

# **Resistance, Silence, and Fulfillment**

## **Reflections on the Meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles in the Books of Maccabees, the Works of Josephus, and the Gospel of John**

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The Feast of Tabernacles (henceforth, Sukkot) is a traditional Jewish festival that has come to have many different meanings. This paper aims to interpret these meanings by examining the themes of resistance, silence, and fulfillment. Examples are drawn from the Book of Maccabees, the works of Josephus, and the Gospel of John.

In 1–2 Maccabees, for instance, Sukkot occur in four passages: 1 Macc.10:21; 2 Macc.1:9, 1:18–2:18, 10:5–8. In 1 Maccabees, Sukkot was associated with the public demonstration of Jonathan's authority as a leader (10:21). For context, Sukkot legitimized Jonathan's leadership. Although 2 Maccabees uses the name, rituals, and traditional setting of Sukkot, it actually refers to a new festival (1:9, 1:18–2:18, 10:5–8). To emphasize continuity with the Sukkot celebration, the Maccabees avoided using the new name, the Feast of Dedication (henceforth, Hanukkah). However, there is no disagreement that Hanukkah, as a new Sukkot, legitimized the emergence of the Hasmonean dynasty. Later, Jewish people began celebrating Sukkot and Hanukkah separately, giving each a different name. Hanukkah symbolically lent meaning to the Jewish resistance movement. This resistance, however, resulted in the destruction of the Temple at the hands of Rome.

Both Josephus and John experienced the threat of the Roman Empire firsthand. In the first century, when Jewish resistance was in full swing following the Maccabean Revolt, they were well aware of the dangers posed by pilgrimage festivals. Josephus and John were contemporaries who witnessed the tragic destruction of the Temple during this period. Their writings, however, reveal their differing responses to the celebration of Sukkot.

Josephus mentions Sukkot several times in his writings (*A.J.*3.244–47; 4:209–211; 8:99–123; 8:225–231; 11:75–78; 11:154–58; 13:242; 13:304; 13:372; 15:50; 18:93–95; *B.J.*1:229–230; 2:515; 2:517; 6:301). In light of the destruction of the Second Temple, he portrays it as the ideal pilgrimage festival. He interprets the celebration as a prophecy that will be fulfilled once the Temple in Jerusalem is rebuilt. Josephus did not discuss the messianic expectations in his account of Sukkot. However, he

mentioned the pro-Roman tendency in relation to the feast and stated that it did not emphasize the pilgrimage festival. Some believe this relates to Josephus' view of the Messiah.

The Johannine presentations of the actions of the Jewish authorities (11:47–53) and the cheers of the crowd (12:12–16) reveals the contemporary atmosphere of popular messianic expectations. John is wary of expectations of a political and military Messiah, such as Moses or David. However, his stance differs from Josephus' quietism. John first describes the pilgrimage-like nature of Sukkot (7:2ff). He then uses the motif of living water, a central Sukkot ritual, to proclaim the redemptive ministry of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit (vv. 7:37–39). In other words, John 7:37–39 proclaims the fulfillment of the eschatological prophecy of Zechariah 14; the presence of the Lord through Sukkot and Jesus' earthly ministry is continued by the presence of the Holy Spirit. John combined the Temple and Sukkot to transform the Jewish idea of God's presence into the Gospel of John.

In this paper, I examine Sukkot as an example of the violence inherent in pilgrimage festivals as depicted in the Books of Maccabees, the works of Josephus, and the Gospel of John. Specifically, I argue that the discrepancies between the Josephus' and John's accounts of Sukkot stem from their differing interpretations of Messiah.

## **1. Resistance as a Maccabean usage**

Sukkot occurs in four passages in 1–2 Maccabees: 1 Macc.10:21; 2 Macc.1:9, 1:18–2:18, 10:5–8. Each instance has its own unique usage. In 1 Maccabees, the Feast of Tabernacles was associated with the public demonstration of Jonathan's authority as a leader (10:21). Although 2 Maccabees uses the name, rituals, and traditional setting of the Feast of Tabernacles, it actually refers to a new festival (1:9, 1:18–2:18, 10:5–8).

In my opinion, the two-stage narrative strategy employed in 2 Maccabees depicts the purification of the Temple as a new festival. First, the purification of the temple is linked to Sukkot because both events involve the dedication of the temple. Thus, the book employs the Jewish tradition of temple dedication as a persuasive device. Second, in 2 Maccabees, sacrifice (1:8; 2:18; 10:3) is often mentioned in relation to a new festival that resembles Sukkot (1:9; 2:18; 10:6).<sup>1</sup> The letter emphasizes the importance of offerings made by divine fire. In fact, it encourages celebrating the fire during the Purification of the Temple and describes its divine origin (1:18–2:12). The emphasis on the divine origin of fire in the works

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<sup>1</sup> For the priestly origins of the festival period, see Jon D. Levenson, "Cosmos and Microcosm," in *Cult and Cosmos: Tilting toward a Temple-Centered Theology*, ed. L. Michael Morales, BTS 18 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 227–47.

of Nehemiah, Moses, Solomon, and Jeremiah may justify the temple purification ceremony involving the creation of a fire with flint and the offering of sacrifices with it (10:3).

The Books of Maccabees occupy a unique position in the comparison of biblical and extrabiblical traditions. Some argue that celebrating Hanukkah is a form of militant activism because the holiday commemorates the Maccabean Revolt. However, after several unsuccessful revolts against the Roman Empire, the idea of rabbinic quietism gained popularity.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, I think that as a new Sukkot, Hanukkah will emphasize the distinctive militant characteristics of the Maccabees.

I examine the four passages and argue that its purpose is to legitimize the Hasmonean dynasty through the purification of the Temple and the integration of royal and religious authority.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1. Sukkot in 1–2 Maccabees

#### 1.1.1. 1 Macc.10:21

This is the only reference to Sukkot in 1 Maccabees. After settling in Michmash and beginning to rule the people (9:73), chapter 10 describes how Jonathan gained external authority by aligning himself with the Seleucid dynasty. Sukkot formalizes Jonathan's internal and external authority.

Chapter 10 begins with a confrontation between Alexander and Demetrius (vv. 1–2). Concerned about Jonathan's alliance with Alexander, Demetrius tries to form an alliance with Jonathan (vv. 3–14). Then, to gain the upper hand in his confrontation with Demetrius, Alexander asks Jonathan for an alliance (vv. 15–20). The terms of the alliances between the two foreign kings and Jonathan are similar yet different. As revealed in Demetrius's Promise, the alliance primarily focuses on military matters such as high status, recruitment authority, and the liberation of captives. In contrast, Alexander's letter and gift reveal that he granted Jonathan religious authority in addition to military and political power. Alexander equates the ruler of Jerusalem with its high priest (esp. v. 20).

The most important aspect of this passage is the contents of the letter and gift that Alexander sent to Jonathan (vv. 17–20). Alexander appointed Jonathan as the high priest and gave him the title “Friend of the King.” He also sent Jonathan a purple robe and a gold crown (v. 20). In ancient times, purple was a

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<sup>2</sup> Reuven Firestone, *Holy War in Judaism: The Fall and Rise of a Controversial Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 26–41.

<sup>3</sup> For the Hasmonean approach to the new feast, see Julia Rhyder, “Hellenizing Hanukkah: The Commemoration of Military Victory in the Books of the Maccabees,” in *Collective Violence and Memory in the Ancient Mediterranean*, CHANE 135, eds. Sonja Ammann, Helge Bezold, Stephen Germany and Julia Rhyder (Leiden: Brill, 2024), 92–109.

color reserved for the king's inner circle.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the title of "Friend of the King" and the purple robe align with this tradition.

Jonathan puts on the holy vestment and gathers an army (v. 21). This indicates that he has accepted Alexander's offer of an alliance. It is fitting for Jonathan to wear the vestment when receiving kings (vv. 62, 64). The first official activity after putting on the vestment is gathering military forces. Jonathan's dual role as high priest and military commander reflects the circumstances of his time (vv. 65, 69). Sukkot in the seventh month was an opportune time for Jonathan to publicly assert his authority.<sup>5</sup> Barbara Schmidt interprets Jonathan wearing the purple robe during Sukkot as a form of investiture. According to Schmidt, the author of 1 Maccabees asserts that a high priest's legitimacy depends on qualities such as military competence, foresight, and political success rather than family lineage. She also asserts that Phinehas (Num 25) served as a model for the Hasmonean dynasty's high priesthood and political rule.<sup>6</sup> However, his role in the Sukkot ritual as high priest is not described. The festival itself is not mentioned either. Despite his title, Jonathan's actions as a religious leader are not depicted.

#### 1.1.2. 2 Macc.1:9

The first epistle contains a praescriptio (1a), initial greetings (1b–6), the main body (7–9), and a conclusion with the date (10a).<sup>7</sup> Its primary purpose is to announce the rededication of the Jerusalem Temple (vv. 7–8) and to exhort Jews in Egypt to celebrate the Sukkot in the month of Chislev [kislev] (v. 9). The origins and timing of Sukkot and the new festival differ. Rather than naming the new festival, the author links it to an existing one.<sup>8</sup> The author hoped to strengthen the relationship with the Jews in Egypt

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel R. Schwartz, *1 Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYB 41B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022), 312

<sup>5</sup> Jeffery L. Rubenstein, *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods*, BJS 302 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2020), 63–4.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Schmitz, "Path Dependence and Institutional Change: The Portrayal of Alcimus and Jonathan as High Priests in 1 Maccabees," in *Ben Sira in Conversation with Traditions: A Festschrift for Prof. Núria Calduch-Benages on the Occasion of Her 65th Birthday*, eds. Francis M. Macatangay and Francisco-Javier Ruiz-Ortiz In Collaboration with Renate Egger-Wenzel, DCLS 47 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2022), 249–66.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Doran, *Temple Propaganda: The Purpose and Character of 2 Maccabees*, CBQMS 12 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 3–5. For a more detailed explanation, see Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 23–38. For an approach of prayer, see Friedrich V. Reiterer, "Praying to God Passionately: Notes in the Emotions in 2 Maccabees" in *Ancient Jewish Prayers and Emotions: Emotions Associated with Jewish Prayer in and Around the Second Temple Period*, eds. Stefan C. Reif and Renate Egger-Wenzel, DCLS 26 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 117–44.

<sup>8</sup> cf. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees*, 143.

by celebrating the new festival together.<sup>9</sup> A subsequent letter further elaborates on the justification for the new festival (1:10b–2:18).<sup>10</sup>

### 1.1.3. 2 Macc.1:18–2:18

The second prefixed letter (1:10b–2:18) is divided into three paragraphs: (1) the death of Antiochus (1:10b–17), (2) the exhortation to celebrate the purification of the temple and the restoration of the altar fire (1:18–36), and (3) additional events related to the altar fire and sacrifices from earlier times (2:1–18).<sup>11</sup>

The letter emphasizes the importance of the Second Temple and the accomplishments of Judah Maccabeus, presenting Nehemiah as the ideal example of this approach.<sup>12</sup> Despite Nehemiah's significance, his observance of Sukkot is not used as a literary device in this correspondence. It should be noted that the focus of this letter is on temple-oriented festival.<sup>13</sup> The letter also notes the restoration of the community of Israel through the festival.

Michael W. Duggan argues that the letter promotes celebrating the purification of the Second Temple to highlight its connection to the First Temple. This celebration takes the form of Sukkot and focuses on the sacrificial fire of the altar. The letter recounts the history of the temple from Moses to Judas Maccabee in an attempt to instill it in the collective memory of Jews in Egypt. However, Judah lacks the prophetic authority of Jeremiah and the Davidic authority of Solomon. Nevertheless, Nehemiah is presented as a model for Judah because their work was similar, including rebuilding the Temple and establishing a library. The letter also expresses the hope that all Jews will gather in Israel. This gathering

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<sup>9</sup> Seth M. Ethorn, *2 Maccabees 1–7: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, BHLXX (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020), 1–2, 13. The statements addressed to the senders and receivers (vv. 1, 10) reveal the current situations for the two groups of Jews—those in Israel and those in Egypt. Both groups are facing uncertain internal and external circumstances. External threats caused the Jewish diaspora. Those who remained in the homeland continued to fight foreign powers. The new festival, Sukkot in Chislev, aims to serve as an important connection between the two groups. The Jewish community strives to remind the Jews in Egypt of their national origins (v. 2). The final greetings are addressed to Aristobulus and the Jewish community in Egypt (v. 10a). Aristobulus is described as a highly regarded individual within the Jewish diaspora. The Jewish leaders may have encouraged the diaspora community to celebrate a festival centered around him because he was from the family of the high priest (τῶν χρυστῶν ἱερέων, the anointed priests).

<sup>10</sup> Rubenstein, *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods*, 56–8.

<sup>11</sup> For a more detailed explanation, see Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 39–64.

<sup>12</sup> H. Clay Smith, “Reconsidering the Composition of Ezra-Nehemiah in Light of 2 Maccabees 1:10–2:18,” *JBL* 141/2 (2002): 257–76; Theodore A. Bergren, “Nehemiah in 2 Maccabees 1:10–2:18,” *JSJ* 28/3 (1997): 249–70.

<sup>13</sup> Rubenstein, *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods*, 58–60.

of Jews in Israel is reminiscent of the eschatological gathering led by a new Davidic figure. However, the letter omits elements related to the messianic idea in order to lend legitimacy to the Hasmonean dynasty.<sup>14</sup>

This letter describes the Sukkot celebration for the purification of the Temple as a new festival (1:18). Its date and origin differ from those of the biblical tradition. The purpose of the letter is to justify the new festival and reinforce the Maccabean rules. The Sukkot celebration is an appropriate means to this end.

The letter specifies the name (1:18) and the eight days duration (2:12) of the Sukkot. First, the name is only explicitly used once (1:18). This instance is associated with the purification of the Temple (1:18; cf. 2:16, 17). Despite its name, Sukkot refers to a new festival that begins on the twenty-fifth day of Chislev [Kislev]. Furthermore, the letter encourages celebrating the fire. Second, although the term is not explicitly used, the letter establishes a connection to the dedication of Solomon's Temple (2:12). The eight-day duration of the feast clearly indicates that it is Sukkot. The letter strengthens the legitimacy of the new festival by connecting the fire to Sukkot through Solomon's festival.

#### 1.1.4. 2 Macc.10:5–8.

The previous verses describe how Judas and his followers restored the Temple and the city of Jerusalem (vv. 1–4). The current passage describes their celebration of a new festival, which they established as an annual national holiday (vv. 5–8).

However, the date and significance of this festival differ from those of the biblical feast (v. 5). The Purification of the Temple celebration mirrors the length and rituals of Sukkot (v. 6). Judas Maccabeus and his followers reminisce about a time when Sukkot was not observed. Jason suggests that the new festival originated as a substitute for a missed Sukkot celebration.<sup>15</sup> They commemorate the successful purification of the temple (v. 7). This celebration is observed as a national festival every year (v. 8).

#### 1.2. Characteristics of Sukkot in the Book of Maccabees

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<sup>14</sup> Michael W. Duggan, "Rediscoveries in Judaism: The Temple and the Return to Israel in 2 Macc 1:10–2:18," in *On Wings of Prayer: Sources of Jewish Worship; Essays in Honor of Professor Stefan C. Reif on the Occasion of his Seventy-fifth Birthday*, eds. Nuria Calduch-Benages, Michael W. Duggan and Dalia Marx, DCLS 44 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019), 83–99.

<sup>15</sup> Rubenstein, *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods*, 61.

1–2 Maccabees mentions Sukkot in four passages (1 Macc.10:21; 2 Macc.1:9, 1:18–2:18, 10:5–8). However, only one of these passages refers to the original feast (1 Macc.10:21). In the remaining cases, the text uses the word “Sukkot” or a similar term but actually refers to a new festival that would later be called Hanukkah (2 Macc.1:9, 1:18–2:18, 10:5–8). Maccabean celebrations differ from earlier biblical traditions, including Mosaic festivals (Exod 23:16, 34:22; Lev 23:33–44; Num 29:12–35; Deut 16:13–17, 31:9–13), primitive vineyard festivals (Judg 9:27; 21:19–21), the dedication of Solomon's Temple (2 Chr 5:3; 7:8–9; 8:13), the rebuilding of the Temple by the exiled community from Babylon (Ezra 3:4; Neh 8:14–18), and festival instructions for the future (Ezek 45:25; Zech 14:16–19). The Maccabean author's use of these terms suggests that he embraced the significance of the traditional Jewish holiday of Sukkot to establish a new holiday commemorating the purification of the Temple. Through the symbolism of the temple fire, the author justifies the continuity of Sukkot and the purification of the temple in the cases of Nehemia and Solomon (2 Macc.1:18–2:12). The letters were written to establish the legitimacy of the Maccabees as a ruling family despite their non-Davidic lineage.

## 2. Silence as a usage of Josephus

The works of Josephus are essential for understanding the history of the Second Temple period. His writings about the Second Temple period are particularly important for comprehending Judean history. Although Josephus was born after Jesus' death, he was a contemporary of his disciples (ca 37/38–100 CE). Drawing from his extensive knowledge of ancient history, Josephus provides valuable information about the background of the New Testament, including biblical literature and the fall of Jerusalem. Despite the importance of his work, many interpreters caution against taking his statements at face value. Their warning stems from Josephus's idiosyncrasies, ranging from his past as a commander of Galilee during the Jewish rebellion against Rome (66–70 CE) to his eventual conversion to Roman citizenship. The prevailing view is that he was born Jewish and maintained his Jewish identity even after becoming a Roman citizen. However, he takes a pro-Roman stance when recounting the Roman Empire's hegemony and related subjects.<sup>16</sup> This cannot easily be dismissed as the ethical failure of an opportunist.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> There are many sources on the life and writings of Josephus. For the sources I referenced, see Steve Mason, James S. McLaren and John M. G. Barclay, “Josephus,” in *Early Judaism: A Comprehensive Overview*, eds. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 290–322.

<sup>17</sup> Some have criticized Josephus's view of the destruction of Israel and the rise of the Roman Empire, equating it with divine judgment and providence, as an example of the ethics of opportunism. See Gerbern S. Oegema, “Theology and Ethics in EARLY JUDAISM,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Apocrypha*, ed. Gerbern S. Oegema (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 507–8.

To understand Josephus' transformed perspective, it is important to focus on the changes he experienced and analyze their impact on his work. Michael Tuval devoted considerable attention to this subject, laying the groundwork for future research. He argues that the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem clearly distinguishes the two works from each other. According to his observations, the early Josephus maintains a Palestinian Jewish perspective in *Bellum Judaicum* (BJ), while the later Josephus reveals a diaspora Jewish perspective in *Antiquities of the Jews* (AJ). This theological shift reflects Judaic transformation from a Temple-centered religion to a Torah-centered one. Nevertheless, Josephus is notable for consistently emphasizing his priestly origins and status, despite his evident religious evolution. He believed that he interpreted Jewish history through the lens of God's providence.<sup>18</sup> Jan Willem van Henten analyzes Josephus' role as a narrator and considers his self-awareness. He concludes that Josephus saw himself as a trustworthy historian and Jewish priest who wrote about Jewish history in light of divine providence.<sup>19</sup>

Tuval is familiar with Josephus' transformation from a Jewish priest to a Diaspora intellectual. However, more emphasis should be given to his perspective on international affairs. This shift impacted his identity and writing, making an examination of his connections with diaspora communities essential. In her exploration of Josephus within the context of the diaspora, Tessa Rajak focuses on the diverse developments of the Jewish diaspora amidst the expansion of the Roman Empire. Josephus interacted with diaspora communities through travel and marriage. Over time, his hope for the restoration of Jerusalem gradually faded. Following the city's destruction, his Jerusalem-centric perspective became passive. Conversely, he turned his attention to Jews across the empire, striving to promote tolerance of Judaism among local populations. Josephus recognized that the status of the Jewish minority, as well as peace and stability, depended on the Roman regime. He believed that the destruction of Jerusalem and the rise of the Roman Empire were acts of divine providence.<sup>20</sup>

The destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem profoundly impacted on contemporary and subsequent generations of Jews. Robert Goldenbert has studied the unavoidable effects of the absence of the Temple cult on Jewish religious life. According to Goldenbert, the Temple's destruction and the Jews' inability to rebuild it led to a reexamination of the concept of the covenant. The destruction of the First Temple and the exile were also significant examples. Josephus presented his writings as a reiteration of

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<sup>18</sup> Michael Tuval, *From Jerusalem Priest to Roman Jew: On Josephus and the Paradigms of Ancient Judaism*, WUNT 357 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Jan Willem van Henten, "Josephus as Narrator," in *Autoren in religiösen literarischen Texten der späthellenistischen und der frühkaiserzeitlichen Welt: Zwölf Fallstudien*, CRPG 3, eds. Eve-Marie Becker and Jörg Rüpke (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 121–50.

<sup>20</sup> Tessa Rajak, "Josephus in the Diaspora," in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, eds. Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason and James Rives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 79–98.

the ancient prophetic message to never give up hope for future restoration. However, Christians interpreted the ethnic tragedy as eschatological fulfillment through their own Christology. Thus, scriptural interpretations contributed to the dissolution of Jewish nationhood and religion. In response, the rabbis independently created the Mishnah. A discussion of this topic will soon follow in the rabbinic literature.<sup>21</sup>

Josephus' personal experiences and perception of external circumstances undoubtedly influenced his identity development. Josephus was a Jewish priest who wrote about his expertise in the priestly tradition. However, his evolving identity is also evident in his work as a diaspora Jew. Josephus' understanding of international affairs, particularly the relationships between the Jewish diaspora and local populations, including Greeks and Romans, was crucial.<sup>22</sup> Josephus mentions Sukkot several times in his works. His perspective on this festival is therefore worthy of careful consideration.

To explore the violence inherent in early Jewish festivals, Steven Weitzman examined literature from the late Second Temple period. He found that these festivals encouraged social integration and solidarity within the Jewish community. During times of peace, the festivals promoted peaceful coexistence between Jews and Romans. However, the festivals also degenerated into internal divisions and rebellion against the Roman Empire. During the Jewish revolt, coins bearing the lulav and etrog—symbols of the Sukkot festival—emerged. These coins expressed the desire to revive the Temple cult, which had been suppressed by Rome, through Jewish unity. Thus, while the Jewish community must rebuild its collective identity through festivals, it must also realize a non-violent social vision.<sup>23</sup>

The connection between coins and Sukkot is something worth pondering. Rubenstein takes a closer look at it. He is cautious about the connection between the symbolism of the leaves and the Judean independence movements against Rome. Nevertheless, he asserts that Sukkot often provided an important ideological foundation for Jewish sovereignty.<sup>24</sup> Regardless of its influence on Jewish resistance, it is clear that expectations of Jewish independence, autonomy, and the coming of the Messiah intensified during the first century in the Roman province of Judea. These expectations inevitably intensified the

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<sup>21</sup> Robert Goldenbert, "The Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple: Its Meaning and Its Consequences," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Vol. 4: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 191–205. I agree that Josephus and the Mishnah have similar views on the Temple. However, Josephus cannot be considered an early proponent of rabbinic Judaism, as the rabbis claim. For more on the development of Judaism, see Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Early Judaism and Rabbinic Judaism," in *Early Judaism: A Comprehensive Overview*, eds. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), \*\*\*-\*\*\*.

<sup>22</sup> For a helpful article in this regard, see Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev, "Jews among Greeks and Romans," in *Early Judaism: A Comprehensive Overview*, eds. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 367-\*\*\*.

<sup>23</sup> Steven Weitzman, "From Feasts into Mourning: The Violence of Early Jewish Festival," *JR* 79/4 (1999): 545–65.

<sup>24</sup> Rubenstein, *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods*, \*\*\*-\*\*\*.

conflict between Jews and Romans. The Judean people's response contradicted Josephus' understanding of the international situation.

Rubenstein accurately captured Josephus' presentation of Sukkot. When introducing the festival, Josephus explains why booths were erected in the wilderness given the region's climate. The Lord of Israel commanded his people to celebrate the feast. Thus, it was a festival for the Lord. Josephus makes no mention of the Exodus, a politically charged topic. He also reduces the Lulav ritual to one of the Jerusalem Temple rituals. Another notable characteristic is his lack of emphasis on pilgrimage; Sukkot is one of the three major Jewish pilgrimage festivals. However, after the destruction of Jerusalem, pilgrimage no longer fulfilled its intended purpose. Thus, Josephus' statements portray Judaism within the framework of Roman hegemony. Nevertheless, through his writing, he strives to preserve the historical significance and value of Sukkot as a distinctly Jewish holiday. He also presents evidence that pilgrimages and the erection of booths occurred prior to the destruction of the Second Temple.<sup>25</sup> While his sources are important for understanding the history of ancient Israel, his statements should be taken with a grain of salt, as evidenced by his treatment of Sukkot.

In the writings of Josephus, the Feast of Tabernacles is used a total of 15 passages: *A.J.*3.244–47; 4:209–211; 8:99–123; 8:225–231; 11:75–78; 11:154–58; 13:242; 13:304; 13:372; 15:50; 18:93–95; *B.J.*1:229–230; 2:515; 2:517; 6:301.<sup>26</sup>

## 2.1. Sukkot in the Works of Josephus

### 2.1.1. *A.J.*3.244–47

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<sup>25</sup> Rubenstein, *The History of Sukkot in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Periods*, 75–84. Furthermore, Josephus pays little attention to the Jewish calendar. For example, he never explicitly states the date of the Feast of Tabernacles. For a detailed discussion, see Stern, "Jewish Calendar Reckoning in the Graeco-Roman Cities," 107–16. Especially Page 111.

<sup>26</sup> This study excluded two passages of uncertain identity (*A.J.*14:285–86; *B.J.*1:229–230). First, there is no name for the festival in *A.J.*14:285–86. The only reference is to the festival in Jerusalem. It is noteworthy that Malichus was concerned about the possibility that Hyrcanus would not accept foreign troops during the feasts for reasons of religious purity. There is no indication of the characteristics of the feast in these verses, so there is some uncertainty about their classification as a Feast of Tabernacles passage. Second, the name of the feast is not given in *B.J.*1:229–230. After putting down the rebellion and celebrating the feast, Herod returns to Jerusalem. Given Herod's situation, we can understand the importance of the feast. Concerned about Herod's invasion, Hyrcanus warns the inhabitants not to allow outsiders to interfere during the period of purification. This festival is associated with purification ceremonies. It does not indicate the season, as does *A.J.*14:285–86, which describes the same event.

Josephus provides the date of the feast and notes the transition to winter. He writes that Moses ordered tents to be pitched in preparation for winter and taught the people how to celebrate the festival in the temple once they entered their homeland. For eight days, Israel was to offer sacrifices accompanied by fruit and various branches. Moses provided the regulations for the eight-day sacrifice.

#### 2.1.2. *A.J.*4:209–211

This passage contains the High Priest's words to the congregation as they gathered in Jerusalem for the sacrifices, every seven years at the time of Sukkot. The High Priest emphasizes that women, children and slaves must also attend the congregation and engrave the law in their hearts and remember it. The passage is notable for the timing of the high priest's appearance and the emphasis on the laws.

#### 2.1.3. *A.J.*8:99–123

Sukkot occurs twice in the story of the dedication of Solomon's temple.<sup>27</sup> The feast was first used to celebrate the completion of Solomon's Temple, and when the assembly came to Jerusalem to participate in bringing the ark into the Temple. After the ark was moved, Solomon delivered a public speech. The speech emphasizes the connection between David's kingship and the divine presence, as well as the importance of keeping the Law of Moses. Solomon then offered the first burnt offering in the Temple. Afterwards, the king and the congregation celebrated the feast together outside the Temple for two seven-day periods.

#### 2.1.4. *A.J.*8:225–231

Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, was afraid that if his people celebrated Sukkot in Jerusalem, they would remember the previous king, Solomon. Therefore, he made two golden heifers and built shrines at Bethel and Dan to prevent his people from traveling to Jerusalem for the celebration. This shows that Sukkot is an annual pilgrimage festival to Jerusalem, and that Sukkot and kingship are connected.

When the time came for Sukkot in the seventh month, Jeroboam wanted to celebrate it himself at Bethel, as the two tribes celebrated it at Jerusalem. However, a prophet named Jadon came down from Jerusalem and announced that Jeroboam's sacrifice was invalid and that Josiah would be born into the Davidic lineage. Sukkot is not just one of the feasts but is closely connected to David's kingship.

#### 2.1.5. *A.J.*11:75–78

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<sup>27</sup> For a study on the topic of prayer, see Tessel M. Jonquière, *Prayer in Josephus*, AJEC 70 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 152–71.

In the seventh month after the Babylonian exile, the people offered sacrifices and celebrated Sukkot in Jerusalem according to the Law of Moses. The emphasis here is on observing the laws.

2.1.6. *A.J.*11:154–58

After celebrating Sukkot, the community requested that Ezra read the law. The people listened to the law and shed tears of reflection. However, Ezra urged them to stop weeping and do what was right for the feast. The community celebrated Sukkot for eight days as Ezra had advised. These passages emphasize the importance of reading the Law and the joyful nature of Sukkot.

2.1.7. *A.J.*13:242

When Sukkot arrived, the inhabitants of the city permitted Hyrcanus and his followers to enter the city. Hyrcanus asked Antiochus for a truce in order to celebrate the holiday.

2.1.8. *A.J.*13:304

This passage recounts the return of Antigonus and the subsequent events against the backdrop of Sukkot. The writer introduces the festival by focusing on the erection of booths for God. Antigonus went to the temple to celebrate the festival and pray for his brother.

2.1.9. *A.J.*13:372

This passage describes how the people insulted Alexander at the feast. The author explains that the citron was one of the objects of the custom.

2.1.10. *A.J.*15:50

The writer explains that the Jew observed Sukkot with special care. Those who celebrated the festival rejoiced.

2.1.11. *A.J.*18:93–95

Like his father Herod, Archelaus retained control and custody of the High Priest's robes. The High Priest received the robes for the three annual festivals and on the fast day. Sukkot was one of the three festivals.

2.1.12. *B.J.*1:73

Antigonus attended the festival because it was a national custom. During the festival, booths were erected to thank God.

2.1.13. *B.J.*2:515

Sukkot is an annual national pilgrimage celebrated in Jerusalem.

2.1.14. *B.J.*2:517

Since the city was deserted for Sukkot when this event occurred, it may be considered Sukkot.

2.1.15. *B.J.*6:301

The name of the festival is not specified, but the characteristics of Sukkot are described, including the custom of all Jews building booths for God.

## 2.2. Characteristics of Sukkot in the Works of Josephus

The following feature will focus on the historical accounts of Josephus. The author was highly educated in the Greco-Roman world and wrote about ancient Israelite history from the perspective of Jews in the diaspora. However, to understand Josephus' pro-Roman bias, it is important to consider how his life influenced his writings.

In his book *On the Special Laws*, Philo discusses Sukkot in the two passages (*Spec.*1:189–93; 2:204–214). As the title of the book suggests, the author takes a detailed legal approach to the feast. First, he provides the most detailed description of Sukkot among the explanations of this feast. Second, he offers two legal lessons regarding the timing of Sukkot. The most striking feature of Philo's historical writing is his devotion to deriving universal principles for all people using his Greco-Roman education. Pseudo-Philo's writings only mention Sukkot once, in LAB 13:7. This passage states that Sukkot requires four types of participants, and God responds by providing suitable weather and rain. Though not a Philonic work, this treatise borrows Philo's name.

Josephus mentions Sukkot several times in his writings. In each instance, he provides information about the feast, whether it is the main focus of the narrative or merely in the background. One of his most significant contributions is his description of how the local population observed Sukkot as a pilgrimage festival, even during the Jewish–Roman conflict. Conversely, Josephus describes Sukkot as an ideal pilgrimage to the Jerusalem Temple after its destruction. Since the Temple no longer exists, Sukkot has become a remnant of the past, idealized in memory. This may be due to concerns about Sukkot as a pilgrimage festival and the resulting violence of the crowds. Some have noted that Josephus's attitude resembles that of later rabbinic literature.

### 3. Fulfillment as a Johannine Usage

Some research focuses on the purpose of Johannine feasts.<sup>28</sup> Mary B. Spaulding scrutinizes the function of feast celebration, taking the Feast of Tabernacles as an example of the Jewish feasts.<sup>29</sup> In chapter 5, she focuses the relationship the Temple and the feast.<sup>30</sup> She also sets the range for the Feast of Tabernacles to be 7:1–10:21: First, Temporal markers as the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2) and the Feast of Dedication (10:22); Second, the cast of characters, in particular, the blind man in chapter 9 and 10:21.<sup>31</sup> She regards “This festival becomes the memory framework upon which Jesus builds his own identity as well as that of his followers, in contrast to that of his opponents.”<sup>32</sup> She connects each passage with the Feast of Tabernacles association to find its meaning.<sup>33</sup> For example, she sees that the water libation in 7:37–39 is related to the memory association of the Feast of Tabernacles and enriches the depiction of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, she concludes that “It is apparent that the author is presenting eschatological imagery in conjunction with this festival’s practices through his portrayal of Jesus as their perfection and completion. Beyond that, no firm conclusions can be drawn.”<sup>35</sup>

Gerry Wheaton defines the Feast of Tabernacles as a celebration of living water (Isa 55; Zech 14:8) and as an altar-centered festival (*m. sukk.* 4 and *t. Sukk.* 3). He views Jesus as having a closer relationship with the altar than with the temple as a whole. He emphasizes the connection between Jesus’ death and the Meribah tradition, the water ceremony, and the willow ceremony. He identifies the idea of divine presence in the water ceremony (Deut. 2:7). Based on thematic consistency, he narrows the scope of the narrative to chapters 7–8. In his view, 7:37–38 is the climactic scene that best reveals the characteristics of the feast.<sup>36</sup> The most regrettable aspect of his observation is his exclusion of the post-Easter interpretation of the Johannine community, as evidenced by John’s commentary in 7:39.

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<sup>28</sup> Jochen Flebbe, “Feasts in John,” in *Feasts and Festivals*, CBET 53, ed. Christopher Tuckett (Leuven: Peeters, 2009); Maarten J.J. Menken, “Die Feste im Johannesevangelium,” in *Israel und seine Heilstraditionen im Johannesevangelium: Festgabe für Johannes Beutler SJ zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Michael Labahn, Klaus Scholtisek and Angelika Strotmann (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004); Mary B. Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities: Jewish Social Memory and the Johannine Feast of Booths*, LNTS 396 (London: T&T Clark, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Mary B. Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities: Jewish Social Memory and the Johannine Feast of Booths*, LNTS 396 (London: T&T Clark, 2009). Especially. 115–57. For a history of the feast, see pages 39–81.

<sup>30</sup> Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities*, 115–57.

<sup>31</sup> Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities*, 115–6.

<sup>32</sup> Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities*, 121.

<sup>33</sup> Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities*, 122–57.

<sup>34</sup> Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities*, 122.

<sup>35</sup> Spaulding, *Commemorative Identities*, 155. For a detail explanation, see page 155–7.

<sup>36</sup> Gerry Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John’s Gospel*, SNTSMS 162 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 127–58.

Many scholars argue that Jesus revealed his identity through these feasts.<sup>37</sup> In my opinion, the two main themes of the Feasts of Tabernacles are the divine nature of Jesus and his connection to the temple. The Feast of Tabernacles is closely tied to the Jerusalem Temple, including its dedication by Solomon (2 Chr 5:3; 7:8–9; 8:13), its rebuilding by Nehemiah (Ezra 3:4; Neh 8:14), and its purification by the Maccabees (\*\*\*). In this context, the role of chapter 7 in the Feast of Tabernacles narrative is important. In my opinion, John 7:37–39 is a proclamation that Jesus is fulfilling the eschatological prophecy of Zechariah 14; the presence of the Lord through the Feast of Tabernacles and Jesus’ earthly ministry is continued by the presence of the Holy Spirit. John combined the Temple, the Feast of Tabernacles to transform the Jewish idea of God’s presence into the Gospel of John. According to Wheaton, the Feasts of Tabernacles emphasize the altar as a source of living water rather than the temple itself.<sup>38</sup> However, since John draws on multiple characteristics of the temple, it is difficult to limit the feasts to just one facet.

### *Jesus’ Salvific Work and His Identity as the Temple*

The structure of the Johannine narrative is the final examination for questions about the death of Jesus. Following John the Baptist’s testimony (1:29–36), John explicitly proclaims Jesus’ salvific work by cleansing the temple (2:19–22). Through this transition, John reveals his temple Christology. 2:19–22 marks the first instance in which Jesus’ salvific work—his death and resurrection—is proclaimed explicitly. It is also the first statement of Johannine Temple Christology. 7:37–39 focuses on Jesus’ salvific work and the Holy Spirit and plays an important role in the Feast of Tabernacles narrative of chapters 7–10.

In my view, 7:37–39 should be included in the discussion of the dynamic relationship between Jesus’ ministry, the temple, and the Holy Spirit. John 7:37–39 can be divided into Jesus’ proclamation (vv. 37–38) and the John’s comment (v. 39). Verses 37–38 are evidence of the connection between “living water” and the “Feast of Tabernacles” in the early Christian tradition.<sup>39</sup> This passage is placed between two passages (7:10–36; 7:40–52) in which Jesus is in conflict with his enemies in the temple; the intent seems to reflect the expectation that eschatological living water will flow out the temple.<sup>40</sup> Zechariah 14 is believed to be in the background of Jesus’ words.<sup>41</sup> The Feast of Tabernacles is associated with the important rainy season in an ancient agricultural society (vv. 16–17), and on the first day of the feast, the

<sup>37</sup> Gary M. Burge, *John*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 286.

<sup>38</sup> Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John’s Gospel*, 145. \*\*\*

<sup>39</sup> Marko Jauhiainen, *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation*, WUNT II (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 128.

<sup>40</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 722.

<sup>41</sup> George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC 36. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Dallas, TX: Word, 1999), 113–7.

people of Israel read these verses according to the precedent of *b. Meg.* 31a.<sup>42</sup> Jesus' teaching in verse 38 also reminds us of the living water that springs from Jerusalem in Zechariah 14:8. In Zechariah 14:8, the flowing water from the Jerusalem symbolizes the completion of the eschatological restoration. The same meaning applies to John 7:38. In this way, I can connect John 7:37–38 with Zechariah 14:8, 16–19.<sup>43</sup> Given John's use of the feasts, these two verses should be interpreted with the Feast of Tabernacles in mind. Verse 39 explains the meaning of Jesus' teaching. The river of living water is the Holy Spirit that believers will receive. He goes on to explain that the reason believers have not yet received the Holy Spirit is because Jesus has not yet been glorified (cf. 14:26).<sup>44</sup>

Applying these observations, I can derive the following interpretation: In verse 37, the word that Jesus spoke to his fellows is an invitation to eschatological salvation. The living water is the source of life, and Jesus referred to himself as living water. Jesus is the source of life. Jesus is also the eschatological temple. Therefore, the invitation of Jesus can be linked to the command of the Feast of Tabernacles to the nations (Zech. 14:16–19). Verses 38–39 have the same meaning. Jesus says that the believers are saved by his death (cf. 19:34). In the Gospel of John, Jesus is the eschatological temple, so his body can symbolize Jerusalem, especially the temple in Jerusalem. The water flowing from Jesus' body can be interpreted as a river of living water. The glorification of Jesus, that is, his absence on earth, is filled by the Holy Spirit. In summary, John 7:37–39 is a proclamation that Jesus is fulfilling the eschatological prophecy of Zechariah 14; the presence of the Lord through the Feast of Tabernacles and Jesus' earthly ministry is continued by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

One study, in particular, offers a broader perspective on temple theology in chapters 1–7 than other studies. Mark S. Kinzer argues that the Johannine temple Christology is revealed in the prologue (“dwelling” or “tabernacling” in 1:14), the call of Nathaniel (“you shall see heaven open, and the angles of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man” in 1:51), the temple cleansing incident (“my Father's house” in 2:16; “this temple” in 2:20), the conversation with the Samaritan woman (esp. 4:20–24), and chapters 7–10.<sup>45</sup> He focus on the relationship between the living water (4:10, 14) and the Holy Spirit (7:37–39) and between the living water and the new Temple (chs. 7–10) should be emphasized. His observations clearly reveal the Johannine Jesus as the new Temple. He emphasizes the

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<sup>43</sup> Many interpreters refer to Zechariah 14:16–19 as the background of John 7:37–39. However, some scholars prefer other HB texts. For example, Keener acknowledges the influence of Zechariah 14 but considers John to be more mindful of Ezekiel 47 (*The Gospel of John*, 725–28). See Ernst Haenchen, *John 2: A Commentary in the Gospel of John, Chapters 7–21*, Trans. Robert W. Funk (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 17 for the notion that the intent of the text is not to link Zechariah 14:8ff with the Feast of Tabernacles.

<sup>44</sup> Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015), \*\*\*.

<sup>45</sup> Mark S. Kinzer, “Temple Christology in the Gospel of John,” *Society of Biblical Literature 1998 Seminar Papers*, SBLSP 37/1 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1998), 447–464.

importance of the new temple theme and the Feast of Tabernacles in chapters 7–10; the light and the living water are closely related to the Feast of Tabernacles and the new temple.

As the development of the narrative, the dynamics between Jesus' death and resurrection, the temple, the living water, the Holy Spirit, and the Feast of Tabernacles become evident: First, Jesus compares his salvific ministry to the destruction and rebuilding of the temple (ch. 2); Second, Jesus proclaims the beginning of a new era of worship, replacing temple-based worship with worship of the Holy Spirit; Third, John reinterprets the prophecy of the living water from the temple (ch. 4) as the descent of the Holy Spirit after Jesus's glorification during the Feast of Tabernacles (ch. 7).

Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus frequently associates his identity with the temple. For example, Jesus first hinted at his death and resurrection through the temple cleansing incident in chapter 2, and Jesus teaches about his death by using the relationship between the temple and the river of living water in 7:37–39. The death of Jesus and the feasts of John reflect the contemporary situation of the Johannine community after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. Through his temple-based Christology, John gradually clarified the relationship between Jesus's death and resurrection, eternal life, and the Holy Spirit.

#### *Reading of John 7:37–39 in the Light of Zechariah 14*

The conversation between Jesus and his brothers indicates that the Jews were keeping the Feast of Tabernacles at that time (7:2–10). During the Feast of Tabernacles, they performed a special ceremony called *the water libation*. According to *m. Sukkah* 4:9–10, on the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the two vessels each had a ceremony to hold water and wine.<sup>46</sup> The wine symbolized the end of the harvest (Deut. 16:13), and the water symbolized the coming fall rain.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, it is correct to find the origin of the connection with the Feast of Tabernacles and the traditional rituals in Zechariah 14:16–19.

John 7:37–39 can be divided into Jesus' proclamation (vv. 37–38) and the John's comment (v. 39). Verses 37–38 are evidence of the connection between “living water” and the “Feast of Tabernacles” in the early Christian tradition.<sup>48</sup> This passage is placed between two passages (7:10–36; 7:40–52) in which Jesus is in conflict with his enemies in the temple; the intent seems to reflect the expectation that eschatological living water will flow out the temple.<sup>49</sup> Zechariah 14 is believed to be in the background of

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<sup>46</sup> Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1933).

<sup>47</sup> G. W. MaeRae, “The Meaning and Evolution of the Feast of Tabernacles,” *CBQ* 22 (1960): 273.

<sup>48</sup> Marko Jauhiainen, *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation*, WUNT II (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 128.

<sup>49</sup> Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 722.

Jesus' words.<sup>50</sup> The Feast of Tabernacles is associated with the important rainy season in an ancient agricultural society (vv. 16–17), and on the first day of the feast, the people of Israel read these verses according to the precedent of *b. Meg.* 31a.<sup>51</sup> Jesus' teaching in verse 38 also reminds us of the living water that springs from Jerusalem in Zechariah 14:8. In Zechariah 14:8, the flowing water from the Jerusalem symbolizes the completion of the eschatological restoration. The same meaning applies to John 7:38. In this way, we can connect John 7:37–38 with Zechariah 14:8, 16–19.<sup>52</sup> Given John's use of the feasts, these two verses should be interpreted with the Feast of Tabernacles in mind. Verse 39 explains the meaning of Jesus' teaching. The river of living water is the Holy Spirit that believers will receive. He goes on to explain that the reason believers have not yet received the Holy Spirit is because Jesus has not yet been glorified (cf. 14:26).<sup>53</sup>

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## Conclusion

I examined various texts related to Sukkot, including the Books of Maccabees, the works of Josephus and the Gospel of John. I have summarized the key features of these texts as follows: 1) resistance; 2) silence; and 3) fulfilment.

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<sup>50</sup> Beasley–Murray, *John*, 113–17.

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<sup>52</sup> Many interpreters refer to Zechariah 14:16–19 as the background of John 7:37–39. However, some scholars prefer other HB texts. For example, Keener acknowledges the influence of Zechariah 14 but considers John to be more mindful of Ezekiel 47 (*The Gospel of John*, 725–28). See Haenchen, *John* 2, 17 for the notion that the intent of the text is not to link Zechariah 14:8ff with the Feast of Tabernacles.

<sup>53</sup> Thompson, *John*, \*\*\*.

First, The Book of Maccabees was written to promote the legitimacy of the Hasmonean dynasty. In this context, it is important to understand the connection between Sukkot and Hanukkah. 2 Maccabees is unique in its use of the term “Sukkot” to refer to the new holiday of Hanukkah. When Sukkot is not used as a temporal backdrop, the feast in Maccabees can be classified as Hanukkah. According to the author’s intention, Hanukkah originated from Sukkot and commemorates both the resistance to a foreign power and the restoration of the Jerusalem Temple.

Second, Josephus’ attitude toward Sukkot, as reflected in his writings, mirrors the situation in first-century Judea and the diaspora. As Roman imperial power expanded, Josephus changed his perspective, portraying the Sukkot—a Jewish pilgrimage festival—as an idealized, unrepeatable event. Consequently, the spirit of resistance and the Jewish messianic expectations, prevalent among Jews and the diaspora at the time, is absent from his writings.

Third, The Gospel of John is set at a time when messianic expectations were widespread. Unlike Josephus, who was indifferent or believed in delayed fulfilment, John portrays the fulfilment of these expectations through Jesus. Chapter 7, in particular, is set against the backdrop of the Feast of Tabernacles and illustrates how Jesus' ministry encompasses salvific works.