PART ONE

PAULINE STUDIES
IOUDAIOI AND PAUL

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In a divisive national atmosphere that is increasingly xenophobic, I am moved to deal with one, but only one, aspect of this destructive impulse. In such a context, I am led far into the past to the letters of Paul the apostle, documents that shaped the attitudes of emergent Christianity to the present day. Laboring in the belief that the best antidote to social poison is study and careful analysis, I offer this rather limited, narrow analysis on a simple translation issue, namely the translation of the term Ioudaios that is almost always rendered “Jew” in the New Testament. This study is in no sense final or definitive, but a proposal for reflection and discussion.¹

1. Recent Scholarship on Paul and his Native Religious Tradition

Although the relationship of Paul to his native religious tradition has long been a focus of my work, this particular study was sparked by two essays by Daniel Boyarin: (1) his “Moses’ Veil; or, The Jewish Letter, the Christian Spirit,”² a study Paul’s hermeneutic, and (2) his essay on the Gospel of John found strangely but wonderfully in a volume devoted to conversations with the apostle Paul. See especially his venture: “The IOUDAIOI in John and the Prehistory of ‘Judaism.’”³

¹ I am honored to share in this effort to recognize and pay tribute to David E. Aune, an eminent scholar, and distinguished co-founder, and president of the VGBNT—Der Verein für die geistlichen behinderten Neuen Testamentler.