

ANTI-JUDAISM IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL:  
ARE WE ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS?

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ABSTRACT

This article, structured in two sections, analyses John's gospel as a literary work whose lasting value lies in its literary quality. First, I seek to establish a particular approach to a literary hermeneutic that claims priority of literature over historicity. By way of analogy with the Shakespearean tragedy *Macbeth*, and as an extension of J. Louis Martyn's two-stage approach to reading John, I posit a three-level approach to literary interpretation. Then, I apply this hermeneutic to a literary analysis of the text of the Fourth Gospel with a thematic focus on the contentious issue of the Gospel's anti-Jewish polemic. The analysis concludes with a statement of the Gospel's overarching demand for "true worship" as the universal theme which transcends the limitations of historical inquiry.

KEYWORDS

conflict, drama, historical criticism, anti-Judaism, literature, worship