason, and Jewish worship to be thoroughly at home within the discourse of the day.\textsuperscript{160}

As a Jewish intellectual with imperial connections, Josephus is in a unique position to advocate on behalf of the Jewish people. He points frequently to the antiquity of Judaism, framing his discussion of Jewish law and government in the language and thought of his Roman contemporaries. Although Josephus often idealizes his presentation of history and exaggerates the similarities between Jewish and Roman thought, his use of the \textit{Shema} in both \textit{Antiquities} and \textit{Against Apion} is part of a broader strategy that allows him to explain the unity of the Jews and their rejection of polytheism as virtues.

\textbf{The \textit{Shema} in Second Temple Judaism: Conclusions}

The variety of ways in which Jewish writers of the Second Temple period use the \textit{Shema} is a witness to the diversity of Second Temple Judaism itself. Practices derived from the \textit{Shema} – the wearing of phylacteries and the fixing of \textit{mezuzot} – were established traditions in some Jewish homes and communities. In

\textsuperscript{160} Barclay notes that even though the Jerusalem Temple no longer stood at the time when Josephus was writing, it was still a central feature in Josephus’s portrayal of the Jewish constitution (ibid., 279, n. 769). He also points out that the universal note struck in 2.193 is apologetic in nature (ibid., 280, n. 771; cf. Philo, \textit{Spec.} 1.97, 168-69; 2.167; \textit{Legat.} 306).
OT apocryphal and pseudepigraphical literature, the use of the *Shema* often reflects the conditions of the Exile and the understanding that current conditions are the result of Israel’s failure to keep the covenant (e.g. Tobit, Baruch). The remedy is expressed in terms of returning to YHWH and YHWH’s Law with all of one’s heart, soul, and strength (Deut 6:5); only by recommitting themselves to God would the people be able to return to the Land and live in peace and prosperity. “Those who love God” is a widely-used expression for those Jews who remain faithful to the one God and keep the commandments; by so doing, they fulfill the requirements of the *Shema*, the loyalty oath to YHWH.

Jewish apologetic literature tends to use εἷς θεός as a way to relate Jewish thought to Greek philosophy. Philo and Josephus, for example, use this trope to demonstrate that Judaism is compatible with, and indeed, superior to, the competing worldviews of the nations in which Jews made their homes. The *Shema* thus serves as a rhetorical bridge between Jewish and non-Jewish worlds: the one God of the Jews is the Creator of the cosmos and Ruler of all things.

Philo also declares that the worship of the one God (εἷς θεός) creates a unity (ἑνωτικός) among the people. This idea is also found in Josephus and, as observed in Chapter Three, occurs in oracles of restoration in the Hebrew
prophets. The theme of corporate unity, often alongside a denunciation of polytheism, finds its way into some of the writings of the New Testament.

This kind of reinterpretation of Deut 6:4-9 in new social and historical settings demonstrates the importance of the *Shema* in the era preceding and concurrent with the NT writings. The *Shema* reflected the core commitment of Judaism: YHWH is Israel’s only King, and Israel was obligated to maintain loyalty to YHWH by keeping the Mosaic commandments. This commitment would be tested by the emergence of Jews who believed in Jesus and the influx of Gentiles into the Christian movement. The Gospels’ portrayal of Jesus as King of the Jews creates tension with the profession “YHWH is one,” that God is Israel’s one, true King. Paul’s argument that righteousness is found in Jesus Christ, not through obedience to the Mosaic Law, challenges the widely-accepted, core Jewish commitment that loving God means keeping the commandments. The Gospel of John contains the greatest challenge to God’s kingship, portraying Jesus as “one” with the Father, as the object of the believer’s love, and as the one who issues his own commandment. The author of John uses the *Shema* in ways

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161 E.g. Jer 32:39; Zech 14:9. This theme will be explored in depth in Chapters Six and Seven.
similar to other writers of his time, but collapses the totality of its meaning into the person of Jesus.
Chapter Five: The *Shema* in the New Testament

Introduction

The *Shema* exercised the imagination of Jewish writers throughout the Second Temple period. Because of its covenantal overtones, the *Shema* was frequently evoked to exhort Jews to return to the covenant, which was imagined differently by various writers. It was used as a reminder to rally around the one God and as a warning against participating in religious practices of the pagan cultures in which Jews often lived. The expression εἷς θεός, derived from Deut 6:4 and used in pagan religions as well, was used to bridge the gap between Jewish thought and Greek philosophy, to defend Jewish belief against polytheism and, indeed, to contend for its superiority. In addition to describing God, the word εἷς was sometimes attributed to an entity, such as the Law, the Temple, or the Jewish people, that corresponded to the one God. The expression “those who love God,” derived from Deut. 6:5, was frequently employed to refer to those whom the author considered to be faithful Jews. Philo, Josephus, the *Letter of Aristeas*, and the DSS described Jewish practices based upon the *Shema* (Deut 6:7-9): the wearing of phylacteries and the posting of *mezuzot* on the doorposts and gates.
Some of the Jewish literature of the Second Temple period overlaps in time and provenance with the writings of the New Testament. Although the New Testament would eventually be recognized as Christian scripture, it also serves as an important witness to Jewish life and thought during the late Second Temple period, and its writings reveal otherwise unattested details about the diversity of Jewish practice and belief during that period.¹ Alongside the literature discussed in the previous chapter, the New Testament demonstrates the importance of the Shema as a text during the latter half of the first century; authors of the synoptic Gospels along with writers of several New Testament epistles cite or allude to the Shema in order to make a variety of theological, Christological, and ecclesiological claims. As believers in Jesus appropriated the notion of covenant found in Judaism to describe their religious belief, it is not surprising that they deployed the Shema, the basic loyalty oath to YHWH, to substantiate their claim to be God’s new covenant people. New Testament authors, most of whom were themselves Jewish, contended with Jewish opposition to their belief in Jesus by reinterpreting the Shema Christologically.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Gospel of John, which will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

This chapter will explore the various ways in which the Shema is used in the New Testament outside of the Johannine writings and will attempt to account for the theological, Christological, and ecclesiological implications of its use in relation to a writing’s literary and historical setting. As in previous chapters, the focus will be on passages that either cite Deuteronomy 6:4-9 directly or use words or themes related to the Shema: oneness, hearing, love, and life, along with obedience to the commandments.

**The Shema According to Mark**

Mark’s Gospel will be examined first since it is likely to have been a source for the authors of Matthew and Luke. Of the three synoptic Gospels, Mark makes the most use of the Shema; though shorter than the other two, it contains more references to the Shema than they do, and the author uses these references to greater Christological effect. In Mark, Jesus not only affirms

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traditional Jewish teaching, but also uses a citation of and allusions to the Shema to reveal something about his unique relationship to God. The authors of Matthew and Luke seem to miss the Christological point of Mark’s presentation of the Shema, removing many of Mark’s subtleties from their accounts and excising or relocating material that could have, in fact, supported Christological claims made elsewhere in their Gospels.

Jesus cites the Shema in Mark 12:28-34, a passage which is the culmination of a series of antagonistic attempts to ascertain whether Jesus' teaching accords with Jewish law or contradicts it. Leaders of various Jewish groups have challenged Jesus' authority in matters of legal interpretation, questioning him about the baptism of John, paying taxes to Caesar, and the resurrection of the dead. A scribe, who approves of how Jesus has responded thus far, comes forward and queries him about the essence of the Law, asking which commandment is the first, the most important of all.3 Jesus respond:

The first is, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one (κύριος εἷς ἐστιν). And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength. And the second is this, “And you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.”

And the scribe said to him, “Well spoken, teacher; you have truthfully said that he is one (εἷς ἐστιν) and there is no other beside him; and to love him from the whole heart, and from the whole understanding (συνέσεως), and from the whole strength, and to love the neighbor as oneself is greater than all burnt offerings and sacrifices’” (Mark 12:29-33; translation mine).

The scribe then receives a commendation, albeit a qualified one: “And Jesus, seeing that he answered thoughtfully, said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God’” (Mark 12:34). The association of the Shema with the kingdom of God is well-known in early rabbinic literature and may go back to the Temple.⁴

The text of Deuteronomy cited in this passage differs in several respects from both the MT and LXX traditions. Assuming that the author of Mark has not composed these lines in error, but by design, these differences raise questions as to how he has arrived at his version of the Deuteronomic text and for what purpose. Was he drawing from an LXX tradition that is no longer extant, translating Hebrew loosely from memory, or making changes for his own purposes? The solution that will be suggested below is that Mark’s version of Deut 6:5 serves his characterization of the scribe, emphasizing the intellectual dimension of fulfilling the Shema’s command to love God.

The text of Mark 12:29 agrees with Deut 6:4 LXX (A and B); Mark is the only Gospel to cite this verse. While Deut 6:5 LXX contains καρδία, ψυχή, and

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δύναμις, however, Mark has four terms: καρδία, ψυχή, διανοία, and ἱσχύς. Mark’s third term, διανοία or “mind,” is attested in the LXX tradition (LXX B), but it occurs there in the first position in the place of καρδία. Based upon the presence of both καρδία and διανοία in the LXX tradition, one might surmise that Mark is aware of the existence of both words in the tradition and simply incorporates both. This explanation does not work, however, for Mark’s substitution of ἱσχύς for δύναμις. In this case, it is possible that Mark knows a version of Deut 6:5 LXX that translates מַד as ἱσχύς, or he may be translating on his own. Perhaps he is familiar with 2 Kings 23:25, which uses καρδία, ψυχή, and ἱσχύς in its description of Josiah (ἱσχύς for מַד; cf. Tobit 14:8; Sir 43:30; T. Iss. 7:6). Mark may also be taking an eclectic approach, mixing and matching texts he has in front of him, recalling from memory, and/or translating on his own. In any case, variation from the LXX does not rule out that the Shema was an important Jewish text. K. Stendahl rightly observes that “the wealth of variants indicates that there was no

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6 The first term in Deut 6:5, לבב, frequently appears in the LXX as διανοία; the heart was sometimes understood to be the seat of the mind or will; BDAG, καρδία, 508-9; BDB, לבב, 523-25. It may the case that the use of διανοία reflects awareness among the LXX translators and synoptic writers of a shift in the semantic domain of “heart” in biblical Hebrew and koine Greek from something like “loyalty/obedience” to more of an emotional response; see Robert A. Bascom, “Adaptable for Translation: Deuteronomy 6:5 in the Synoptic Gospels and Beyond,” in A Gift of God in Due Season: Essays on Scripture and Community in Honor of James A. Sanders (eds. R. D. Weis and D. M. Carr; Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 166-83.
authorized Greek form of that part of the Jewish liturgy in the days of the
evangelists or that there were different forms, which influenced the NT texts in
different ways.”

Within the context of scribal opposition and debate, Mark’s expansion of
the Shema to include διάνοια along with the other three terms addresses the
importance of the intellect, something that would have been highly prized by the
well-educated scribe who questions Jesus, and by the other scribes within
earshot. This emphasis fits the argumentative context of this section of the
Gospel; previously, the reader has been told that Jesus’ interlocutors have been
trying to trap him (Mark 12:13). Their questions about the Law have been
designed to find fault with Jesus’ teaching. Perhaps (and this point is admittedly
speculative) the Markan Jesus perceives that what is lacking in the scribes’ love
of God is not only a commitment of the heart, soul, and strength, but also a
rightly-directed intellect.

What follows supports this thesis: in the scribe’s repetition of Jesus’
teaching (Mark 12:33), he uses σύνεσις or “understanding” – a term absent from
the LXX tradition – as the second term in the triad (καρδία, σύνεσις, ισχύς),

7 Stendahl, 76.
omitting ψυχή. It may be that the scribe, after Jesus’ use of διανοία in 12:33, is trying to impress Jesus with his “understanding” that one must love God with the whole mind in addition to heart and strength. He adds that loving God and neighbor is better than all burnt offerings and sacrifices (12:33). Jesus confirms that the scribe is indeed close to understanding correctly, for he uses the adverb νουνεχῶς to acknowledge the scribe’s response (καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἰδὼν ὅτι νουνεχῶς ἀπεκρίθη; Mark 12:34a).

Robert H. Gundry and Kim Huat Tan also note the noetic dimension of this passage. When the scribe observes that loving God and neighbor is more important than sacrifices (12:33), however, Tan mistakenly concludes that the point of the Markan Shema is that “the cult is relativized” and is no longer a “badge of covenantal identity” (187-88, 190). The problem with this view is that several Hebrew prophets, Qumran writers, and Tannaitic rabbis make similar

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8 Marcus suggests, on the basis of Mark’s other uses of the cognate verb (4:12; 6:52; 7:14; 8:17, 21) that the author of the Gospel may be responsible for the term (Mark 8-16, 841).


statements about the cult or give summaries of the Law without diminishing its abiding significance (e.g. 1 Sam 15:22; Hosea 6:6; 1QS 9:4; 4Q266:10; b. Sabb. 31a). W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison put it best, observing that the double command “is simply the most basic or important demand of the law, a demand which in no way replaces Torah but instead states its true end.”

The Markan Jesus follows up his citation of Deut 6:5 with a second commandment, Lev 19:18 LXX: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself; no other commandment is greater than these” (ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ως σεαυτόν. μείζων τούτων ἄλλη ἐντολή οὐκ ἐστιν; Mark 12:31). The notion that the Law could be summarized by two commandments concerning behavior toward God and neighbor was not unique to Jesus; other Jews did so, understanding the Decalogue as a summary of the Law. Philo and Josephus both write that the


Decalogue itself can be narrowed down to two principles embodied in the two tables, the first table concerning one’s relation to God, the second one’s duties to humans.\textsuperscript{14} The Markan Jesus, in conformity with the Judaism of his day, thus embraces the traditional link between reverence for the one God and proper ethical behavior toward other humans.\textsuperscript{15}

But Jesus’ teaching about the essence of the Law, while conforming to Jewish thought, also represents a radical development from it: here and earlier in the Gospel, Mark has prepared the reader for a Christological reinterpretation of the Shema. This observation and much of the following discussion are indebted to of Jewish sources, Allison observes that the Shema is a summary of the first table of the Decalogue and the Decalogue is a summary of the Law.

\textsuperscript{14} Philo, Decal. 19-20, 50, 106, 108-110, 121, 154; Spec. 2.63; Abr. 208; Josephus A.J. 3.101; J.W. 2.139; Juh. 7:20; 20:2-10; T. Iss 5:2; 7:6; T. Dan 5:3; b. Sabb. 31a; Tg Ps-J Lev 19:18; Did 1:2; Let. Arist., 229; 1QH 7:13-14; c.f. Cant. Rab. 5:14, Pesiq. Rab. 21.18.

\textsuperscript{15} Whether or not the double love command goes back to the historical Jesus is widely debated. John P. Meier argues at length in favor of its historicity on the basis of discontinuity, 499-528. For the purpose of this study, it should be noted that while the double command may or may not go back to Jesus, the Christological implications of the passage in Mark appear to be the work of the evangelist. This conclusion is based upon: (1) use of εἷς in Mark 2:7 and 10:18; (2) the likelihood that the Christological conflict is a later first-century response to the charge of bi-theism, and (3) the juxtaposition of 12:29-34 with 12:35-37 (see further below). For more on this passage in relation to the historical Jesus, see Davies and Allison. 3.237-38; Tan, “Jesus and the Shema,” 2677-2707; Reginald H. Fuller, “The Double Commandment of Love: A Case for the Criteria of Authenticity,” in Essays on the Love Commandment (trans. R. H. Fuller and I. Fuller; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 41-56.
the work of Joel Marcus, who observes that Mark 2:7, 10:18 and 12:29 are linked by describing God as εἷς.\textsuperscript{16} Whereas in Mark 12, the reference to the Shema is explicit, in 2:7 and 10:18 it lurks in the background and points to the Christological claims put forth in those passages.

In Mark 2, a paralyzed man is brought to Jesus:

And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, “Child, your sins are forgiven.” But some of the scribes were sitting there and deliberating in their hearts, “Why does this man speak in this way? He blasphemes! Who is able to forgive sins except One, that is, God?” (εἷς ὁ θεός; Mark 2:5-7; translation mine).

Jesus proceeds to both forgive and heal the man. In their outrage at Jesus’ apparent violation of the Law and his audacity in arrogating to himself the divine prerogative of forgiveness of sins, Jesus’ opponents, the scribes, appeal to God’s “oneness.” Marcus argues that the use of εἷς both here and in 10:18 is somewhat awkward unless understood as an allusion to the Shema.\textsuperscript{17} The present

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{16 Joel Marcus, “Authority,” 196-211; idem, The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 145-46; idem, Mark 1-8, 222, and Mark 8-16, 720-21, 725-26, 837-840, 842-45.}
\end{footnotesize}
use of the *Shema* is an attempt by the scribes to distance Jesus from his claim to be uniquely related to God. Jesus replies that the Son of Man has the authority to forgive sins on earth (Mark 2:10). Marcus observes, “This reply links Jesus with the activity of the one God, and it probably indicates that in Mark’s mind it is not a violation of monotheism for Jesus to represent in the earthly sphere the heavenly God’s gracious forgiveness of sins.”¹⁸ For Mark, Jesus’ alliance with God does not violate the Jewish claim that only God is one. This emphasis on Jesus’ unity with God seems to reflect the first-century controversy, found in John’s Gospel as well (5:18; 8:53; 10:33; 19:7), in which Jewish authorities contend that Christian claims about Jesus are blasphemous.¹⁹ The evangelist thus deploys the *Shema* to defend early Christianity from claims that it promotes bi-theism or two powers in heaven.²⁰

In Mark 10, using the same language as in Mark 2:7, Jesus appears to reject the rich young man’s epithet “good teacher,” responding that no one is good, “except One, God” (*ἐἰ μὴ ἕν ὁ θεός*; 10:18). Although it appears at first glance that

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¹⁹ Marcus, “Authority,” 199.
Jesus is distancing himself from God, on the level of Markan theology the opposite is true. Jesus tells the young man that, to inherit eternal life, he must keep the commandments; in good Deuteronomistic fashion, Jesus explicitly connects these commandments with life (e.g. Deut 30:19-20). When the young man replies that he already keeps the commandments, Jesus commands him to give away all of his wealth and follow him. Jesus divines the one thing that the young man lacks: he is not able to love God completely, with all of his wealth, and he walks away grieving. Jesus’ demand coheres with a rabbinic interpretation of the Shema in which loving God בַּכֵּל־מַעֲפַד (with all your strength; Deut 6:5) means with all of one’s possessions. The widow in Mark 12:42-44 stands out as a positive example of someone who does, in fact, love God with all her possessions, for out of her poverty, she casts in ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῆς (cf. 2 Tim 2:4; 1 John 2:1; esp. 1 John 3:17). Marcus suggests that Jesus has demonstrated that he is, in fact, a good teacher, acting in the power of God’s own goodness to show the young man the way to eternal life. For Mark, it is not enough to know that Jesus is good: to follow Jesus is to have a deeper understanding that the

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21 m. Ber. 9:5.

22 Marcus, Mark 8-16, 728.
source of his goodness is the one God. Mark’s use of the Shema is thus bound up with Jesus’ identity in Mark 10 as well as in Mark 2.

Jesus’ identity emerges again as a topic in Mark 12. When a scribe asks Jesus which singular commandment is the most important of all, Jesus, again in good Deuteronomistic fashion, cites the mitzvah, the Shema, the loyalty oath upon which all of the individual commandments of the Law are based. And in agreement with other Jewish sages from his era, Jesus links the love of God with love of neighbor. The scribe believes that God is one, and that loving God and neighbor is the heart of the Law, yet he remains just outside of the kingdom of God.

The passage that follows addresses what seems to be keeping the scribe at arm’s length from the kingdom: Jesus teaches about the identity of the Son of David, citing Ps 110:1, “The Lord said to my lord, ‘Sit on my right until I put your enemies under your feet.’” Not only does David paradoxically call his own son “lord,” he also prophesies that this remarkable figure will be exalted to

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23 For the Shema as the singular commandment, see Chapter Two, 25-26; Chapter Seven, 389-94.

sit at God’s right hand to share in God’s royal power. By following the Shema with Ps 110, Mark hints that the one thing the scribe lacks is the understanding that Jesus is the κύριος, whose divine Sonship entails enthronement at the right hand of God. As God’s co-regent who speaks and acts with divine authority, Jesus ushers in the eschatological kingdom of God.

When interpreted together with the previous passage, Mark 12:35-37 moves the scribe, along with the reader, toward a deeper understanding of Jesus’ identity. The placement of these passages side by side appears to be an attempt to reconcile two conflicting scriptural expectations: κύριος εἷς ἐστιν (“the Lord is one”) and εἶπεν κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου (“the Lord said to my lord”) – the monotheistic confession that there is only one Lord and a belief in a “lord” exalted to God’s right hand who participates in God’s kingly rule. Deut 6:4 and Ps 110:1, linked by the word κύριος (יהוה MT), mutually illuminate one another,

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25 On the inadequacy of the title “Son of David” for Jesus in Mark, see Marcus, Mark 8-16, 847-48; Way, 130-52.


27 John Lee does something similar in his narrative-critical reading; whereas Lee focuses on the kingdom of God as the link between the two passages, the present study stresses the centrality of κύριος.
striking a balance between the affirmation of God’s oneness and the exaltation of God’s anointed king. A complete understanding of Jesus’ identity is what the scribe still lacks: Jesus is God’s exalted κύριος who participates in the sovereign rule of the one God.

Mark ends the pericope by pointing out that “the large crowd was listening to him (ἤκουεν αὐτοῦ) with delight” (12:37). The crowd of common people “hears,” just as Israel was commanded to hear (Deut 6:4). They seem to understand what the scribe does not. They respond positively to the Shema’s imperative. The Markan Shema, along with the citation of Psalm 110:1, is thus loaded with Christological implications and demonstrates for Mark’s readers that belief in Jesus is compatible with the unity of God. Mark’s interpretation of

28 George Keerankeri also notes κύριος as a Stichwort connecting Mark 12:29-35 and 12:35-37 in The Love Commandment in Mark: An Exegetico-Theological Study of Mk 12,28-34 (AnBib 150; Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Bíblico, 2003), 175-79. The joining of Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18 on the basis of the phrase “and you shall love” is matched here by the linkage of Deut 6:4 and Ps 110:1 based on the word κύριος. John P. Meier (495) opines that the former constitutes an example of the exegetical technique gezerah shavah, by which two passages of scripture are used to interpret one another based on a common word or phrase; so also Birger Gerhardsson, “The Hermeneutic Program in Matthew 22:37-40” in The Shema in the New Testament: Deut 6:4-5 in Significant Passages (Lund, Sweden: Novapress, 1996), 211, who points out the equivalence of ὅμοιος in the Matthean version with the Hebrew שׁוה. If Meier is correct (see his caveats in that regard), then the Markan joining of Deut 6:4 and Ps 110:1 constitutes another example of this technique, highlighting Mark’s familiarity with ancient Jewish exegetical methods.

29 As Meier puts it, “[M]onotheistic confession is true but incomplete without Christological confession,” 497.
the *Shema* may have served to deflect accusations that his Christology infringed upon Jewish monotheism: Jesus’ inclusion in the kingly rule of God does not violate monotheism; rather, it redefines monotheism to include Jesus, crucified, risen, and exalted to God’s right hand.\(^{30}\) For Mark, to fulfill the *Shema*’s command to love God with all one’s heart, soul, mind, strength is to recognize Jesus as κύριος.

**The *Shema* According to Matthew**

Following the Markan order, the parallel passage in Matthew (22:34-40) comes immediately after the question about the resurrection and immediately before the question about David’s son. Matthew, assuming he is using Mark as a source, shortens the passage and makes numerous changes, several of them quite significant (see Appendix 1). First, instead of a scribe, Jesus’ interlocutor is one of the Pharisees, a νομικός, an expert in the Law.\(^{31}\) Second, unlike the friendly scribe, the lawyer approaches Jesus πειράζων αὐτόν, to test him. In Matthew’s hands, and

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\(^{31}\) νομικός, a *hapax* in Matthew, may have been brought into the Matthean manuscript tradition via Luke, due to its absence from family 1 and various versions and patristic mss; see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2d ed; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/German Bible Society, 1994), 48-49. The general tendency to harmonize Mark and Luke to Matthew favors the originality of νομικός in Matthew. In addition, the νομικός provides an ideal foil Matthew’s portrayal of Jesus as the true interpreter of the Law.
likewise in Luke’s, Mark’s *Schulgespräch* (scholastic dialogue) has become a *Streitgespräch* (conflict story). Third, Matthew, along with Luke, omits Deut 6:4, the opening line of the *Shema* (cf. Mark 12:29). Fourth, Matthew’s citation of Deut 6:5 only includes three terms, καρδία, ψυχή, and διανοία, lacking Mark’s fourth term, ἰσχύς. Fifth, for all three terms, Matthew substitutes the preposition ἐν with a dative object for Mark’s ἐκ with the genitive.

Luke agrees with Matthew against Mark in most of these instances. These minor agreements are not easily explained in terms of independent editing. Dale Allison argues that the level of agreement between Matthew and Luke is “insufficient to let us speak here confidently of Q.” Allison surmises that Matthew and Luke probably knew Mark and had their own oral tradition as well, as the double commandment was well known in the early Church and the story may have circulated widely in different forms. The minor agreements between Matthew and Luke are better explained by the Farrer-Goulder

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32 Bornkamm, 44.


35 Ibid., 224; cf. Davies and Allison, 3.236. For the view that Matthew’s *Shema* is dependent upon neither the LXX nor Mark but upon early Matthean tradition, see Hultgren, 376.
hypothesis: Luke used Matthew, in addition to Mark; where Luke differs from both Matthew and Mark, he is using his own material. This theory of synoptic relationships makes it possible to make sense of many, if not most of the similarities and differences in the synoptic treatments of the Great Commandment.

In regard to the absence of Deut 6:4 in Matthew and Luke, it is possible that both used a version of Mark that lacked Deut 6:4, along with the interlocutor’s positive response, but it is equally possible that Matthew omitted that verse and Luke copied Matthew. The actual commandment under discussion is Deut 6:5, and Matthew may have considered Deut 6:4 superfluous.

The rest of the changes in Matthew’s text are easily explained as redactional. These alterations cohere with Matthew’s interest in Jewish law and the ongoing debate over its interpretation. Matthew expunges the approving

36 On Luke’s use of Matthew, see Goodacre, passim.

37 Raymond F. Collins asserts that the omission of Deut 6:4 is due to its redundancy for Matthew’s Jewish Christian readers; Matthew’s focus is rather on the Law and commandments, in “Matthew’s ἐντολαί: Towards an Understanding of the Commandments in the First Gospel,” in The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Franz Neirynck, vol. 2 (eds. F. van Segbroeck and C. M. Tuckett; Louvain: Peeters, 1992), 1341; so also Reginald Fuller, 47. This seems highly unlikely, since Deut 6:4 was also associated with Law and commandments in the Hebrew Bible; see Chapter Two, passim.

38 E.g. Matt 5:17-20; 7:12.
scribe, along with his positive response to Jesus, and replaces him with a Pharisaic lawyer out to test Jesus. This move helps establish a broad pattern of increasing hostility that culminates in the denunciation of the Pharisees in Matthew 23.

The final two changes have to do with the form of Matthew’s citation of Deut 6:5, indicating an intimacy with the text unmatched by the parallel citations in Mark and Luke. As many interpreters have noted, Matthew’s translation adheres more closely to the Hebrew text than does Mark’s or Luke’s, as he reduces the human faculties from four to three (καρδία, ψυχή, and διανοία) and introduces each with the preposition ἐν, corresponding to the Hebrew preposition ב (Appendix 1). Matthew may use διανοία because he knows it from the LXX tradition; he sees it in the third position in Mark, and decides that, in combination with καρδία and ψυχή, it adequately expresses the idea of loving God with one’s whole self.  


40 That Matthew has διανοία in the third position is a strike against Birger Gerhardsson’s parabolic interpretation of the Shema in the temptation story and the parable of the sower, along with other passages; see B. Gerhardsson, “The Temptation Narrative (M) and Deut 6:5” and “The Parable of
In light of Matthean redaction, what has become of the *Shema*, which Mark seems to have woven strategically into his narrative and interpreted Christologically? Matthew has omitted Mark 2:7, where the scribes accuse Jesus of blasphemy: “Who can forgive sins except One, that is, God?” (εἷς ὁ θεός; cf. Matt 9:3-4; see Appendix 2). Matthew may have struck this sentence, because once again, he is abbreviating Mark or finds the sentence too awkward.

It seems likely, in addition, that Matthew is abbreviating because he does not recognize the Christological point that Mark is making both here and in Mark 10:18. Matthew alters the question of the rich, young man in Mark 10:17, “Good Teacher (διδάσκαλε ἀγαθέ), what must I do to inherit eternal life?” to say “Teacher, what good thing must I do (τί ἀγαθὸν ποιήσω) in order to have eternal life?” (Matthew 19:16; Appendix 2). This change allows Matthew to avoid the

the Sower and its Interpretation” in *The Shema in the New Testament*, 13-52 and 302-309; idem, *The Testing of God’s Son (Matt 4:1-11 & par): An Analysis of Early Christian Midrash* (ConBNT 2; trans. J. Toy; Lund, Sweden: CWK Gleerup, 1966). Gerhardsson argues that each of the temptations in Matt 4:1-11 and each type of soil in Matt 13:3-23 corresponds to rabbinic interpretation of three terms of Deut 6:5, i.e. loving God with an undivided heart (with both good and evil indications), to the point of martyrdom, and with all one’s wealth (*m. Ber.* 9:5). Matthew’s third term, διανοία, does not lend itself to the interpretation of loving God with all one’s wealth; so also Davies and Allison, 3.241. A bigger problem with Gerhardsson’s thesis is that he fails to use any methodological constraints to determine that these themes are derived from the *Shema* and his interpretation often seems forced.
Markan response, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except one, that is, God (εἷς ὁ θεός),” a statement which could be mistakenly understood as a denial of Jesus’ goodness and/or divinity. Matthew’s changes ward off such a reading; he affirms “One is good (εἷς ἐστιν ὁ ἀγαθός),” but the implicit connection between Jesus and the one God has been severed. That connection is not contrary to Matthew’s Christology, as will be discussed below.

The question about David’s son follows the Great Commandment pericope in Matthew as it does in Mark, but with the elimination of the scribe’s repetition of Jesus’ teaching, along with Jesus’ response. This move severs the Markan link between the one κύριος of the Shema and the exalted κύριος who shares in God’s authority. Matthew has thus edited out elements that might have been construed as problematic, either grammatically or Christologically, but as a result he undoes Mark’s highly nuanced, Christological rendering of the Shema.

If Matthew’s version of Deut 6:5 evinces intimacy with the Hebrew text of the Shema, why does the author strike Mark’s proleptic allusions to the Shema along with the text of Deut 6:4, and in so doing, attenuate the profound Christological implications of the Markan text? Perhaps Matthew misunderstood

41 On the inseparability of Jesus and God in this section, see Marcus, Mark 8-16, 725-26.
Mark; perhaps the subtlety of the Markan *Shema*, its anticipatory soundings and its juxtaposition with the Son of David passage, was lost on him. Perhaps Matthew was so focused on Jesus is the teacher of the Law *par excellence* that he missed Mark’s Christological subtleties. Elsewhere in Matthew, however, Jesus is uniquely one with God (e.g. Matt 3:17; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16; 17:5; 23:8-10; 26:64-65; 27:54; 28:19-20), so Mark’s uses of εἷς and κύριος in reference to Jesus would have been amenable to Matthew’s Christology.

Another possibility is that Matthew might be doing something different with the *Shema*. Only in Matthew does Jesus proclaim that the second command, the command to love one’s neighbor, is like the first (δευτέρα δὲ ὁμοία αὐτῇ): that love for others is bound to love for God. In Matthew 23, immediately after the Son of David pericope, Jesus accuses the Jewish leaders of severing this link. According to Matthew, they are more interested in drawing attention to themselves, enlarging their phylacteries and lengthening their tassels as an outward show of piety (23:5), than in helping others. The use of phylacteries, which bind the commandments upon one’s arm and forehead, comes from the *Shema* (Deut 6:8; 11:18), as does the wearing of tassels or fringes (Num 15:38-40).
Matthew may be hinting that the *Shema* – the affirmation of one God – is of no value when it is divorced from its ethical dimension (cf. James 2:19).

The Matthean Jesus goes on to censure the Jewish leaders for loving the best seats in the synagogue and accepting honorific titles, saying to his followers:

> But you, do not be called Rabbi; for *one* is your teacher (εἷς γάρ ἐστιν ύμῶν ὁ διδάσκαλος), and you all are brothers. And call no one Father on earth; for *one* is your Father who is in heaven (εἷς γάρ ἐστιν ύμῶν ὁ πατήρ ὁ οὐράνιος). Neither be called instructors; for your instructor is *one*, even the Messiah (καθηγητής ὑμῶν ἐστιν εἷς ὁ Χριστός; Matthew 23:8-10; translation and emphasis mine).

The Matthean Jesus eschews such titles for the teachers in his community, who are not to seek power or prestige, but rather to recognize that their authority derives from the one teacher, the Messiah, who is the true interpreter of Moses.

Do these three occurrences of *εἷς* constitute allusions to the *Shema*? The expression “one Father” is also found in Malachi 2:10, which, as discussed earlier, alludes to the *Shema*. The context of the Malachi passage is similar to

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42 For a fuller discussion of this passage, see Chapter Three, 82-87; cf. Davies and Allison, 3.277; Hagner, 2.661.
that of Matthew 23: the prophet rails against the priests, who have not been true teachers of Torah:

But you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble in the Torah...Is there not one father (אֶבֶן אֱלֹהִים) unto all of us? Did not one God (אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים) create us? Why do we deal faithlessly a man with his brother, profaning the covenant of our ancestors? (Mal 2:8a, 10; translation mine).

This is the only place in the Hebrew Scriptures where אֶבֶן אֱלֹהִים is used of YHWH.

What is striking about this passage, and where it corresponds to Matthew 23, is the expectation that belonging to the one Father should create a unity among one’s fellow Israelites; both Malachi and Matthew criticize Jewish leaders who have failed in this regard. Matthew 23 instructs the evangelist’s community of Jewish Christians to do otherwise, to actualize the link between love of the one God and love of neighbor. Matthew’s use of the Shema in this section is similar to the use of the Shema in Second Temple literature, where the oneness of God was joined to the oneness of another entity such as Temple, people, or Law.43

43 See Chapter Four, e.g. Philo, Spec. 1.67; Virt. 1.35; Opif. 1.171; Spec. 1.52; Josephus, A.J. 4.200-201.
Matthew 23:7-10, for example, has close affinities with Philo’s treatise *On the Decalogue*:

Let us, therefore...not worship those who are our brothers by nature ... (for *all created things are brothers to one another*...since the Father of them all is one [πατὴρ ἁπάντων εἷς], the Creator of the universe); but let us rather, with our mind (διανοίᾳ) and reason (λόγῳ), and with all our strength (δυνάμει), gird ourselves up vigorously and energetically to the service of that Being who is uncreated and everlasting, and the maker of the universe (Dec. 1:64).

Philo explicitly connects “one Father” to the one God of the *Shema*, following his statement of divine and human unity with three terms connoting service to God: διανοια (cf. Deut 6:5 LXX B), λόγος, and δύναμις (Deut 6:5 LXX). For Philo, reverence for the one God excludes giving undue honor to other humans, precisely the error for which Matthew condemns the Pharisees. It is not necessary to posit that these texts had a direct influence on Matthew, but it seems likely that the evangelist was aware of an existing tradition that understood the unity of God, epitomized in the *Shema*, as a warrant against communal disunity; for Matthew, as for Malachi and Philo, belonging to the one Father should result...
in a brother and sisterhood of mutual love and respect. The *Shema* thus informs Matthew’s notion of ecclesiological unity.

As was the case in Mark, in Matthew the *Shema* informs the author’s Christology: Matthew uses εἷς to refer to Jesus, aligning the one teacher and instructor, the Messiah, with the one God. For Matthew, there is one God, the Father in heaven, and alongside him, one Instructor, Jesus the Messiah, the true teacher of Torah. Matthew may have eliminated certain elements of the Markan *Shema* in his exposition of the Great Commandment, but in Matt 23, he uses Deut 6:4 to speak against what he views as religious abuses of power, exhorting his readers to honor Jesus and the Father, rather than seeking honor from one another. Matthew not only links the *Shema* closely with responsibility toward one’s neighbor, he also links Jesus closely with God.

These issues correspond to a post-70 historical location in which Matthew’s Jewish Christian community sought an identity apart from the

**Erik Waaler also argues that the placement of Matt 23:8-10 between the *Shema* and the discussion of phylacteries points to the association of the *Shema* with the person of Jesus in *The Shema and the First Commandment in First Corinthians: An Intertextual Approach to Paul’s Re-reading of Deuteronomy* (WUNT 2. Reihe 253; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 223.**
emerging rabbinic movement and its interpretation of Torah. This identity was centered in its one Teacher, Jesus the Messiah. The desire to maintain Law observance along with faith in Christ strained relations with other Jews and distanced Matthew’s readers from them, as is evinced by phrases such as “their synagogues” (9:35) and “their scribes” (7:29). Matthew therefore stresses continuity with Judaism and Torah while also affirming Jesus as the true interpreter of Scripture, and distancing his community from other Jewish groups. The way that Mark uses Deut 6:4 would have lent support both to Matthew’s emphasis on continuity with Judaism and to his high Christology (e.g. 25:31; 26:64; 27:54). It therefore seems likely that Matthew missed Mark’s allusions to Deut 6:4 (2:7; 10:18); otherwise, he might have made use of them as well. Matthew’s unique use of the Shema in chapter 23, however, indicates that he reserved the use of this text for issues that were central to his readership. Jesus’ unity with God is depicted primarily in his role as Teacher; Jesus is not only one with God, he is also the true interpreter of Torah, the chief rabbi of Matthew’s scribes trained for the kingdom of Heaven (Matt 13:52).

45 On Matthew’s Sitz im Leben, see W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew (ICC; vol. 1; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 133-38; Donald A. Hagner, Matthew 1-13 (WBC 33A; Dallas, Tex.: Word, 1993), lxv-lxxi.
The *Shema* according to Luke

The Matthean and Markan passages have a decidedly Christological emphasis, sandwiched between legal arguments and a discussion of Psalm 110. In both Matthew and Mark, Jesus participates in the unity of God. In Mark, Jesus shares in God’s goodness and the divine prerogative to forgive sin; he is the κύριος exalted to God’s right hand who ushers in God’s kingdom. In Matthew, Jesus is the one Teacher alongside the one Father, and this Teacher’s unity with God is a model for unity among his disciples. Departing from the Markan order, the Lukan citation of Deut 6:5 (Luke 10:27) functions as a prelude to the parable of the Good Samaritan. It does not come as the culmination of debates with the scribes in Jerusalem, but falls within Luke’s travel narrative (Luke 9:51-19:47) after the mission of the Seventy (10:1-24) and preceding Jesus’ visit to Mary and Martha (10:38-42). Just as the Markan *Shema* is linked to the Son of David pericope by the catchword κύριος, the Lukan *Shema* is linked to the parable of the Good Samaritan by πλησίον.\(^6\) This is a guide to Luke’s emphasis: as an

introduction to the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Shema is less about Jesus himself and more about the ethical and covenantal demands of following him.

Like Matthew, Luke has eliminated εἷς ὁ θεός from Mark 2:7 to say “Who is able to forgive sins except God alone?” (μόνος ὁ θεός; 5:21; Appendix 2), thereby excising a Christologically significant echo of Deut 6:4. As discussed above, it is probable that Luke followed Matthew, although it is also possible that both authors delete an element that they both saw as awkward. Later, Luke retains the rich young man’s question almost verbatim (διδάσκαλε ἀγαθέ, τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω; Luke 18:18/Mark 10:17), but he changes the rich young man to a ruler (ἄρχων). This change may reflect Luke’s tendency to critique social hierarchy and reverse eschatological expectations (e.g. Luke 1:46-55; 6:20-26; 16:19-31). Jesus’ answer is identical to the Markan version which includes εἷς ὁ θεός (Luke 18:18-19). Only in Luke does this passage come after the Great Commandment pericope, rather than before: it does not anticipate the proclamation of the Shema as a Christological high point as in Mark and Matthew. Instead, Lukan redaction shapes Jesus’ encounter with the lawyer to highlight the praxis of love of neighbor exemplified in the parable of the Good Samaritan.
The first Lukan distinctive is that the lawyer who stands up to test Jesus (νομικός; cf. Matt 22:35) does not ask which commandment is first or greatest; rather, he inquires about the way to inherit eternal life. This question is similar to that of the wealthy ruler in Mark 10:17/Matt 19:16/Luke 18:18. Some interpreters have suggested that the question of eternal life may have been more relevant than the greatest commandment to a largely Gentile audience less concerned with the Law.\(^47\) As noted throughout this study, however, Deuteronomy promises life as the chief blessing of loving YHWH and keeping the commandments (e.g. Deut 4:1; 6:24; 8:1; 30:6, 16, 19); the context is therefore no less Jewish than in Matthew or Mark.\(^48\) Perhaps Luke frames the Great Commandment in this way because – as shown in the parable of the Good Samaritan – love for God is demonstrated by how one acts toward one’s neighbor. The questioner is interested in how to receive life; a thoroughly Jewish concern. Jesus paradoxically commands him to give life.


A second Lukan distinctive is that the scripture citations are put in the mouth of the νομικός rather than Jesus. Paradoxically, this allows Jesus to control the discussion, so that he can conclude it by pronouncing the judgment: “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live” (Luke 10:28). Third, Luke includes the same four terms as Mark: καρδία, ψυχή, διάνοια, and ἰσχύς, but he reverses the last two terms, thereby restoring the sequence in Deut 6:4 MT and including διάνοια from Mark (Appendix 1). Fourth, Luke uses a combination of prepositions, ἐξ before καρδία, and ἐν before the other three terms. Luke appears to start off following Mark and then switches to Matthew after the first term, but it is difficult to say why he would have done so. Fifth, Luke omits ἀγαπήσεις at the beginning of the command to love one’s neighbor, effectively creating one commandment out of two. It seems that in all of these instances, Luke avails himself of both Mark and Matthew, and adds his own editorial creativity. Most of the changes from Mark, agreements with Matthew, and deviations from both are explained by Luke’s welding of the Great Commandment to the parable of the Good Samaritan and the issues raised therein.

The parable of the Good Samaritan accords with Luke’s key theme of eschatological reversal and his abiding concern for social justice. An unnamed
man heading out of Jerusalem is accosted by robbers, beaten, and left half-dead. A priest and a Levite, in turn, see the man and pass by (ἀντιπαρέρχομαι) on the opposite side of the road, keeping their distance. A Samaritan, moved with pity, approaches and provides care for this stranger from his own possessions. Jesus then asks the lawyer which of the three was the neighbor to the man. The lawyer answers that it was the one who showed mercy, and Jesus replies: “Go and do likewise.” This imperative addresses the lawyer’s original question about how to inherit eternal life (10:25). The Lukan Jesus thus links the promise of life – the Deuteronomic blessing for loving YHWH (Deut 6:5) – with love for neighbor, binding love for God more tightly to love of neighbor than do the Matthean and Markan parallels. The close connection between love of God and neighbor is expressed again in Luke’s woes against the Pharisees, where Jesus accuses the Pharisees of neglecting (παρέρχομαι) or “passing by” justice and the love of God (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ; 11:42; most likely an objective genitive). παρέρχομαι is remarkably similar to ἀντιπαρέρχομαι, the verb used to describe the way the Pharisee and Levite pass by or neglect the injured man in the parable of the Good Samaritan. In the Lukan woes, Jesus again accuses Jewish leaders of negligence in uniting love of God (Deut 6:5) with love of neighbor.
While some interpreters have concluded that the parable of the Good Samaritan “relativizes the cult” and expands covenental boundaries,\(^\text{49}\) or undermines status that is derived by birth,\(^\text{50}\) Richard Bauckham argues that the parable brings to light a halakhic debate over corpse impurity.\(^\text{51}\) According to Bauckham, the lawyer’s question, τίς ἐστίν μου πλησίον, leads Jesus to describe a test case in which the duty to love the neighbor conflicts with a purity law that forbids a priest (and possibly a Levite) to touch a dead body (Lev 21:1-3). The problem with Bauckham’s argument, however, is that he must assume that the victimized man appears to be dead or is about to die when the story itself seems to indicate that anyone could have helped if he or she had chosen to do so.\(^\text{52}\) Rather, the Lukan Jesus interprets the Law of Moses to say that love of neighbor goes beyond the question of who is one’s neighbor and asks, instead, how to behave as a neighbor. As Joseph A. Fitzmyer puts it, “It is no longer whether the victim of the highway robbery could be considered legally a ‘neighbor’ to either


\(^\text{52}\) For a fuller argument, see Tan, “Community, Kingdom and Cross,” 135-36.

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the priest, the levite, or the Samaritan, but rather which one of them acted as a ‘neighbor’ to the unfortunate victim.”

That the one who acts as a neighbor is a Samaritan, not a Jewish leader, overthrows expectations: Jewish leaders fail to act according to the Law’s central concern for compassion toward one’s fellow human being, while a Samaritan, considered by many to be disobedient to the Law, does rightly. The unique placement of the Lukan pericope thus informs Luke’s interpretation of the Shema. All references to God’s oneness except one (Luke 18:19) have been omitted; Luke does not use the Shema Christologically, even though such use would cohere with his portrait of Jesus as κύριος. Rather, Luke emphasizes love of neighbor as the hermeneutical key to the Law. Luke’s focus in this pericope is consonant with his emphasis throughout the Gospel on caring for the poor and on social and

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53 Fitzmyer, 884.


economic justice (e.g. Luke 4:18; 6:20). The Samaritan lives out the command of the Shema to love God, along with the command to love one’s neighbor, while the Jewish leaders do not. The Samaritan thus proves himself in this instance to be faithful to the covenant, while the Jewish leaders are implicitly judged to be faithless.

**The Shema in Paul**

Paul draws upon the concept of divine unity and love for God in ways similar to other Jewish writers of the Second Temple period: (1) to polemicize against idolatry; (2) to promote unity among the people of God; and (3) with Matthew and Mark (and John as well), to include Jesus within the unity of God. Like several of the OT prophets, Paul argues in Romans 3 that in the new age of the reign of God, Jew and Gentile will worship the one God as one people. Where Paul differs from the prophets and other Jewish writers is in his belief that the eschatological era has dawned and that this unity is to be found among

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57 So also Tan, “Community, Kingdom and Cross,” 137.
Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus. Paul uses his anti-idolatry statements and his proclamations of divine unity in service of his exhortations for ecclesiological unity. Paul’s references to love of neighbor (Rom 13:9, 10; 15:2; Gal 5:4) reinforce this emphasis. In addition, Paul employs the expression “those who love God,” used throughout Second Temple literature to refer to those who keep the covenant, to refer to Christians (Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; 16:22). 1 Corinthians 8 contains an extended allusion to the Shema, with references to God and Jesus as εἷς (1 Cor 8:4, 6; cf. Deut 6:4) and to loving God (1 Cor 8:3; cf. Deut 6:5). This study will begin here, with the most explicit reference to the Shema in Paul, followed by an examination of Galatians 3:20 and Romans 3:30.

1 Corinthians

Several modern commentators note echoes of the Shema in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.58 In this passage, Paul addresses the question of whether it is permissible

for Corinthian Christians to consume meat left over from pagan ritual sacrifices. Paul’s main point is that a Christian is free to eat ritually slaughtered meat, but that exercising this freedom may cause another person who lacks this knowledge to eat the food as if it is offered to an idol and therefore, to sin (1 Cor 8:7-13; cf. 1 Cor 10:23-33). Paul argues that the Corinthians’ freedom must be tempered by an awareness of the conscience of those believers who might be troubled by partaking in pagan feasts. It is fitting that Paul draws upon the Shema to address a situation in which pagan culture challenges Christian loyalty to Jesus, as Jewish writers used the Shema in dealing with similar challenges to the loyalty to Israel’s one God.

Paul appeals to the Corinthians to prize love over knowledge: “Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; but anyone who loves God (τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν) is known by him” (1 Cor 8:2-3). It was noted in Chapter Four that the expression “one who loves God,” is frequently used in Second Temple Jewish literature for one who is obedient to the covenant.

59 On the historical background of the situation in Corinth and the broader scope of Paul’s argument, see Anthony C. Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text (NGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 607-38; Hays, First Corinthians, 2-13, 134-35; Fitzmyer, First Corinthians, 330-37.

60 See Chapter Four, passim; so also N. T. Wright, Paul and the Faithfulness of God: Book II, Parts III and IV (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2013), 661.
As the command to love God is rooted in Deut 6:5 and is bound up with the covenant between God and Israel, its use by later Jewish authors resonates with the language and context of Deut 6:5. Here and elsewhere, Paul uses the phrase in a parallel manner to refer to appropriate conduct for those who believe in Jesus. He has already used it to refer to Christians in 1 Cor 2:9: “But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him’” (τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν; cf. “Let anyone be accursed who has no love for the Lord” [οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον]; 1Cor 16:22; cf. Rom 8:28). The main point of 1 Cor 8:2-3 is that, for Paul, abstract knowledge is not enough; true knowledge of God should result in love for one’s fellow believer. Similarly, in 1 Cor 13, love trumps knowledge three times (13:2, 8, 12). In all of these passages love for God is expressed through love for others. This resonates with the synoptic descriptions of the Great Commandment, in which love of God and neighbor are inextricably intertwined.

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61 Paul’s citation is unclear; it contains features of Isa 64:3 MT and Ps 31:20 MT (for more references, see Conzelmann, 64).
In 1 Cor 8:4-6, the volume of the echo of the *Shema* is increased, as the reference to those who love God is followed by a claim that God is one. Remarkably, it is also followed by a claim that Jesus is the one Lord:

(4) Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "no idol in the world really exists," and that "there is no God but one (οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ ἕίς)."
(5) Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth-- as in fact there are many gods and many lords--
(6) yet for us there is one God (ἕς θεός), the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ (ἕς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός), through whom are all things and through whom we exist (1 Cor 8:4-6; emphasis added).

The Corinthians have used the slogans “no idol in the world really exists” and “there is no God but one” to argue for their liberty to eat sacrificial meat.\(^6\) In 1 Cor 8:5-6, Paul qualifies the first slogan which denies the existence of idols to say that there are many “so-called” (λεγόμενοι) gods and lords; Paul does not deny that these powers exist in the world, only that they are not gods “for us” (ἡμῖν; cf. 1 Cor 10:20-21).

The expression εἷς θεός in the second slogan cited in 1 Cor 8:4 may have been familiar to Paul’s largely Gentile audience as it was used in Greek acclamations of a favored god or of the unity of the pantheon. Combined with the reference to love for God in 8:3, Paul’s usage in 1 Cor 8:4-6 resonates with the Shema, which was used by other Jewish writers of his era to combat polytheism and to commend Judaism to Gentiles. Like several Jewish authors of the Second Temple period, Paul uses the notion of divine unity to build a bridge with his audience. Paul agrees with the Corinthians’ slogans, but – as the rest of the passage shows – not with the conclusion that the non-existence of idols allows them to do as they please.

In 1 Cor 8:6, Paul puts forth a Christological interpretation of the Shema which begins with the notion of the one God and then locates Jesus within the divine unity as the one Lord. In this formulation, Paul affirms the uniqueness of God compared to the θεοί πολλοί καὶ κύριοι πολλοί (1 Cor 8:5) of the surrounding

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63 Chapter Four, 120-27. Cf. M. Aur. Ant., Medit., 7.9: “For there is both one Universe, made up of all things, and one God, immanent in all things, and one Substance and one Law.”

64 Chapter Four, passim.

65 Cf. Matthew 23, where Jesus and the Father are both one, cited above. 1 Cor 8:6 may contain a Christian creed (so Hays, 139) or may originate with Paul himself (so Gordon D. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians [NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987], 374). The origins of this verse are less important for the present study than the way the verse functions in the passage at hand.
culture: “yet for us there is one God (εἷς θεός), the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist.” As Creator, God is superior to the many gods of the ancient world: God is both the source of all things (εἷς οὗ τὰ πάντα) and the goal, the one who gives ultimate purpose (εἰς αὐτόν) to all creation. References to God as εἷς are often associated with God’s role as Creator in Second Temple literature, and thus Paul follows a line of thought common to other writers of the same period.66

Alongside the Father is “one Lord, Jesus Christ” (εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς), the agent of creation (δι᾽ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ημεῖς δι᾽ αὐτοῦ). It is striking that Paul uses εἷς to refer both to God and to Jesus (cf. Matt 23:8-10); by referring to Jesus as εἷς κύριος, he identifies Jesus as the “one Lord” of the Shema (κύριος ὁ θεὸς ημῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστιν; Deut 6:4).67 Paul’s association of Jesus with the creative power of God, along with his use of the phrase δι᾽ αὐτοῦ, foreshadows the Johannine Prologue: πάντα δι᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἐν (John 1:3). As the one κύριος in 1 Cor 8:6, Jesus is the pre-existent mediator of creation,

66 E.g. Sir 1:8-10; 42:21-22; Sib. Or. Prologue 1:94-97; 3:11-23; 23:3-14; Philo, Opif. 1.171; Decal. 1.64-65; Legat. 1.115; Conf. 1.144, 170; Virt. 1.213.

67 Based in large part on this passage, Larry Hurtado argues that Paul and other New Testament writers use the category of divine agency to affirm the Jewish belief in one God and to reshape monotheism to account for the practice of worshiping Jesus alongside God; see One God, One Lord, 97-98; cf. 1-2, 21.
resembling personified Wisdom (Prov 8:22, 27, 30; Wis 9:1-12; cf. Ps 33:9; Sir 42:15; cf. John 1:1-3).68

In an interpretation similar to the one espoused above, James D. G. Dunn maintains that, in 1 Cor 8:6, Paul “splits the Shema (Deut 6.4), the Jewish confession of monotheism, between God the Father and Christ the Lord in a way that has no earlier parallel.”69 Dunn has since backed away from this conclusion, stating that he no longer thinks that the Shema is the basis of the confession that Jesus is the one Lord in 1 Cor 8:6.70 He now highlights the distinction between the one God, the source or origin of creation, and the one Lord, the mediator or agent of creation, whose role is like that of Wisdom and Word in Jewish

68 So, too James D. G. Dunn, Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation (2d ed.; London: SCM Press, 2003), 179-83, although Dunn asserts that “Christ is being identified here not with a pre-existent being but with the creative power and action of God” (182; emphasis original). It seems likely, however, that if the creative power of God was involved with creation, and if that power is identified with Christ, that Paul ascribes to Christ some form of pre-existence. On Christ as pre-existent Wisdom in 1 Cor 8, see also N.T. Wright, The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and Law in Pauline Theology (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1993), 120-36, esp. 130-31, where Wright also argues that Dunn’s view of pre-existence is too narrow.


tradition, as if this distinction negates the possibility that Paul is including Jesus in the divine unity.⁷¹

But the differentiation between God and Jesus in 1 Cor 8 does not overturn Dunn’s earlier claim that Paul has the *Shema* is in view when he identifies Jesus as the “one Lord.” Richard Bauckham rightly points out that it is precisely the language of εἷς κύριος that is drawn from Deut 6:4:

The only possible way to understand Paul as maintaining monotheism is to understand him to be including Jesus in the unique identity of the one God affirmed in the Shema...He is identifying Jesus as the Lord whom the Shema affirms to be one.⁷²

For Paul, the Father is the one God of the *Shema*, and the one Lord is Jesus.

Charles H. Giblin describes how this “Christianized Shema” might remain within the pale of monotheism:

Thus, monotheism as Paul expects it to be understood, involves a uniquely ordered personal activity by two related agents. God, named personally

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⁷¹ On this point, Dunn acknowledges the influence of James F. McGrath, who argues that the “one Lord” passage is “an addition of a second clause alongside the Shema,” in *The Only True God: Early Christian Monotheism in its Jewish Context* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 40 (emphasis original). But again, Deut 6:4 reads κύριος εἷς ἐστιν. In 1 Cor 8:6, εἷς κύριος is too close to Deut 6:4 to represent something “alongside” the Shema.

as the Father, is one as the sole originator and goal of salvific action. Jesus Christ is one as the unique, direct channel of that activity, establishing a unity among brothers based on God’s unique fatherhood.\(^\text{73}\)

The relationship between the one Creator and the one Mediator is relevant to the Gospel of John, where Jesus’ equality with the Father (John 5:18; 10:33; 19:7) is balanced by his subordination to the Father (John 14:28). Like the Fourth Evangelist, Paul balances his assertion of Jesus’ lordship with statements such as 1 Cor 15:28, which states that the Son is ultimately subject to the Father (cf. 1 Cor 3:23 and 11:3).\(^\text{74}\) Both Paul and John portray Jesus as God’s unique agent (note the use of the preposition \(\deltaι\) in 1 Cor 8:6 and John 1:3, which designates agency).\(^\text{75}\) Both employ the language of agency in order to square Jesus’ exalted status with monotheistic concerns.

As Giblin observes, the point of Paul’s remarkable interpretation of the Shema, however, is not ultimately Christological. The Corinthians have argued that because there is one God, they are free to eat ritually slaughtered meat. Paul


directs them toward the primacy of ecclesiological unity: food offered to idols is merely food, but to insist upon one’s right to eat it is to miss the point.\textsuperscript{76} He writes, “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (1 Cor 8:1; cf. 13:4). Paul’s Christological \textit{Shema} points beyond Christology to the responsibility the Corinthians have toward others who are part of the one God’s creation. In 1 Cor 8:7-13, Paul advocates limiting one’s freedom in service of a weaker brother or sister: “Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall” (1 Cor 8:13). His emphasis is pastoral and he marshals his Christology in an attempt to create unity in the Corinthian church. The message of 1 Cor 8 is thus similar to Malachi 2:10, Jer 32:39-41, and to the pericope of the Great Commandment in the synoptic Gospels (cf. Philo, \textit{Decal.} 1.64; Jos. \textit{A.J.} 4.200-201), which wed the unity of God with the unity of the covenant community.\textsuperscript{77}

Paul continues the theme of unity in 1 Corinthians 10, which deals with Christian participation in the Lord’s Supper. The theme of idolatry resurfaces

\textsuperscript{76} So also Waaler, 435; cf. Wright, \textit{Climax}, 132-36, who invokes the examples of Christ (Phil 2:1-11) and Paul (1 Cor 9), both of whom relinquish their rights for the sake of the unity of the body of believers.

\textsuperscript{77} On the link between the \textit{Shema} and the Jeremiah and Malachi passages, see Chapter Three, 75-77; 82-87; on the synoptic passages, see 199-233.
(10:14), connecting this passage with the discussion of meat sacrificed to idols in 1 Cor 8. Paul asserts that the “oneness” of the bread, which represents Christ’s body, creates a “oneness” – a corporate unity – among the body of believers:

“But there is one bread (εἷς ἄρτος), we who are many are one body (ἐν σώμα), for we all partake of the one bread” (ἐνὸς ἄρτου; 1 Cor 10:17). The Corinthians are to understand themselves as “one” based upon their common partaking of the “one bread,” Christ. Again, Paul uses the adjective εἷς to refer to Jesus. Paul, then, deploys the language of the Shema (1) to describe Jesus, and (2) as a mandate for unity among believers in Jesus. This usage is similar to Philo’s word regarding proselytes, mentioned in the previous chapter:

For the most effectual love-charm, the chain which binds indissolubly the goodwill which makes us one [ἐνωτικῆς from εἷς] is to honour the one God (ἡ τοῦ ἑνὸς θεοῦ τιμή; Spec. 1.52; emphasis added).

For Paul as for Philo, “the desired social expression of faith in the one God is the exclusive unity of the worshipers.”78 The difference for Paul is that Gentiles who believe in Jesus become part of this unity as Gentiles, not as proselytes.

Again, in a discussion of spiritual gifts in 1 Cor 12, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to strive for unity, using the language of oneness:

For just as the body is one (τὸ σῶμα ἕν ἐστιν) and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body (ἐν ἕστιν σῶμα), so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι) we were all baptized into one body (ἐν σῶμα) -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-- and we were all made to drink of one Spirit (ἐν πνεύμα; 1 Cor 12:12-13)...As it is, there are many members, yet one body (ἐν δὲ σῶμα; 1 Cor 12:20).

Here, the “one body,” made up of diverse members, is unified through the “one Spirit.” The dyad of one Spirit/one body is parallel to the one bread/one body of 1 Cor 10, as the “one Spirit” links the unity of God with the reconciliation of the community of believers. These ideas grow out of the discussion in 1 Cor 8, which roots Christian unity in the divine unity, using the language and themes of the Shema.

To summarize, in 1 Corinthians, Paul uses the Shema to make a case that Christ’s unity with God, when properly understood, should create oneness within the believing community. Christ’s unity with God is grounded upon Christ’s role as the agent of God’s creative power. Christ is the one through whom (δι’ αὐτοῦ) all believers exist, and in whom they find their unity with one
another. In the matters of food sacrificed to idols and spiritual gifts, Paul therefore prioritizes love for one’s fellow believer over Christian liberty and knowledge. Paul articulates this principle in 1 Cor 10:22-23: “‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things are beneficial. ‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other” (cf. 10:23-33). Paul exhorts believers in Jesus to imagine themselves as members of a whole, corresponding to the divine unity, so that they form a unity as well. Paul argues that “the one who loves God,” i.e. who fulfills the Shema, will extend Christ’s unity with God to the covenant community.

**Galatians**

Paul’s letter to the Galatians contains an enigmatic echo of the Shema:

“Now a mediator is not of one; but God is one” (ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἐστιν; Gal 3:20; my translation, emphasis added). What does it mean to say that a mediator is not “of one” and how does the statement ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἷς ἔστιν come to bear upon Paul’s broader argument? The context of Galatians 3 sheds some light on these difficulties.

In Galatians 3, Paul polemicizes against teachers who have convinced Paul’s Gentile converts of their need to be circumcised and observe other aspects
of Jewish Law. Paul explains his view of the purpose of the Law in relation to the Abrahamic covenant: “Now to Abraham the promises were spoken and to his offspring (τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ); it does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ as of many; but as of one (ὡς ἕφ᾽ ἐνός), ‘And to your offspring (τῷ σπέρματί σου),’ which is Christ” (Gal 3:16; translation mine). In a remarkable interpretive move, Paul understands the collective noun σπέρμα to refer to Christ. The result is that those who believe in Christ receive the promises made to Abraham, promises that preceded the giving of the Law and which the Law itself does not make void (3:17-18).

The Law, Paul says, was given until the singular offspring should come, to whom the promise was given; the Law essentially fills in the gap between the giving of the promises and the coming of the one to whom the promises were made, Christ. In Gal 3:19, Paul writes that the Law was given through angels by the hand of a mediator, which leads into the statement: “Now a mediator is not of one; but God is one” (ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἶς ἐστιν; Gal 3:20; translation mine).\textsuperscript{79}

Martinus de Boer provides a common interpretation of Gal 3:20:

\textsuperscript{79} The idea that angels were present at the giving of the Law is found in Deut 33:2 LXX: καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ἐκ Σινα ἥκει…ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ ἄγγελοι μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ, and also in Second Temple literature, e.g. Jub. 1:27-2:1; Jos. A.J. 15:136; cf. Acts 7:38, 53; Heb 2:2. For more references, see Martinus C. de Boer, \textit{Galatians: A Commentary} (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 228.
The assumption underlying the argument of v. 20 appears to be that a mediator is needed only when the party initiating a particular transaction consists of a plurality. (Whether the other party to the transaction is also a plurality is irrelevant; the issue is the plurality of the initiating party.) Paul leaves it to his listeners and readers to draw the implicit conclusion: Since Moses was mediator of the law for the angels (a plurality) mentioned in v. 19d, he could not have been the mediator of the law for God, since God is “one,” not a plurality. Paul here appeals to the fundamental conviction of the Israelite faith that God is “one,” as attested by the Shema (Deut 6:4; emphasis original).

According to de Boer, Moses is the mediator of the Law in Gal 3:20a, but the angels, a plurality, initiated the giving of the Law, not God, because God is a party of one who needs no mediator. The problem with de Boer’s interpretation, however, is that there is no evidence that in the ancient world, only a plurality could initiate the use of a mediator.

Like de Boer, N.T. Wright argues that the mediator in Gal 3:20a refers to Moses, but unlike de Boer, Wright opines that when Paul writes ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν, “one” refers to the one human family promised to Abraham: “Moses is not the mediator of the ‘one family’, but God is one, and therefore desires one family, as he promised to Abraham.”

According to Wright’s view, Moses could not be the mediator of the one family, because the Law was only given to the Jewish people, and the one God requires one united family. While Wright is correct to say that Paul argues that the divine unity must result in one people, this idea emerges in Gal 3:28 (cf. Rom 3:30), not in 3:20, where Paul first establishes the unity of God with Christ.

The argument presented here is that while the mediator in 3:19 is Moses, in 3:20a, Paul turns from his previous statement to put forth a general axiom: ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν: a mediator is not (a mediator) of one, i.e. a mediator is not necessary if there is only one party involved. The article before μεσίτης is generic, referring to mediators as a class. So, to paraphrase 3:19b-20: “Moses was the

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82 “In the singular the generic article makes a single object the representative of the entire class” (Smyth, Greek Grammar, §1123).
mediator of the Law. A mediator was necessary because there were two parties in the transaction, God and Israel. But a mediator is not needed when there is only one party. The promise, therefore, needs no mediator, as it takes place between God and Christ, who are a unity.”

As Steven M. Baugh writes:

Paul refers to a self-evident principle that a mediator is not employed when there is only one party in the transaction. Since God is one, there was no mediation of the promise to this Seed-to-come (v. 19), who was the foundational heir.

Gal 3:16 supports this reading; Paul has already identified Christ as “the one (seed)” to whom the promises were spoken. It seems unlikely that Paul has changed his definition of “the one” to mean “the one family” (contra Wright).

Gal 3:20 seems to indicate that mediation is not needed between the one God and the one seed, Christ, precisely because they are a unity. In other words, Moses may have mediated the Law at Sinai, but not the promised inheritance; that promise originates in a prior agreement between God and Christ, within the unity of God. Unlike the Law, the promise to Abraham is unmediated, as it takes

83 This argument is based upon the work of Steven M. Baugh, 64-66.
84 Baugh, 65.
place within the one God. The Law had its purpose but could not produce life (Gal 3:19-26): the original promise of life is now fulfilled in Christ (Gal 3:26-29).

Paul’s main point in Galatians 3 is that the Law was in effect during the interim between the promise and the “one” seed who was to come, but that the Law was always subordinate to the promise (Gal 3:21-29). The use of εἷς to refer to both God (3:20) and Christ (3:16) hints at a relational unity similar to the one developed in 1 Corinthians 8:6. Paul draws upon the Shema’s declaration of God’s oneness, not only to contrast the significance of the Abrahamic promise with the purpose of the Mosaic legislation, but also to link Jesus to the one God.85

As in 1 Corinthians 8, Paul’s language of theological unity is used in the service of ecclesiological unity. Believers are all now children of God through faith (3:26), and Paul describes them as being one: “For all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ; Gal 3:28). God is one and through the promise given to the one offspring, i.e. Christ, believers in Christ are one, heirs of the promise, adopted as children (Gal 4:1-7). To be “in Christ” (Gal 3:28) is to have a new identity, to be an heir of the one God, who gave the

85 This line of reasoning also makes sense of Paul’s claim to uphold the Law in Gal 3:21-25. The Law had a purpose, but it did not take the place of the promise (Baugh, 66).

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promise to the one offspring. As J. Louis Martyn notes, this new identity “is so fundamentally and irreducibly identified with Christ himself as to cause Paul to use the masculine form of the word ‘one.’” For Paul, divine unity creates ecclesiological unity. This Fourth Evangelist makes a similar point in John 17 (see Chapter Seven).

**Romans**

In Romans, as in 1 Corinthians and Galatians, Paul uses the expression εἷς ὁ θεὸς in order to foster unity in the church. The letter suggests that there is tension between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians in its audience over questions of the Law (e.g. Rom 2:12-29; 3:19-31). Within this context, Paul makes an extended argument demonstrating that there is one gospel for both Jew and Gentile alike.

Paul contends that Jews and Gentiles are equally guilty before God: both must be justified through Christ, not by works of the Law (Romans 1:18-8:39; cf.

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Gal 2:16). In 1:18-2:16, Paul discusses the guilt of the Gentiles, and beginning in 2:17, the Jews. Paul maintains that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile before God. In diatribe style he asks “is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also since \( \text{God is one} \) (\( \varepsilon\iota\varsigma \ \circ \ \theta\epsilon\omicron\omicron\varsigma \)); and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith” (Rom 3:30; emphasis added; cf. Rom 10:12). Richard B. Hays punctuates this verse as follows: “Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also. If indeed God, who will justify the circumcised on the basis of faith, is one, he will also justify the uncircumcised by faith.”

As Hays points out, the reading of the NRSV states a rather unremarkable truism: because God is one, he is the God of Jews and Gentiles. Hays’s interpretation, however, places stress on the issue at hand for Paul: “because God is one, he must justify Gentiles in the same way that he justifies Jews.” This rendering accords with the crux of Paul’s argument, which is that justification \( \epsilon\kappa \ \pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\omicron\omega\varsigma \) means that Gentiles do not need to keep the Law.

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89 Ibid.
*Shema* is thus at the heart of Paul’s case for the justification of both Jew and Gentile by faith.⁹⁰

Paul goes on to invoke the example of Abraham, whom God considered righteous because of his faith before he was circumcised (Rom 4:1-25). Paul had already used the example of Abraham in Galatians, arguing there that the promise to Abraham preceded the Law and was intended for a singular offspring. Here, Paul argues that Abraham’s own righteousness preceded his circumcision. The Gentiles, therefore, are reconciled to God as was Abraham: ἐκ πίστεως, not by adhering to the Law.

Paul uses εἷς ὁ θεός in Romans 3:30, drawing upon the *Shema* as the basis for God’s impartial judgment of Jews and Gentiles alike, uniting Jews and Gentiles into one community. Mark D. Nanos summarizes:

Paul’s logic is this: If all who worship the one God are Israelites or become Israelites, then God is only the God of one nation, not of all the nations. But if the non-Jews who turn to Israel’s God do so while

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remaining non-Jews, not as members of the nation Israel, then they worship the God of Israel as the one God of all the nations also...God’s oneness must not be compromised by the proselyte conversion of non-Jews who turn to God by way of Jesus Christ. For Paul, that they remain members from the other nations joining alongside of the Israelites constitutes an important proof of the propositional claims of the gospel; it signals the arrival of the awaited day when all of the nations will worship the Creator God together.  

For Paul, Gentiles must be united with Jews because that is the expectation of the eschatological age in the Jewish Scriptures. Unlike Philo, who argued for the unity of Jews and proselytes under the one God, for Paul, God’s oneness is compromised if God is only the God of Israel, and not of the Gentiles qua Gentiles. This eschatological expectation uniting Jews and Gentiles extends into rabbinic interpretations of the Shema as well:

“The Lord, our God,” over us (the children of Israel);
“the Lord is one,” over all the creatures of the world.
“The Lord our God,” in this world; “the Lord is one,” in the world to come, as it is said, “[T]he Lord shall be


92 Philo Spec. 1.52, treated on 178-79 above.
king over all the earth. In that day shall the Lord be one and His name one” (Zech 14:9).

YHWH will be one “in that day,” the time of YHWH’s future kingdom, when all people, Jews and Gentiles, worship YHWH as one. So Zech 14:16 speaks of all the families of the earth worshipping YHWH in Jerusalem. It is this stream of prophetic, eschatological universalism that marks Paul’s view of Law and grace, Jew and Gentile. Paul views the new age as having already dawned: YHWH is finally one because Jew and Gentile are one in Christ.

Ironically, Paul uses the Shema – the primary commandment of the Mosaic legislation – to say that it is not the Law, but faith, that justifies all people before God. He uses the Shema, which epitomizes the Law and Jewish election, to argue for God’s universal embrace of both Jew and Gentile in Christ. Nils Dahl observes:

To the rabbis, the confession of the One, who alone is God, implied willingness to observe his commandments. Paul, on the contrary, gives a polemical twist to the monotheistic confession,

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94 So also Nanos, 77-78.

turning it against the Jew who relies on the Law and boasts of his special relation to God. The oneness of God, the sovereign Creator of all, is demonstrated by the impartiality of his judgment and of his grace upon Jews and Greeks without any distinction. In the Pauline perspective, monotheism has become a warrant for the doctrine of justification, just as the recognition that all men are sinners, and that righteousness and glory belong to God alone, has become a criterion of genuine faith in the one God.\textsuperscript{96}

In Deut 6:4, only Israel is called to hear and obey the one God. As Dahl notes, Paul draws upon the \textit{Shema} to show that God’s oneness, like the prior promise to Abraham, has universal implications.

Jesus’ inclusion in the divine identity is not of chief concern to Paul here as it was in 1 Cor 8:6 and Gal 3:20. Nevertheless, Paul argues that it is through the faithfulness of Christ\textsuperscript{97} that Jews and Gentiles now have equal footing before the one God (περιτομὴν ἐκ πίστεως καὶ ἀκροβυστίαν διὰ τῆς πίστεως; Rom 3:30). As C. Giblin puts it, “The law of Moses attests the oneness of God, but it is the bond of faith in Christ that effectively discloses that oneness as the principle of an


interpersonal unity.” Later in Romans, Paul compares the church to one body (ἓν σῶμα) consisting of many members with different functions, all dependent upon one another and upon Christ (Rom 12:4-5; cf. 1 Cor 10:17; 12:12-20). Paul thus applies the language of oneness to the church, the people of God consisting of Jews and Gentiles.

Paul’s use of the Shema has significant parallels with the Johannine writings, which will be discussed in the next two chapters. These similarities can be summarized in four major points: (1) Jesus is included in the divine unity as mediator of God’s creative power; (2) the divine unity necessitates a corresponding unity among God’s people (this idea is already present in prophetic texts and in Philo and Josephus); (3) the inclusion of the Gentiles is a sign of the in-breaking of the eschatological era of God’s reign (cf. Zech 14); (4) “those who love God” (Deut 6:5) are now Christians, indicating that Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ constitute the new covenant people.

Giblin, 545.
Ephesians

In a manner reminiscent of Paul, the author of Ephesians refers to God, Jesus, and the Church as “one.” There are major differences, however, in the way Ephesians treats the theme of unity: the basis for corporate unity is not explicitly eschatological, nor is there continuing concern for ethnic Israel. These differences from the undisputed Pauline corpus lend weight to the theory that the letter is written by someone other than Paul to an audience for whom the conflict between Jewish and Gentile Christians is now in the past. The readers are Gentiles (2:11; 3:1; 4:17) whom the author describes in relation to Israel, no longer “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise” (2:12). The author exhorts his audience to imagine themselves members of God’s people, using the language of corporate unity found in Pauline correspondence. No longer outsiders without hope, they are now one (ἕν) with Israel (2:14), part of the “one new person” (ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον; 2:15) in Christ.

The author draws upon the Pauline images of “one body” and “one Spirit” to say

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99 On issues of authorship, see Andrew T. Lincoln, Ephesians (WBC 42; Dallas, Tex.: Word, 1990), lix-lxxiii, and Markus Barth, Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1-3 (AB 34; New York: Doubleday, 1974), 10-12, 36-41. The author is likely a follower of Paul (so Lincoln, contra Barth), possibly a Jewish Christian (so Lincoln, lxx), writing in Paul’s name.
that through the death of Christ, both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled in one body (ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι; 2:16; cf. 1 Cor 10:17; 12:12-20), and have access to God through one Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι; 2:18; cf. 1 Cor 12:9, 11, 13).

Within a section of paraenesis in Ephesians 4, the author expounds upon the theme of unity, putting forth a series of proclamations of oneness:

There is one body and one Spirit (Ἐν σῶμα καὶ ἑν πνεῦμα), just as you were called to the one hope (μιᾷ ἐλπίδι) of your calling,

one Lord, one faith, one baptism (ἐἷς κύριος, μία πίστις, ἑν βάπτισμα),

one God and Father of all (ἐἷς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων), who is above all and through all and in all (ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν; Eph 4:4-6; cf. ἑνότης; 4:3, 13).

The first three “ones” describe the unity of the Church (Ἐν σῶμα καὶ ἑν πνεῦμα, μιᾷ ἐλπίδι; cf. “one body, one Spirit” in 1 Cor 12:13), the next three “ones” describe the oneness of the Lord, Jesus, alongside “ones” concerning a person’s relationship to him (ἐἷς κύριος, μία πίστις, ἑν βάπτισμα), and the final phrase proclaims the oneness of God (ἐἷς θεὸς). As noted above, these oneness formulations are indebted to similar ideas found in Second Temple Jewish writings: the one God was the source of Israel’s unity and is now the source of
the Church’s unity: “Because God is one, his people are one and are to live on the basis of and in recognition of unity.”

Eph 4:4-6 is followed by a description of various gifts given to individuals, designed to build up the Church into a unity (Eph 4:7-16). Theological reflection on this passage led to later Trinitarian speculation on the nature of God, as the diversity within the unity of God is reflected in diversity within the unity of the Church. The author of Ephesians here uses the *Shema* in a manner similar to Paul: he desires one, united people, each with individual gifts for the body’s growth (4:16), based upon the model of the divine unity. A similar dynamic of unity and diversity within God and within the Church is also found in John 17, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

The author ends his work by sending grace to “all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ” (ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγαπώντων τὸν κύριον ἠμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ; 6:24). This verse puts a powerful Christological exclamation point at the end of a letter in which the author has already given the divine epithet “one” to Jesus (Eph 4:5). Here, the command to love the one God

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100 Barth, 465; cf. Lincoln, 248; so also Joachim Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief* (HTKNT 10/2; Freiburg; Basel; Wien: Herder, 1971), 200-204. Chapter Four in the present study catalogs a variety of oneness statements in Second Temple Jewish literature.
(Deut 6:5) is transferred to the one Lord, Jesus Christ. As was the case in Paul, “those who love God” are not those who keep the Law (cf. Eph 2:15-16), but those who love Jesus.

1 Timothy

1 Timothy contains one clear allusion to Deut. 6:4:

For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human (εἷς γὰρ θεός, εἷς καὶ μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς), who gave himself a ransom for all (ὑπὲρ πάντων) -- this was attested at the right time (1 Tim 2:5-6).¹⁰¹

These verses fall in a section of the epistle consisting of instructions on prayer in the context of a broad concern for salvation for all people. The author stresses the universal goal of salvation, urging the addressees to pray on behalf of all people.

(ὑπὲρ πάντων ἄνθρωπων; 2:1), because God wishes all people (πάντας ἄνθρωπος; 2:4) to be saved and to come to know the truth.\footnote{On issues of authorship and provenance, see Collins, 1-14, who argues on the basis of language, style, theology, and eschatology that the Pastorals are written by an anonymous author invoking the authority of Paul.}

This emphasis on the hope of salvation for all people appears to have been the catalyst for the author’s insertion of 1 Tim 2:5-6, which many consider to be a liturgical fragment (2:5-6).\footnote{Yarbrough, 79-86; cf. Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles (Hermeneia; trans. P. Buttolf and A. Yarbro; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 41-42; Mounce, 77. The origin of these lines is less important to the present study than the author’s use of them.} The γὰρ in 1 Tim. 2:5 ties the affirmation of the one God to that hope for all (ὑπὲρ πάντων; 2:1, 4; cf. 2:6; 4:10). This use of εἷς θεός is analogous to Rom 3:30, where Paul recalls the Shema to argue for equal access to salvation for Jews and Gentiles (cf. Eph 4:6). It is possible, as William D. Mounce observes, that the author’s opponents are emphasizing the Law (1 Tim 1:7-11) and teaching that salvation is limited to those who observe it.\footnote{Mounce, 76, 87.} The proclamation of God’s oneness unifies all people in their need for and access to the salvation offered only through the one mediator.

The juxtaposition of the one mediator (εἷς μεσίτης) alongside the one God is Christologically significant: εἷς is applied to Jesus as well as to God, indicating

\footnote{\textsuperscript{102}}\footnote{\textsuperscript{103}}\footnote{\textsuperscript{104}}
a unique relationship between the two. The use of oneness language for Jesus alongside God is comparable to Paul’s language of εἷς θεὸς... εἷς κύριος (1 Cor 8:6) and to Matthew’s εἷς ὁ διδάσκαλος... εἷς ὁ πατὴρ... καθηγητής εἷς (Matt 23:8-10). In Gal 3:19, Paul also mentions a mediator in conjunction with the εἷς θεὸς formula, but there, μεσίτης refers to Moses as mediator of the Law. The author of 1 Timothy may be emphasizing the one mediator, Jesus, in contrast to Moses: if his opponents are teaching that salvation is limited to those who keep the Law (1 Tim 1:7), he counters that only Jesus mediates between God and humans by giving himself as a ransom for humanity (2:6). Both for Paul and for the author of 1 Timothy, the attribution of εἷς to Jesus is a remarkable expression of Jesus’ exalted status and unique relationship to the one God.

Yet the word ἄνθρωπος is used of Jesus as well (ἄνθρωπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς; 1 Tim 2:5), emphasizing Jesus’ humanity; it is only as a human that Jesus is able to represent humanity as mediator of all people (ὑπὲρ πάντων; 2:6). The author

105 Jesus is also referred to as μεσίτης in Heb 8:16; 9:15; and 12:24, where the emphasis is the superiority of the new covenant to the old. On mediation in Greco-Roman society and Second Temple Judaism, see A. Oepke, TDNT 4:598-624.

106 Collins maintains that the emphasis on the humanity of the mediator polemicizes against the divinization of emperors (61), but this idea does not seem to be central to this passage. 1 Tim 2:2 urges prayer on behalf of those in authority, which may indicate a conciliatory stance toward political leaders rather than an adversarial one.
thus stresses Jesus’ uniqueness as “the one” alongside God, who also identifies with humanity so that he alone is able to mediate between the divine and human realms.

To add a brief, final note on the Shema in 1 Timothy: toward the end of the writing, the author charges the recipient “to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (τηρῆσαι σε τὴν ἐντολὴν ἄσπιλον ἀνεπίλημπτον μέχρι τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; 1 Tim 6:14). There is widespread scholarly disagreement about exactly which commandment Timothy is directed to keep.\textsuperscript{107} This imperative is embedded within a discussion of the proper use of wealth. Nathan Eubank has recently argued, based on references in rabbinic and Second Temple Jewish literature, that “the commandment" refers to almsgiving.\textsuperscript{108} Chapters Two and Seven of the present study, however, contain a discussion about the singular commandment (מצוה) in Deuteronomy, arguing that it refers to the Shema, the basic loyalty oath between YHWH and Israel.\textsuperscript{109} As noted there, early Tannaitic interpretations of

\textsuperscript{107} On the various options, see Mounce, 359.

\textsuperscript{108} Nathan Eubank, “Almsgiving is ‘the Commandment’: A Note on 1 Timothy 6.6-19,” NTS 58 (2012): 144-50.

\textsuperscript{109} Chapter Two, 25-26; Chapter Seven, 389-94.
the *Shema* understand the *Shema*’s phrase בְּכָל־מַאֲדַךְ (Deut 6:5) to mean “with all your wealth” (e.g. m. *Ber.* 9:5). It therefore is plausible that Jewish references to the *צָוָה* as almsgiving, including the reference in 1 Timothy, may be rooted in early Jewish exegesis of the *Shema*.

**Hebrews**

Hebrews contains one possible allusion to the *Shema*: “For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all of one (ἐξ ἑνός). For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters” (Heb 2:11; translation mine). The NRSV and NASB translate ἑνός as “one Father.” The text, however, does not explicitly say “Father,” but rather vaguely “of one” (so ASV; KJV), and is variously interpreted as “one source” (ESV), “one origin” (RSV; NAB), and “one family” (NIV).  

Even though “one Father” is not present in the text, the antecedent of ἐξ ἑνός is most likely God. Harold W. Attridge observes:

> In this context, after the reference to the source of all things in vs 10 [ὁν τὰ πάντα καὶ δι᾿ οὗ τὰ πάντα], the

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most likely identification of the “one” is indeed God, and the inspiration for the formulation can be traced to Jewish affirmations about the spiritual solidarity of Israel.\textsuperscript{111}

If God is the source of all things in 2:10, it is likely that God is also the one origin of the humanity shared by Jesus and believers. The NRSV and NAS follow the logic that God the Father is the antecedent of ἐξ ἑνὸς based on the rest of 2:11: δι᾽ ἣν αἰτίαν οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦς καλεῖν. Jesus calls them brothers (and sisters), because they have the same Father. The quotations in Heb 2:12-13 which refer to ἀδελφοί and παιδία buttress the familial relationship emphasized in this passage. The author goes on to explain that Jesus shared human flesh and blood so that, as a High Priest, he could overcome death on behalf of all humans. The author may be exhorting the addressees who are, in fact, being ostracized for their association with a crucified Messiah and are wavering in their faith (e.g. Heb 6:4-8; 10:32-39).\textsuperscript{112} By reminding them of their kinship with the Messiah, he hopes to embolden them to stand firm (Heb 12:4).

\textsuperscript{111} Attridge, 88-89.
The second point supporting the idea that the author of Hebrews has the *Shema* in mind is that Hebrews 2:11-18 highlights an important feature of other *Shema*-related texts examined earlier: the one God or Father creates one people or family. Attridge mentions the unity of Israel, but does not connect this concept with the one God of the *Shema*. As discussed in previous chapters, however, the link between one God and one people is a frequent topic in the OT, NT, and Second Temple Jewish literature (e.g. Mal 2:10; Philo, *Decal. 1.64-65; Virt. 1.35; Opif. 1.171; Spec. 1.52; Jos. *A.J.* 4.201; Matt 23:8-10; 1 Cor 10:17; 1 Cor 12:12). So too, in Heb 2:11, the adjective εἷς is attributed to God, creating a familial unity between Jesus and his followers. It is the filial relationship that enables Jesus to serve as a “merciful and faithful high priest” to his brothers and sisters (Heb 2:17). Jesus is thus the means by which the one God creates a unified family. A similar ethos is found in John 17, where Jesus prays as a priest on behalf of his own, “that they may be one even as we are” (John 17:11; cf. 17:21-22). This passage will be examined in Chapter Seven.

**James**

In his commentary on James, Dale Allison considers several parallels between James 2:14-24 and Romans 3-4 which occur in a common sequence and
are summarized in the following four points: (1) the issue of faith and works
(James 2:14-18; Rom 3:27-28); (2) the claim that God is one (James 2:19; Rom 3:29-30); (3) the appeal to Abraham as test case (James 2:20-23; Rom 4:1-3); and (4) the
use of Gen 15:6 as a proof text (James 2:23; Rom 4:4-21).\footnote{Dale C. Allison, Jr., A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle of James (ICC 16; New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 66.} Allison observes: “This
common sequence cannot be due to chance, and an explanation is to hand if
James knew Romans.”\footnote{Ibid.} The argument presented here is that the author of James
not only knows Romans, or at least the arguments presented there, but also that,
like Paul, he uses the \textit{Shema} as the linchpin of his argument over the ongoing
significance of the Mosaic Law. In Romans 3:30, Paul links God’s oneness to the
idea of justification apart from the Law. The author of James, pushing back
against Paul’s view, restores the traditional link between the \textit{Shema} and keeping
the Law.

Before considering the key statement “God is one” in James 2:19, there are
other allusions to the \textit{Shema} that reinforce its importance for James as a whole. In
two instances, the author uses the expression “those who love him [God] (οἱ
ἀγαπῶντές αὐτόν),” which is used frequently in Jewish literature from this period,
often referring to those Jews whom the author judges to be pious, those who keep the Mosaic commandments. 115 As noted above, Paul uses this phrase to refer to Christians (Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3). In the first instance, the author addresses those who are enduring temptation, reminding them that after one is tested “he will receive the crown of life which he [the Lord] has promised to those who love him” (ἐπηγγέλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτὸν; James 1:12; translation mine). 116 The connection with life further links this passage with Deuteronomy, where life is the chief reward for those who love God and keep God’s commandments (e.g. Deut 6:2; 8:1; 30:6, 16, 19-20).

The expression “those who love [God]” occurs a second time when the author condemns partiality toward the rich: “Hear, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him?” (τοῖς

115 Chapter Four, passim.

ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν; James 2:5; alt. trans.; cf. Matt 5:3). By identifying “those who love God” as “heirs of the kingdom,” the author affirms the link between the Shema and the kingdom of God found in the Hebrew Bible and in rabbinic literature: those who love God are those who make God their King, and take upon themselves the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven. James’s use of the expression οἱ ἀγαπῶντες αὐτόν mirrors the use by other Jewish writers of this period. The command to “hear” at the beginning of James 2:5 (Ἀκούσατε) increases the possibility that the author has the Shema in mind here.

There are also hints of early Jewish interpretations of Deut 6:5 in this section, which underscore the centrality of the Shema for James. In James 1:8, the author introduces the δίψυχος, a person who is double-minded, unstable in the face of temptation, and wavering in prayer. James 1:9-11 describes the kind of temptation the author seems to have in mind: the attraction of riches. Those who

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117 See Chapter One, 1-2; Chapter Two, 38.
118 Chapter Four, passim.
119 See also Allison, James, 394, n. 164.
resist such temptation, by contrast, the poor, are those who love God (1:12).  

The second use of δίψυχος follows the author’s rebuke:

You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures... Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you δίψυχοι, you double-minded (4:3, 8; alt. trans.).

The author commands the δίψυχοι to purify their hearts so that they can escape the temptation of “friendship with the world” and the pleasures of wealth. Only then will they be able to turn wholeheartedly to God.

Based upon a study of James alongside early Christian literature and rabbinic texts, Oscar Seitz argues that

the Greek term δίψυχος and its cognates represent an attempt to convey the notion of a divided or double heart, literally ‘two hearts,’ which the rabbinic writers associate with certain biblical texts where the word לבב is used in place of לב.

Deut 6:5 is one such text, and arguably the most important:爱你하되 פורה אלהיך לבבךבכל־לבח. The double-minded or “double-hearted” person is the antithesis of one

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who loves God with all his heart and with all his soul (Deut 6:5): the desire for worldly wealth and pleasures sabotages the ability to devote one’s whole self to God (cf. Matt 5:3; 6:24).\(^{122}\)

The διψυχος therefore fails to love God with all of his or her strength: some Jewish interpretations of the third term of Deut 6:5, \(\text{מאד}\), have to do with riches:

“With all your strength,’ with all your wealth” (\(m.\ Ber \text{ 9:5; בכול ממונך, בכול מאדך}\); cf. Prov 3:9\(^{123}\); Sirach 7:30\(^{124}\); 1QS 1.11-13\(^{125}\)).\(^{126}\) While the διψυχος fails to live up to the demands of the \textit{Shema}, the poor embody it: they are rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom; they are “those who love God” (2:5). The proximity of διψυχος (James 1:8) to the mention of those who love God (1:12) increases the volume of the echo of the \textit{Shema} in this section. It is also significant that the word διψυχος

\(^{122}\) On the relevance to the \textit{Shema}, see also Allison, 187; Davids, 74-75; Hartin, 61, 68; McKnight, 92.

\(^{123}\) Chapter Three, 71.

\(^{124}\) Chapter Four, 105-6.

\(^{125}\) Chapter Four, 154-55.

\(^{126}\) On the ANE background of this interpretation, see Chapter Two, 41.
(δίς + ψυχή), lit. “double-souled,” reflects the second term in Deut 6:5 LXX, ψυχή; the Israelite was to love God with an undivided ψυχή as well as a whole heart.127

James not only refers to those who love God (Deut. 6:5), the author also twice mentions the divine unity (Deut 6:4). Many interpreters have noted the allusion to Deut 6:4 in James 2:19: “You believe that God is one (εἷς ἐστιν ὁ θεός); you do well. Even the demons believe-- and shudder.”128 The author makes no attempt to hide his sarcasm: yes, “God is one,” a profession made by both Jews and Christians, but mere belief – even in this most central of confessions – is not only empty, it is evil, if it is not accompanied by works.129 The author thus mocks those who would separate faith from deeds—they themselves betray the “one God” by the lack of oneness between their faith and their works.

127 Allison notes that the LXX translates לֶב as ψυχή over two dozen times (James, 187, n. 172; cf. 189).

128 Allison, James, 473-75; Davids, 125; Martin Dibelius, A Commentary on the Epistle of James (Hermeneia; rev. H. Greeven; trans. M. Williams; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1996), 159; Edgar, 16; Frankemöller, 443; Hartin, 152, 158-59; Johnson, 240-41; Laws, 125-28; McKnight, 234, 240-42; Ralph P. Martin, James (WBC 48: Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1988), 89; Franz Mussner, Der Jakobusbrief (HTKNT 13.1; Freiburg; Basel; Wien: Herder, 1967), 138; James H. Ropes, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James (ICC 42; New York: Scribner’s, 1916), 215; Donald Verseput, “James 1:17 and the Jewish Morning Prayers,” NT 39 (1997): 187-88. Verseput’s main argument is that the “Father of lights” in James 1:17 alludes to the blessing before the Shema in which God is called Creator of lights. While this is possible, there is no evidence that liturgical blessings were attached to the Shema in the first century. Moreover, Verseput’s idea is tangential to the thrust of the author’s use of the Shema in the book as a whole.

129 On the irony in this statement, see Allison, James, 475.
This section of James (2:8-26) recalls Paul’s arguments about the relationship between faith and Law (Rom 3:19-5:1; Gal 2:15-3:24). The oppositional views of Paul and James on the topic of faith and works have long been a matter of scholarly interest, yet the central role played by the Shema in this discussion has gone largely unrecognized. Dale Allison muses: “One has to wonder whether James thought of Deut 6.4 because of an association in the Pauline material,” but Allison does not work out the implications of this statement.\(^{130}\) As noted earlier in this chapter, Paul uses the expression εἷς ὁ θεός (Rom 3:30) to argue that it is not the Law, but faith in Christ, or the faithfulness of Christ, that justifies both Jew and Gentile before God.\(^{131}\)

Paul goes on to invoke the example of Abraham, whom God considered righteous because of his faith, before he was circumcised. He cites Gen 15:6: “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness” (Rom 4:3). Jews and Gentiles are reconciled to God as was Abraham: by faith, not by doing the works of the Law. Paul’s use of the Shema is ironic: in its Deuteronomic context and throughout Second Temple literature, the Shema is invoked when an

\(^{130}\) Allison, James, 63.

author calls for a renewal of the covenant and a return to the Mosaic Law. Paul reverses this pattern to say that, because there is one God, both Jews and Gentiles are made righteous in the same way that God justified Abraham: through faith, apart from the Law.

James’s use of εἷς ὁ θεός, on the other hand, reflects a more traditional interpretation of the Shema:

If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead... You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe -- and shudder (James 2:15-17, 19).

Faith apart from works is barren and results in a community in which the rich and the poor are terribly divided from each other.132 James then deploys Gen 15:6 to counter Paul’s usage: whereas Paul marshalled Gen 15:6 to argue that Abraham was justified by faith, James uses this same verse to say that Abraham was justified by works:

Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see

132 Note that ἀργή (B C) is a pun on ἔργον: ἡ πίστις χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων ἀργή ἐστιν (var. νεκρά Ν A K).
that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone (2:21-24).

For James, Abraham believed God and was made righteous – not simply by believing – but by doing what God had commanded.

Keeping the commandments is of central importance to the author of James. He writes favorably of the Law: it is “the perfect law; the law of liberty” (1:25; cf. 2:12). Here, the Law represents freedom, whereas Paul describes living under the Law as slavery (Rom 7:6; Gal 4:1-7, 22-31). The author of James says, “You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (James 2:8). Whereas Paul argues that love of neighbor alone fulfills the Law (Gal 5:14; Rom 13:8, 10), the author of James writes that even if his addressees did, in fact, love their neighbor, which they do not, they are bound to keep all of the Law:

But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law and fails in one point has become accountable for all of it...So speak and so act
as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty (2:9-10, 12).

The author gives a sarcastic commendation ("you do well"; καλῶς ποιεῖτε) to those who believe that God is one (2:19) and who espouse the importance of loving their neighbor (2:8), but whose actions betray these beliefs. He despises teaching that emphasizes the confession that God is one (Deut 6:4) and love for neighbor (Lev 19:18), while at the same time tolerating partiality toward the rich and neglecting the needs of the poor.

At this point, one has to wonder whether James has accurately understood Paul, or whether, to some degree, he is reacting to a libertine interpretation of Pauline ideas. It is Paul, after all, who takes the Corinthians to task for brandishing the slogan “there is no God but one” (1 Cor 8:4), while they are creating a stumbling block for the weak brother or sister by eating idol meat. It is Paul who shows concern for the marginalizing of the disadvantaged in Corinth (11:17-22; 12:20-26) and who insists that there be one bread, one body (1 Cor

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133 So also Matt A. Jackson-McCabe, *Logos and Law in the Letter of James: The Law of Nature, the Law of Moses, and the Law of Freedom* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 174; cf. 165-85. Against Jackson-McCabe, however, there is irony in the transition between 2:8 and 2:9, with 2:8 having the sense of a contrary-to-fact conditional: "If you fulfill the royal law –but you don’t – you do well." 2:9, by contrast, expresses a first-class condition: "But if you show partiality, you sin; i.e. you don’t love your neighbor because you do show partiality."
10:17), that believers put aside “knowledge” for the sake of love and unity. It seems likely that the author of James is responding to abuses of Pauline ideas that favor the rich among his constituents, by those who may even use religious platitudes to justify their actions. For James, however, the solution to the issues at hand is not a greater understanding of liberty in Christ, but a return to the Law of liberty, the Torah.

The second reference to the divine unity in James reinforces the opposition to Paul. Following a second admonition to the δίψυχος (4:8), the author warns against judging the Law: “But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. One is the lawgiver and judge (ἐἷς ἐστιν [ὁ] νομοθέτης καὶ κριτής), the one who is able to save and to destroy” (James 4:11b-12a; translation mine). The oneness of the Lawgiver and Judge echoes Deut 6:4, as did James 2:19.\(^{134}\) As Ralph P. Martin observes, “In the light of the debate over faith and works in 2:14-16, where one of the central issues was the confession of ‘one God’ (2:19), it is possible to see an extension of the same controversy in this text.”\(^{135}\) James’s criticism of those who judge the Law by judging others mirrors his

\(^{134}\) So also Allison, *James*, 637; Edgar, 16; Hartin, 218.

\(^{135}\) Martin, 164.
criticism of the notion of faith without works: only God gave the Law and only God will judge those who profess faith but fail to keep the Law. The person without works does not have the full-hearted response to the one God that is called for in the *Shema*. He does not love his neighbor, nor does he keep the Law as the *Shema* requires.

The author’s positive view of the Law makes it likely that he is Torah-observant and that his addressees may be as well; he shows concern that they have been influenced by Pauline teaching. His view of the Law comports with an understanding of the *Shema* that would have been at home among other Jewish communities: to love God requires more than believing that God is one, it means keeping the Mosaic commandments. Like Paul, the author understands the believing community as “those who love God,” as those who are heirs to the covenant of Israel. Like Paul, his goal is to create a unified people out of a divided community. Like Paul, he bases his argument upon the *Shema*. But for Paul, loving God is divorced from keeping the Law: the eschatological unity of community.

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136 It is an intriguing coincidence that there are only two references to looking in a mirror in the NT: (1) 1 Cor 13:12, where Paul speaks of incomplete knowledge in the present; and (2) James 1:23, where those who do not do the Law are as those who look in a mirror and forget their identity. Perhaps James is directing the Pauline metaphor against those who reject the Law, which he believes is the source of humans’ true identity.
Jew and Gentile under the one God necessitates that the Gentiles become part of God’s people as Gentiles, apart from the Law. Both Jew and Gentile are made righteous through Christ and fulfill the Law by loving their neighbor.

For James, however, the question of unity is not resolved through faith alone – even belief in the one God – but through the working together of faith and adherence to the Torah. The great divide in James is not Jew vs. Gentile or even Christian vs. non-Christian as it is for Paul; rather, it is rich vs. poor, the double-minded vs. the wise, judging the Law vs. doing the Law. For James, faith in Christ does not change the age-old meaning of the Shema: loving the one God means keeping the commandments, which are most fully expressed in love of neighbor, especially the poor.

**Summary and Conclusions: The Shema in the NT**

New Testament writers use the Shema in ways similar to other Jewish writers of the Second Temple period: to affirm the belief in one God and to designate the faithful as “those who love God.” In the Synoptic Gospels, the Great Commandment reflects the traditional Jewish view that love of God and neighbor summarizes the Decalogue and indeed the whole Law. Paul also mirrors the concern for unity found in other Jewish writings when he insists that
there must be one people corresponding to the one God (e.g. 1 Cor 10:17; 12:12-20; Gal 3:28; cf. Eph 4:4-6). Theologically, by maintaining that God is one, New Testament authors strive to maintain continuity with the Hebrew Bible and their Jewish contemporaries. In some instances (e.g. Mark 2:7; 10:18; Matt 23:8-10), this continuity with Jewish monotheism may be an effort to push back against accusations that Christians worship Jesus as a second God or that they have rejected the Law of Moses (1 Tim 2:5-6). This kind of polemical use of the *Shema* is heightened in John’s Gospel.

In many instances, New Testament writers interpret the *Shema* in creative and unprecedented ways. In Mark and Matthew, God’s oneness is linked to Jesus (Mark 2:7-12; 10:17-22; Matt 23:8-10). Even more explicit is Paul, who places the “one Lord” alongside the “one God” in creation and redemption (1 Cor 8:6). Paul goes on to use εἷς ὁ θεός to argue for the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God through Jesus Christ, apart from the Law (Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30). In so doing, Paul taps into Jewish eschatological hopes, expressed by the OT prophets, which point to Jews and Gentiles worshiping the God of Israel as one people (e.g. Zech 14:9). New Testament writers, however, do not use the *Shema* in a uniform manner: James wields the *Shema* to oppose Paul’s separation of faith from works.
In many ways like Paul, the Gospel of John, too, interprets the *Shema* Christologically: the Fourth Evangelist aligns Jesus with God and expects believers in Jesus to form a corresponding unity with one another. The *Shema* is at the core of John’s portrayal of Jesus: it witnesses to the Jewish roots of John’s Christology and, at the same time, it measures the widening gap between Johannine Christianity and the Judaism from which it came.
Chapter Six: The *Shema* in the Gospel of John

Introduction

Chapter Two noted that both John’s Gospel and Deuteronomy work on two levels, refracting current events through the lens of a foundational past event in the life of the people: the giving of the Law in Deuteronomy and the life of Jesus in John. In both works, the notion of covenant is reinterpreted in light of new circumstances – the Exile of Israel from the Land in Deuteronomy, and the exile of Johannine Christians from the Jewish community in John. The *Shema* is at the heart of Deuteronomy, where Israel is summoned to hear and respond to divine revelation, and YHWH is proclaimed “one,” Israel’s only King, to whom total love and allegiance is due. The *Shema* itself is the singular commandment – the basic loyalty oath between God, the King, and Israel, the vassal – to which the commandments are added. The blessing promised for obedience to the commandments is life. In John, these themes will all resurface, reinterpreted Christologically.

Throughout the Hebrew Bible, the *Shema* is invoked during times of covenant renewal (e.g. Josh 22:5; 23:11; 1 Kings 2:4; 8:22-53; 2 Kings 23:25). The Hebrew Prophets transpose the *Shema* into an eschatological key, foretelling a
time in which not only YHWH, but also Israel will be one, and YHWH’s kingship
will be acknowledged by the nations (e.g. Zech 14:9; Mal 2:10-16; cf. Jer 32:37-41).
Philo, Josephus, and authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls also write that
corresponding to the one God is one united people. John’s motif of corporate
unity locates this eschatological reality in Jesus and his disciples.

In the New Testament, Jesus teaches the *Shema* as the Great
Commandment, alongside love of neighbor. Mark emphasizes Jesus’ unity with
God in a way that Matthew and Luke seem to sidestep or misunderstand (Mark
2:7; 10:18; 12:29-34). John’s Gospel goes even further than Mark in using the
*Shema* to this end. Paul incorporates Jesus into the *Shema* (1 Cor 8:4-6) and argues
that God’s oneness is the basis for the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the people of
God without requiring Gentiles to keep the Law of Moses (Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30).
Paul thus understands the prophetic, eschatological vision of divine Kingship to
have come to fulfillment in Jesus. John takes up the themes of the *Shema* and the
Deuteronomic covenant along with the understanding that the eschatological
kingdom has arrived, and portrays Jesus as the Messianic King in whom the
*Shema* is fulfilled: he is the one the people must hear, he is one with the Father, he
demands love and obedience, he issues his own commandment, and he promises
life to all who believe in him. In John, Jesus embodies the *Shema* in his life and
death and requires his followers to do so as well. In John, all of the meaning of
the *Shema* is located in the person of Jesus.

**History of Research**

A few scholars have broached the topic of the *Shema* in John’s Gospel. In a
1947 article, C. K. Barrett observes that Old Testament passages cited as proof
texts in the synoptic Gospels are rarely used as such in the Fourth Gospel, but are
often expanded and reworked into John’s thematic structure, so that

> Synoptic incidents and sayings which at first appear to have been neglected by the Fourth Evangelist have in fact become far more than incidents and sayings; they have been developed into themes which govern not a few lines only but the whole movement of the Gospel.\(^1\)

These passages, Barrett observes, are often reinterpreted Christologically.”\(^2\)

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Barrett suggests that Deut 6:4-5, quoted in Mark 12:29-30, conforms to this pattern and is transformed in John into a complex portrayal of the thoroughgoing unity of Father and Son: “There is no verbal parallel in the Fourth Gospel, but it is perhaps not too much to say that no O.T. themes have more deeply influenced the Evangelist than these – the theme of the divine unity, and the command of love.” He proposes that this unity is conveyed in ways that recall the key word “one” of the Shema (e.g. John 10:30; 17:11, 22). Barrett goes on to suggest that the command to love one’s neighbor, which is paired in the synoptic Gospels with the Shema’s command to love God (Mark 12:31; Matt 22:39; Luke 10:27), is reinterpreted in the Fourth Gospel in Jesus’ command to love one another (i.e., fellow Johannine Christians).

Barrett, however, fails to ask a follow-up question: Is there a particular social and historical context in which such Christological reinterpretations make sense, not only of John’s unique use of the Hebrew Bible, but also of his relation to Judaism? J. Louis Martyn critiques other aspects of Barrett’s methodology:

One should be aware of the two dangers – a tendency toward expressions that are too general and

undifferentiated, and a certain lack of clarity as to the relation of a general Old Testament background to specific citations. 4

Following Martyn’s admonition, the aim of this chapter is to bring specificity and clarity to John’s use of the Shema and to show how the Shema is closely tied to the social and historical context of the Fourth Gospel.

Since Barrett’s 1947 article, few scholars have considered the idea that the Shema is used in a unique manner in the Fourth Gospel. Birger Gerhardsson writes negatively: “Does John deliberately and explicitly link the demand to love with the Old Testament command to love God, and with the Shema, the text in which this command is found? Apparently he does not,”5 and “We do not get much help from the Johannine writings for the Shema question.”6

In a chapter in a book on early Jewish and Christian monotheism, C. T. R. Hayward briefly considers the role that the Shema might play in the early Christian development of the theme of Jesus’ unity with God:

He [Jesus] is uniquely qualified to carry out the command to love God with all the heart and bring into being on earth the ‘one-ness’ which is the prerequisite [sic] for the coming of the Messiah. The love that is the chief command of Jesus in St. John’s Gospel no-one need deny; but in light of what has been said here, it should probably be carefully scrutinized in the setting of Jewish understanding of the Shema.\(^7\)

Although one might wish that Hayward would elaborate on the idea that oneness is a prerequisite for the coming of the Messiah and how widespread this notion might have been, the present study has, in fact, shown that several Jewish sources claim something of this sort: the one God will create one people. This chapter will attempt to do what Hayward calls for and examine John’s Gospel in light of the Shema.

Writing on covenant theology in John 14, Johannes Beutler mentions Deut 6:4-5 in relation to John.\(^8\) This is not surprising, since the Shema is the chief commandment of the covenant, where love for YHWH is connected with

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\(^7\) C. T. R. Hayward, “‘The Lord is One’: Reflections on the Theme of Unity in John’s Gospel from a Jewish Perspective,” in Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism (JSNTSup 263; eds. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E. S. North; London and New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 154.

\(^8\) Johannes Beutler, Do Not Be Afraid: The First Farewell Discourse in John’s Gospel (Jn 14) (NTSCE 6; Frankfurt am Mein: Peter Lang, 2011), 53, 58, 73, 100; cf. idem, “Das Hauptgebot im Johannesevangelium,” in Das Gesetz im Neuen Testament (QD 108; Freiberg: Herder, 1986), 228, 236.
keeping the commandments and with life. Beutler links John 14:15-24 with the Deuteronomic covenant:

[T]he covenant theology of Deuteronomy (and so the “Law”) shows itself to be the underlying layer...in the New Testament and in other places in John’s Gospel, “love for God” is [found in connection with] covenant theology and the chief commandment of Deut 6,4ff, that is to say, in connection with the confession of the unicity of God.

Beutler’s work will intersect with this study insofar as both find traces of the Deuteronomic covenant throughout John. The present study, however, takes the Shema as the focal point; this locates John’s covenant theology precisely within his Christology, where Jesus is one with the Father. With the Shema as a starting point, moreover, John’s broader program of unity will be examined as a function of (1) the theme of Jesus’ kingship, and (2) prophetic, eschatological visions of one people corresponding to the one God.

In his monograph on Jesus and Wisdom, Frédéric Manns includes a brief section on the Shema in John. Unfortunately, Manns’s approach is less than convincing: he asserts that, in the Fourth Gospel, Nicodemus, Thomas, and Peter

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9 Beutler, Do Not Be Afraid, 99-100.

each behaves in such a way that he demonstrates loving God with all the heart, soul (to the point of giving one’s life), and wealth. For example, Nicodemus models the *Shema*, by (1) acknowledging that Jesus works signs, which shows that he loves him (but not quite with all his heart because, Manns notes, Nicodemus comes at night in John 3); (2) risking his life by defending Jesus before the Pharisees (loving God with all his soul; John 7); and (3) spending his wealth by providing lavishly for Jesus’ funeral (loving God with all his strength; John 19). This same line of reasoning in regard to Thomas and Peter is equally unpersuasive. Manns does note the importance of John 10:30 (“I and the Father are one”): “Jean insiste sur le Temple nouveau, sur le culte en Esprit et en vérité et montre que la liturgie juive trouve son accomplissement en Jésus.” But Manns does not attempt to explain what this verse means Christologically or how it relates to other expressions of unity in John’s Gospel.

Richard Bauckham has discussed the *Shema* in John in a number of studies on the topic of Johannine Christology and Judaism. In reference to John 10:30 he writes:

11 This approach appears to be based loosely on the work of B. Gerhardsson, 76, 77.

12 Manns, 82.
Although, so far as I am aware, no one else has ever suggested such a correlation [sic], it seems to me very probable that this saying of Jesus alludes to the Jewish confession of faith in the one God, the Shema, which begins with the words of Deut 6:4: “Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one.”

Bauckham also recognizes the allusion to the Shema in John 17:11 and 22, where Jesus prays to the Father that his disciples “may be one, as we are one,” noting the passages in which Philo and Josephus also posit one people corresponding to the one God: “[T]he divine singularity draws the singular people of God together into a relational unity.”

Bauckham downplays the idea that John’s Christology is expressed in polemical and apologetic terms, reflecting ongoing debates between Jewish Christians and non-Christian Jews. For Bauckham, divine unity in John is rooted exclusively in the concept of “divine identity”; John includes Jesus within the unique identity of the one God. As Bauckham puts it, “[T]he Christology of

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14 “Monotheism and Christology,” 164.

15 Ibid., 149.
divine identity...identifies Jesus as intrinsic to who God is.”\textsuperscript{16} The Gospel of John thus “redefines Jewish monotheism as christological monotheism.”\textsuperscript{17} Bauckham suggests that the oneness of Father and Son represents Jesus’ inclusion in the divine identity in a way that maintains the integrity of Jewish monotheism. Although Bauckham believes that John’s Christology fits within the boundaries of Jewish monotheism, he acknowledges that the “intra-divine relationship” in John has no precedent within Judaism. The hostility of Jewish authorities to Jesus’ self-claims in the Gospel, however, indicates that at least some Jews thought that Jesus was falsely arrogating divine privileges to himself which infringed Jewish monotheism.

The present study agrees in principle with Bauckham’s main idea: John does, indeed, allude to the \textit{Shema} in a way unique among the canonical Gospels, placing Jesus within the identity of God (John 10:30). This chapter will go beyond Bauckham’s suggestion to show how the themes of the \textit{Shema} and the broader context of the Deuteronomic covenant are carefully woven into the narrative. This chapter will also examine the oneness of the disciples in light of the

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{God Crucified}, 31.
\textsuperscript{17} “Monotheism and Christology,” 165.
eschatological unity expected by the Hebrew prophets, a oneness adapted by 
both Paul and John and applied to Christians. In addition, this chapter will bring 
forward arguments to show, contra Bauckham, that John’s use of the Shema has a 
polemic and apologetic intent: the Fourth Evangelist deploys the Shema in order 
to legitimate his community’s confession of Christ, a confession which has gotten 
them expelled from the Jewish community. The upshot of John’s rhetorical ploy 
is that those who believe in Jesus embody the Shema and its command to love 
God, while those who reject Jesus thereby reject God and are themselves, in a 
true sense, outcasts from the covenant community. John’s use of the Shema thus 
reverses the social realities for his community, who – rather than being outsiders 
– are insiders in the kingdom of God, with Jesus as their King.

The Shema and its themes in John 5, 8, and 10

Introduction

The previous chapters traced the key themes of the Shema – 
hearing/obeying, oneness/kingship, love, and life – in Deuteronomy, the OT, 
Second Temple Jewish literature, and the New Testament outside of John. In the 
Fourth Gospel, these themes cluster in two major areas: (1) at particular points in 
the narrative where heated disputes between Jesus and “the Jews” come to a
head (John 5, 8, and 10); and (2) in the Farewell Discourse. This chapter focuses on the key themes in an exegetical analysis of the conflict stories in John 5, 8, and 10; the following chapter will focus on the Farewell Discourse material. In each of the conflict passages, Jesus is accused of making himself equal to God, of claiming the same status as the God who demands exclusive worship in Deut 6:4-9. In each incident, the Evangelist correlates the importance of hearing or obeying Jesus with hearing or obeying God, thereby linking Jesus with God. This connection is often further expressed in specifically Deuteronomistic terms. At the same time, the author maintains distinctions between Father and Son that counter the notion that Jesus is somehow usurping divine authority and thus violating the exclusive loyalty to God proclaimed in the *Shema*.

The present study will consider the text of the Fourth Gospel as a literary whole, rather than attributing certain ideas or sayings to various redactional layers, or postulating a theory of composition. While there is little doubt that John’s Gospel passed through multiple authorial and editorial hands, it is the final form of the Gospel that ultimately creates meaning for its many symbols, characterizations, and themes, and which therefore provides a narrative framework for understanding John’s use of the *Shema*. 
The *Shema* in John 5

John 5 presents the first in a series of dramatic confrontations between Jesus and various groups of Jewish opponents, often referred to simply as οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, “the Jews.” This conflict has been anticipated at several points earlier in the Gospel, beginning in the Prologue: “He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him” (1:11). Jewish rejection of Jesus is thus known to John’s readers from the outset. The author hints at the source of the rejection, the special status of the Son, who, as the μονογενής (1:14, 18; cf. 3:16, 18), is set apart from and above all other humans, even the highly-revered figure of Moses: “The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (1:17). This is the first of thirteen references to Moses in the Fourth Gospel, nine of which occur in direct confrontations between Jesus and “the

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18 The present study will translate Ἰουδαῖοι as “the Jews” in quotation marks, in spite of the recent trend to use “Judeans”; see for example, Steve Mason, “Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,” *JSJ* 38 (2007): 457-512. Quotation marks are used to indicate that John generally tends to use Ἰουδαῖοι as a technical term for the Jewish leaders; Raymond Brown also argues that “the Jews” be retained and explained, in *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (ed. Francis J. Moloney; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 167-68. Adele Reinhartz points out, however, the rhetorical effect of John’s ~70 uses of Ἰουδαῖοι tends to associate Jews with the negative qualities of their leaders, in “Judaism in the Gospel of John,” *Int* 63 (2009): 382-93 and more recently, “The Vanishing Jews of Antiquity,” *Marginalia Review of Books*, 23 June 2014: http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/vanishing-jews-antiquity-adele-reinhartz/.
Jews.”19 Anticipating the conflict that comes to the fore in John 5, the Prologue provides a link between Jewish rejection of Jesus and John’s Christology, highlighting the contrast between the Law of Moses and the λόγος made flesh.

There are also indications in John 2-4 of tension between Jesus and “the Jews,” tensions which will escalate in John 5. In John’s narration of the cleansing of the Temple (2:13-22), some Jews question Jesus’ actions (2:18, 20), but the rhetoric is restrained compared to what is to come in John 5, and there are no explicit charges leveled against Jesus. In the dialogues between Jesus and Nicodemus (3:1-21) and between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (4:1-42), there is some questioning of Jesus’ authority, but no hint of the highly charged polemics that appear later in the Gospel.

Oneness/divine unity in John 5

The tenor changes markedly in John 5, following the healing of a lame man on the Sabbath (5:1-18). Here the narrator comments that “the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the Sabbath” (5:16). Suspicion has escalated to pursuit and soon, to intent to kill: “But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father is still working, and I also am working’” (5:17). The narrator

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reports that this statement is the catalyst for the call for Jesus’ death: “For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God” (πατέρα ἴδιον ἐλεγεν τὸν θεὸν ἴσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ θεῷ; 5:18; emphasis added; cf. 10:33; 19:7, 12; Phil 2:9). The idea of God as Father was not unknown in Judaism (e.g. Isa 63:16; Malachi 2:10; Philo, Decal. 1:64; Legat. 1:115; Mut. 1:205; Decal. 1:8, 64; Tobit 13:3-4); the issue seems to be that by calling God his own father, Jesus is claiming a unique relationship with God.

J. Louis Martyn reads this scene as part of John’s two-level drama: the charges ostensibly being leveled at Jesus are actually being made by Jewish leaders in the late first century against the Christological claims of a community of Jewish believers in Jesus. Martyn frames the charge against Jesus this way: “We [non-Christian Jews] persecute Jewish Christians because they worship Jesus as a second god!” But there is a subtlety lost here (and in most translations) because of the use of two different words in English, “making” and


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“doing,” for one Greek word, ποιέω: when Jesus is accused of “making” himself equal to God, his reply is actually something like “I am not making myself anything” (οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἑαυτοῦ οὐδέν; 5:19; cf. 5:30). Jesus does not deny that he is in some way equal to God; he insists only that he has not made himself so (ἴσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ θεῷ). The Father, rather, has granted the Son divine authority to do what the Father himself does: confer life and execute judgment, as seen in the following section (5:19-47).

The key verse in this passage is “My Father is still working, and I also am working” (5:17). Some Second Temple Jewish writings attest to the idea that God performed certain kinds of work on the Sabbath (e.g. Aristob. 5:11-12; Philo, Leg. 1:5-7, 16-18; Cher. 86-90), therefore Raymond E. Brown can write that “in claiming the right to work even as his Father worked, Jesus was claiming a divine prerogative.” This accounts for the strong reaction to Jesus’ statement in John 5:17: “the Jews” perceive Jesus to be infringing upon Jewish monotheism


and claiming privileges exclusive to YHWH and therefore of making himself God’s equal, a violation of the Shema. As Alan F. Segal has pointed out:

In 5:21, relevant to the same issue, the gospel states that “. . . just as the father raises the dead and grants life, so also the Son grants life to those whom he wishes,” applying Dt. 32 to Jesus in the same way that the rabbinic community applied it to God.24

Segal has argued that the binitarian nature of Johannine Christianity provides early evidence of the kind of “two powers” traditions attested in rabbinic literature of the second century and later.

Against this view, James F. McGrath argues that the issue in John is not a violation of monotheism, but rather whether Jesus is a legitimate agent of God or a messianic pretender seeking his own glory. Jesus’ blasphemy is not claiming to be God, but pretending to have been appointed by God when he is not.25

McGrath draws upon the work of Larry Hurtado and others who have outlined

the importance of Jewish intermediary figures for New Testament Christology.\textsuperscript{26}

Unlike Hurtado, however, who argues that the worship of Jesus is a Christian mutation of Jewish monotheism, McGrath avers that Jesus was never truly worshiped and that Jewish monotheism was flexible enough to accommodate the existence of the kind of principal agent upon whom the Johannine Jesus is patterned. This last point is also argued at length by Daniel Boyarin, who affirms that the Logos or Wisdom, functioning as God’s mediating presence in the world, is a widespread idea in Jewish thought during the first and second centuries.\textsuperscript{27} If belief in and worship of various divine beings was within the pale


of Jewish practice (until the rabbis later rejected the notion of such intermediaries altogether), then there was no Christian threat to Jewish monotheism:

The Gospel of John...when taken together with the Logos of Philo and with the Targum, provides further important evidence that Logos theology, used here as a general term for various closely related binitarian theologies, was the religious koine of Jews in Palestine and the Diaspora.28

The merit of Boyarin’s approach is that it is able to account for the exalted status accorded to Jesus in John: the unity of Jesus and the Father is simply an extension or continuation of the close relation between divine heavenly agents and God within Judaism. There are at least two objections, however, to his thesis: (1) John identifies the Logos with a human being who recently walked the earth (John 1:14), rather than to a hero of the past; and (2) in John, “the Jews” strongly object to the application of Logos theology to Jesus; if the concept of exalted divine agents was the “religious koine” of Jews during this period, one would expect to find the Johannine Jesus embraced by Jews. Boyarin acknowledges that it would

28 Ibid., 126.
be incorrect “to claim [of Logos theology] that it was a universally held position.”

Clearly, it was not.

There is no question that the Fourth Evangelist utilizes various Jewish agents such as the Logos, Son of God, Son of Man, and Wisdom in his portrayal of the unity of Father and Son. But this neither establishes that Jesus was no threat to monotheism, as McGrath avers, nor that the application of divine mediator status to Jesus was no problem in first-century Judaism, as Boyarin maintains. Rather, it is likely that the appropriation of the Shema alongside the language of divine agency was part of the process of the Johannine community’s interpretation of Scripture in light its history of conflict with the Jewish community from which it had been forcibly separated. If this Gospel emerged from a people traumatized by expulsion from the synagogue, John’s community appears to have found a subversive way of interpreting Scripture and tradition in order to legitimate itself: those who are accused of deifying Jesus reverse the charge so that now it is “the Jews” who fail to acknowledge the one God,

29 Ibid., 126-27.
refusing to recognize God in the words and actions of the one whom God has sent.

In John 5, Jesus counters the charge by insisting that he is not a usurper of divine authority; rather, he is authorized by the Father to act in the Father’s behalf (5:19-20; cf. Mark 2:7). Jesus goes on to enumerate the divine prerogatives that the Father has given him: the power to give life (5:21) and raise the dead (5:28-29), and the authority to execute judgment (5:22, 27). These points emphasize that Jesus is not an independent deity or a rival to God, but the unique Son, authorized and commanded to do the work of the Father, and thus is one with the Father in both will and action. The fact that the prerogatives given to Jesus involve giving life, the chief Deuteronomic blessing for obedience (e.g. Deut 6:2; 30:19-20), and judgment, the Deuteronomic curse for disobedience (e.g., Deut 30:15, 19), also suggests that the broader context of Deuteronomy, including the Shema, is at hand.30

The reference to Jesus as Son of Man in 5:27 also reinforces the author’s stress on Jesus’ unity with the Father; this passage, and its echo of Daniel 7:13-14, locates Jesus’ authority in his divinely appointed kingship: “To him [the Son

30 Although κρίσις is not used of the Deuteronomic curses, it functions in John 5 as the opposite of life and is associated with death in 5:24.
of Man] was given dominion and glory and kingship” (Dan 7:14). Like the Danielic Son of Man, the Johannine Jesus is given ἐξουσία (John 5:27; 10:18; 17:2), δόξα (1:14; 8:54; 11:14; 17:5, 22, 24), and a kingdom (βασιλεία; 18:4). Chapter Two noted that the description of YHWH as “one” in Deut 6:4 connoted YHWH’s kingship. As will be seen later, it is precisely at the level of kingship that Jesus and the Father are one.

In 5:31-47, Jesus parades a line of witnesses that testifies to his unity with the Father: John the Baptist (5:32-36a), Jesus’ works (5:36b), the Father himself (5:37-38), and the Scriptures (5:39-40). The witnesses consist of figures whom “the Jews” claim to accept: their own God, their own prophet, and their own Law. According to John, their rejection of Jesus amounts, ironically, to a rejection of their God, and of God’s messenger, God’s works, and God’s word, all of which, according to the Fourth Gospel, are manifest in Jesus.


32 Chapter Two, 34-36.

This irony is reflected in the expression “the only God” in 5:44. Jesus says to his accusers, “How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God (ὁ μόνος θεός)?” Although the present study has not counted the expression ὁ μόνος θεός as a reference to the Shema, it is likely that in this instance, where it is surrounded by other resonances of Deut 6:5, the author had the Shema in mind. Here, the Johannine Jesus again effectively reverses the charges that have been leveled against him: it is “the Jews” who do not acknowledge the one God, since they do not seek God’s glory but their own (cf. 16:2). By rejecting Jesus’ unity with the Father, they reject God. Their accuser is not Jesus but Moses (5:45-47). Thus, the very Law which “the Jews” accuse Jesus of breaking when he heals the lame man on the Sabbath is that which condemns them. Furthermore, the accusation that Jesus has violated the divine unity by making himself God’s equal is reversed: by rejecting the Son, “the Jews” demonstrate that it is not Jesus but they who have failed to recognize the only God: “You have never heard his voice or seen his

34 So also George R. Beasley-Murray, John (WBC 36; Waco, Tex.: Word, 1987), 70.

form, and you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has sent” (5:37b-38). This reversal of the charges against Jesus has far-ranging consequences in this passage and throughout the Fourth Gospel.

**Hearing in John 5**

“Hearing” in John recalls the Deuteronomic command to hear and obey YHWH (Deut 6:4), but rather than God, it is Jesus who must be heard: “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life” (5:24). This statement applies not only to the living, but also to the dead: “The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live” (5:25; cf. 5:28). In Deuteronomy, hearing YHWH means obeying the commandments and receiving the covenant blessing of life; in John, hearing Jesus’ word yields life.

To refuse to hear Jesus, however, is to turn a deaf ear to the voice of God: “And the Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his form” (5:37). This statement recalls Deuteronomy 4, where Moses reminds the Israelites that at Sinai, upon receiving the Law, they heard the voice of YHWH: “Then YHWH spoke to you out of the fire. You heard
the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice” (Deut 4:12; cf. 4:33, 36). The author of John contrasts the generation that received the Law with the Johannine Jews: the earlier generation did not see God, but they heard God’s voice and obeyed it. The Johannine Jews, however, despite having seen Jesus, have missed God’s voice altogether: failure to hear Jesus’ words amounts to a failure to hear the voice of YHWH. By refusing to hear Jesus, they refuse to hear God, whose λόγος does not abide in them (5:38). They are sightless, like the Pharisees in John 9, who “see” Jesus, but are blind to his true identity. In another ironic twist, “the Jews” believe eternal life is found in the Scriptures, but the Scriptures testify to Jesus; when they do not recognize the Father in Jesus, Moses becomes a hostile witness against them (5:39-47).

Paul N. Anderson argues that the motif of hearing relates directly to the Deuteronomic theme of the Prophet like Moses, whom the people are commanded to hear: “YHWH your God will raise up for you a prophet from your midst, from your brothers, like me: hear him!” (Deut 18:15; translation mine;

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35 John 5:38 may include a double entendre on the word λόγος: it is not only God’s word, but Jesus, the true λόγος (cf. 1:1, 14), who does not abide with “the Jews” because of their unbelief.
cf. 18:18, 19). By insisting that his teaching and actions are not his own, the Johannine Jesus conforms to the Deuteronomic portrait of the Mosaic prophet, of whom YHWH says, “I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I command him” (Deut 18:18). Deuteronomy 18:15 solemnly adjures Israel, “Hear (listen to) him!” 

The comparison between the Johannine Jesus and the Prophet like Moses opens up the possibility that the Evangelist, with his emphasis on hearing and obeying Jesus’ word, has both the Shema and the broader Deuteronomic context in mind. In Deuteronomy 13, Moses instructs the people not to hear or obey the false prophet:

If prophets…appear among you and promise you signs…and the signs declared by them take place, and they say, ‘Let us follow other gods’ (whom you have not known) ‘and let us serve them,’ you must not hear the words of those prophets, for the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you indeed love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul (13:1-3; emphasis added).

Recognition of a true or false prophet is framed in terms of the Shema; it is a test of loyalty to the one God. For John, those who hear and obey Jesus recognize him as the Prophet like Moses who is uniquely one with the Father, and therefore, they – believers in Jesus, not “the Jews” – are the ones who truly love God.

**Love in John 5**

At the center of the speech in which Jesus castigates “the Jews” for not hearing his words, he says to them, “But I know that you do not have the love of God (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεου) in you” (John 5:42). Based upon the context of the previous discussion, which focused on the failure of “the Jews” to hear divine revelation both in Jesus’ word and in Scripture, it is likely that τοῦ θεου is an objective genitive. So D. Moody Smith writes: “‘Love of God’ probably means ‘love for God’ rather than ‘God’s love.’ …To love Jesus is to obey his word (14:21, 23), which is God’s word. Consequently, those who disobey God’s Word cannot claim to love him.”

Although it is impossible to state with complete certainty that this reference to loving God is an echo of Deut 6:5, three points work in

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37 D. Moody Smith, *John* (ANTC; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1999), 141-42; cf. Bultmann: “And as they falsely imagine themselves to be true to the Scriptures, they naturally suppose that they love God. The one however is as much a lie as the other,” 269.
favor of this conclusion. First, the evidence of both biblical and extra-biblical writings from the Second Temple period suggests that Deut 6:5 was understood to be the statement par excellence summarizing the command to love God. It is therefore historically plausible that the Evangelist had this text in mind. Second, the emphases in John 5 on hearing (5:24, 25, 28, 37) and God’s uniqueness (5:44), two key themes of the Shema, add weight to this interpretation. John asserts that “the Jews” are disobeying the command to love God precisely because they do not hear Jesus’ words. The third point, which is discussed below, is that the theme of life in John 5 has further Deuteronomistic resonances linked to the Shema.

Life in John 5

The idea that life is found in keeping the commandments goes back to the Hebrew Scriptures and is summed up in the Shema. Chapter Two showed that, in Deuteronomy, keeping the commandments leads to life, while failing to do so brings death. For Israel to hear and love only YHWH, they must keep YHWH’s commandments and thereby choose life:


39 Chapter Two, e.g. 17-18; 45-47; 51-53.
For I command you today to love YHWH your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, his laws, and his ordinances, that you may live and become numerous, and YHWH your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess (Deut 30:16; emphasis added; cf. Deut 30:6, 20).

Israel expresses its love for the one God by keeping the commandments and is promised abundant life and prosperity in return.

In John 5:19-47 and throughout the Fourth Gospel, the ultimate significance of belief in Jesus is grounded in Jesus’ unique ability to confer life. The importance of life in John’s Gospel is evident in the frequent occurrences of both substantive and verbal forms of words related to life. The noun ζωή appears 36 times in John (thirteen times in 1 John), compared to seven times in Matthew, four times in Mark, and five in Luke. The verb ζάω occurs 17 times in John, compared to six times in Matthew, four times in Mark, and nine times in Luke (cf. 1 John 4:9). ζῳοποιέω appears three times in John, and only 11 times in the New Testament, never in the synoptic Gospels. The argument presented here is that “life” has a technical meaning for the author and his readers, related to Israel’s covenant: under the Mosaic covenant, obedience to the Law yields life, in the present. In John, this blessing is now conferred upon believers in Jesus, both
in the present and at the eschaton (e.g. John 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:40, 47; 8:51; 10:28; 11:25).

References to Jesus as the source of life are found at key points in the narrative. The Prologue asserts that “in him was life, and the life was the light of all people” (1:4). It is possible that 1:4 foreshadows the contrast between Jesus and Moses in 1:17: in him – in Jesus, the word made flesh – life is found, not in the Mosaic Law. In John 6, the author contrasts the bread given by Moses (the Scriptures) and Jesus, the living bread, who is able to confer eternal life to those who believe in him (cf. 11:25). Toward the end of the Gospel is a purpose statement emphasizing life: “But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name” (20:31).

In John 5, the author insists that the life that “the Jews” seek in Scripture is ultimately to be found in Jesus, the one of whom Moses wrote, and to whom the Scriptures bear witness. The Johannine Jesus breaks down his argument into two points: (1) the eternal life found in him has been given to him by the Father: “For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself” (5:26); (2) the Scriptures themselves bear witness to him (5:39): “If you
believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?” (5:46-47). Life may have formerly been understood to reside in the Scriptures, particularly in the keeping of the Mosaic commandments, but these writings now are understood to point to Jesus.40 While “the Jews” insist that the Scriptures and Moses guarantee them eternal life, ironically, they are breaking the Law at its core and violating the Shema: they do not hear or love God by believing in the Son, the one of whom Moses wrote, and thereby they exclude themselves from the promise of life and condemn themselves to judgment.

Summary: the Shema in John 5

Confrontation with “the Jews” after the healing of the lame man in Jerusalem leads to the charge that Jesus is violating the Sabbath and making himself equal with God. Jesus counters by arguing that (1) he is speaking and acting by the Father’s authority, and (2) the Father, John the Baptist, Jesus’ works and words, and the Scriptures all testify on his behalf. He then reverses the charges, alleging that, ironically, it is “the Jews” who do not hear or love the only

40 On John’s use of Israel’s Scripture as a backwards reading that reinterprets the OT through a Christological lense, see Richard B. Hays, Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness (Waco, Tex., Baylor University Press, 2014), 75-92.
God or understand the Scriptures. Moses, the very one in whom they put their hope, is the one who accuses them. According to John, Jesus does not violate the \textit{Shema} by claiming equality with God; rather, in a polemical twist, it is his accusers, “the Jews,” who do so, failing to acknowledge the one God by rejecting the one God sent. The rhetorical effect is devastating; it leaves “the Jews” outside the covenant, without eternal life, judged, condemned.

Social and historical considerations may play into the way in which the Evangelist developed his inversion of the \textit{Shema} and, in effect, the Mosaic covenant, to combat his opponents. Wayne A. Meeks puts it well:

There can be no question, as Louis Martyn has shown, that the actual trauma of the Johannine community’s separation from the synagogue and its continuing hostile relationships with the synagogue come clearly to expression here…[T]he book defines and vindicates the existence of the community that evidently sees itself as unique, alien from its world, under attack, misunderstood, but living in unity with Christ and through him with God.\footnote{Wayne A. Meeks, “The Man From Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism,” \textit{JBL} 91 (1972): 69-70.}

Meeks goes on to discuss how the Gospel, with its insider language and unique symbolic world, would have provided a community isolated from the larger society with legitimation for its sectarian worldview through a process of
“continual harmonic reinforcement between social experience and ideology.”

John’s appropriation of the *Shema* is one of the many ways in which the author legitimates his community’s beliefs and delegitimizes his opponents: in an unexpected and ironic reversal, it is “the Jews” who violate the *Shema* by failing to hear, love, and obey God, since they reject his Son, of whom Moses wrote, and who alone is the source of eternal life. This same reversal takes place in John 8.

**The *Shema* in John 8**

In John 8, the themes of oneness, hearing, love, and life again cluster together and play a significant role in the development of John’s Christology and his characterization of “the Jews.” John 8:12-59 depicts conflicts between Jesus and two groups of Jewish opponents: the Pharisees (8:12-30) and a group of Jews who at one time believed in Jesus, but no longer follow him (8:31-59). In both instances, Jesus’ unity with God is the defining issue.

**Oneness in John 8**

In John 8:12-30, as in John 5, the author uses the language of witness and testimony to describe Jesus’ unity with the Father. Rather than appealing to multiple other witnesses, however, Jesus argues that he and the Father together

42 Ibid., 71.
satisfy the demand for two witnesses found in the Law: “Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid” (8:16-17; cf. 8:18, 29; Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15; emphasis added). The appeal to the Father as a second witness is significant on three counts: (1) it reinforces the theme that true belief in the Father should result in belief in Jesus; (2) it is a reminder that John’s Christology retains a differentiation between Father and Son. In John, Jesus is included in the divine unity, but he does not take the place of the Father; and (3) it shows that ultimately, as Bultmann points out, Jesus’ argument is an “expression of scorn” toward any attempt to require divine revelation to defend itself before humans, as if to say, “The requirements of your law have been satisfied, indeed radically so, for here the two witnesses really are in unity, for the two witnesses are one!”

John 8:17 contains the first of several references to the Law as “your Law/their Law” (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ δὲ τῷ ὑμετέρῳ; cf. 7:19; 10:34; 15:25), a phrase which


44 Bultmann, 282; emphasis original.
has the rhetorical effect of creating distance between the Johannine Jesus (and his followers) and the Law of Moses. As Brown puts it:

Jesus, a Jew, seemingly dissociates himself from the heritage of the Law. In the Synoptic tradition what he dissociated himself from was the Pharisees’ interpretation of the Law (Matt xxiii 23). But in John such attacks have been colored by the dispute between the Synagogue and the Church, and the dissociation is more absolute.45

It has already been noted that the relationship between Jesus and the Mosaic Law is central to Johannine Christology (e.g. 1:17; 5:45-7; cf. 6:32-35); John’s use of the Shema has dramatic implications for his view of the Law, which will be explored in Chapter Seven.

The Pharisees respond to Jesus’ claim to unity with the Father (8:16-18) with the query, “Where is your Father?” (8:19). In characteristic Johannine fashion, Jesus’ opponents misunderstand his heavenly origin (cf. 4:12; 6:42; 7:4, 27, 40-43). The question is also most likely a mocking reference to Jesus’ dubious paternity, an issue which comes up again in 8:41 (ἡμεῖς ἐκ πορνείας οὐ

γεγεννήμεθα). In this section of John 8, it is apparent that the gap between who Jesus claims to be and who his adversaries believe he is has widened; Jesus’ identity has become the flash point of a controversy that builds until its violent denouement in 8:59.

Jesus’ claim to unity with the Father in this section is also evidenced in three “I am” statements:

(1) “You will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he (ἐγώ εἰμι)” (8:24).

(2) So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he (ἐγώ εἰμι), and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me” (8:28).

(3) Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am (ἐγώ εἰμι)” (8:58).

These constitute three of the nine absolute “I am” statements without predicates in the Fourth Gospel (4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8). The NRSV most

46 Most interpreters see 8:19 as an example of misunderstanding rather than snide accusation, e.g. Brown 1.342; Barrett, 339. But Smith wonders “whether at this point in the narrative their ignorance should be construed as innocent,” 183.

47 With predicates: 6:35, 41, 48, 51; 8:12, 18, 23 (2); 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5.
often translates ἐγώ εἰμι as “I am he” (4:26; 8:24, 28; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8), which, on the surface, appears to be a simple phrase of self-identification, as in 4:26, where it is Jesus’ response to the Samaritan woman (4:25; cf. “It is I,” 6:20). But its use in John 18 reveals a deeper meaning: when the soldiers hear Jesus’ self-declaration, ἐγώ εἰμι, they fall to the ground in fear before God, or prostrate in worship. Similarly, Brown is right to call Jesus’ walking on the water (6:1-21) an epiphany scene, in which Jesus’ response to the disciples’ fear, ἐγώ εἰμι (6:20) is probably “playing on both the ordinary and sacral use of ego eimi.” The knowing reader is able to recognize this dual meaning in each of the “I am” statements.

In John 8, a progressive understanding of Jesus’ “I am” statements unfolds. In 8:24, Jesus says: “you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he (ἐγώ εἰμι).” The Pharisees immediately respond: σὺ τίς εἶ; in other words, “You say ‘I am,’ but who are you?” The narrator explains to the knowing reader, “They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father” (8:27).

48 So Brown, 1.534.
50 Brown, 1.534.
Jesus’ opponents do not understand that he is in perfect unity with the Father, but the reader does, and no doubt delights in his or her insider knowledge. Jesus then proclaims, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that ἐγώ εἰμι” (John 8:28). This phrase is still enigmatic to most of Jesus’ hearers, although John reports that many of them believe at this point (8:30). It is not until the third such declaration: “Before Abraham was, ἐγώ εἰμι” (8:58) that Jesus’ listeners finally understand that he is identifying himself with the one God, and then they pick up stones to kill him for blasphemy.

Many commentators have observed that John’s use of ἐγώ εἰμι demonstrates that the Johannine Jesus has appropriated the divine Name to himself and is thus uniquely identified with the one God. YHWH’s self-revelation איהי שאר אדני (Ex 3:14) is translated in the LXX as ἐγώ εἰμί ὁ ὄν. Even more relevant to John are YHWH’s boldly monotheistic declarations in Deuteronomy and Deutero-Isaiah, where ἐγώ εἰμι is used for איהי שאר אדני is translated in the LXX as ἐγώ εἰμί ὁ ὄν. Even


(Deut 32:39; Isa 41:4; 43:10, 25; 46:4; 48:12; 51:12; 52:6). For example, “See now that I, even I, am he (ἐγώ εἰμι); there is no god besides me. I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and no one can deliver from my hand” (Deut 32:39).

Numerous Johannine statements, in which Jesus is the source of life and judgment (e.g. John 1:4; 5:24-27; 14:6), echo this divine declaration.

In Isaiah, YHWH proclaims ἐγώ εἰμι in his role as eschatological Savior:

You are my witnesses, says YHWH, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he (ἐγώ εἰμι). Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am YHWH, and besides me there is no savior (Isa 43:10-11; cf. 41:4; 43:25; 46:4; 48:12; 51:12; 52:6).

Bauckham thus summarizes the import of John’s absolute “I am” statements:

They identify Jesus with God, not just in an abstract way, but in a way that the Scriptures associate with the universal revelation of God’s unique identity in his eschatological act of salvation for Israel and the nations.  

John’s “I am” statements not only demonstrate Jesus’ unity with the Father, but they also show that Israel’s expectations for eschatological life and judgment are realized in Jesus.

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The theme of divine unity develops further in John 8:31-59, where Jesus’ opponents are described as those who had once believed in him (8:31). The Evangelist refers to this group elsewhere with particular scorn as those who love receiving glory from humans more than receiving glory from God (12:42-43; cf. 6:66). There was no love lost between this group and Johannine believers, who had sacrificed their place in the Jewish community for their convictions; some may have lost their lives as well (16:2).^54

After this group of former believers claims Abraham as their Father, Jesus asserts that they are mistaken: the fact that they seek to kill Jesus demonstrates that they do not do the works of Abraham (cf. 8:56-58). Jesus cryptically remarks that they are indeed doing the works of their father and they respond: “We were not born of sexual immorality; we have one father, God” (8:41b; translation mine). The use of the emphatic pronoun ἡμεῖς implies a contrast: “We were not born of sexual immorality like you.”^55 There is irony in this accusation: “the Jews’”


[^55]: Also noting the contrast are Brown, 1.357; Barrett, Gospel, 348; Smith, 186.
jab at Jesus by raising questions about his paternity, thereby betraying their ignorance of the truth that Jesus’ Father is God, with whom he is in complete unity. “The Jews” profession of faith in the one God, while failing to recognize his Son, shows that Jesus’ adversaries do not have God as their father. If the one God was truly their Father, they would believe in the Son (8:42; cf. 5:46). This is another example of the type of reversal found in John 5, in which the Evangelist responds to attacks against Jesus’ claim to divine authority by demonstrating that it is in fact Jesus and his followers – and not “the Jews” – who are the faithful followers of the one God.

The equation of εἷς πατήρ and ὁ θεός, which stand in apposition to one another in 8:41, brings the language of the Shema into the discussion. Although “one Father” is not identical to the “one God” of Deut 6:4, in Malachi 2:10-15, the expressions אל אחד and אב אחד are used of God in the context of other themes related to the Shema, such as covenant faithfulness, hearing, and life.56 In addition, Matthew 23:9 (εἷς γὰρ ἐστιν ὕμων ὁ πατὴρ ὁ οὐράνιος), which comes shortly after Matthew’s citation of Deut 6:5 (Matt 22:37), evinces several points of

56 Chapter Two, 82-87. Richard Bauckham also notes this allusion in “Biblical Theology and the Problems of Monotheism,” 104.
contact with Deut 6:4-9, and Philo directly links εἷς ὁ πατὴρ with Deut 6:5 (Dec. 1:64). Thus the Old and New Testaments and Philo contain precedents for linking the expression “one Father” with the one God of the Shema. In John 8, “the Jews” join these two concepts as well, understanding themselves to be heirs of the covenant in good standing as children of the one God through Abrahamic descent.

The escalating objections of “the Jews,” which culminate in the attempt to stone Jesus (8:59), indicate that they increasingly understand Jesus’ claims as a threat to their notion of divine unity. The prominence of other themes from Deuteronomy 6 – hearing, love, and life – provide further evidence that features of John 8 are intelligible in light of Deuteronomic concerns. While “the Jews” profess to have one Father, God (in contrast to Jesus’ unknown parentage), Jesus declares that their father is actually the devil, the father of murder and lies (8:44). Jesus dramatically turns the tables on his opponents so that their

57 Chapter Four, 162-63.

assertions of covenant faithfulness, i.e. Abrahamic descent and having God as their one Father, become the basis for their condemnation; for John, being a descendant of Abraham does not necessarily make one a child of Abraham. As Jeffrey S. Siker observes: “Jesus uses the very Abraham to whom the Jews appeal in order to drive home his point regarding their alienation from Abraham, on the one hand, and Jesus’ own priority over Abraham, on the other hand.” The theme of hearing in this passage reinforces this point.

**Hearing in John 8**

In John 8, Jesus hears and is perfectly obedient to the words and commands of the Father and thus models the kind of obedience that is expected from his followers: “and I declare to the world what I have heard from him” (8:26b; cf. 8:38, 40a: “but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God.”). As will be shown later, Jesus models love for

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Matters of historical context, ancient rhetorical conventions, and intra-Jewish controversy all play a role in bringing to light the nature of John’s relationship to Jews and Judaism.

the Father as well, and more broadly, he embodies the Shema by hearing, loving, and obeying the Father with his whole self.

The problem, however, is that those whom Jesus is addressing cannot hear his words (8:43); they have a completely different origin than those who hear and follow Jesus: “Whoever is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God” (8:47). “The Jews’” inability to hear Jesus’ words of truth and life marks them off as children of a different father. Jesus’ indictment is stark: “the Jews’” Father is not the one God of the Shema, but the devil.

Love in John 8

When “the Jews” profess that God is their one Father, Jesus responds, “If God were your Father, you would love me (ἠγαπᾶτε ἂν ἐμὲ) for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own (ἀπ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ), but he sent me” (8:42; emphasis added). The phrase “I did not come on my own (ἀπ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ; cf. 5:18; 8:53; 10:33)” shows once again that Jesus’ authority is not his own, but rather, he is completely dependent upon the Father. To be true to the one God is to love Jesus and recognize him as one sent by God. It is unusual that the author uses ἀγαπάω here to describe the appropriate response to Jesus: previously, he has said...
that people should honor the Son (5:23), hear the Son (5:24), believe in the Son (5:46; 6:29, 35, 40; 8:24), come to the Son (6:35, 37, 44, 45), and follow the Son (8:12). This is the first time that Jesus is to be the object of human love. The idea of loving Jesus will be of crucial importance in John 14, where it surfaces five times, but before then it appears only here.\endnote{60} In Chapter Six, it will argued that John includes Jesus with the Father as one to whom human love is owed as part of the wholehearted allegiance required by the Shema; the imperative to love Jesus first appears here, as part of a cluster of Shema allusions.

**Life in John 8**

In Deuteronomy, life is linked explicitly with the Shema: loving the one God with all one’s heart and soul and keeping the commandments guarantees life, blessing, fruitfulness, and safe dwelling in the Land (e.g. Deut 6:2, 24; 30:6, 16, 20). Failure to love YHWH and keep YHWH’s commandments, however, results in exile and death (e.g. Deut 30:17-19). In John 5, hearing Jesus’ word and believing that he is sent by God leads to eternal life (5:24-25), and apart from him there is only judgment. In John 8, there is a similar contrast: the one who follows

\endnote{60} Cf. 14:15, 21, 23, 24, 28; 21:15, 16.
Jesus will have “the light of life” (8:12), but the one who does not believe will die in his or her sins (8:24).

The key passage is 8:51-53. Jesus says:

“Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.” The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, 'Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.' Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?" (τίνα σεαυτὸν ποιεῖς; lit. “Who do you make yourself out to be?”)

In John 5, it is Jesus, not Moses or the Scriptures, who is the source of life (5:21, 24-29, 39-40). Jesus’ word guarantees life (5:24; 8:51), and he has power over death, making him greater than Abraham and the prophets who were subject to death (8:52-53). Any claim to have power over death, “the Jews” reason, is demonic, because it is usurping the prerogative of God (8:48, 52) or blasphemous (8:59). Jesus responds as he has all along: it is the Father who glorifies him, who gives him this power, not he himself (8:54).

Ironically, “the Jews” accuse Jesus of having a demon when, according to Jesus, the devil is their father (8:44).
Jesus’ opponents proclaim “He is our God (θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐστὶν)” (8:54). This statement may be a paraphrase of Deut 6:4: κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστιν. It also recalls Josh 24:18 (οὗτος γὰρ θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐστιν/הוא אלהינו), which is part of the covenant renewal ceremony at Shechem discussed in Chapter Three as an echo of the Shema. To Evangelist and his readers, the statement “He is our God” is a lie (8:55). If “the Jews” truly knew God, they would be like “their father Abraham” (8:56) and rejoice in Jesus’ presence. Finally, the author leads the reader to the ironic denouement; “the Jews” greet the one who is “the light of life” with intent to murder (8:59).

**Summary: the Shema in John 8**

Anxiety over Jesus’ identity has escalated dramatically since Jesus’ healing of the lame man in John 5. Now the Pharisees and a group of Jews who had believed in Jesus do not only question Jesus’ witness to himself, but also turn his statements about his Father into personal insinuations that he is illegitimately born. Jesus, in turn, calls his opponents children of the devil. These inflammatory

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63 Chapter Three, 60-61.
invectives revolve around Christological claims: “the Jews,” on the one hand, proclaim their loyalty to the one God, while Jesus, on the other, argues that belief in him is the only proof that a person truly hears, obeys, and loves the one God. By applying the divine name ἐγώ εἰμί to himself and by connecting love for himself with obedience to the Father, the Johannine Jesus solidifies his place within the divine unity; he has not made himself God, rather he is one with God, and has been so from the beginning (cf. 1:1-2).

As in John 5, Jesus has the power over life and death, a privilege conferred on him by God. Life – the chief Deuteronomic blessing for keeping the covenant, loving YHWH with all one’s heart and soul, and keeping the commandments – is now only available through faith in Jesus. It is not enough to be a child of Abraham, one must have the faith of Abraham, that is, belief in Jesus (8:58). John 8 thus contains another alleged rejection of God by “the Jews”: they may profess “he is our God,” but Jesus responds that they do not know him (8:54-55). If they truly believed Moses and Abraham, they would believe in Jesus, as Moses and Abraham did. In a final ironic note, when “the Jews” pick up stones to throw at him, Jesus is able to hide himself from them (8:59; cf. 12:36). For John, Jesus’
identity as the one sent by the Father, who is one with the Father, has been hidden from them all along.

From a historical standpoint, 8:31 is intriguing because of its mention of some Jews who had believed in Jesus and now oppose him. Much has been made of the fact that, in this passage, these former believers in Jesus are lumped together with “the Jews” and are depicted in much the same manner. It is quite possible, as Martyn has argued, that these former believers represent Christian Jews during the time of the Evangelist who try to keep their faith in Jesus a secret for fear of being ostracized from the Jewish community (e.g. 12:42). If John’s readers find themselves thrust outside of their former community, it is not difficult to imagine that they would find some satisfaction in the kind of dramatic reversal witnessed in this passage: those who would not confess their faith in order to remain inside the safety of the covenant community now find themselves on the outside. Their claim to Abrahamic descent, to be followers of

64 Brown is convinced that 8:31-59 was originally addressed to those elsewhere called “the Jews,” and that the mention of those who had believed in him is an editorial gloss referring back to 8:30 (1.354-55). The reference to remaining in Jesus’ word (8:31b; ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μείνητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, ἀληθῶς μαθηταὶ μού ἐστε), however, lends weight to the possibility they were former believers who hung back from confessing Jesus publicly (e.g. 6:66; 12:42); cf. Martyn, History and Theology, 159, n. 40, 162.

the one Father, is a lie. They are not children of God but children of the devil.

John’s readers, on the other hand, those who have continued to stand strong in their faith rather than remaining safe within the shelter of the synagogue, are the true heirs to the covenant promise of life, which is found only in Jesus.

**The Shema in John 10**

“I and the Father” are one” (John 10:30 RSV). When Jesus utters this laconic phrase, the Jewish opposition immediately picks up stones to hurl at him. There is no escalation of tension in this scene as there is in John 8; rather, these words are so freighted with meaning that the moment Jesus speaks them, they spark instant outrage. The accusation: Jesus has made himself God (10:33). There is a strong case to be made that John 10:30 contains an echo of Deut 6:4, “Hear O Israel, YHWH our God, YHWH is one”: Jesus uses the word “one” of himself and the Father as a unity, thereby including himself within the divine אחד.

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66 So also Barrett, “The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel,” 161; Bauckham, “Biblical Theology,” 104-6; idem, “Monotheism and Christology,” 250-51; Aelred Lacomara, “Deuteronomy in the Farewell Discourse,” CBQ 36 (1974): 74. In the only sustained study of John’s oneness motif, Mark Appold, following his mentor, Käsemann, argues that the unity of Father and Son most closely resembles Gnostic language and thought patterns: *The Oneness Motif in the Fourth Gospel: Motif Analysis and Exegetical Probe into the Theology of John* (WUNT 2; Tübingen: Mohr, 1976). Appold has not changed his point of view. In a personal communication (9/13/2008), he remarks: “While it is true that Jewish monotheism is a foundational construct in the theology of John, the unusual way in which John unpacks the meaning of the oneness of God in terms of reciprocity between the Father and the Son and the believers is distinctly un-Jewish and cannot be found in the
John’s portrayal of Jesus as the Good Shepherd in 10:1-21 paves the way for such an understanding.

**Hearing in John 10**

The theme of hearing so central to John 5 and 8 resurfaces in John 10. Jesus’ judgment of the Pharisees in 9:41 creates a bridge to the discourse of 10:1-21, in which Jesus contrasts himself, the Good Shepherd, with the Pharisees, thieves and bandits who are out to steal, kill, and destroy the sheep (10:10). The implication is that the Pharisees are not only blind (9:39-41) but also deaf to God’s voice. Worse, they are wicked leaders who steal the unwary and lead them to their destruction.67

But Jesus’ sheep hear his voice and follow him; they will not follow a stranger (10:3, 8, 16; cf. 10:27). Four times in John 10:1-21, Jesus speaks of his sheep hearing or knowing (10:4) his voice, and again in 10:27. At one point, the issue of hearing is raised as a question: when “the Jews” are divided because of contemporaneous paradigms of Jewish apocalyptic (Qumran), or the systems of Enochic, messianic, or covenantal Jewish traditions.” The task of this chapter and the next is to do precisely what Appold claims cannot be done: to put forth evidence that demonstrates the Jewish background of John’s oneness motif.

67 This interpretation is consistent with the author’s view of the Pharisees elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel (e.g. 9:39-41; 12:42).
Jesus’ words, some brand him a lunatic and ask, “Why hear him?” (τί αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε; my translation; 10:20). The question is ironic; these people are not his sheep. Rather, they are like “the Jews” of John 8:43, who cannot hear. As in John 5 and 8, hearing is related to Christology: it is Jesus who must be heard. But the Pharisees are both blind (9:40-41) and deaf (10:4); they do not see the Father’s works in Jesus nor can they hear the words of the Father spoken through him.

**Oneness in John 10:1-21: the Good Shepherd Discourse**

The theme of Jesus’ unity with the Father is prominent both in the Good Shepherd discourse (10:1-21) and in the second section of John 10 (10:22-42), where Jesus is rejected at the Festival of the Dedication. The OT text most often cited by scholars in connection with the Good Shepherd discourse is Ezekiel 34, where the prophet condemns Israel’s leaders as false shepherds who feed themselves, but let the sheep go hungry. Jeremiah and Zechariah contain similar condemnations of Israel’s leaders as shepherds (Jer 23:1-2; Zech 11:3-5). Israel is a scattered flock, but YHWH promises to rescue them and be their shepherd: “I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep” (Ezek 34:15). Other OT

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and Second Temple period texts also speak of YHWH as Israel’s Shepherd (e.g. Jer 23:3; Ps 23:1; 80:2; Sir 18:13; Zech 10:3; Isa 40:11; Micah 7:14; Philo, Agr. 50-53; Post. 67-68). In the ancient Near East, shepherd imagery was used to describe human and divine rulers; so, too, for Israel, YHWH was the only Shepherd and King. 69

The parallels between these prophetic passages and John 10 are readily apparent: just as YHWH castigates the false leaders in Israel and would shepherd and feed the people himself, so Jesus rails against the Pharisees and vows to protect his sheep. When this OT imagery is applied to Jesus in John 10, it more than hints at Jesus’ unity with God; it invites the reader to see Jesus in the role of YHWH, who rescues his sheep from the grasp of false leaders bent upon their destruction (cf. 1 Pet 2:25; 5:4; Heb 13:20).

But the prophetic picture is a bit more complicated; Ezekiel and Jeremiah also describe a human agent standing in for the Divine Shepherd, the messianic figure of “David”:

I will set up over them one shepherd (ποιμένα ἕνα, רעה אחד), my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, YHWH, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, YHWH, have spoken...You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord YHWH (Ezek 34:23-24, 31; emphasis added; cf. 37:24; Jer 23: 5: “I will raise up for David a righteous branch”).

In addition, and striking in its affinities with John 1, Philo refers to the Shepherd’s stand-in as the Logos:

Thus, indeed, being a shepherd is a good thing, so that it is justly attributed, not only to kings, and to wise men, and to souls who are perfectly purified, but also to God, the ruler of all things... For God, like a shepherd and a king, governs (as if they were a flock of sheep) the earth, and the water, and the air, and the fire, and all the plants, and living creatures that are in them...appointing, as their immediate superintendent, his true Logos and first-born son (ὁ ὀρθός αὑτοῦ λόγος καὶ πρωτόγονος υἱός), who is to receive the charge of this sacred company, as the lieutenant of the great king (Agr. 50-51; trans. Yonge; slightly abridged; cf. Post. 67-8).\(^{70}\)

Like the Davidic ruler of Ezekiel, the Logos is deputized by God to superintend God’s created order or “flock.” Moshe Greenberg observes that, in ANE literature and in the Prophets, “The meaning of the epithet [shepherd] vacillates

\(^{70}\) Noted by Dodd, 56-7.
between the owner of the flock (as in the case of a god) and the agent of the owner who is responsible to him.” The attribution of YHWH’s authority, whether to a future Davidic figure, as in the OT prophets, or to the Logos, as in Philo, thus anticipates John’s portrayal of Jesus as the unique Son, who is authorized by the Father to speak God’s words and perform God’s works. The Johannine Jesus is both λόγος and θεός (John 1:1).

In both Ezekiel and John, the shepherd is “one,” a descriptor highly suggestive of the Shema (Deut 6:4). As noted above, in ANE literature and in the Hebrew Bible, the image of the shepherd connotes divine kingship. In Chapter Two, it was also observed that in ANE inscriptions and literature, the language of oneness is used to connote the supremacy of a god or king. In Ezekiel and John, these features are joined to produce a vivid image of eschatological deliverance. In Ezekiel, YHWH proclaims, “I will set up over them one shepherd” (Ezek 34:23a; εἷς ποιμήν/רעה אחד), and later, “they shall all have one shepherd” (Ezek 37:24; ποιμήν εἷς/רעה אחד). Here YHWH, Israel’s one God, delivers his people from destruction as a Shepherd rescues his sheep. So it is striking that, when

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71 Greenberg, 708.
72 Chapter Two, 34-36.
Jesus speaks of the ingathering of sheep to the fold, he applies the word “one”/εἷς to himself: “So there will be one flock, one shepherd” (10:16; μία ποίμνη, εἷς ποιμήν). Jesus’ attribution of the word “one” to himself effectively unites him with YHWH, Israel’s one Shepherd and King.

Corresponding to the notion of one Shepherd or one King, both Ezekiel and John assert that the people will be unified as one entity:

Thus says the Lord GOD: I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather (συνάξω) them from every quarter, and bring them to their own land. I will make them one nation (ἔθνος ἓν) in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king (ἄρχων εἷς) shall be king over them all...My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd (ποιμὴν εἷς)...and my servant David shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary among them forevermore. My dwelling place (κατασκήνωσις) shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations shall know that I the LORD sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is among them forevermore (Ezek 37:21-28; emphasis added).

The “one nation” in this passage represents the reunification of the Northern and Southern kingdoms. This is spelled out when Ezekiel portends national
reunification in a symbolic action in which he unites two sticks representing both kingdoms. YHWH commands the prophet: “[J]oin them together into one stick (ῥάβδον μίαν/עץ אחד), so that they may become one (והיו לאחדים) in your hand” (37:17; cf. 37:19). The prophet thus envisions a renewed covenant and Israel’s restoration as one people (37:17, 19) under one king (37:22), with one heart (11:19; cf. “new heart” 18:31; 36:26), worshiping in one place (37:27-28). Addressing Ezekiel’s references to the heart, Risa Levitt Kohn observes that “Ezekiel’s use of the motif of the ‘heart’ as the place of human moral response to Yahweh parallels D/Dtr.” It is therefore possible that the new heart and new spirit of Ezek 36:26 (לב חדשׁ ורוח חדשׁה) alludes to the Shema, reimagined in terms of the end of the exile and a renewed covenant in the Land.

The word אחד appears eleven times in Ezek 37:16-24. Walther Zimmerli relates Ezekiel’s relentless focus on unity to the Shema:

73 The LXX reads ἔσονται ἐν τῇ χειρί σου, most likely due to confusion over the breathing mark or over a double εν in a putative Ur-text (ἔσονται ἐν ἐν τῇ χειρί σου; suggested by Joel Marcus).
74 In the LXX, לב אחד is translated καρδία ἑτέρα, probably due to the similar appearance of רוח and רוח. Greenberg comments that רוח is a possible Hebrew reading, but it lacks the rich overtones of the reading ‘ehad,” in Ezekiel 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB 22; New York: Doubleday, 1983), 190.
Judah had experienced under her king Josiah a liberating reformation. From the multiplicity of cultic centers and forms of belief there has been a turning towards Yahweh, the unique one (Dtn 6:4) who wished to have his worship practiced in the one place chosen by him. In these days a wound in Israel’s history has begun to throb anew. There was once one people of God, one Israel of twelve tribes. After an elevated period it was shattered…but [God] promises that he will bring together with his own hand what has gone astray…[T]he one king set by God over his own people will be the symbol of this unity.

Ezekiel’s word of reunification harkens back to the one God who had created one people. So the promised restoration recapitulates the Shema as it looks forward to a renewed covenant in which the one Shepherd and his flock are reunited.

Jeremiah uses similar language when he writes of the ingathering of Israel, who will be restored after turning back to YHWH. Following the covenantal affirmation, “They shall be my people, and I will be their God” (Jer 32:38; cf. Ezek 37:27), YHWH proclaims that Israel will be אחד, undivided in its faithfulness to YHWH: “I will give them one heart and one way לָבֶז אִחֶד וַאֲדֻחָן (Jer 32:39).

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76 On Josiah and the Shema in 2 Kings 23:25, see Chapter Three, 64-65.
that they may fear me for all time” (Jer 32:39a). Post-Exilic Israel will thus be one people with one heart. YHWH’s response to Israel’s renewed faithfulness echoes Deut 6:5, applying its terms to YHWH: “I will rejoice in doing good to them, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul” (בכל־לבי ובכל־נפשי; Jer 32:41; emphasis added). YHWH thus reaffirms his covenant faithfulness toward Israel, reversing the terms of the Shema in the process, and promises to enable Israel to be faithful to him. As was the case with Ezekiel, a renewed covenant necessitates a renewed Shema.

Zechariah, too, envisions a day of restoration expressed in terms of the Shema: “And YHWH will become king over all the earth; on that day YHWH will be one and his name one” (יהוה אחד ושֶׁמוֹ אחד; Zech 14:9). It is not surprising that the themes of “one shepherd” (or one king or Lord) and “one heart” are found in oracles of future restoration, as the renewal of the covenant is at the heart of


79 This echo of Deut 6:5 was recognized by J. Gerald Janzen, “On the Most Important Word in the Shema (Deuteronomy VI 4-5),” VT 37 (1987): 288-91; cf. Lundbom, 521.

80 Jeremiah 3:10; 24:7; 29:13 also speak of returning to YHWH or seeking YHWH with all one’s heart.

81 Chapter Three, 77-82.
these passages, and the *Shema* is at the heart of the covenant. As noted in Chapter Four, the idea that one God creates one people also appears in Second Temple literature (e.g. Philo, *Spec.* 1:52; 4:159; *Virt.* 1:35; Josephus, *A.J.* 4:200-201; the יִחד at Qumran) and the NT (e.g. Matt 23:8-10; Gal 3:28; Rom 3:30; 1 Cor 10:17; 1 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:11). John 10:16 (cf. 11:52) clearly draws upon this prophetic imagery – the unity of YHWH’s people as “one flock” under the rule of the one Shepherd. This suggests that John understands believers in Jesus as Israel restored: one people under the one Shepherd, Jesus. For the Hebrew prophets, the vision of restoration contains a renewed *Shema* in which the one God is worshiped by a united people. For John, along with Paul (Gal 3:20; Rom 3:30), prophetic eschatological restoration is now a reality for followers of Jesus.

John’s “one flock” most likely includes both Jews and Gentiles, as Jesus declares that he has “other sheep” (10:16) that he must bring into the fold. In the context of John 10, the fold represents Israel, whose leadership is corrupt as it was in the days of the prophets. “Sheep that do not belong to this fold” suggests

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82 So also Manning, 127; Robert Kysar, *John* (ACNT; Minneapolis: Minn.: Augsburg, 1986), 163.

83 Martyn suggests they are other Jewish Christians (*History and Theology*, 163-67; cf. Painter, 301), while most other interpreters opt for Gentiles (e.g. Brown, 1.396; Barrett, *John*, 376; Kysar, 163; Lindars, 363).
those outside of Israel, or Gentiles. Gentile inclusion is also implied in John 11:52, where the high priest prophesies that Jesus will not die for the nation only (ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους μόνον). The unity of Jew and Gentile under the rule of the one Shepherd coheres with Zech 14:16, where those of the nations who survive the final eschatological battle go up to Jerusalem to worship YHWH, who is now the sole object of worship for all people: “And YHWH will be king over all the earth; on that day YHWH will be one and his name one” (יהוה אחד ושׁמו אחד; Zech 14:9; cf. Philo Spec. 1:52; 4:159; Jer 3:17; Zeph 3:9). When all of the nations recognize YHWH as King, YHWH will truly be one and Jew and Gentile will worship YHWH as one.

Along similar lines, as noted in Chapter Five, Paul argues that the inclusion of the Gentiles is a sign of the in-breaking of the eschatological era of God’s reign:84

Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also since God is one (εἷς ὁ θεός); and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith (Rom 3:30; emphasis added).

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84 See Chapter Five, 252-58.
Paul draws upon the *Shema* to show that there is one Gospel for Jews and Gentiles. For Paul, the prophetic motif of eschatological restoration has been realized through Jesus, so that there is one people corresponding to the one God: “Because there is one bread (*εἷς ἄρτος*), we who are many are one body (*ἓν σῶμα*), for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:17; cf. 1 Cor 12:20; Philo, *Spec.* 1:52; Heb 2:11-18). Although there is not enough evidence to posit that Paul is consciously echoing the Ezekiel passage, Paul’s “one bread/one body” motif loosely corresponds to Ezekiel’s “one shepherd/one nation,” using the imagery of the Eucharist. Similarly, John’s “one flock/one shepherd” motif is a Christological reworking of prophetic expectations of restoration which now find their fulfillment in the Johannine community. Since the Fourth Gospel was set in final form well after Paul’s death, the Evangelist could have known of Paul’s Christological interpretation of the *Shema* and reframed it for his own purposes. The idea that the author and/or redactor of John may have known Paul or some of Paul’s writings is intriguing and worthy of further research. It is also possible that both Paul and John drew upon early Christian tradition that used the *Shema*

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85 On the Gentiles as the re-gathered remnant of the ten tribes of Israel in Romans, see 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.
or that both authors came up with their constructions independently. In John’s case, thematic and verbal links with Ezekiel outlined above make a case for dependence upon Ezekiel’s eschatological expectations, including Ezekiel’s reworking of the *Shema*.

Evidence of themes related to prophetic restoration elsewhere in John reinforce the significance of this theme in John 10 and in the Fourth Gospel as a whole. For example, in John 11:52, the omniscient narrator reinterprets the high priest’s cynical remark about the necessity of Jesus’ death as a prophecy that Jesus will die for the nation and gather into one the dispersed children of God: τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ διασκορπισμένα συναγάγῃ εἰς ἕν. The verbs διασκορπίζω and συνάγω are used frequently in Zechariah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel to refer to the scattering of the people of Israel among the nations for their disobedience and YHWH’s re-gathering of them. The presence of this language in John undergirds the idea that the Fourth Evangelist sees the re-gathering and restoration of Israel as integral to his narrative about Jesus.

87 On Jesus as prophet of eschatological restoration, relying primarily on the evidence of the actions of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, see E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). The present study argues that in John, Jesus’ role in restoration is less as a prophet and more as YHWH himself.
Another point of contact between John and Ezekiel is Ezekiel 37:26-28, which emphasizes YHWH’s dwelling with Israel on earth in the new era: “My dwelling place (κατασκήνωσίς/משכן) shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Ezek 37:27). John 1:14 states: “And the Word became flesh and dwelled (ἐσκήνωσεν) among us” (my translation; cf. 14:3, 18, 20-23; 17:20-24). In addition, John 2:19-22 depicts Jesus as the new Temple, the locus of God’s presence on earth. Brown points out that the theme of God dwelling among his people goes back to Ex 25:8-9 and is recapitulated in prophetic passages that look forward to restoration, e.g. Joel 3:17; Zech 2:10; Ezek 43:7. Jesus’ dwelling among humans thus fulfills the expectation of the one Shepherd dwelling with his re-gathered flock.

It is fitting that Ezekiel, in particular, provides the background for the Johannine “one flock/one shepherd” motif; the OT prophet writes under the influence of the trauma of the Exile, proclaiming that it is a consequence of disloyalty to YHWH’s covenant and yet that there remains a hope for

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88 Brown, 1.32-33.
redemption and restoration.\textsuperscript{89} If, in fact, the Johannine community was forced out of the local Jewish community to which it once belonged, it seems likely that its members would identify with the exiled community of the past and apply the biblical imagery of restoration to themselves: believers in Jesus – united as one flock under the one Shepherd – represent the fulfillment of the prophetic vision of eschatological restoration. Both Ezekiel and Jeremiah take up and transform the idea of covenant – with the \textit{Shema} at its core – making it relevant to new historical situations. So, too, the Evangelist transposes both the covenant and the \textit{Shema} Christologically: believers in Jesus constitute the one flock of God, united to one another through the one Shepherd. This move transforms expectations of restoration with an apologetic and Christological twist: followers of Jesus are the hoped-for messianic unity, not “the Jews” and their corrupt leaders.

\textbf{Oneness in John 10:22-42}

John 10:22-42 represents the climax of Jesus’ self-revelation. While Jesus is in the Temple at the festival of Hanukkah, “the Jews” encircle him and demand to know if he is the Messiah (10:24). Jesus contends, as he has all along, that his

\textsuperscript{89} For introductory matters on Ezekiel, see Greenberg, 12-17; Walther Zimmerli, \textit{Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24} (Hermeneia; trans. R. E. Clement; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1979), 9-16.
works witness to his true identity (5:19-21, 36; 8:28-29), but these people are not his sheep; they do not hear the voice of the Good Shepherd (10:25-29). John has set the scene: if Jesus’ opponents will not hear him, they surely will not apprehend his unique relationship with the Father. When Jesus utters his climactic statement, “I and the Father are one” (10:30), his opponents fully comprehend the audaciousness of this claim; they pick up stones to kill him for blasphemy, for “making himself God” (10:33).

The significance of this declaration can hardly be overstated: the author invokes the word “one” (ἕν) a key word in the Shema, explicitly locating Jesus’ identity within the divine אחד. As Bauckham observes, when Jesus uses the word “one” here: “Jesus is not saying that he and the Father are a single person, but that together they are one God.” 90 A potential objection to the idea that John has the Shema in mind here is that Deut 6:4 LXX uses the masculine εἷς to translate אחד, whereas John employs the neuter ἕν. But this change is necessitated by grammatical considerations: in the Shema, εἷς is masculine singular as a predicate nominative of κύριος. εἷς would be awkward with a compound subject such as ἐγώ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ, whereas ἕν is not awkward; compare, for example, Paul’s

formulation in 1 Cor 3:8, ὁ φυτεύων δὲ καὶ ὁ ποτίζων ἕν εἰσιν. The Evangelist, similarly, uses the neuter ἕν, which expresses the idea of one entity. John 10:30 would thus be better translated: “I and the Father are one thing,” a unity. Several modern translations render 10:30: “The Father and I are one” (NRSV; NET; NJB), thereby deemphasizing what the Evangelist has put in bold: by placing ἐγὼ in front, the Evangelist stresses Jesus’ place within the unity, as if to say: “I and the Father are one. I – a human being who walks the earth – and the Father are one entity.” So Athanasius writes:

“I and the Father are one”; for thus God is one, and one the faith in the Father and Son; for, though the Word be God, the Lord our God is one Lord; for the Son is proper to that One, and inseparable according to the propriety and peculiarity of His Essence.91

Athanasius thus becomes the earliest witness to the relevance of the Shema in John 10:30.

The fact that John 10:22-42 takes place in the Temple, where the Shema was recited, is all the more striking. It may be no coincidence that Hanukkah is the setting for the scene; 2 Maccabees tells the story that when Antiochus Epiphanes, who profaned the Temple, was on his deathbed, he said remorsefully, “Mortals should not think that they are equal to God” (μὴ θνητὸν ὄντα ἰσόθεα φρονεῖν; 2 Macc 9:12; cf. John 5:18; 8:53; 10:33; 19:7). There is more than a little irony, then, in the placement of the Johannine scene in the Temple: whereas Hanukkah celebrates victory over one who desecrated the holy place and “made himself equal to God,” Jesus – who is wrongly accused of the same blasphemy – is for John and has always been truly equal to God. And as Brown points out, it is here, at Hanukkah, that Jesus is consecrated (ἁγιάζω) by God as the new Tabernacle (10:36; John 2:21; cf. 1 Macc 4:48; 3 Macc 2:9; 2:16).

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92 m. Tamid 5:1.

The narrative has prepared the reader for this Christological showdown between Jesus and “the Jews” in several ways. First, from the Prologue through John 10:21, the reader has been repeatedly told of the unique relationship that exists between Father and Son (e.g. John 1:1, 18; 5:18-47; 8:12-59; 10:1-21). Jesus’ adversaries have wrongly interpreted these claims as blasphemous, as Jesus’ attempts to usurp the authority of the one God and “make himself” God’s equal (5:18; 8:53; 10:33). This is a misinterpretation, because in John, Jesus has not “made himself” God; he has been God from the beginning (1:1-2; 17:5). Second, in the Good Shepherd discourse immediately preceding John 10:22, Jesus aligns himself closely with the OT figure of YHWH as Israel’s Shepherd and is depicted gathering his scattered sheep and ushering in the promised eschatological restoration. Third, themes of hearing and life signal the reader that multiple Deuteronomistic motifs are at play here: those who hear the Shepherd’s voice and believe that he is one with the Father receive eternal life (10:10, 28). Given (1) the emphasis on Jesus as the one who accomplishes eschatological restoration in the preceding section; (2) the accusation of blasphemy (10:33); and (3) the Deuteronomistic resonances throughout John 10, it is not altogether unexpected when John explicitly uses the language of the Shema of both Father and Son.
The Johannine Jesus answers the accusation that he has made himself God (10:33) by citing Psalm 82:6 (81:6 LXX), giving scriptural backing for his claim to be God’s Son: “Is it not written in your law,⁹⁴ ‘I said, you are gods?’” (ἐγὼ εἶπα· θεοὶ ἐστε; 10:34). Jesus then interprets the verse as follows: “If those to whom the word of God came were called ‘gods’-- and the scripture cannot be annulled - can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, ‘I am God’s Son?’” (10:35-36).

Most contemporary exegetes understand John’s citation of Ps 82 against a midrashic background which refers to the giving of the Law at Sinai: receiving the Law made the Israelites holy and therefore immortal like gods. On account of sin, however, Israel inherited death.⁹⁵ The Johannine Jesus cites Ps 82:6a in order to recall all of 82:6-7 via metalepsis: “I say, ‘You are gods, children [sons] of the

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⁹⁴ On νόμος as a reference to the OT as a whole in the NT, see John 12:34; 15:25; Rom 3:19; 1 Cor 14:21.

Most High, all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like mortals, and fall like any prince.” According to this reading, the Israelites at Sinai were deathless like gods when they received the Word God through Moses, but because they sinned in worshipping the golden calf, they became mortal. So, arguing *a minori ad maius*, if those who received the word of God at Sinai could be called gods, even though they sinned and lost their godlike status, how much more is Jesus, the one whom God sanctified and sent into the world, worthy to be called God’s Son?

This reading of Ps 86 in John 10 can be taken a step further. The Johannine Jesus is directing the psalm against his opponents: the Word of God has indeed come to Israel in Jesus (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ; cf. John 1:11a), but the people did not receive him as the one sanctified and sent by the Father (1:11b); therefore, like their ancestors, they will die in their sins (John 8:24). Jesus is greater than those who received the word of God and were called “gods” – he is not the receiver but the one sent, the Logos, God’s unique Son – which is another way of saying that he and the Father are one.
Love in John 10

Love is only mentioned once in John 10, in the Good Shepherd discourse:

“For this reason, the Father loves me (με ὁ πατὴρ ἀγαπᾷ), because I lay down my life in order to take it up again” (10:17). As noted in Chapter Two, love for YHWH in Deuteronomy is predicated upon YHWH’s love for Israel: “And because he loved your ancestors, he chose their descendants after them. He brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power” (Deut 4:37; cf. 7:8; 10:15). The relationship between YHWH and Israel is one of mutual love and commitment that involves obedience to YHWH’s commandments on Israel’s side, and life, protection, and blessing on YHWH’s. The Father’s love for Jesus and Jesus’ obedience to the Father’s command reflect a similar relationship.

In John 10, the relationship between Jesus and the Father mirrors the ideal relationship between Israel and YHWH: in response to the Father’s love and in obedience to the Father’s command, Jesus models the way that Israel is to love God and keep God’s commandments.

For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life (ἔγὼ τίθημι τὴν ψυχήν μου) in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it

96 Chapter Two, 16-17.
down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command (ταύτην τὴν ἐντολήν) from my Father (John 10:17-18).

This is the first mention of a commandment in John, a topic which will be discussed at length in the next chapter.\(^9^7\) It is possible, although the larger argument presented here does not depend upon it, that Jesus’ laying down his life (ἐγὼ τίθημι τὴν ψυχήν μου; 10:11, 15, 17, 18) is an allusion to the commandment to love YHWH in Deut 6:5. Early rabbinic interpretation of Deut 6:5 understands the idea of loving God with all one’s soul (ψυχῇ; Deut 6:5 LXX) as giving one’s life in the service of the kingdom of heaven.\(^9^8\) This interpretation is associated with Rabbi Akiba, who is said to have fulfilled the command while being tortured to death by Roman soldiers (y. Ber 9:7, 14b; b. Ber 61b). If the attribution to Akiba is historically accurate, then this interpretation originated prior to 135 C.E., the year Akiba died, and may already be reflected in John 10:17-18. The idea of loving the king by giving one’s life in military service was already known in ANE treaties and many other features of these treaties influenced the

\(^{97}\) The other uses of the singular ἐντολή in the Johannine corpus include 11:57; 12:49, 50; 13:34; 14:15, 21; 15:10 (2), 12 (cf. 1 John 2:3, 4, 7 (3), 8; 3:22, 23 (2), 24; 4:21; 5:2, 3 (2); 2 John 1:4, 5, 6 (2).

\(^{98}\) M. Ber. 9:5; Chapter Two, 41.
Deuteronomic framework of Israel’s covenant. If indeed the Evangelist availed himself of this understanding of loving God with all one’s soul, then the reference to “the commandment” (10:18) demonstrates another way in which the Shema is significant for the Johannine community: Jesus fulfills the commandment to love YHWH with all his soul by giving his life for the sheep, and Jesus’ disciples will be asked to do the same (15:13). By laying down his life willingly, Jesus models the Shema’s command to love God with all one’s soul. In so doing, Jesus imparts life to all who believe in him.

**Life in John 10**

The theme of life is central to John 10: “My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life (ζωὴ αἰώνιον), and they will never perish” (10:27-28a); “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life (ζωὴ), and have it abundantly” (10:10). Jesus gives his sheep eternal life and protects them from the false shepherds who would steal them away, those leaders previously identified as the Pharisees (9:40) or simply “the Jews” (10:19). Jesus is the one Shepherd, the Good Shepherd who is able to do what the false shepherds cannot: to lead the sheep into life.
It is precisely this gift of life and protection that YHWH promises Israel in
Deuteronomy: to keep the covenant is to choose life (e.g. Deut 30:1-20);
conversely, the people will perish if they do not hear the voice of YHWH and
keep his commandments (ἀπόλλυμι; Deut 28:20, 22, 24, 45, 51; 30:18). Stated in
terms of the Shema, “YHWH is one” (יהוה אחד; Deut 6:4) means that only YHWH
is to be heard, loved, and obeyed in order for Israel to receive life and prosperity
in the Land. This promise of life is later renewed under the social and historical
circumstances of the Exile in the prophetic oracles of restoration (e.g. Ezek 18:21;
28; 33:15; 34:25-31; 36:8-12, 24-30; 37:1-14). In John, this chief covenant blessing is
now located in Jesus, who aligns himself closely with the Father on behalf of the
sheep. So Marianne M. Thompson writes: “If at one time life was mediated
through knowledge of and faithfulness to the Torah, it is now supremely and
finally mediated through knowledge of and faithfulness to the Son.”

Jesus declares that it is impossible to steal the sheep from his hand (10:28)
or the Father’s hand (10:29), nor will he allow them to be destroyed (ἀπόλλυμι;
10:10, 28). This assurance of life and protection serves to bolster the security and

confidence of a community confronted by an unbelieving and hostile majority.\textsuperscript{100}

As Bultmann observes:

The security which the believer finds in the Revealer is grounded in the latter’s relationship to God, in his unity with God...He and the Father are one. This last statement...is comparable only with the \textit{θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος} in 1.2 [sic]; in Jesus and only in him does God encounter man.\textsuperscript{101}

The unity of Father and Son is the foundation of the community’s security, as the two are one in their ability to give life and protect the community from harm. Life is guaranteed only to those who hear the voice of God in Jesus’ words and see the hand of God in Jesus’ works, who believe that just as YHWH is one, so Jesus is one with him. It is belief in Jesus, not obedience to the Law (1:17), which gives life to God’s people.

**Summary: The Shema in John 10**

In John 10, Jesus’ claim to unity with God again leads to threats of violence against him (cf. 5:18; 7:1, 30, 32, 44; 8:59). While “the Jews” understand Jesus’ words as a violation of the divine unity, which is embodied in the Shema, the Evangelist frames his Christology in a way that places Jesus within that

\textsuperscript{100} So also Painter, 304.

\textsuperscript{101} Bultmann, 386-87.
unity. In the Good Shepherd discourse, the themes of hearing, unity with God, love, and life link John’s Christological portrait with the Deuteronomistic covenant, reinterpreted through the prophetic vision of eschatological restoration. Jesus is cast in the role of the divine Shepherd who speaks and acts as God. Believing in Jesus, hearing his voice, and following him guarantees the blessings of the Deuteronomistic covenant and keeps the curses at bay. The fulfillment of the prophetic oracles in which one people is reunited with the one God and King is realized in the Johannine community. In 10:22-42, where Jesus is rejected at the Feast of the Dedication, the Deuteronomistic themes continue to function as Christological markers. Most importantly, Jesus’ oneness with the Father signifies that Jesus exists within the divine unity; he is not a blasphemer, but God’s unique Son.

By adapting the framework of eschatological restoration to suit his purposes, the Evangelist reverses his community’s narrative of exclusion. If “the Jews” have denied Jesus the status of divine Sonship, John has denied their participation in the covenant. If “the Jews” have excluded Johannine believers from their community, John has turned the tables, effectively excluding them from Israel and from the covenantal blessings of life, peace, prosperity, and
protection. If John’s readers are estranged from their past, John has estranged his
adversaries from their future by deploying their own Scriptures against them.
Those who believe in Jesus may appear to be exiled and defeated, but John
upends this view of reality and creates a more hopeful future for those who hear
the voice of the Shepherd and believe that he and the Father are one. The
inclusion of Jesus in the divine unity and the reimagining of believers in Jesus as
restored Israel are themes that gain further traction in the Farewell Discourse,
where the Johannine Jesus promulgates a new *Shema*. 
Chapter Seven: The Shema and its themes in the Farewell Discourse

Introduction

The Johannine references to the Shema and its themes of hearing, oneness, love, and life, are concentrated in the Farewell Discourse (John 13:31-17:26), where the focus becomes Jesus’ interactions with his disciples. As Jesus recognizes that it is time for him “to depart from this world” (ἵνα μεταβῇ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου; 13:1) – a Johannine euphemism for death¹ -- he prepares his disciples to continue without him. This scene would have taken on added significance for believers in Jesus in the late first century, who had never experienced Jesus’ physical presence. Bultmann asks: “Can the next generation love him, without having had a personal relationship to him?”² So Jesus turns away from his dealings with “the Jews” and closes the circle with his disciples to

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² Bultmann, 613.
ensure that they fully understand who he is and how they should relate to one another and to those outside of Johannine ranks.³

The lengthy monologues characteristic of the Farewell Discourse provide an apt vehicle for exhorting and strengthening Jesus’ followers, who are facing new problems of rejection and exclusion beyond the time of the historical Jesus.⁴ So, too, the Deuteronomic discourses address the situation of the Israelites beyond the time of the “historical Moses,” as the people grapple with issues of theodicy in light of the Exile. In John’s Farewell Discourse, alongside this Deuteronomic ethos run resonances of the OT prophets, promises of eschatological unity and restoration that contain within themselves remembrances of the Shema. Now Jesus’ followers, having been gathered into one, take on Jesus’ mission as witnesses to the world. For both the OT prophets and John, this unity is forged under the pressure of exile.

Chapter Six concluded that for John, Jesus exists within the divine echad and thus has the authority to speak and act both for God and as God. The present


⁴ On 13:31-16:33 as a Johannine version of a farewell speech, see Fernando F. Segovia, The Farewell of the Word: The Johannine Call to Abide (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1991), 1-58; 308-16.
chapter will trace the *Shema* and its themes in an exegetical analysis of portions of John 14-15, in Jesus’ prayer in John 17, and in the new commandment of John 13. John 13 is treated last, because it builds upon the discussion of John 14-15, and 17. Throughout the Farewell Discourse, Jesus continues to speak and act from within the divine *echad* as YHWH’s appointed King, who commands love, gives life, and issues his own commandment.

**The Shema in John 14-15**

Chapter Two argued that the vocabulary of the *Shema* and much of Deuteronomy is based on the language of ancient political treaties between a king and his vassals. The essence of the *Shema* is that for Israel, whether in exile or at home in the land, YHWH is to be the only king, the one to whom they pledge their total allegiance. To love the one YHWH means to show exclusive loyalty to YHWH, as opposed to any other ruler, and is enacted by keeping YHWH’s commandments. The *Shema* is the commandment, i.e. the basic loyalty oath, upon which hang all other stipulations of the Law of Moses.

Thematic and verbal links between Deuteronomy and John’s Gospel are interspersed throughout the Fourth Gospel, but when they are brought together in the Farewell Discourse, they establish the claim that the *Shema* and the
covenant which it encapsulates are vital to the Evangelist’s Christology.\(^5\) In Deuteronomy, the God of Israel (1) chooses a people for himself; (2) loves them; (3) demands their wholehearted love and allegiance (the *Shema*); (4) issues commandments to the people; and (5) gives life to those who obey his commandments. These five elements are interconnected and form the backbone of YHWH’s covenant with Israel. In John 14-15, these attributes of YHWH’s kingship in Deuteronomy are transferred to the Johannine Jesus, further demonstrating his unity with the Father and the shape of his relationship with his disciples.\(^6\)

**YHWH and Jesus choose a people**

In Deuteronomy, YHWH chooses Israel as his people: “It is you YHWH has chosen (ἐξελέξατο/בחר) out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession” (Deut 14:2b; cf. 4:37; 7:7; 10:15). In John, Jesus chooses his

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own people: “You did not choose me but I chose you” (ἐξελέξασθε; John 15:16); “I have chosen you out of the world” (15:19; cf. 6:70; 13:18; Acts 13:17; Rom 8:33; Col 3:12; 1 Pet 2:4). Although John never calls Jesus’ disciples “Israel,” they are treated as the new “chosen people” (6:70; 13:18; 15:16, 19). Moreover, Jesus is referred to as the king of Israel (1:49; 12:13), and John the Baptist declares that his baptism takes place so that Jesus might be revealed to Israel (1:31; cf. 3:10). These statements imply that John sees Jesus’ disciples as a new or renewed Israel (cf. 1:47), a notion confirmed by other verbal and thematic links discussed below.

YHWH and Jesus love a people

In Deuteronomy, YHWH’s choosing of Israel is grounded in YHWH’s prior love for Israel: “YHWH loved your ancestors alone and chose you, their descendants after them, out of all the peoples, as it is today” (Deut 10:15): “And because he loved your ancestors, he chose their descendants after them” (4:37a; cf. 7:8; 7:13; 23:5). In John, Jesus loves his disciples: “even as the Father has loved me, so I have loved you” (15:9; cf. 14:21; 15:10; 15:12; cf. 13:1, 34; 1 John 4:19: “We
love, because he first loved us”). In Deuteronomy and John, this love is the basis for the command to love in return.\(^7\)

**YHWH and Jesus command love**

As noted in Chapter Two, in ancient political treaties, love signifies absolute loyalty to a king.\(^8\) In Deuteronomy, Israel is commanded to love its divine King exclusively (Deut 6:5). This commandment – sometimes referred to as the singular commandment – is echoed throughout Deuteronomy.\(^9\)

In John, Jesus links a person’s love for the Father with love for Jesus himself. To his opponents who claim God as their one Father, he retorts: “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me” (8:42; emphasis added); “Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not

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\(^7\) On God’s election and love as themes common to Deut and John, see Lacomara, 72. In support of Martyn’s proposed *Sitz im Leben*, Fernando F. Segovia argues that John’s love references indicate a community in tension with the synagogue, in *Love Relationships in the Johannine Tradition: Agape/Agapan in 1 John and the Fourth Gospel* (SBLDS 58; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1982), 172-79.

\(^8\) Chapter Two, 40-45.

\(^9\) Deut 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:2; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20. On the *Shema* as the singular commandment, see Chapter Two, 25-26, and below; so also Johannes Beutler: “the ‘chief commandment’…comes to expression in Deut 6,4ff,” in *Do Not Be Afraid: The First Farewell Discourse in John’s Gospel (Jn 14)* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 53.
mine, but is from the Father who sent me” (John 14:24). In John 14-15, Jesus’ oneness with the Father is expressed in statements of mutual inherence, e.g. “Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (14:11a; cf. 14:20; 14:10; 15:10). It is because Jesus and the Father are one that Jesus expects to be loved; whoever loves God will also love Jesus, and whoever does not love Jesus does not truly love God.

**YHWH and Jesus issue commandments**

In Deuteronomy, love for YHWH is linked to keeping YHWH’s commandments. YHWH shows “steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments” (Deut 5:10); YHWH also “maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations” (Deut 7:9; emphasis added); “You shall love YHWH your God, therefore, and keep his charge, his decrees, his ordinances, and his commandments always” (Deut 11:1; cf. 11:13; 30:16; emphasis added).

In John, Jesus declares, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (14:15); “They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father” (14:21); "Those who love me will
keep my word” (John 14:23). This idea is also reflected in the three-fold word to Peter, “If you love me, feed my sheep” (21:15, 16, 17). In John, it is Jesus who must be loved and whose commandments must be kept. So A. Lacomara writes: “The disciples are to have faith in Jesus as they have faith in God; they are to love him as they love God, and express this love in the keeping of his commandments.” Jesus’ disciples are those who have heard and responded positively to Jesus’ call, who love him and keep his commandments. And with Jesus’ impending departure in view, he promises to send “another Advocate” the Paraclete, who will continue the work of Jesus in the world and empower the disciples to keep Jesus’ commandments in his absence (14:16; cf. 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1).


11 Lacomara, 75. Contra Lacomara, however, Jesus is not merely the mediator of the new covenant as a new Moses (66-68), but the Lord of the covenant (so Stephen Voorwinde, Jesus’ Emotions in the Fourth Gospel: Human or Divine? [London and New York: T & T Clark, 2005], 101).

12 So also Beutler: “The correlation between the love of God or Jesus and the love shown to him in the keeping of his commandments, as it comes to expression in Jn 14, 15-24, seems to be an expression of the covenant theology of Deuteronomy,” 72.
YHWH and Jesus give life

In Deuteronomy, blessings will follow Israel if they adhere to the words of the Shema, loving YHWH and keeping his commandments (Deut 6-11, 28-30). Chief among the blessings for covenant obedience is life, e.g. “This entire commandment [singular] that I command you today you must diligently observe, so that you may live and increase” (Deut 8:1a; emphasis added); “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live” (Deut 30:6; emphasis added). Observing “the commandment” – the Shema – which is fleshed out by the various stipulations of the covenant, will lead to life in the present and abundance in the Land.

Jesus, similarly, promises life to his followers in John 14-15. This theme runs throughout the Fourth Gospel, from the Prologue (“in him was life, and the life was the light of all people,” 1:4) to the end of the Gospel (“But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name,” 20:31). It emerges again in the Farewell Discourse when Jesus says to Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6), and to his disciples in general, “Because I live, you also will live”
(14:19). As he has done earlier in the narrative, the Johannine Jesus insists that he is the true source of life; he alone dispenses the covenantal blessing to those who love him and keep his commandments.

Is there also polemic against the synagogue here? Earlier, Jesus says to his opponents: “You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf” (5:39). Whereas Deuteronomy contains a promise of life in the present, the idea that eternal life is found in Torah appears frequently in rabbinic teaching, e.g. “Great is Torah, for it gives to them that practice it life in this age and in the age to come” (m. Avot 6:7). John’s use of ζωή αἰώνιος (17 times; e.g. 3:16, 36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:54; 10:28) seems to mirror the rabbinic use of חייו עולם, as the Johannine Jesus now embodies and imparts the life previously thought to reside in the Scriptures.

In John, the scriptures indeed contain eternal life, but only insofar as they point to Jesus: “The Law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came

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13 Beutler: “It is at least possible that this link [between the commandment to love God and the promise of life in Deut] has also had an effect on the promise of life in Jn 14,19,” 74.

14 For numerous other references, see C. H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 82-83; 146-47.
through Jesus Christ” (1:17). Jesus is one with the Father because he is a King like the Father, who is uniquely able to bestow life upon those who would love him and keep his commandments. The polemic is both implicit and stark: by rejecting Jesus, “the Jews” forfeit eternal life.

**Summary: the Shema in John 14-15**

In a move that is both bold and far-reaching in scope, John reinterprets the *Shema*, locating all of its key features in the person of Jesus: the Johannine Jesus is one with the Father, and those whom he chooses are to love him and obey his commandments. In John, Jesus’ kingly functions are identical to those of YHWH in Deuteronomy; Jesus is King because he is one with YHWH. Before Pilate, “the Jews” will cry out: “Everyone who makes himself king (ὁ βασιλέα ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν) opposes the emperor” (John 19:12; translation mine). The NRSV translation “Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor,” obscures the fact that the Evangelist pairs ποιέω and ἑαυτόν here as he has done in 5:18-19, 8:53, and 10:33 (cf. 19:7). In these earlier passages, “the Jews” accuse Jesus of blasphemy, as one who “makes himself” equal to God. In 19:12, the charge is

15 Cf. Dodd, 83: “Not the Torah, but Christ is the way to Life. Not ‘words of Torah’, but His words, are life (vi. 63).”
treason. These two charges merge into one, precisely because Jesus is one with the Father as Israel’s divine King.

The Fourth Evangelist provides a narrative of empowerment that champions both Jesus and his followers, entrenching his Christology within the language and theology of Hebrew scripture. Jesus is not a rival to God or the emperor; he is sent by the Father to fulfill the role of Israel’s sovereign King on earth. For outcasts from the synagogue, this narrative counters any accusation that Johannine believers are violating Jewish law or custom by saying more than should be said about a mere human being: Jesus is the divine King authorized and sent by the Father. On a rhetorical level, however, John’s portrait of Jesus’ kingship and unity with the Father does even more; it dramatically reverses the social reality: “the Jews” are those deserving of expulsion. They have denied both the King of the Jews and the King of Israel. In a stunning reversal, now those Jews who do not love Jesus or believe in him are excluded – not just from the community, but from the covenant of life. They are the ones who have turned away from God’s summons to hear, refusing to recognize Jesus’ oneness with the Father; they neither love God nor submit to his kingship. When the chief priests
boast, “We have no king but Caesar” (19:15), they reject not only Jesus’ kingship, but God’s, casting off the yoke of the kingdom of heaven.

The Johannine Jesus goes a step further. As he did in the Good Shepherd discourse, Jesus includes his disciples in the unity he shares with the Father: “On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you” (14:20). The phrase “on that day” has eschatological connotations in the Hebrew Bible, and Jesus’ unity with the Father takes on an eschatological dimension in John 17 as he extends this unity to include those who believe in him.

The Shema in John 17

The word ἑν, which the evangelist has drawn from the Shema to describe Jesus’ unity with the Father (ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἑν ἐσμεν; John 10:10), reappears five times in John 17 (17:11, 21, 22 [2X], 23), where it describes not only Jesus’ unity with the Father, but also Jesus’ unity with his disciples and their unity with one another. Jesus prays to the Father, “that they [his disciples] may be one, just as

16 On John’s use of the neuter ἑν, see Chapter Six, 349-50.
we are” (ἵνα ὦσιν ἓν καθὼς ἡμεῖς; 17:11c). The disciples, then, form a unity that is based upon the unity of Father and Son.\(^\text{17}\)

The previous chapter showed how John’s use of oneness language draws upon the eschatological unity envisioned in OT oracles of restoration which reinterpret the *Shema* for a new historical situation, namely, the Exile. The prophets place the *Shema* at the core of their vision of Israel’s national restoration: on that day, YHWH will be established as the one God and King, and there will be one people, united in worship of YHWH.

John’s Gospel takes up this notion of unity along with the language of gathering God’s scattered people and applies it to Jesus’ followers.\(^\text{18}\) To review briefly, the idea of a relational unity first appears in John 10, where Jesus speaks of bringing in “other sheep,” “so there will be one flock, one shepherd” (μία ποίμνη, εἷς ποιμήν; 10:16; emphasis added; cf. Ezek 34:23; 37:22, 24). In John 11, the narrator reports Caiaphas’ prophesy that Jesus is about to die for the nation,


\(^\text{18}\) Chapter Six, 335-48.
“and not for the nation only, but to gather into one (εἰς ἕν) the dispersed children of God” (11:52; emphasis added).

In John 17, Jesus reaffirms his unity with the Father as he speaks of the authority given to him by the Father to impart eternal life (17:2): “And this is eternal life, that they [Jesus’ disciples] may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (17:3). This statement redefines elements of the Shema and the Deuteronomic covenant Christologically: there is only one true God (Deut 6:4), who is the source of life (e.g. Deut 6:24; 30:6, 16, 19, 20), but it is through knowing God and Jesus, not through keeping the Mosaic commandments, that one receives eternal life.

In 17:3, the expression is “to know God” (γινώσκω), not “to love God” (ἀγαπάω; Deut 6:5). The verb “to know” (ידע) is used frequently in Deuteronomy to affirm YHWH’s uniqueness and has covenantal overtones, e.g. “Know therefore this day and keep in mind that YHWH alone is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other” (Deut 4:39; cf. 7:9; 9:3, 6; 29:6). “Knowing” also has eschatological overtones, which will be discussed below in relation to John 17:23.19 In 17:3, the Johannine Jesus thus outlines the basic relationship

19 On “knowing” as an eschatological theme, see Brown, 2.753.
between Father, Son, and disciples: the life of the one God is mediated through the Son, uniting those who believe that the Father has sent him.

In 17:5, Jesus reaffirms his unity with the Father “before the world existed” (cf. 17:24), underscoring his unique role as the Logos or Wisdom of God (cf. 1:1, 18).20 His disciples recognize that Jesus is sent by the Father (17:8; cf. 17:3), and that Jesus speaks and acts with divine authority as the Father has commanded him (17:4). The discussion that follows will argue that in John 17, echoes of prophecies of national restoration signal that Jesus’ disciples share in his mission: as a unified people, Jesus’ followers participate in the divine work of eschatological judgment and reconciliation.

The Johannine Jesus prays for the unity of those who will believe in him through the word of his disciples, presumably those who are alive at the time of the writing and experiencing persecution:21


21 Hints that the disciples represent persecuted believers after the time of Jesus: Jesus has guarded them and kept them from perishing (17:2); he explains that the world has hated them and that they need protection from the evil one (17:14-15; cf. 15:18-24).
Holy Father, protect them in the name that you have given me, *that they may be one, as we are* (ἵνα ὦσιν ἓν καθὼς ἡμεῖς) ... I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, *that they may all be one* (ἵνα πάντες ἓν ὦσιν). As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, *so that they may be one, as we are one* (ἵνα ὦσιν ἕν καθὼς ἡμεῖς ἕν), I in them and you in me, *that they may become completely one* (ἵνα ὦσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν), so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (John 17:11b, 20-23; emphasis added).

As Jesus’ departure from this world is imminent, he prays for his disciples’ protection and for their mission, which is an extension of Jesus’ own mission:

“As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (17:18).

There are two ways in which John’s description of the disciples’ unity employs terms that Ezekiel uses to depict Israel’s national reunification and that echo the *Shema*. First, in a symbolic action, Ezekiel is instructed to bring together

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22 δοσιν and δοσιν ἕν contain ἕν here, while δοσιν ἕν and δοσιν δοσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (John 17:11b, 20-23; emphasis added).

23 On the giving of the divine name to Jesus in John 17 as the transmission of the divine life from Father to Son to believers, see G. Franklin Shirbroun, “The Giving of the Name of God to Jesus in John 17:11, 12,” Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1985.
two sticks representing the Northern and Southern kingdoms and to prophesy “that they may be one”:

Join them together into one stick, so that they may become one (יוֹהֵם/yhwh) in your hand… in order that they may be one (יוֹהֵם/yhwh) in my hand (Ezek 37:17-19; emphasis added).

Note that אחדוֹת, a plural form indicating a unity, is in the LXX translated ἕν, the same form as is used by Jesus in John 17. Jesus’ prayer resonates with the prophetic hope of the restoration of Israel into one people: “that they may be one” (ἵνα ἔσονται ἕν; 17:11, 21, 22 [2X], 23).²⁴ His death, as the Shepherd-King who would lay down his life for the sheep, is the means by which the scattered children of Israel will be gathered into one (Ezek 37:22, 24; cf. John 11:51-52).

Second, the expression “that the world/nations may know” is also common to both Ezekiel 37 and John 17; in both writings, the unity of the people is a witness to God’s kingship (which is implied in the Shema) and God’s mission to the world. Knowledge of YHWH is a theme that recurs throughout Ezekiel, the prophets, and other OT writings. For example, Israel’s judgment and

dispersion among the nations and re-gathering occurs so that Israel will know that YHWH is God: “And they shall know that I am YHWH (καὶ γνώσονται διότι ἐγὼ κύριος), when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries” (Ezek 12:15; emphasis added; cf. 12:16; 13:9; 28:23, 24, 26; 34:27, 30; 39:22, 28; Jer 9:6; Bar 2:31). So, too, the nations will know that YHWH is God when they see Israel re-gathered in the land:

I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations shall know (γνώσονται τὰ ἔθνη) that I am YHWH, says the Lord GOD, when through you I display my holiness before their eyes (Ezek 36:23; emphasis added; cf. 7:27; 36:36; 38:16, 23; 39:7; Ex 7:5; 14:14, 18; 29:46; Isa 11:9-10; Jer 16:21; 1 Macc 4:11; 2 Kgs 19:19).

At the culmination of the oracle in Ezekiel 37, after YHWH promises to reaffirm the covenant with Israel as one nation with one king, YHWH declares: “Then the nations shall know (γνώσονται τὰ ἔθνη) that I, YHWH, sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is among them forevermore” (Ezek 37:28). YHWH’s restoration of Israel and dwelling among them will cause all people to know that YHWH is the one, true God.

The idea that Israel’s unity will be a testimony to the nations also plays a significant role in Solomon’s prayer in 1 Kings 8:41-42; 60. As discussed in
Chapter Three, this prayer echoes the *Shema* as Solomon commits Israel to renewing its covenant with YHWH. Solomon prays to YHWH that “all the peoples of the earth may know your name (ὅπως γνῶσιν πάντες οἱ λαοὶ τὸ ὄνομά σου) and fear you, as do your people Israel” (1 Kings 8:43; cf. 8:60) when Israel returns to YHWH “with all their heart and soul” (8:48; cf. Deut 6:5). In both Ezekiel and 1 Kings, Israel’s dispersion and subsequent reunion signal to both Israel and the nations that YHWH is the one, sovereign God.

In John, the disciples’ unity is likewise a testimony to the world. Their mission mirrors that of Jesus: just as the Father sent Jesus into the world for eschatological judgment and reconciliation (“I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind”; 9:39; cf. 15:22), the disciples are sent into the world for the same purpose. This point is made through the use of multiple purpose clauses. Jesus prays for his disciples:

- that (ἵνα) they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you,
- in order that (ἵνα) they may also be in us,

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25 Chapter Three, 62-64.
• so that (ἵνα) the world may believe that you sent me (17:21; alt. trans.; emphasis added).

The unity of the Father, the Son, and the disciples is ultimately directed to the world. Here, the focus is reconciliation, rather than judgment, although the implication is that those who do not believe will be judged negatively (cf. 3:18-19; 5:29). Even though Jesus has already said that he is not praying for the world (17:9), Brown writes: “The unity and indwelling visible among [Jesus’] followers challenges the world to believe in Jesus’ mission, and thus indirectly the world is included in Jesus’ prayer.”

So also, when Jesus prays to the Father at the raising of Lazarus, he does so before the crowd, as a testimony to them: “so that they may believe that you sent me” (11:42).

Three more purpose clauses follow: “The glory that you have given me I have given them,

• so that (ἵνα) they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me,

• that (ἵνα) they may become completely one,

Brown, 2.770; cf. Bultmann: “If there is such an eschatological community in the cosmos, in history, then there is always the possibility of faith for the world,” 514.

This last set of three clauses runs roughly parallel to the first set: the disciples are (1) to be united with one another and (2) with the Father and the Son, (3) so that the world may know that Jesus has been sent by the Father, and that he and the Father are one. The terms are intensified in 17:23: now the disciples are to be completely one (ἵνα ὦσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν), and the world will not only believe (17:21), it will know (γινώσκω) that Jesus is one with the Father. In John, to believe in the unity of Father and Son is to know God.

In the Fourth Gospel, however, the world does not know God or the Logos, and neither do Jesus’ own people: “He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him” (John 1:10-11; emphasis added; cf. 7:28-29; 8:54-55; 17:25). Dodd writes that “prophetic denunciations [in the OT] are echoed in places in the Fourth Gospel where the Jews are accused of
not ‘knowing’ God.”\textsuperscript{28} John’s use of “knowledge of God” seems to reflect this prophetic trope.

By contrast, Jesus’ disciples both “believe” and “know” that Jesus is from God: “We have believed and known that you are the holy one of God” (6:69; cf. 10:14-15; translation mine; cf. Isa 43:10: “so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he”).\textsuperscript{29} The unity of the disciples is a testimony to the unity of the Father and the Son: just as the presence of “one king” and “one people” testifies to the nations that YHWH is sovereign (Ezek 37), so the disciples’ unity with the Father, the Son, and with one another, signals the in-breaking of God’s kingly rule in Jesus. Their unity is indicative of God’s presence and purpose within the eschatological framework of God’s renewed kingdom on earth.

This eschatological unity comports with early rabbinic traditions on the Shema: in Sifre on Deuteronomy 6:4, for example, the rabbis discuss the repetition of the phrase “the Lord”: “Having already said the Lord is one, why does the Scripture say also our God?...The Lord, our God, in this world; the Lord is one, in the

\textsuperscript{28} Dodd, 158.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 168.
world to come (i.e. the messianic era, when God’s unity will be universally acknowledged), as it is said, *The Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day shall the Lord be one and His name one* (Zech 14:9).” The rabbis interpret the phrase “the Lord is one” as a reference to the eschatological age when all people will acknowledge the divine unity, and they understand Zech 14:9 as a reference to that future era. For John, the world to come has arrived in the midst of the present age, and yet the Lord’s name will not be completely one (ἵνα ὦσιν τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν; 17:23) until Jesus’ kingship is acknowledged by the world. Thus the Johannine Jesus prays for the unity of his people, that they might be bound up into the mission of Jesus and God “in order that the world may believe and know” Jesus as the one Lord and King.

**Summary: the Shema in John 17**

By drawing upon the language of the *Shema* as filtered through the prophets’ visions of restoration, John establishes Jesus’ relationship with his disciples as the first stage of fulfillment of the eschatological hope of one people.

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30 *Sifre Deut, Piska 31*, in Norman Lamm, *The Shema: Spirituality and Law in Judaism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1998), 32 (the insertion is Lamm’s). Earlier in *Piska 31*, Jacob’s sons speak directly to him (“Hear, O Israel”) on his deathbed and so affirm their allegiance and that of successive generations to the one God.
united under one shepherd-king. In John’s Christological rendering of this hope, it is through the disciples’ unity with Father and Son that the world will come to know that Jesus is God’s unique Son. Jesus’ followers thus form a unity that witnesses to and enacts God’s mission in the world and to the world. The goal of this mission is both reconciliation (20:23) and judgment (5:24).

The implications of John’s Christology for John’s ecclesiology are remarkable: the Gospel recognized for its high Christology is also the one that most intimately connects the human realm with the divine. In a kosmos of darkness and unbelief, believers in Jesus are the re-gathered people of God, united with the one God through the one whom He sent, in fulfillment of the eschatological hopes of Israel. That John’s readers would see themselves as the fulfillment of Israel’s eschatological renewal is ironic in light of their alienation from the synagogue. They are Israel, re-gathering and restored, united to the Father, the Son, and one another through belief in Jesus. The outsiders have become insiders and the exiled have returned home.
John 13: The *Shema* and the New Mitzvah

Introduction

If the Fourth Evangelist considers Jesus’ followers to be the eschatological people of God – one united people under the one King, Jesus – it is with a number of important modifications to the prophetic vision of the restoration of Israel. John does not refer to the importance of the Land (e.g. Ezek 36:24, 28; 37:12, 14, 21, 22, 25), for example, or to a new or renewed covenant (e.g. Isa 55:3; Jer 31:31, 33; 32:40; Ezek 34:25; 37:26); it is well known that the word διαθήκη never appears in the Fourth Gospel, although it will be argued below that a new covenant is implicit in John. Furthermore, it is sometimes understood in biblical and Second Temple Jewish texts that in the eschatological kingdom of God, Israel will keep the Mosaic Law (e.g. Ezek 11:20; 36:27; Jub 1:15-25). In John, however, the emphasis is on keeping Jesus’ commandment (John 13:34; 15:12). The thesis which will be argued below is that Evangelist’s use of the singular ἐντολή is evidence that he and his readers believe that they no longer live under the Mosaic νόμος, but under a new, singular commandment, and therefore, under a new covenant. At the core of this commandment is a Christological interpretation of the *Shema*: it is through obedience to Jesus’ ἐντολή that the
Shema, the chief commandment of the Old Testament, is now lived out among Jesus’ disciples in the new, eschatological age.

**The New Mitzvah in John 13**

A new commandment I give to you; that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you must love one another (Ἐντολὴν καινὴν δίδωμι ὑμῖν, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους; John 13:34, my translation)...This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12).

In his commentary on the epistles of John, Raymond Brown writes: “Both the Gospel of John and 1 John use the plural and singular of commandment interchangeably.” On the surface, it seems reasonable to agree with Brown that there is no difference of meaning between the singular (e.g. 13:34; 15:12; 1 John 3:23; 4:21) and plural forms (e.g. 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 John 2:3; 3:22) of ἐντολή in Johannine literature, since both forms generally pertain to love for Jesus and for other believers. There is, however, a technical use of the term at play, which Brown misses: the use of the singular ἐντολή in John’s Gospel and in the Johannine epistles mirrors the singular form of מְצוֹא in Deuteronomy. In

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Deuteronomy, “the מצוה“ is the Shema, the basic covenantal oath to which individual statutes and ordinances – i.e., commandments – are added.\textsuperscript{32} The Fourth Evangelist shows an awareness not only of this use of the singular commandment in Deuteronomy, but also of the Deuteronomistic context surrounding it. The use of ἐντολή in Johannine literature has implications that have largely gone unrecognized both for John’s Christology and for John’s relation to the Law of Moses. This section will begin by looking at the singular מצוה in Deuteronomy and then at the use of the cognate Greek term in the Fourth Gospel and Johanneine epistles.

The Commandment in Deuteronomy

The word מצוה, “commandment,” appears 181 times in the Hebrew Bible, and while it surfaces only once in Genesis to Numbers (Ex 24:12), it is a key word in Deuteronomy, where it occurs 44 times: 30 times in the plural and 14 times in the singular.\textsuperscript{33} The singularמצוה often seems to reflect a plural or collective meaning, to stand for the totality of all the laws.\textsuperscript{34} So, for example, in Deut 6:1,

\begin{verbatim}
\end{verbatim}
English translations vary in their use of the singular or plural for the singular 
מצוה: “Now this is the commandment (מִצְוָה) -- the statutes and the ordinances --
that YHWH your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you
are about to cross into and occupy” (Deut 6:1 NRSV). The NRSV follows the MT
in using the singular “commandment,” as does the ESV, JPS, and NKJ; however,
the KJV, NAB, NIV, and NET use the plural “commandments.” The LXX has the
plural ἐντολαί here and in all but one instance of the singular מִצְוָה (Deut 30:11).35
Perhaps the LXX translators, along with the English translators who use the
plural, are smoothing out what they perceive to be an awkward use of מִצְוָה, as in
these instances, the singular מִצְוָה appears to refer to a plurality of
commandments.

In his commentary on Deuteronomy, however, Moshe Weinfeld points
out that the singular מִצְוָה often has a technical meaning:

Hamitzvah here [5:31] and in 6:1, 25; 7:11; 8:1, 11:8, 22;
30:11 refers to the basic demand for loyalty, to which
[Deut] chaps. 5-11 are devoted... The mitzvah seems to
correspond to the basic stipulation of allegiance
known to us from the treaties, or rather loyalty oaths,
in the ancient Near East. This understanding of

35 In Deut 26:13 MT, מִצְוָה appears twice, first in the singular and then in the plural, while in the
LXX, ἐντολή appears first in the plural, then in the singular.
*hamitzvah* could be corroborated by Jer 32:11, which refers to the two basic parts of the purchase deed: *hamitzvah v’hakhukkim* ‘the basic stipulation and the specified terms of the deed.’

It is fitting that the passage in Jeremiah to which Weinfeld refers is part of an oracle of restoration. Just as Jerusalem is about to fall to the king of Babylon, Jeremiah is instructed to purchase a field, a sign that, in spite of the punishment of the Exile, YHWH will eventually re-gather his people in the Land (32:37-44). The purchase deed for the field consists of what Jack Lundbom calls “the contract [המצוה] and the conditions.” Similarly, in Deuteronomy, הַמְּצַוָּה – the commandment – often refers not to an individual stipulation of the Law, or to the Law as a whole, but to the “contract” between YHWH and Israel, the fundamental demand for loyalty to which legal ordinances are attached. The NRSV captures this sense in Deut 6:1: “Now this is the commandment – the statutes and the ordinances – that YHWH your God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy” (emphasis

37 See Chapter Three, 75-77, for a discussion of the Shema in this passage.
added). This verse introduces the *Shema*, the commandment – the basic demand for loyalty to the one God – which precedes the enumeration of the individual laws: “Hear, O Israel, YHWH our God, YHWH is one. And you shall love YHWH your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deut 6:4-5). Although other earthly rulers throughout Israel’s history may have appeared to have the upper hand, YHWH was to be Israel’s only King, the one to whom the people pledged their total allegiance.

In his 1886 commentary on Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, August Dillmann suggested that the *מצוה* referred to the *Shema* – the loyalty oath between YHWH and Israel – from which the individual laws followed, explicating the basic command in concrete ways:

\[
\text{המצוה הזאת ist keineswegs, wie allgemein angenommen wird, das Gesetz..., sondern die ganze Lehrvorschrift, welche in dem einen Grund- u. Hauptgebot (6,4f, 11, 13. 22. 19,9 u.s.), Jahve von ganzem Herzen, von ganzer Seele zu lieben, zu fuerchten u. zu verehren u. seine Satzungen zu halten, zusammengefasst ist.}\]

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Dillman argues that הָמְצָאָה, the *Hauptgebot*, is the *Shema*, along with its various recapitulations throughout Deuteronomy, and that the whole of the Mosaic instruction is an outgrowth of the commandment to love and serve God with one’s entire being. Further exploration suggests that Dillmann is correct: the singular הָמְצָאָה crops up throughout Deuteronomy, often with ties to the *Shema* or related covenantal themes. In 11:22-23, the singular commandment is explicitly linked with the *Shema*:

If you will diligently observe *this entire commandment* (πάσας τὰς ἐντολὰς ταύτας; singular in MT; plural in LXX) that I am commanding you, *loving YHWH your God*, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him, then YHWH will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and mightier than yourselves (emphasis added).

הָמְצָאָה is again aligned with the *Shema* in 19:9, where YHWH promises that Israel will take possession of the Land “provided you diligently observe *this entire commandment* (πάσας τὰς ἐντολὰς ταύτας) that I command you today, to *love YHWH your God* and walk in his ways” (emphasis added). Thus, in Deuteronomy, the singular הָמְצָאָה, embodied in the *Shema*, is the fundamental oath of total commitment to YHWH, and serves as the basis for the individual laws
and precepts that follow. The promised reward for strict obedience to “the commandment” includes not only the Land but prosperity, abundance, and life (e.g. 8:1; 11:8-15; 15:5-6). This meaning of הָעַזְבָּה carries over into other Deuteronomistic books, as can be seen in Josh 22: 3, 5; 1 Sam 13:13; and 2 Kings 17:34, 37. Significantly, these instances occur at points in Israel’s history where the covenant between God and Israel has been broken (1 Sam) or reaffirmed.\textsuperscript{40}

**The Commandment in John’s Gospel**

Earlier in this chapter, evidence was presented demonstrating that the Johannine Jesus takes on the role played by YHWH in Deuteronomy (John 14-15), as he chooses a people, loves them, commands love in return, and issues commandments. It should not be surprising then that Jesus also issues what amounts to a new loyalty oath: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (John 13:34); cf. “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (15:12). There have been various suggestions about the meaning of Jesus’ new commandment and exactly what is new about it; love of one’s

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\textsuperscript{40} 2 Chron 14:3; 2 Chron 31:21; possibly Prov 13:13; 19:6; Ecc 8:5; Mal 2:4.
neighbor was certainly not foreign to Judaism.\textsuperscript{41} Some have thought that, in the new commandment, Jesus is broadening the definition of “neighbor,” and while that may be true of the synoptic tradition (e.g. Luke 10:36), it is not so in John, where “one another” is generally confined to fellow believers.\textsuperscript{42} Other scholars contend that what is new is that love is now modeled after the relationship between the Father and the Son, which reveals God to the world.\textsuperscript{43} Another possibility is that the newness is located in the phrase “as I have loved you,” i.e. loving as Jesus loved, being willing to lay down one’s life for another.\textsuperscript{44} There is probably some truth in all of these options, and the last interpretation has much to commend it, as the author of 1 John seems to have understood it in this way: “We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us – and we ought to lay down our lives for one another” (1 John 3:16).

But there is more to the newness of Jesus’ commandment. Brown writes: “The newness of the commandment of love is really related to the theme of covenant at the Last Supper – the ‘new commandment’ of John 13:34 is the basic

\textsuperscript{41} Lev 19:18; 1QS 1.9-11; \textit{m. Avot} 1:12; see Bultmann, 527.
\textsuperscript{42} Brown, 2:613; Smith, 260.
\textsuperscript{43} Barrett, 452; Dodd, 405; Kysar, 217.
\textsuperscript{44} Kysar, 217; Schnackenburg, 3.54; Charles H. Talbert, \textit{Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles} (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 199.
stipulation of the ‘new covenant’ of Luke 22:20.” Brown does not connect this observation to the Deuteronomic מצווה, but the link between the Deuteronomic מצווה and John 13:34 has significant implications for the ongoing validity of the Law in John: if “new commandment” is John’s way of talking about the inauguration of a new covenant, and if love for one another is the basic stipulation of the new covenant, then the Johannine Jesus, the divine King, has effectively replaced the old מצווה, the loyalty oath of the Shema, which involves a whole series of legal stipulations, with a new commandment, a new oath, a new Shema.

There is evidence for this claim in the text. John uses the emphatic pronoun to contrast Jesus’ new commandment with the old: “This is my commandment” (Αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ ἐμὴ; John 15:12; emphasis added). This statement is structured very similarly to Deut 6:1: “This is the commandment” (וזאת המצוה; cf. 1 John 3:23), except that John emphasizes the word “my.” The way the Johannine Jesus introduces his commandment, then, imitates the syntax

45 Brown, 2:614; cf. Bultmann, 527; Talbert, 199.
46 Smyth, Greek Grammar, §325. John 15:12 is essentially a reiteration of the new commandment of 13:34.
of Deuteronomy, while also emphasizing that what follows is Jesus’ commandment.

It is telling that the Johannine Jesus never refers to his word or his commandment as Law; in fact, expressions such as “your law” (8:17; 10:34) and “their law” (15:25) create distance between John’s Jesus and the Mosaic Law. Nor is there much evidence in John’s Gospel of the intense battles with the religious leaders over points of Law that are present in the Synoptics (though see John 5:9 and 9:14, which are more the exception than the rule). In John, the function of the Law, the Scriptures, and Moses is to point to Jesus (e.g. John 5:39-47). It is Jesus in whom life – the chief blessing of the covenant – is found (e.g. 10:10; 11:25; 14:6), not in the Law.

The basic stipulation under the eschatological reign of Jesus is that disciples must love one another as Jesus loved them. Jesus has the authority to institute this new commandment because he, too, has received a commandment from the Father; he only speaks what the Father has told him, thereby imparting eternal life to those who hear him (John 12:49, 50). He is one with the Father and

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47 Cf. 317-18 above; Pancaro, 519.
has modeled obedience to the Father’s commandment. Jesus’ commandment to love one another in John’s Gospel thus becomes the new basis for the outworking of God’s love in the world, as believers participate in the divine mission of the Father and the Son: “By this everyone will know (γνώσονται πάντες) that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (13:35). Knowledge of God is now linked to Jesus’ new commandment of mutual love.

From a historical standpoint, this proposal coheres with the idea that Johannine believers in Jesus had been expelled from the synagogue for equating Jesus with God (John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). The remains of intense and protracted conflicts between the Johannine community and Jewish authorities fill the pages of John’s Gospel as hostile interactions between Jesus and “the Jews.” It seems that Jesus’ followers had claimed more for a human being than most Jewish sensibilities could allow. For a while, it appeared as though they had lost the battle: they were labeled outcasts and deceivers (7:19), and perhaps even became martyrs (16:2). But John has an answer. Jesus does not speak of the Shema as the

48 So also Brown, Epistles, 251.
Great Commandment in John in the way he does in the Synoptics. Instead, he issues his own commandment. In so doing, Jesus replaces the Shema - the basic loyalty oath between God and Israel – with a new commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you.” He is able to do this because he is within the divine echad: he and the Father are one (10:30).

Jesus’ commandment is not called a “Law,” perhaps because to call it such would link it too closely with the very thing that it is replacing. For John, it is the Logos – the word of the Father given both through the Son and as the Son – not the Law – which gives life to the world (cf. 1:4, 17). Jesus’ commandment is the means by which God’s word for humanity is revealed and from which all other commands stem: “Love one another.” The new commandment thus reinterprets the Shema for the new, eschatological age. This development signals both continuity with Judaism and a radical break from it.

The Commandment in 1 and 2 John

Although the Johannine Epistles are not likely to have been written by the same author as the Fourth Gospel, their theology and literary style are similar in
many ways to those of the Gospel of John. Because the Epistles reflect upon themes in the Gospel, they are thought to have been written by a member of a Johannine “school” not long after the Gospel was completed, around 100 CE or a few years after. The command to love one another provides an important link between the Epistles and John’s Gospel; it is echoed eleven times in 1 John and once in 2 John. 1 and 2 John show how ἐντολή was interpreted later within the Johannine community. In 1 John, the singular ἐντολή appears with a couple of intriguing twists: “And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us” (1 John 3:23; cf. John 15:12). Here the commandment is the Father’s, not the Son’s. This is consistent with the view expressed throughout the Gospel that Jesus is sent by the Father to say and do only what the Father says and does (e.g. John 5:19). Jesus’ command, then, is the Father’s command.

50 Brown argues that the Gospel and epistles had different authors, based primarily on the apparent presence of different adversaries and a different life situation (Epistles, 14-35); cf. Rensberger, 3; Lieu, 6-9.


52 1 John 2:10; 3:10, 11, 14, 23; 4:7, 11, 12, 21; 5:1, 2; 2 John 1:5.
In 1 John 3:23, the singular commandment contains two parts: believing in Jesus and loving one another. Vis-à-vis John 13:34 and 15:12, then, there is an added requirement of believing in the Son. Again, this innovation is not inconsistent with John’s Gospel. The author of the epistle has joined belief in Jesus with the love command, first, because belief is central to the Gospel (e.g. 1:7; 3:16; 6:29; 14:1; 20:31) and second, to address the challenge raised by opponents who have broken from the community (1 John 2:19). These secessionists have beliefs about Jesus which the author finds inadequate in some way and which threaten the unity of the community.53 Jesus’ Sonship appears to be one of the issues at stake:54 belief in Jesus is expressed in terms of his Sonship in 1 John 3:23 and 21 other times in this epistle. The author closely associates Jesus’ Sonship with his humanity (4:9) and salvation through his blood (1:7; 4:10, 14). It seems likely that the secessionists have stressed Jesus’ divinity at the

53 On various problems and issues in identifying the author’s adversaries, see Brown (Epistles, 49-115; idem, The Community of the Beloved Disciple [New York: Paulist Press, 1979], 94-144), who understands them to be Johannine insiders with a Christology higher than what is found in the Fourth Gospel, on a path toward Gnosticism; cf. de Boer, Johannine Perspectives, 63-66; 269-71; 281-83, who sees them as baptismal triumphalists, for whom Jesus’ death lacked significance.

expense of his humanity;\textsuperscript{55} the expression ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ encapsulates for the epistle writer the necessity of maintaining both. It is only through Jesus’ sacrificial life and death “in the flesh” (1 John 4:2; cf. 2:2; 4:10) that the command to love one another can be fulfilled. Through shared belief and mutual, sacrificial love, the author exhorts his readers to stand unified against this assault from within.

The author of the epistle also writes:

Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this (καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔχομεν ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ): those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also (1 John 4:21; emphasis added).

This version of the commandment is explicitly attached to love for God, linking it closely to the Deuteronomic commandment, the classic formulation of love for God, the Shema (Deut 6:5). The statement in 1 John 4:21, which connects love for God with love for others, reflects a common trope in Second Temple Judaism, in which love for God and neighbor represents both halves of the Decalogue.\textsuperscript{56} This

\textsuperscript{55} So Brown, Community, 109-110.

idea is also present in the Great Commandment of the NT.\textsuperscript{57} In effect, then, the formulations “Believe in Jesus and love one another” (1 John 3:23) and “Love God and love one another” (1 John 4:21) are equivalent to the new commandment of John 13:34. In the Gospel, Jesus says: “Believe in God, believe also \textit{in me}” (John 14:1; emphasis added) and ”If God were your Father, you would \textit{love me}, for I came from God” (8:42; emphasis added). Jesus also prays to the Father “that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them” (17:26). Thus the new commandment, the new \textit{Shema}, requires that the one who truly loves God will love and believe in Jesus and love other believers, for all are one (John 17:21). The basic loyalty oath to God, established in Deuteronomy, is now an oath to Jesus and is inclusive of the family of believers. The author of the epistles has adapted what he found in the Gospel tradition to meet the new needs of his readers. The emphasis on unity would have been especially important to a group that was ravaged by internal dissention and defection.

Like the Fourth Gospel, the Johannine epistles link Jesus’ commandment with eschatological renewal:

Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word that you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new commandment that is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining (1John 2:7-8; emphasis added).

Similarly, the author of 2 John writes: “I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning, let us love one another” (2 John 1:5). The juxtaposition of new and old here is a bit confusing. Is the new commandment new or isn’t it? David Rensberger observes:

It is old because it is familiar from the Christian tradition known to the readers...On the other hand, it is a ‘new’ commandment in part because it is called that in John 13:34. But what really makes it new, both in John and in 1 John, is that it belongs to the new era brought in by the coming of the Messiah Jesus, a new era that is now dawning and pushing back the darkness of the former age.58

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58 David Rensberger, The Epistles of John (Lousville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 25; so also Bultmann: “Jesus’ command of love is new...because it is the law of the eschatological community...[I]t is a phenomenon of the new world which Jesus has brought into being,” 527; Brown, Epistles, 266-67; idem, Gospel, 2.614; Lieu, 78.
In the Johannine writings, the new commandment marks a new age, the fulfillment of Israel’s eschatological hope, in which the basic loyalty oath to God, the *Shema*, has been transformed. Amid accusations that Johannine Christians are violating the *Shema* – the Great Commandment of Judaism – the Johannine writings attest that the Messiah has ushered in the new, eschatological age that renders these accusations false and irrelevant. The Fourth Evangelist and the author of the Epistles interpret the *Shema* Christologically: “YHWH is one” (Deut 6:4) is now “the Father and Jesus are one.” The command to “Love YHWH your God” (Deut 6:5) now includes believing in and loving Jesus and loving fellow believers in Jesus. The love of God and eternal life are manifest – not by keeping the old commandment – but by keeping the new one.

**Summary: The Shema in the Farewell Discourse**

In the Farewell Discourse, Jesus’ unity with the Father is no longer the subject of heated debates with “the Jews” as it was in John 5, 8, and 10, where after the declaration “I and the Father are one” (10:30), Jesus was nearly killed for blasphemy. Instead, Jesus’ inherence within the divine *echad* (Deut 6:4) is expressed more fully to an audience of his adherents as he takes on YHWH’s role
as King: Jesus chooses a people, loves them, and is the object of love (Deut 6:5); he issues commandments and mediates life to those who love and believe in him.

In John 17, Jesus extends his unity with the Father toward those who believe in him, empowering them through the love of the Father to take on Jesus’ own mission to the world. The unity of the Father, the Son, and the disciples reinterprets the prophetic oracles of restoration that anticipate a new age in which faithful Israel will worship YHWH as one people and when, as a result of this unity, YHWH will be made known to the nations. For John, believers in Jesus are the restored, re-gathered, eschatological people of God.

Finally, Jesus’ new mitzvah signifies the terms of the new covenant: believe in Jesus and love one another (13:34; 1 John 3:23). The Shema, the singular commandment of the Mosaic Law, has been renewed and transformed Christologically in the singular commandment of Jesus. The Deuteronomic blessings for obedience – chief among them, life – now flow freely from Jesus to his disciples. Jesus is the source of life, light, and truth in the eschatological era, not Torah. Jesus’ new commandment is not simply an innocuous exhortation to love; it upends all expectations, destabilizes the foundational character of the Mosaic legislation, and focuses all of Israel’s hopes and longings in himself. And
it renders “the Jews” outcasts from Israel’s long-awaited restoration; Johannine believers may have been made pariahs and excluded from Jewish life, but now “the Jews” are left behind, excluded from the hoped-for, new era toward which their Scriptures point.
Chapter Eight: Conclusions – the *Shema* in the Johannine Crucifixion, Anti-Judaism, and the Prologue

**The Shema and the Johannine Crucifixion**

John’s use of the *Shema* as outlined in the present study makes sense of certain aspects of Jesus’ crucifixion as King of the Jews in the Fourth Gospel (19:19). Just as “the Jews” accuse Jesus of making himself equal to God (5:18) and making himself God (10:33), they also accuse him of making himself king (ὁ βασιλέα ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν; 19:12). Once again, they fail to recognize that Jesus does not “make himself” anything; he is sent by the Father to speak and act according to the Father’s will.

The accusation that Jesus makes himself king links Jesus’ unity with God to his kingship. Chapter Six argued that in the statement “I and the Father are one” (ἐγώ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἕν ἐσμεν; 10:30), the word “one” is applied to Jesus along with the royal connotations implicit in *echad* in Deut 6:4. So when Jesus says to Pilate: “My kingdom is not from this world” (19:36), it is because Jesus is speaking of his eschatological kingdom, in which there is “one flock, one Shepherd” (10:16), consisting of the disciples of Jesus and their King (17:11, 21-23).
Jesus’ kingship is not of this age, but belongs to the hoped-for eschatological era, corresponding to Israel’s prophetic visions of the people reunited, with YHWH as their king (e.g. Ezek 34:10-16; 37:22; Zech 14:9; Jer 32:37-41). It is therefore savagely ironic that Jesus’ crucifixion is staged as a mockery of his kingship (19:1-16). Johannine irony reaches its climax when Pilate asks: “Shall I crucify your King?” and the chief priests answer, “We have no king but Caesar” (19:15). The Jewish leaders deny not only Jesus’ kingship, but also YHWH’s, abandoning the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven which, in Jewish tradition, is encapsulated in the Shema.

The Shema in John and Anti-Judaism

The Christological Shema of the Fourth Gospel is good news for Christians, who, like the Johannine disciples, believe they represent the re-gathered flock, united in the mutual love between the Father and the Son. The present study has suggested that John deploys the Shema in a rhetorical move that reverses the historical situation, creating insiders of the Johannine community, who have been forced outside of Jewish life. As such, the Gospel provides its readers with a narrative of empowerment, enabling them to see beyond their present circumstances. They love the Father, the Son, and one
another, in accordance with Jesus’ new commandment, the new *Shema*. They are the eschatological people of God who have eternal life.

But this good news comes at the expense of those Jewish people who do not share John’s convictions about Jesus: John’s Gospel takes out all of its sectarian wrath upon “the Jews,” who have excluded believers in Jesus from their community (9:22; 12:42; 16:2). In constructing a narrative based in large part upon a Christological and eschatological reading of the *Shema*, John makes outsiders of Jews who do not believe in Jesus: the disciples of Jesus may be alienated from their former lives, but ultimately they are the victors, the new people of God.¹ Because of unbelief, “the Jews” are cut off from their Scriptures, their covenant, and their God. Although the Johannine “Jews” claim to be descendants of Abraham and disciples of Moses, they have never heard God’s voice (5:37), nor do they love God (5:42); thus they disobey the *Shema’s* commands and exclude themselves from the heritage of Israel. Moreover, they are murderers (5:18), children of the devil (8:44), and co-conspirators in Jesus’ crucifixion (19:6, 7, 12, 15).

¹ For a detailed study of the historical shift in early Christianity from a focus on Gentile inclusion to an emphasis on Jewish exclusion, see Jeffrey S. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster, 1991).
Several studies have distinguished anti-Semitism, the hatred of Jews as a people, from what might be called “theological anti-Judaism,” the denial of the continuing validity of the covenant to Jews who do not believe in Jesus.² This is a key distinction; while the former is outside of the purview of the Fourth Gospel, the present study highlights the numerous ways in which John does, in fact, judge the Jewish Scriptures, symbols, and festivals to be empty apart from the belief that Jesus and the Father are one. Rosemary Radford Ruether takes this one step further when she writes of John’s Gospel:

The Christian community, reading the Scriptures christologically, are the only ones who abide in the Father. The Jewish community, which reads the Scriptures as a testimony to an ongoing covenant of the past, are “the children of the Devil who have never known me or the Father.”…There is no way to rid Christianity of its anti-Judaism, which constantly takes social expression in anti-Semitism, without grappling finally with its christological hermeneutic itself.³

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Ruether has little optimism for the possibility of divesting Christianity in general, and the Gospel of John in particular, of both their anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic potential. She maintains that because the “synagogue” or Jewish teaching authorities rejected Christian claims about Jesus, Christianity felt the need to legitimate its beliefs in Jewish terms, and that anti-Judaism “originated in an alienated and angry Jewish sectarianism which believed it had the true midrash on the Scriptures.” Ruether would see John’s use of the *Shema*, as argued in the present study, as one example of that kind of self-legitimation.

Several arguments have been marshaled to attempt to mitigate John’s anti-Jewish potential. According to the historical explanation, championed by Martyn and Brown, and followed (with some modifications) by others, John’s polemic is a result of his community’s exclusion from the synagogue. Adele Reinhartz argues, however, that even if Jewish Christians were forcibly separated from the Jewish community, John’s rhetoric is not a reasonable response to such hostility:

> Are not the Jews then [in the Fourth Gospel’s view] still to blame for the exclusion of the Johannine

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4 Ibid., 94.

Christians, which led in some direct way to the ultimate separation of Judaism and Christianity, and then, by extension, to the many difficult centuries in the history of Jewish-Christian relations?  

Exclusion may explain the origins of John’s sectarian rhetoric, but it does not eliminate the Gospel’s anti-Jewish potential; by making Jews responsible for persecuting Christians, according to Reinhartz, it exacerbates the problem. 

Martinus C. de Boer nuances the historical argument in a different direction; he notes that hostility directed at Jesus by certain Jews is attested in multiple sources, both within and outside of the New Testament. Rather than deny the historical likelihood that some Jews persecuted some believers in Jesus in the early days of the Christian movement, de Boer views this scenario as a real possibility, but one that is based upon the behavior of a few of the powerful elites. He writes: 

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The problem for John is not ‘the Jews’ as an ethnic group…, but the hostile and finally murderous behavior which they [certain Jewish leaders] direct toward Gods’ Jewish envoy and his Jewish followers. The notorious John 8:44 [which claims that “the Jews” are of their father, the devil, “a murderer from the beginning”] must surely be read in this light.⁹

For de Boer, John’s harsh rhetoric is primarily a response to certain Jewish leaders who collaborated in the pursuit and death of Jesus and his followers. Rather than being “unreasonable,” John’s response expresses the outcry of a persecuted and powerless sect, betrayed by its former leaders, unmoored from its parent community, and fighting for its existence.

Richard B. Hays points out the role played by power dynamics in the history of this conflict:

It is one of history’s great tragedies that texts such as this one [John 15:18-21; 16:2-3], written from the point of view of a powerless minority group of Christians, later became the pretext for a Christian majority to hate and oppress and kill Jews, when the relations of social power were reversed. ¹⁰

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⁹ Ibid., 268.
Along the same lines, Luke Timothy Johnson observes: “In the beginning, the messianists were David to the non-messianists’ Goliath…Abuse tends to gain in volume when it is powerless.” Johannine polemic thus takes on a whole new meaning in later centuries, when it is used by the powerful majority, i.e., the state-sponsored, predominantly Gentile, Christian church, against a powerless minority, i.e., the Jewish people. When the outcry of the powerless is later taken up by the powerful, it becomes the language of hatred and oppression. When Christians intentionally or inadvertently use John’s condemnation of Jewish authorities against latter-day Jews, the Gospel becomes a triumphalist manifesto of bullying, persecution, and murder. With the ascendancy of Christianity, the rhetoric of John’s Gospel took on new power that it never had as a minority voice: now it had the ability to make the Christians the victors and treat their Jewish neighbors as less than human. As a result, Jews have paid with their lives through bloody centuries of persecution at the hands of Christians, many of whom have alleged to have received the mandate for their actions from the New Testament, including, and perhaps foremost, from John’s Gospel.

Another argument used to explain John’s anti-Jewish polemic is that the Gospel’s harshness reflects standard rhetorical conventions used by educated speakers and writers in the ancient world.\(^\text{12}\) Slander and invective are rampant, not only among Greek and Roman rhetors, but also appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls, where the covenaners at Qumran define themselves against the Temple establishment and its Wicked Priest, believing that only they have the true interpretation of Scripture.\(^\text{13}\) Partly because the Scrolls have never been part of the Jewish or Christian canon, they have eluded the charge of anti-Judaism.\(^\text{14}\) Moreover, the Scrolls do not negate the ongoing validity of God’s covenant with Israel, only asserting that the current establishment is disobedient and corrupt. The stereotypical polemic in John, on the other hand, does not only critique the Jewish leadership, but also repudiates any ongoing legitimacy of Judaism apart

\(^{12}\) So Johnson, 419-41; cf. Reinhartz, 76-77.


from Jesus. Understanding the historical context along with ancient rhetorical conventions, then, does not defuse John’s anti-Judaism.

A final suggestion, which is tied to and overlaps the previous explanations, is that John’s antagonism toward “the Jews” results from inner-family tensions; that is, its anti-Jewish elements are, in fact, intra-Jewish. The battle in John’s Gospel, then, is primarily a sibling rivalry between one group of Jews and another, not between Jews and a distinctly separate entity, Christians.

As intra-Jewish polemic, John’s interpretation of the *Shema* becomes the sort of invective characteristic of prophetic critique in the Hebrew Bible. Writing on Israel’s prophetic self-criticism, Mary C. Callaway observes:

> Because the false security and corrupt behavior of the people were sometimes supported by self-serving interpretations of religious traditions, prophetic critique often took the form of alternative readings of Israel’s traditions. The prophet would quote the people’s interpretation, as evidenced by their words and actions, and then provide his own quite different understanding of that same tradition.\(^{15}\)

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John’s interpretation of the Shema follows this pattern: “the Jews” falsely assume that God is their “one Father” (John 8:41); they say “He is our God” (θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐστιν 8:54; cf. Deut 6:4 LXX: ἀκοῦε Ισραηλ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν κύριος εἷς ἐστιν), but they do not hear God (5:37), nor do they love God (5:42) or believe God’s word (5:45-46). The Johannine Shema functions as a prophetic critique of “the Jews’” sense of false security that their Abrahamic descent (8:33) and Mosaic discipleship (9:28) are sufficient proof of their covenantal standing with the one God. Jesus says, “For unless you believe that I Am, you will die in your sins” (8:24; my translation). The intra-Jewish argument, therefore, fails to temper John’s anti-Judaism, as it concedes no legitimacy to Judaism apart from Jesus.

One could argue, furthermore, that the epithet “the Jews” might indicate that the dispute in John is no longer intra-Jewish at all; the ubiquitous phrase has the effect of creating distance between the Johannine disciples and non-Christian Jews, much in the same way that the expressions “their Law” and “your Law” distance John from the Mosaic commandments (John 7:19; 8:17; 10:34; 15:25). Martinus de Boer, however, maintains that the epithet “the Jews” in John is “an ironic acknowledgment of their claim to be the authoritative arbiters of Jewish identity.”

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16 de Boer, 278 (emphasis original); cf. 271-80.
“The Jews” are the ones who have decided that disciples of Jesus can no longer identify as disciples of Moses (9:28), and can no longer remain in the Jewish community (9:22; 12:42; 16:2). Therefore, “John acknowledges this claim with the ironic (even sarcastic) epithet ‘the Jews’.”

John surrenders the use of this term for his community, while at the same time demonstrating through his use of the Shema that those who truly love and obey the one God of Israel are those who believe in Jesus.

One benefit of de Boer’s thesis is that it helps to explain how John’s Gospel is simultaneously Jewish and anti-Jewish. Indeed, John’s thoroughgoing use of Jewish categories, symbols, and motifs leads Wayne Meeks to observe: “The Fourth Gospel is most anti-Jewish just at the points it is most Jewish.”

This situation is not as paradoxical as it might seem at first glance. John’s Gospel affirms Jewish scripture, beliefs, and institutions, but finds their true significance in Jesus. R. Alan Culpepper notes: “Claims of fulfillment easily mutate into claims of replacement, that is, that apart from its fulfillment in Jesus Judaism is

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17 Ibid., 279.

no longer valid.” So, too, the Johannine *Shema* finds its true meaning in a christological reinterpretation: the true *Shema* is fulfilled in hearing and loving Jesus and believing that he is one with the Father. While Christian interpreters may be averse to ascribing anti-Judaism to John or to any part of the New Testament, the force of John’s rhetoric adjudges Judaism to be utterly fraudulent apart from Christ (8:31-59; 12:42).

The past 2,000 years have often witnessed the realization of the anti-Jewish potential of the Fourth Gospel, a tragic history that need not be recounted here. It is the responsibility of those who handle the Gospel in both confessional and academic settings to ensure that the context is understood and that texts with both anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic potential are read descriptively and not prescriptively. John’s Christological reinterpretation of the *Shema* may have been an anchor for a struggling community in the first century, but to apply John’s

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19 Culpepper, 80.

20 From a confessional standpoint, Jewish and Gentile Christians might contend that the above definition of anti-Judaism is flawed: if Jesus truly is the Jewish Messiah and Savior of the world, they might argue, then believing in him would constitute a fulfillment of Jewish beliefs and hopes, rather than a replacement of them. The present study, however, has attempted to understand John’s use of the *Shema* from a historical, theological, and literary perspective, so that those from various confessional communities and those within the academy might be able to grapple with the implications for their particular settings and apply them as they see fit. In light of the various perspectives that readers bring to a text, there is probably some truth to the idea that anti-Judaism is in the eye of the beholder.
condemnation of “the Jews” of his day to present-day Jews or Judaism is to misread the contemporary situation. Anyone who interprets the Fourth Gospel must exercise great caution not to step carelessly on any of its polemical land mines and thereby perpetuate the legacy of Christian anti-Judaism. As Martyn observes, history and theology are always intertwined. Teachers and preachers of the Fourth Gospel must therefore discern their own place in history in order to make theirs a theology that gives life and hope to all people (Deut 30:16; John 10:10).

The Shema and the Johannine Prologue

It is appropriate that this study end at the beginning: the Johannine Prologue is programmatic for John’s Christology and foreshadows the failure of Jesus’ own people to believe in him. The evidence presented in the previous two chapters provides insight into the Prologue retrospectively: Jesus’ unity with the Father as the agent of creation (1:1-3) and his relationship to the Law of Moses in the Prologue (1:17) gain force and clarity in the light of John’s christological reworking of the Shema in the rest of the Gospel.

As noted above, John’s Christology is a kingship Christology, in that Jesus is the divine King who demands to be loved and issues his own commandment.
He is the Shepherd-King who gathers his eschatological flock into one. But John’s Christology is also a Torah Christology, in the sense that the Johannine Jesus embodies many of the characteristics that Jewish writers ascribed to Torah. In the Prologue, Jesus is one with the Father as the pre-existent Word made flesh (1:1-2, 14). Jesus, not Torah, gives light (1:4, 5, 7-9) and life (1:4), uniting all believers into the oneness that he shares with the Father. Daniel Boyarin has shown that as the λόγος, the Johannine Jesus represents the role jointly played by a complex of Jewish traditions: Logos, Wisdom, and especially the Word or Memra. The creating, redeeming Word, not the Torah, lies in the bosom of the Father (1:18). This sheds light on the enigmatic 1:17: “The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” In the eschatological reign of the Messiah, the Law gives way to Jesus’ new commandment for his disciples to love one another as he has loved them. Jesus’ new commandment (13:34) constitutes both a renewed Torah and a renewed Shema.

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21 E.g. Dodd, Interpretation, 83-86; Peder Borgen, “The Logos was the True Light: Contributions to the Interpretation of the Prologue of John,” NovT 14 (1972): 115-30; Pancaro, 452-87.

For John, Jesus both fulfills the *Shema* and exemplifies its demands for his beleaguered community. By stressing the unity of the Father and the Son, John answers the challenge that Jesus’ claim to exalted status constitutes a breach in the divine unity: Jesus’ oneness with the Father is “the *Shema* made flesh,” embodied in his loving the Father with all his heart, soul, and might, even unto death, in order to give life to the world. And John calls his people to the same unity of love and obedience to God in service of the world. Jews are able to be part of this unity, part of eschatological Israel restored, but only through faith in Jesus. The proclamation “I and the Father are one,” and the appeal for unity among believers as a testimony to the oneness of God, signify nothing less than a reinterpretation of both Jesus and the *Shema*. 
## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Versions of Deuteronomy 6:4-5

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<td>καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου</td>
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<td>בַּכֵּל־יָדוֹ</td>
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<td>בַּכֵּל־לֵבָּכֶם</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2. Other Allusions to the *Shema* in Matthew, Mark, and Luke

**Mark 2:7**

τί οὗτος οὕτως λαλεῖ; βλασφημεῖ·

τίς δύναται ἁμαρτίας ἀφεῖναι
ei μὴ εἶς ὁ θεός;

**Matthew 9:3b**

οὗτος βλασφημεῖ.

**Luke 5:21b**

τίς ἐστιν οὗτος ὃς λαλεῖ βλασφημίας;

τις δύναται ἁμαρτίας ἀφεῖναι
ei μὴ μόνος ὁ θεός;

**Mark 10:17b-18**

didáskałe ἀγαθέ,

τί ποιήσω ὅνα ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω;

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ·

τί μὲ λέγεις ἀγαθόν;

εἰδὼς ἀγαθός
ei μὴ εἶς ὁ θεός.

**Matthew 19:16b-17a**

didáskałe,

τί ἀγαθὸν ποιήσω ὅνα σχῶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον;

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ·

τί μὲ έρωτάς περί τοὐ ἀγαθοῦ;

εἶς ἐστίν ὁ ἀγαθός·

οὐδεὶς ἀγαθός

ei μὴ εἶς ὁ θεός.

**Luke 18:18b-19**

didáskałe ἀγαθέ,

τί ποιήσως ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω;

εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς·

τί μὲ λέγεις ἀγαθόν;

οὐδεὶς ἀγαθός
ei μὴ εἶς ὁ θεός.

**Matthew 23:8-10**

ἵμεις δὲ μὴ κληθῆτε ῥαββί· εἰς γάρ ἐστίν ὑμῶν ὁ διδάσκαλος, πάντες δὲ ὑμεῖς ἀδελφοί ἐστε.

καὶ πατέρα μὴ καλέσητε ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,

εἰς γάρ ἐστίν ὑμῶν ὁ πατήρ ὁ οὐράνιος.

μηδὲ κληθῆτε καθηγηταί, ὅτι καθηγητεῖς ὑμῶν ἐστίν εἰς ὁ Χριστός.
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Biography

Lori Ann Robinson Baron was born on February 21, 1959 in St. Louis, Missouri. She earned a B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin in 1981 in the Plan II Honors Program. In 1998, she earned a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary. Most recently, she has been working toward her Ph.D. in New Testament at Duke University in the Graduate Program in Religion (2003-2015). During her time at Duke, Lori has taught Biblical Greek, Greek Reading, and has precepted in both New Testament and Old Testament/Hebrew Bible.


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