When Judaism & Christianity Began

Essays in Memory of Anthony J. Saldarini

Volume One

Christianity in the Beginning

Edited by

Alan J. Avery-Peck, Daniel Harrington & Jacob Neusner



BRILL



Anthony J. Saldarini (1941–2001)

WHEN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY BEGAN

SUPPLEMENTS

TO THE

JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF JUDAISM

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BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON
2004

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in Publication data

When Judaism and Christianity began : essays in memory of Anthony J. Saldarini / edited by Alan J. Avery-Peck, Daniel Harrington, Jacob Neusner.
p. cm. — (Supplements to the Journal for the study of Judaism. ISSN 1384-2161 ; v. 85)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Contents: v. 1. Christianity in the beginning — v. 2. Judaism and Christianity in the beginning.
ISBN 90-04-13659-2 (set : alk. paper) — ISBN 90-04-13660-6 (v.1 : alk. paper) — ISBN 90-04-13661-4 (v.2 : alk. paper)
1. Church history—Primitive and early church, ca. 30-600. 2. Judaism—Relations—Christianity. 3. Christianity and other religions—Judaism. 4. Judaism—History—Talmudic period. 10-425. 5. Saldarini, Anthony J.—Bibliography. I. Saldarini, Anthony J. II. Avery-Peck, Alan J. (Alan Jeffery), 1953- III. Harrington, Daniel J. IV. Neusner, Jacob, 1932- V. Series.

BR162.3W48 2004
270.1—dc22

2003065525

ISSN 1384-2161
ISBN 90 04 13659 2 (Set)
ISBN 90 04 13660 6 (Volume I)
ISBN 90 04 13661 4 (Volume II)

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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PREFACE

> A sage who died—all are regarded as his near relatives
>
> Yerushalmi Moed Qatan 3:7 I.1

We gather in these pages to celebrate the enduring heritage in learning bequeathed to coming generations by Anthony J. Saldarini (1941–2001). How much we should not have known or understood had he not lived and worked as he did! But he was taken from us in the fullness of life, and, while accomplished, he cannot be said to have completed his work. It becomes the honorable duty of those who gather to erect a memorial to his life to carry that work forward. That is why the partners in this project of memorialization have chosen to continue studying problems of interest to him, rereading elements of his *oeuvre* and in many instances moving further in the directions to which he pointed. In this way we say the scholars' good-bye to a scholar much loved for his virtue, honored for his authentic learning, and admired for his acumen.

So we focus our commemorative essays on the several fields in formative Christianity and Judaism to which he devoted his best efforts: earliest Christianity, with special attention to the Gospels; Judaism in late antiquity; and the interchange between Judaism and Christianity then and now. So too the disciplines represented in these pages match his: history (including archaeology), literature, religion, and theology. We leave it to the contributors to this project to explain for themselves the connection between their essays and his books and articles, which each has done.

That the papers hold together in a cogent pattern matching the several fields of his *oeuvre* is clear from the divisions into which they are divided. Their coherence matches Anthony J. Saldarini's capacity to bring together learning of the highest quality in fields that, before his generation, intersected only rarely. These are the study of Judaism in antiquity, the study of Christianity in antiquity, and the study of their symbiosis. That is not to suggest that specialists in the one did not undertake forays into the sources of specialization of the other. Anthony J. Saldarini was by no means the first to

bring knowledge of Rabbinic and other Judaisms to Gospels' research, and vice versa. Indeed, before his time it was common for scholars of Judaism to write learnedly about earliest Christianity. And scholars of earliest Christianity would write confidently about something they called "Judaism" from the time of Billerbeck, if not before. But, exhibiting only an imperfect knowledge of the scholarship, problems, and sources of earliest Christianity, the experts on Judaism found the Gospels simpler than specialists knew they were. And with the best will in the world, scholars of earliest Christianity rarely showed a mastery of the texts and problems of the counterpart writings of Judaism, even while expressing opinions on Judaism in its own terms and in comparison with Christianity. Both sectors of the humanistic—all the more so, the theological—study of Judaic and Christian antiquity exhibited an infirm grasp of matters. And each condescended to the interlopers from the other.

Standards and expectations have risen immeasurably, and that is in appreciable measure because of the example of Anthony J. Saldarini. His Jesuit education taught him the meaning of knowing a subject properly and with high competence. And he learned the lesson of respect for knowledge. That explains why progress in the period in which he flourished is signaled by the standard defined in his own work. He produced original scholarship of a rigorous quality on both the Rabbinic classics of the age and their Christian counterparts. When he wrote on Matthew's Gospel, he spoke fluently in the idiom of New Testament scholarship. When he presented a Rabbinic text and problem, he expressed himself as a native speaker of Rabbinic learning. Authentic to the task, his knowledge in both areas was professional, and his use of that knowledge critical. He met the standards of each field, not claiming the exemption of the outsider. So he did not play master of the Gospels in the setting of the Rabbis, and familiar of the Rabbis in the context of the Evangelists. Not many specialists in the one speak with expert knowledge in the other of the fields he joined in his own person, and most do not.

That is why the colleagues deriving from several distinct fields in the pages of these volumes treat him as one of their own: a Judaica specialist among the Judaica specialists, a Gospels' scholar among the Gospels' scholars. Having met—and set—so high a standard, Anthony J. Saldarini has left an enduring challenge to generations to follow, a challenge to meet the standards of the diverse fields that

intersect in the study of Judaic and Christian antiquity. If these essays written in his memory prove worthy of their authors' intention, then the reason is clear. We follow the model of him whom we remember in these pages.

Jacob Neusner
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College of the Holy Cross

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ANTHONY J. SALDARINI (1941–2001): A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Daniel J. Harrington, S.J.
Weston Jesuit School of Theology

How did an Italian-Irish Catholic from Boston become an academic authority on early Judaism and rabbinic literature? The short answer is that God blessed Tony Saldarini with intelligence and curiosity, love for study, and literary and religious sensitivity. The long answer emerges from the course of a rich and productive life lived just a few days short of sixty years that yielded an impressive record of teaching accomplishments and scholarly publications.

Born in Boston on September 18, 1941, Tony attended St. Kevin's Grammar School in Dorchester. Tony's father was a teacher in the Boston public school system. Tony attended Boston College High School from which he graduated in 1959. He received his A.B. and M.A. degrees from Boston College 1965 and 1966, respectively. Thus according to a sociological category known mainly to those who live in the Boston area, Tony was a "Triple Eagle" (the "eagle" being the symbol of the teams at Boston College). He eventually taught at Boston College for over twenty-five years (1975–2001).

Having entered the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1959, Tony completed the equivalent of a double major in Greek and Latin classical literature and in philosophy at Boston College while also beginning the study of Hebrew. He quickly became fascinated by the Jewish world in which early Christianity took shape and that developed into the later Rabbinic movement.

With a solid philological training but no real exposure to Rabbinics, Tony began his doctoral program in 1966 in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures at Yale University. Tony also spent a year (1968–1969) studying Rabbinics at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His doctoral dissertation (1971) under the direction of Professor Judah Goldin was a translation of and commentary on Version B of *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan (Abot de Rabbi Nathan)*—a complement to Goldin's own work on Version A.

After further Catholic theological study at the Weston Jesuit School

of Theology in Cambridge, MA, Tony taught in the department of religious studies at Loyola University of New Orleans from 1972 to 1975. From 1975 to his death in 2001 he taught in the Department of Theology at Boston College, where he served as assistant professor (1975–1978), associate professor (1978–1990), and full professor (1990–2001). At Boston College he taught basic courses designed for undergraduates and more advanced material to graduate students. He covered both Testaments (and large parts of the Western intellectual tradition) and also found opportunities to teach courses on apocalyptic literature, Judaism and the New Testament, and Jewish and Christian biblical interpretation.

Tony left the Society of Jesus in 1978 and married Maureen Cusack shortly thereafter. She also is a teacher, in the Lexington public school system. They have two sons, Daniel and Brian. They had a wonderful marriage and loved each other very much.

Tony was a gifted teacher—articulate, logical, and challenging. He delighted in helping students grow in the critical analysis of texts and ideas and in expressing themselves in a clear and logical manner. He loved Boston College and its students, and he was perfectly suited for teaching there. Its Catholic and Jesuit atmosphere was his intellectual and spiritual home. At the same Tony brought to this milieu an interest in the serious academic study of Judaism, which eventually bore fruit in the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College directed by Philip Cunningham.

Through most of his life Tony had health problems (some inherited from his parents), but he managed to live always in a positive and productive manner. His chronic leukemia (which he had for over ten years) turned into lymphoma in early 2000, and he was not able to continue teaching after March, 2000. He underwent a bone-marrow transplant in September of that year. Throughout this difficult period and until his death, Maureen cared for Tony with an admirable solicitude. He died at home in Newtonville, MA, on September 16, 2001, a few days before his sixtieth birthday.

As a specialist in early Judaism and rabbinic literature Tony served as a bridge between Jews and Christians. He came to know and appreciate Judaism on its own terms, not merely as "background" to the New Testament. He wrote important scholarly books on *Abot deRabbi Nathan* and related Rabbinic treatises, the Jewish sects (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes), and Matthew as a Christian-Jewish Gospel, along with many other scholarly and popular works (see his full bibliog-

raphy, which follows). He participated in various forms of Christian-Jewish dialogue.

Tony approached the study of Judaism and early Christianity with both passion and objectivity. Jewish scholars respected his work, and Christians relied on his learning and judgment about ancient Jewish texts and current scholarship on them. These volumes produced by Jewish and Christian scholars on the texts and topics that Tony loved is a fitting tribute to his memory. He was a fine scholar and a good friend, and we miss him.

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CHRISTIANITY IN THE BEGINNING

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MATTHEW 21:12: TRADING WORDS, TURNING THE TABLES, TIMING THE END

Herbert W. Basser
Queen's University

In the beginning of November, 1996, Tony Saldarini and I were to conduct a dialogue at Siena College in Albany. At the last moment I had to cancel because my wife's illness took a turn for the worse. She passed away a few days later, and Tony Saldarini sent me a warm note afterwards. In 1998, there was a small conference on Pharisees at Queen's University in Canada and Tony Saldarini was a leading figure in the discussions. He was cordial and had put aside some differences that developed when we shared the program at the Society of Biblical Literature on Rabbinic literature and the Gospels. I had presented an argument that Rabbinic passages were important to the understanding of the New Testament, and Tony expressed his deep reservations on the matter. In this farewell piece to Tony I want to discuss a passage that he, in his social minded way, viewed as essentially social commentary and I, in my Rabbinic minded way, see as ritual messianic ceremonies. Unfortunately, he is not here to respond to my judgments. I am sure he would have deepened my analysis. Having missed our dialogue at Siena I have the sense of unfinished business. Maybe now is the time to deal with it.[1]

Tony's wife, Maureen Saldarini, kindly located a draft[2] of his in-press commentary on Matthew (*Commentary 2000: The Gospel of Matthew*) and allowed me access to his interpretation of Matt. 21:12, which states: "And Jesus entered the Temple of God and drove out all

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[1] I want to make it clear that although I cannot say very much about the historical Jesus (and in this piece impute absolutely nothing to him), I acknowledge that some Jesus-traditions were in circulation prior to the writing of any Gospel. Since the tradition I will deal with was known to all the Gospels in variant forms, I posit it was formulated in Temple times but is not necessarily descriptive of the historical Jesus, only the early "literary Jesus."

[2] The draft I have does not include the footnotes. I assume that much of the bibliography and points I am making throughout my work were known to Saldarini and alluded to in his notes. Still the major thrust of his work, I take it, is what he expressed in the body of his commentary.

who sold and bought in the Temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons:"[3]

> Jesus' first act in Jerusalem, expelling those engaged in commercial enterprises from the Temple compound (vv. 12–13), was a symbolic prophetic action (v. 11). Though commentators often impute unjust prices or greedy motives to the money changers and merchants, Matthew only vaguely suggests the problems in the Temple by quoting Isaiah 56:7. This verse suggests that Jesus' program for renewal requires God's house to "be called a house of prayer" and that the Temple priests and officials, who have countenanced injustice and social disorder, [were remiss] in making it a "den of robbers."[4]

Saldarini rightfully summons Matt. 21:13 to explain the act of violence:[5] "He said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called

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[3] For his earlier interpretation of this verse, see Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago, 1994), pp. 42–58.

[4] I have inserted the words "were remiss" because the typist seems to have skipped a word or two here. The context makes it certain that something of this order was intended.

[5] I want to thank Professor Richard Ascough for his comments to my first draft of this article and to Professor Bruce Chilton for his comprehensive personal communication. Let us look at some bibliographical data concerning this passage.

E.P. Sanders, *Jesus in the Gospels* (Englewood Cliffs, 1967), pp. 161, 255, finds Jesus' actions in disrupting the Temple merchants to be symbolic acts of judgment on the Temple. He notes that there is a conflation of Sukkot motifs into a Jesus' Passover visit. He elaborates on this position in his *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 61–76.

Craig A. Evans argued that Jesus' act was a portent of the destruction of a Temple he saw as corrupt; see "Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?" in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51 (1989), pp. 237–270. Bruce Chilton took a different position by looking at Jesus' actions in concert with the Targumic forms of Zechariah. See his "Regnum Dei Deus Est," in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 31 (1978), pp. 261–270, and *Targumic Approaches to the Gospels. Essays in the Mutual Definition of Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Judaism* (Lanham and London, 1986), pp. 99–107. Chilton maintained the issue was the realization of Zechariah's prophecy, which Jesus saw as taking place in his meals when his raid on the Temple failed. See his *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program within a Cultural History of Sacrifice* (University Park, 1992), pp. 91–154, and *A Feast of Meanings. Eucharistic Theologies from Jesus through Johannine Circles* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 46ff. Chilton's and Evan's views are arranged in *Jesus in Context. Temple, Purity and Restoration* (Leiden, 1997). Certain pertinent Rabbinic data is brought in Victor Eppstein "The Historicity of the Gospel Account of the Cleansing of the Temple," in *Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 155 (1964), pp. 42–58. Eppstein discusses the places where sacrificial animals were sold. For exegetical connections between Zechariah and other Sukkoth texts and "the triumphal entry and chasing out the traders," see T.W. Manson, "The Cleansing of the Temple," in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 33 (1951), pp. 271–282. Also see J. Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations: Studies in Biblical Theology* (London, 1958), pp. 65–70, 107, 145, and Cecil Roth "The Cleansing of the Temple and Zechariah

a house of prayer," (Is. 56:7); but you make it "a den of robbers" (Jeremiah 7:11).'"

Now let us see if we can find Jesus' problem with these merchants. If we look at the moral problem referred to in Scripture (Jer. 7:11), we do not find it "in the Temple" but in the widespread corruption among people as a whole who have neglected God's command. Let us look at Jer. 7:5–11:

XIV 21," in *Novum Testamentum* 14 (1960), pp. 174–181. Note too, B. Lindars, ed., *The Gospel of John* (London, 1972), p. 139. Many of these ideas are reproduced in Hyam Maccoby, *Revolution in Judea: Jesus and the Jewish Resistance* (London 1973).

See the following articles for various other opinions on the New Testament episode of Cleansing the Temple: R. Grams, "The Temple Conflict Scene: A Rhetorical Analysis of Matthew 21–23," in *Persuasive artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A Kennedy* (Sheffield, 1991), pp. 41–65. G.W. Buchanan, "Symbolic Money-Changers in the Temple," in *New Testament Studies*. 37 (1991), pp. 280–290. S. Sumithra, "Jesus Cleanses the Temple: An Exposition of Matthew 21:12–17," in *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 10 No. 3 (1986), p. 277–283. L.J. Kreitzer, "The Temple Incident of John 2:13–25: A Preview of What Is to Come," in *Understanding, Studying and Reading* (Sheffield, 1998), pp. 93–101. P. Trudinger, "The Cleansing of the Temple: St John's Independent, Subtle Reflections," in *Expository Times* 108 (1997), pp. 329–330. M. Casey, "Culture and Historicity: The Cleansing of the Temple," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 59 (1997), pp. 306–332. Hans Dieter Betz, "Jesus and the Purity of the Temple (Mark 11:15–18): A Comparative Approach," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116 (1997), pp. 455–472. U. Schnelle, "Die Tempelreinigung und die Christologie des Johannesevangeliums," in *New Testament Studies* 42 (1996), pp. 359–373. D. Seeley, "Jesus' Temple Act," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 55 (1993), pp. 263–283. M. Simonettei, "Origine e i mercanti nel tempio," in *Recherches et tradition* (Paris, 1992), pp. 271–284. E. Bammel, "Die Tempelreinigung bei den Synoptikern und im Johannesevangelium," in *John and the Synoptics* (Leuven, 1992), pp. 507–513. P. Richardson, "Why Turn the Tables? Jesus' Protest in the Temple Precincts," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1992, pp. 507–523. M.A. Matson, "The Contribution of the Temple Cleansing by the Fourth Gospel," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 1992, pp. 489–506. R.J. Miller, "Historical Method and the Deeds of Jesus: The Test Case of the Temple Demonstration," in *Forum*, 8 (1992), pp. 5–30. B.D. Smith, "Objections to the Authenticity of Mark 11:17 Reconsidered," in *Westminster Theological Journal* 54 (1992), pp. 255–271. F.J. Moloney, "Reading John 2:13–22: The purification of the Temple," in *Revue biblique* 97 (1990), pp. 432–452. R.J. Bauckham, "Jesus' demonstration in the Temple," in *Law and Religion* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 72–89. C. Bryan, "Shall We Sing Hallel in the Days of the Messiah: A Glance at John 2:1–3:21," in *Saint Luke's Journal of Theology* 29 (1985), pp. 25–36. D.M. Dooling, "Den of thieves," in *Parabola* 9 No. 2 (1984), pp. 30–33. J.M. Dawsey, "Confrontation in the Temple: Luke 19:45–20:47," in *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 11 (1984), pp. 153–165. J.D.M. Derrett, "Zeal of the House and the Cleansing of the Temple," in *Downside Review* 95 (1977), pp. 79–94. J. Jeremias, "Zwei Miszellen: 1) antik-judische Munzdeutungen; 2) zur Geschichtlichkeit der Tempelreinigung," in *New Testament Studies* 23 (1977), pp. 177–180. R.H., Hiers, "Purification of the Temple: Preparation for the Kingdom of God," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90 (1971), pp. 82–90. E. Trocmé, "L'expulsion des marchands du Temple," in *New Testament Studies* 15 (1968), pp. 1–22.

> [5] "For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly execute justice one with another, [6] if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, [7] then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers for ever. [8] Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail. [9] WILL YOU STEAL, MURDER, COMMIT ADULTERY, SWEAR FALSELY, BURN INCENSE TO BAAL, AND GO AFTER OTHER GODS THAT YOU HAVE NOT KNOWN, [10] AND THEN COME AND STAND BEFORE ME IN THIS HOUSE, WHICH IS CALLED BY MY NAME, and say, 'We are delivered!'—only to go on doing all these abominations? [11] Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it," says the Lord.

The idea in Jeremiah is that after pillaging helpless persons, corrupt evildoers come to the Temple like thieves come to a cave to hide. Yet this is not the way the Gospels orchestrate the verses. Let us adjust the narrative to discover the midrash style of the Gospels. The NT seems built upon an interpretive device conflating three verses: Is. 56:7, Jer. 7:11, and Zech. 14:21.

> Is. 56:7: These I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my *house* of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.
>
> Jer. 7:11: Should this *house*, which is called by my name, be a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, says the Lord.
>
> Zech. 14:21: And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be sacred to the Lord of hosts, so that all who sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the flesh of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a trader in the *house* of the Lord of hosts on that day.[3]

The Gospels offer an interpretation of Is. 56:7 based on these three verses, all of which refer to the Temple as "house." The citation of Isaiah mentioned by Saldarini would lead us to form a proper midrash on it, seeing Jesus' condemnation as a sermon. This interpretation already bridged the Gospel's account of Jesus' journey to and entrance into Jerusalem: Matt. 21:9, "And the crowds that went before him and that followed him shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord [we bless you from the HOUSE OF THE LORD]! Hosanna in the highest!" Psalm 18, liturgically the center of the Sukkot Hallel Psalms, forms the

bridge. The first half of the verse is cited but, in common midrashic fashion, the end of the verse is understood to be the operative factor. Jesus is to be blessed from the "house of the lord." But where do we find such a "house"? Behind the Gospels lies a messianic interpretation in the style of a midrash:

> The messiah is to be blessed from the "house of the Lord," which cannot be found at present. For you have transgressed the words of Isaiah, "their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my *house* shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Is. 56:7). Specifically, a house of prayer—and not a den for robbers. But you have made it a den for robbers, as it is said, "Should this *house*, which is called by my name, be a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, says the Lord" (Jer. 7:11). And who are the robbers? Those who sell and buy in the Temple making it a *house* of trade, as Scripture states, "And there shall no longer be a trader in the *house* of the Lord of hosts *on that day*" (Zech. 14:21).

By chasing traders out the Temple, Jesus fulfills the messianic forecast of Zechariah that "there shall no longer be a trader . . . on that day." Now the House is indeed the House of the Lord and Jesus can be blessed there. It is clear that the NT emphasizes that Jesus cites "den of robbers" (Jer. 7:11) to refer to sins of specific Temple traders and not to the sins of the people as a whole. The Scriptures are marshaled to the message of the NT: Jesus is the messiah. Zechariah's "on that day" has arrived and Jesus has fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah restoring the Temple to a "House of prayer" if even just for a day. The whole episode of Matthew 12 and its Gospel parallels is one of prophecy fulfillment. The prophecies are mixtures of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Zechariah. All the scriptural passages are conflated and their shared vocabulary acts as a hook for the original evangelist to join these passages into a single narrative. John 2:15 reproduces the effect of the evangelist's incorporation of Scripture (i.e. Zech. 14:21) into the narrative, "Take these things away; you shall not make my Father's *house a house of trade*." The role of Zech. 14:21 in this sermon is unmistakable. Jesus' action in chasing the moneychangers and merchants of sacrificial animals fulfills Scriptures announcing the advent of the Era of Salvation.

Saldarini's comment continues:

> In themselves the sale of sacrificial animals and the exchange of secular coins for anionic Jewish coins were essential for conducting the Temple cult. But Jesus uses these transactions as a symbol of venality.

> He promotes order and social health by healing in the Temple and by calling for a renewed, perfected worship according to the will of God.

More is at play here than just symbols of venality. An entire story has been woven around verses from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah. This conflation of verses around a theme is how Jewish story telling in the tannaitic period occurs, and now we see the same phenomenon in the New Testament. What is at stake here is the interpretation of "trader" (Zech. 14:21) and why Zechariah says the merchant will no longer be in the "house of the Lord." We have found the key to be in the word "house"—Isaiah claims that in the future the Temple will be a house of prayer; Jeremiah says that now the house of prayer is a den of thieves; Zechariah looks forward to the day when the traders are gone and the place is now "God's house." By conflating the verses we get a story. The house of thieves is to be restored to a house of the Lord. And the fulfillment scenes in the Gospels show that Jesus has simply fulfilled biblical messianic prophecy. The healing episodes are based on other fulfillments of messianic prophecy. Saldarini prefers to find the social gospel of Jesus in his healing the infirm in the Temple. Saldarini conflates medical healing and social healing. Finally, Saldarini pushes forward to consider first century critiques of the Temple and the priesthood:

> Similarly the Qumran community protested irregularities in priestly marriage, the calendar used for festivals, and sacrificial procedures (*Pesher of Habakkuk, Isaiah, Psalms, Nahum*, etc.). The author of the first century B.C.E. *Psalms of Solomon* called for reform (17:30) as did some prophetic texts (Zech. 14:21; Mal. 3:1–5). Matthew may associate Jesus' action with that of the eschatological prophet expected to guide Israel at the end (Deut. 18:15, 18). Some commentators have interpreted Jesus' confrontation with the businessmen in the Temple as a curse and a sign of the Temple's approaching destruction, but the equally ancient tradition of purifying the Temple is better attested.

Saldarini's comparisons with Qumran criticisms of priestly practices and the *Psalms of Solomon* seem to stretch the texts too far. These comparisons are not warranted. Let us look to see precisely what problems are being addressed here:

> Matt. 21:12: And Jesus entered the Temple of God and drove out all that sold and bought in the Temple, and he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

Luke 19:45: And he entered the Temple and began to drive out those who sold.

Mark 11:11: And he entered Jerusalem, and went into the Temple; and when he had looked round at everything . . . (Mark 11:15) And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the Temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the Temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

John 2:14–15: In the Temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the moneychangers at their business. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all, with the sheep and oxen, out of the Temple; and he poured out the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables.

Matt. 21:13: He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you make it a den of robbers.'"

Luke 19:46: Saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of robbers.'"

Mark 11:16–17: And he would not allow any one to carry anything through the Temple [see Josephus, Apion, 2:8]. And he taught, and said to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? But you have made it a den of robbers.'"

John 2:16: And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; you shall not make my Father's *house* a house of trade."

Saldarini sees the chasing out of the moneychangers as only a symbolic promotion of order. Yet it may well be that those who sold animals and birds for the Temple sacrifices abused their monopolies. Sifra Tazria parashat 3 (7) (cf. M. Ker. 1:7, B. B.B. 166a) relates an incident of gouging the price of pigeon-sacrifices (offered by women after births or blood flows) that occurred a score of years or so after the death of Jesus:

> It happened that that the price of pigeons in Jerusalem reached the value of golden dinars and Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel exclaimed—"I swear by this Temple that I shall not sleep the night until the price comes down to silver dinars." He went into the [Temple] court and proclaimed: "A woman who owes five certain birth sacrifices or five certain sightings of menstrual blood need bring only one sacrifice. She will then be pure enough to eat of all sacrifices. . . ." Immediately the price fell to one fourth of a silver dinar.

While I think Saldarini has shifted the tenor of the money-changer references to reflect more general social disorders (in a sense reverting back to the real meaning of Jeremiah),[6] his reference to Zech. 14:21 is exactly to the point. Jews to this day recite this verse in the *haftorah* on the Sukkot festival. It completely circumscribes the NT passages here. It is worthwhile noting that Zechariah's messianic prophecies dominate the entire NT passages. However, Zech. 14:21, according to its Scriptural reading, is not a condemnation of the traders in the Temple precincts or of the Temple at all. The verse advises that at the "end of days" there will be no doubt of purity in Jerusalem. Even horse bells in Jerusalem will be as pure as the High Priest's golden head shield: "Holy to the Lord."[7]

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[6] We do find social commentary in early Christian literature and the rabbis. Consider the operative elements at work in the following passages, the first from a disputed passage in the Gospel of John and the second from Mishnah Sotah (cf. T. 14:1 for a variant). Compare D. Daube, "Biblical Landmarks in the Struggle for Women's Rights," in *Juridical Review* 23 (1978), pp. 177–197. Both passages deal with issues concerning adulteresses. Mishnah Sotah however deals with a suspected adulteress while John deals with a caught-in-the act adulteress. Mishnah Sotah assumes a verse in Hosea is discussing those suspected of adultery, John's report of Jesus' pronouncement might well have been based on a more literal reading of Hosea ("when they commit adultery")—those deserving of capital punishment. Below, we reproduce John 8:2–7 (See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (New York, 1971), p. 219). The larger passage containing these verses in John is not to be found in the four major and earliest MSS. of the Gospel and most likely is an addition to the text; others argue they are original, and some argue they came from Luke originally.):

> Early in the morning he came again to the Temple; all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst—they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such. What do you say about her?" This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let the one who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

See P.S. Minear: "Writing on the Ground: The Puzzle in John 8:1–11," in *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 13 (1991), pp. 23–37. In my opinion, Jesus simply wrote some words from Hosea 4:14. It is clear Jesus is speaking to men, for he literally says, "The sinless one among you—let him cast the first stone at her." This brings us to consider how Hosea was cited in M. Sot. 9:9, which contains a note embedded in it to date the incident to the latter years of the Second Temple.

> When male adulerers increased, the ordeal of bitter waters was suspended. Now it was Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai (a chief leader of the Pharisees) who suspended them—This is in accord with what is said, "I will *not* punish your daughters when they play the harlot nor your brides when they commit adultery; for the *men* themselves go aside with harlots . . ." (Hos. 4:14).

[7] Exod. 38:26 and 39:30.

Zech. 14:19–21: [19] This lack of rain shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths. [20] And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "Holy to the Lord;" and the pots in the House of the Lord shall be as the bowls before the altar. [21] And every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy to the Lord of hosts, so that all that sacrifice may come and take of them and boil the flesh of the sacrifice in them. And there shall no longer be a *trader* in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day.

The point of all of this is that no longer will anyone have to worry about whether things are pure or not. The sellers of pure bowls and utensils for the Temple rituals will be out of business. Everyone will attend to purity matters as a matter of course. But this is not how the Gospels frame Zech. 14:21. The Gospels frame it as a condemnation of the Temple "house" traders and read the verse in concert with "my house has become a den of robbers" (Jer. 7:11). The Gospels have entirely reworked the passage from an earlier source or sources. It is difficult to attribute any historicity to these passages as they stand.

To see how Zechariah and its attendant passages in Isaiah and Zephaniah operate in the Gospel context we examine the scene just before Jesus enters Jerusalem. As he enters Jerusalem, the scene is colored by a highly complex and original—breathtaking pastiche of biblical allusions to the House of the Lord. Let us look at the progression of biblical allusions here. He had stopped at the Mount of Olives and addressed two of his disciples:

Matt. 21:2: Saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me."

Luke 19:30: Saying, "Go into the village opposite, where on entering you will find a colt tied, *on which no one has ever yet sat*; untie it and bring it here."

Mark 11:2: And said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, *on which no one has ever sat*; untie it and bring it."

John 12:12–14: The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast (Passover; see 12:1) heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written. . . .

The majority of commentators agree that in all Gospels it is understood that Jesus enters Jerusalem on this occasion just before Passover. However, the liturgy referred to in the passages fits the Sukkot festival. The greater likelihood is that the Synoptics have a tradition that it was just prior to the Festival of Booths, called Sukkot, the fall pilgrimage festival. The Gospel writers, as did John, explicitly conflate Passover and Sukkot. Most likely they had a Sukkot story and no Passover one. But they knew Jesus was arrested on Passover and so moved the Sukkot story to Passover. Thus the account conflates two Jewish pilgrimage festivals so as to provide a sharp context for Jesus' arrest. The ensuing chants of the people holding their palm branches prove this to be Sukkot. The citations of Matthew and John from the prophet Zechariah make the identification of time rather conclusive. The events that occur in this passage are figured upon Zechariah whose description of the festival of Sukkot at the end of days is the key to understanding the events outlined in the Gospel. Matthew refers us to Zechariah 9, which indeed refers to an ass and a colt in apposition. Mark and Luke know the tradition that Jesus rode a foal. Matthew is the more creative by splitting the apposition, "mounted on an ass, yea on a colt," and seats Jesus on two animals. The idea that the ass is tied comes from Gen. 49:11: "binding his foal to the vine, yea his donkey's colt to the choice vine." Apparently, this donkey has been reserved for Jesus from time immemorial. B. San. 98a refers to the donkey mentioned by Zechariah upon which the Messiah will ride:

> Said Rabbi Alexandri: Rabbi Joshua the son of Levi raised a difficulty between two verses: In Daniel 7:13 its is written, "And behold there came with the clouds like the SON of MAN," but it is written (Zech. 9:9), "humble and riding on an ass [on a colt the foal of an ass]." The solution is if Israel has merit, he will come with the clouds of heaven; if they do have no merit, [he will come] humble and riding on an ass.

The Jewish commentators see in these verses references to the messiah. We find the Gospels attribute Jesus' actions to be fulfillment of certain prophetic elements expected of the messiah.

Matt. 21:3:	If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord has need of them," and he will send them immediately.
Luke 19:31:	If any one asks you, "Why are you untying it?" you shall say this, "The Lord has need of it."

Mark 11:3:	If any one says to you, "Why are you doing this?" say, "The Lord has need of it" and he will send it back here immediately.[8]
Matt. 21:4–5:	This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,, "Tell the daughter of Zion (conflated with Is. 62:11: . . . . Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes)[9] BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, humble, and mounted on an ass, yea on a colt, the foal of an ass."
John 12:15–16:	"Fear not (conflated with Zeph. 3:16: fear not Zion), daughter of Zion; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, mounted on an ass's colt!" His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him.

Neither Mark nor Luke cites these passages, although clearly their narrative is based on them. We see in Matthew and John an attempt to join the messianic passages of Zephaniah ("Zion") or Is. 62:11 ("Zion") to Zech. 9:9 ("Zion") into a single reference. The salient verse is Zech. 9:9 and it has been truncated from a victorious scene ("Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! triumphant and victorious") into simply a scene of Jesus beginning his ascent to his final ascension: "(Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!) Behold your king is coming to you; (triumphant and victorious is he), humble and mounted on an ass, yea on a colt the foal of an ass." The joy and triumph has been dropped from the verse. Not too much should be made of Matthew's seeing two animals in Zech. 9:9, while the others only locate one. The verse might be so construed. Saldarini himself seems to find the events historical, as does Sanders, and suggests that the real issues of contention have to be read between the lines. That is to say, Saldarini is disappointed that he cannot find more social teaching in these "symbolic" scenes and tells us we have to imagine them. I find this somewhat jarring considering that in his earlier work Saldarini proclaimed the passage, without recourse to any imagination, to be centered on addressing social ills. Now he

[8] I read the "he will send it back" to be Jesus' predicting what the "any one" will do. It is usually portrayed as what the disciples are to say to the "any one." However, there is no reason for Jesus to return the ass. It belongs to the messiah.

[9] The verses are conflated with the opening of Zech. 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. . . ."

admits the passage is somewhat different from what he would like to find. In wrestling with the material Saldarini pushes the material beyond its limits to find what he wants to be there.

Saldarini continues:

> Jesus, as son of David, has also been identified with Solomon who was the builder of the Temple and according to later tradition a healer (cf. comment on 9:27). Jesus' healing in the Temple (v. 14) continues his work begun in 4:23, but here it also restores the wholeness and health of Israel in God's house. Biblical laws restricted the participation of priests with sickness and disabilities in the Temple worship (Lev. 21:18–20), and the communities of the Qumran Community Rule (2:5–22) and the Covenant of Damascus (15:15–17) similarly restricted membership in their assemblies in order to preserve an integral, pure and holy people for God. Jesus addresses this problem so that the children in the Temple acclaim him as the adults did earlier (v. 15).

Saldarini saw this act of chasing away the moneychangers as a protest against the current social and religious order that disenfranchised the lower classes. Sanders and others[10] think this verse must be historically accurate, for its claim is too outrageous to think anyone invented it. This act of rebellion must have been the reason why Jesus was executed. But both these pictures are not easily supported by a close inspection of the text.

Now let us see how the Gospels picture Jesus, not as social redeemer but as a divine messenger, King Messiah. We note that the biblical and liturgical references are centered upon messianic motifs. It is only remotely feasible to find threads of historicity or social function here. The passage is framed by Sukkot rituals in the Temple. Let us now consider the pilgrimage festivals in Jerusalem that many Jews undertook in the first century.

There are three pilgrimage festivals mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. On these days many Jews would come to the Temple to offer sacrifices and rejoice in Jerusalem. The first of these is called Passover and comes in the early spring, while the last is called the Sukkot (Booths) and comes in early fall. The Passover was celebrated by each family or group offering some parts of a lamb on the Temple's altar and then roasting the rest of the lamb to eat in houses within the precincts of Jerusalem. This was followed by the Feast of Weeks,

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[10] *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (New York, 1995).

fifty days after Passover.[11] The feast of Sukkot entailed taking palm fronds together with bunches of myrtle and willows (*aravot*) and a citron-like etrog (*pri etz hadar*). The biblical verse Lev. 23:40, "And you shall take for yourselves *on the first day*,[12] the fruit of the *hadar* tree, and branches of *palm* trees, and a bough of the thick [myrtle] plant and the *aravot—willows* of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days." With these in hand, the people would march around the altar in Jerusalem and recite parts of Ps. 18, the climax of the Psalms of Praise (Hallel), for all seven days of the festival.[13] The Hallel Psalms were seen to incorporate the entire history of God's saving of Israel: past, present future, and messianic.[14] It seems songs of a certain form called "Hosanna" would also be recited at this time. The custom continues to this day as Jews on this festival still encircle, in memory of the destroyed Temple, a central platform in the Synagogue on which scrolls of the Holy Torah are held. These songs have an interesting history and many various versions were produced as evidenced in early medieval liturgies. The typical song began with the word *Hosanna* followed by some phrase connected with a theme, then *Hosanna* is said again and a sequential phrase is recited and so on. These formulations tended to follow the alphabet, an A phrase followed by a B phrase, etc.

The rabbis preserve ancient interpretations of the words of Leviticus' description of the *hadar* (citron)/*palm*/*myrtle, willows*: the citron in the Bible is called *hadar*. But the rabbis know that Scripture uses *hadar* to refer to God's glory. The palm is called *tamar* and is used by

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[11] According to the Pharisaic calendar.

[12] Lev. Rabbah 30:16 found messianic themes in this ritual:

> Said R. Berachia in the name of R. Levi: "In the merit of fulfilling the commandment *to take on the first day* the palm branch (and the other items) . . . Lo, I will appear to you first of all, I will punish your first enemy, I will build for you the first, and I will bring you a first."

The midrashist unpacks this pithy statement in its several assertions and reveals its scriptural underpinnings.

> "*Lo I will appear . . . I will build for you the first*"—this "first" means the Temple. It says so in Jeremiah, "The throne of glory is on high, from the *first*, the place of our Temple" (Jer. 17:12). [According to the Targum of Jer. 17:12: punishments will come from God on his throne of glory in the highest heavens from *first*—the place of the house of our Temple.] "*And I will bring you a first*" this "first" means the *messiah*. As it says in Is. 41:27: "The *first* in Zion behold, behold them, and to Jerusalem I have given a harbinger of good news."

[13] See B. Suk. 45a.

[14] Lev. Rabbah 7:5.

Scripture to means to sprout or emanate righteousness. *Myrtle* (*hadas*) also has its references to God in the Bible but it is the willow called *aravot* in Scripture that intrigued the rabbis. The very term is used to name of highest heaven in which God dwells.[15] These terms are prime material for Hosanna songs which were recited while the Jews still held these items in their hands at the conclusion of the Hallel prayer.

The central Psalm verse 118:26 was recited towards the end of the Hallel, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." According to the rabbis it was David who recited this verse.[16] This verse attracted messianic expansion in the New Testament. Matthew 21:9 offers an explanation of who it is who is coming in Ps. 118:26: "And the crowds that went before him and that followed him shouted, 'Hosanna *to the son of David*! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' 'Hosanna in the highest (*aravot*)!'" Luke 19:37–38 transforms the verse and inserts the understood referent. "As he was now drawing near, at the descent of the Mount of Olives,[17] the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen,—saying, 'Blessed—*is the king*—who comes in the name of the Lord!—Peace in heaven[18] and glory (*hadar*) in the highest (*aravot*)!'" (Ps. 148:1). Mark 11:9–10 presents the verse and follows it with a Targum style paraphrase: "And those who went before and those who followed cried out, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' [=] Blessed is *the kingdom of our father David* that is coming! 'Hosanna in the highest! (*aravot*).'" John 12:13 gives us the verse followed by an addition of clarification, "So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,'—even the King of Israel!" Clearly, John's reference to palm branches is referring to the Sukkot festival, although he introduces chapter 12 by saying, "Six days before the Passover. . . ."

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[15] Lev. Rabbah 30:9.

[16] See B. Pes. 119a. According to the Targum it was the musicians who said it while David said the last part of the verse.

[17] The Geonim record a tradition that the Mount of Olives was encircled by throngs holding palm branches (likely in reference to the messianic theme of Zech. 14:4). See Sefer Hasidim chap. 630, which cites Hai Gaon to the effect that after the destruction of the Temple pious Jews would encircle the Mount of Olives on Hosanna Rabba.

[18] Compare the Qaddish prayer, "He makes peace in the heights."

The entire setting is messianically charged through the allusions to ritual, liturgy and scriptural passages. Zechariah 3:8 shows us how messianic imagery operated metaphorically as a "branch." "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men of good omen: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch."[19]

In the current liturgy there is a pertinent alphabetical "Hosanna" stanza recited on the seventh day of Sukkot, a festival called *The Great Hosanna*. This ceremony recalls the Jews' encircling the altar in the Jerusalem Temple with their branches. The stanza talks about the Good News that the voice of David, God's beloved, announces at the arrival of the messianic era and alludes to Zech. 3:8: "A man has branched, *Branch* (Zemach) is his name; he is David himself."

The NT scene is not painted on a canvas of social issues but on a canvas of messianic expectation.[20] One of the things the Messiah might be said to do is to rid the Temple of its traders as Zech. 9:9 projects a traderless Temple on the day of the advent of the messianic era. When read through the eyes of an interpretive framework focusing on the rehabilitation of the Temple in the messianic era the actions of Jesus seem more motivated by prophecy fulfillment than by social concern. While Jacob Neusner[21] and others see Jesus' disruption of the Temple's mercantile system as completely subversive of the sacrificial and purity foundation of the Temple's Levitical practices, and Sanders suggests that Jesus was a revolutionary who symbolically attacked the Temple in a bid to destroy it, I find the passage pro-Temple. Jesus, as the Gospels record the scene, wants the Temple to be God's house. He wants to underscore what the prophets say to those who have special ears, to understand that the messiah will reform and not destroy. In the first century it seems there were some problems with fair pricing in the Temple. Since Zechariah mentions there will be no trader "on that day," Jesus makes certain on "that day" that there is no trader. There is no

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[19] Also see Zech. 6:12: Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Behold, the man whose name is 'the Branch:' for he shall grow up in his place, and he shall build the Temple of the Lord." To this day Jews pray three times a day for the "*tsemah* David"—the "shoot of David"—a term denoting the messianic "son of David."

[20] The association of Sukkot and Messianic speculation is pervasive in Jewish lore.

[21] See Jacob Neusner, "Money Changers in the Temple: The Mishnah's Explanation," in *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989), pp. 287–290.

intimation that he wanted to destroy anything but to re-establish, to build up, the Temple in its messianic framework as the House of the Lord. While all the Gospels attest to the event, the heavy midrashic tones and devices make its historicity suspect. The story has literary merit and is striking when its hermeneutic framework is realized. As such, it ranks as a first rate masterpiece of art in the genre of its period.

I cannot help but wonder how Tony Saldarini would respond to the above presentation. Perhaps he would just nod and say, "Yes, but. . . ."

JAMES AND THE (CHRISTIAN) PHARISEES

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Anthony Saldarini's socially historical description of the Pharisees in relation to other groups within Judaism invites a cognate question. How is it that in the New Testament Pharisees are referred to both as within the group of those who believed in Jesus and as implacable enemies of Jesus? Data regarding the Pharisees among believers is so scarce,[1] the approach to them must be socially exegetical, rather than socially historical. That is, we are in no position to typologize a large run of evidence but need to infer the Christian Pharisees' position from the reaction to them as well as from the way they are described. That reaction is articulated in the book of Acts from the perspective of James. By following through the perspective of James, we can surmise both what the believing Pharisees stood for, and how their position played into the anti-Pharisaic rhetoric of the Gospels.

The Authority of James and Its Foundational Impact

Acts 15 reflects the extraordinary influence of James within the primitive church. Whether this influence was a matter of his personal biography or the memory of James at a later stage, the simple fact of his influence in institutional terms remains. His position in Acts, requiring that non-Jewish Christians accept basic requirements of purity, was first articulated on his own authority, and then accepted by those present at the meeting in Jerusalem. The result is a letter sent by the meeting, as from the apostles and elders with the congregation as a whole, and under the express authority of the holy spirit, instructing that baptized Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia are to be required to abstain from food sacrificed to gods, from

[1] *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society. A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington, 1988). Saldarini even finds reference to the Pharisees as such "sparse and difficult to evaluate," p. 277.

blood and strangled animals, and from fornication (so Acts 15:22–29).

James' status as Jesus' brother and therefore as head of the Christian congregation in Jerusalem, his dedication to worship in the Temple in Jerusalem, and his exercise of authority on the basis of a precise citation of the Scriptures of Israel are commonly acknowledged. Eusebius on several occasions refers to James as having been the first bishop of Jerusalem, and once cites a source of the second century to do so.[2] James died in the year 62 C.E., so that his example had been there to influence the emerging model of episcopal hierarchy within the church attested within the Pastoral Epistles for more than three decades before the Pastoral Epistles themselves were written. James' authority is as a local leader, who made decisions on the basis of Scripture, and the exercise of his authority—owing to his familial relationship—brought with it a personal link to Jesus himself which was reinforced by his own martyrdom. The personal model of James as bishop was evidently sufficient to elevate that office above other possible contenders for what was to be the predominant authority within the church by the end of the first century.

There is, no doubt, a degree of anachronism in Eusebius' portrait of James' episcopal authority. He conceived of it as being a "throne,"[3] in the manner of the image of dominant power, which only the fourth century saw fully achieved, and he imagines a formal designation as being involved. In fact, if one sees the episcopate as an entirely Hellenistic invention within the life of the church, it is easy enough to dismiss the entire reference to James as bishop. But that would be a hasty judgment. Eusebius' reference is persistent, and grounded in an identification of James' office from the second century. Moreover, if Eusebius helps us correctly to identify that office (for all his own anachronism), then we can explain the key shift in the hierarchy of the church during the first century, from apostolate to episcopate.

Still, the objection remains that *episkopos* is an odd title for James—or for any Aramaic speaker—to bear. In just this regard, a suggestion made many years ago by Joachim Jeremias turns out to be helpful. Jeremias fastened his attention on the office of the *mebaqqer*

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[2] See Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.1, 23; 7.19. In the first passage, he refers to Clement's *Hypotyposeis*.

[3] See *Ecclesiastical History* 2.1; 7.19.

at Qumran.[4] That term in fact means "overseer," just as *episkopos* does, and the *mebaqqer* was charged to do many of the same things that an *episkopos* was do to: he was to teach the Torah (even to priests) as well as the particular traditions of the Essenes, to administer discipline, and to see to the distribution of wealth (see *Damascus Document* 13.1–19; 14.3–22). As Jeremias points out, comparisons are made between the *mebaqqer* and a father and a shepherd (*Damascus Document* 13.9); he does not mention, but the point is worth making, that Christ himself is said to be an *episkopos*, to care as a shepherd does in bringing us to God (so 1 Peter 2:25; a letter, like the Pastorals, written around 90 C.E.). Divine care and the institution of the overseer appear to have been linked in both Essene theology and primitive Christianity.

The connection as Jeremias attempted to make it was vitiated by his surmise that the community at Qumran somehow represented the Pharisaic ethos.[5] The Essenes pursued their own system of purity, ethics, and initiation, followed their own calendar, and withdrew into their own communities, either within cities or in isolated sites such as Qumran. There they awaited a coming, apocalyptic war, when they, as "the sons of light," would triumph over "the sons of darkness:" not only the Gentiles, but also anyone not of their vision (see the *War Scroll* and the *Community Rule*). The culmination of those efforts was to be complete control of Jerusalem and the Temple, where worship would be offered according to their revelation, the correct understanding of the law of Moses (cf. *Damascus Document* 5:17–6:11).

James is quite unlike the Essenes in his acceptance of uncircumcised followers of his brother, as well as in his fellowship in Jerusalem with a group centered on the Temple, but not associated with Qumran.

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[4] His views are accessibly presented in *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus. An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* (tr. F.H. and C.H. Cave; London, 1969), pp. 260–262.

[5] For this criticism, see Hermann W. Beyer, "*episkeptomai* . . .," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament 1* (ed. G. Kittel, tr. G.W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids, 1978), pp. 599–622, 618–619. He develops some of the basic philological evidence in favor of the solution, but then opts for the hypothesis of "something new and distinctive." The problem with that hypothesis is the commonality of the term within Hellenistic culture. A successful solution must explain why it was taken up, not why it was invented. The application of *mebaqqer* to James seems to meet the case.

But his devotion to the Temple involved tension with the administration there (tension severe enough ultimately to bring about his death), and he appears to have recourse to an interpretation of Scripture which may be compared to the Essenes'. To see this, we must revisit the passage in Acts, which reflects James' perspective in regard to both circumcision and the issue of purity (Acts 15), the two principal matters of concern in Galatians 2. The account in Acts 15 is romanticized; one sees much less of the tension and controversy which Paul attests in Galatians. But once allowance has been made for the tendency in Acts to portray the ancient Church as a body at harmonious unity, the nature and force of James' position become clear.

The two issues in dispute, circumcision and purity, are dealt with in Acts 15 as if they were the agenda of a single meeting of leaders in Jerusalem. (Paul in Galatians 2 more accurately describes the meeting he had with the leaders as distinct from a later decision to return to the question of purity.) The first item on the agenda is settled by having Peter declare that, since God gave his holy spirit to Gentiles who believed, no attempt should be made to add requirements such as circumcision to them (Acts 15:6–11). Paul could scarcely have said it better himself; and that is consistent with the version of Paulinism represented in Acts.

The second item on the agenda is settled on James' authority, not Peter's, and the outcome is not in line with Paul's thought. James first confirms the position of Peter, but he states the position in a very different way: "Symeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take a people in his name" (Acts 15:14). James' perspective here is not that all who believe are Israel (the Pauline definition), but that in addition to Israel God has established a people in his name. How the new people are to be regarded in relation to Israel is a question that is implicit in the statement, and James goes on to answer it.

James develops the relationship between those taken from the Gentiles and Israel in two ways. The first method is the use of Scripture, while the second is a requirement of purity. The logic of them both inevitably involves a rejection of Paul's position (along the lines laid out in Galatians 2).

The use of Scripture, like the argument itself, is quite unlike Paul's. James claims that "with this [that is, his statement of Peter's position] the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written" (Acts

15:15), and he goes on to cite from the book of Amos. The passage cited will concern us in a moment; the form of James' interpretation is an immediate indication of a substantial difference from Paul. As James has it, there is actual agreement between Symeon and the words of the prophets, as two people might agree: the use of the verb *sumphoneo* is nowhere else in the New Testament used in respect of Scripture. The continuity of Christian experience with Scripture is marked as a greater concern than within Paul's interpretation, and James expects that continuity to be verbal, a matter of agreement with the prophets' words, not merely with possible ways of looking at what they mean.

The citation from Amos (9:11–12, from a version of the Septuagint, which was the Bible of Luke-Acts) comports well with James's concern that the position of the Church agree with the principal vocabulary of the prophets (Acts 15:16–17):

> After this I will come back and restore the tent of David which has fallen, and rebuild its ruins and set it up anew, that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called. . . .

In the argument of James as represented here, what the belief of Gentiles achieves is, not the redefinition of Israel (as in Paul's thought), but the restoration of the house of David. The argument is possible because a Davidic genealogy of Jesus—and, therefore, of his brother James—is assumed.

The account of James' preaching in the Temple given by Hegesippus (as cited by Eusebius in *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23) represents Jesus as the son of man who is to come from heaven to judge the world. Those who agree cry out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Hegesippus shows that James' view of his brother came to be that he was related to David (as was the family generally) and was also a heavenly figure who was coming to judge the world. When Acts and Hegesippus are taken together, they indicate that James contended Jesus was restoring the house of David because he was the agent of final judgment, and was being accepted as such by Gentiles with his Davidic pedigree.

But on James' view, Gentiles remain Gentiles; they are not to be identified with Israel. His position was not anti-Pauline, at least not at first. His focus was on Jesus' role as the ultimate arbiter within the Davidic line, and there was never any question within this position

but that the Temple was the natural place to worship God and acknowledge Jesus. Embracing the Temple as central meant for James, as it meant for everyone associated with worship there, maintaining the purity that it was understood that God required in his house. Purity involved excluding Gentiles from the interior courts of the Temple, where Israel was involved in sacrifice. The line of demarcation between Israel and non-Israel was no invention within the circle of James, but a natural result of seeing Jesus as the triumphant branch of the house of David.

Gentile belief in Jesus was therefore in James' understanding a vindication of his Davidic triumph, but it did not involve a fundamental change in the status of Gentiles vis-à-vis Israel. That characterization of the Gentiles, developed by means of the reference to Amos, enables James to proceed to his requirement of their recognition of purity. He first states that "I determine not to trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God" (15:19) as if he were simply repeating the policy of Peter in regard to circumcision. (The implicit authority of that "I" [we might say, an episcopal "I"] contrasts sharply with the portrayal in Acts of apostolic decision as communal.) But he then continues that his determination is also "to write to them to abstain from the pollutions of the idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood" (15:20).

The rules set out by James tend naturally to separate believing Gentiles from their ambient environment. They are to refrain from feasts in honor of the gods and from foods sacrificed to idols in the course of being butchered and sold. (The notional devotion of animals in the market to one god or another was a common practice in the Hellenistic world.)[6] They are to observe stricter limits than usual on the type of sexual activity they might engage with, and with whom. (Gross promiscuity need not be at issue here; marriage with cousins is also included within the likely area of concern. That was fashionable in the Hellenistic world, and proscribed in the book of Leviticus [see chapter 18 and 20:17–21]). They are to avoid the flesh of animals that had been strangled instead of bled, and they are not to consume blood itself. The proscription of blood, of course, was basic within Judaism; and strangling an animal (as distinct from

[6] See Vincent J. Rosivach, *The System of Public Sacrifice in Fourth-Century Athens* (Atlanta, 1994).

cutting its throat) increased the availability of blood in the meat. Such strictures are consistent with James' initial observation, that God had taken a people from the Gentiles (15:14); they were to be similar to Israel and supportive of Israel in their distinction from the Hellenistic world at large.

The motive behind the rules is not separation in itself, however. James links them to the fact that the Mosaic legislation regarding purity is well and widely known (15:21):

> For Moses from early generations has had those preaching him city by city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.

Because the Law is well known, James insists that believers, even Gentile believers, are not to live in flagrant violation of what Moses enjoined. In the words of Amos, they are to behave as "all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called." As a result of James' insistence, the meeting in Jerusalem decides to send envoys and a letter to Antioch, in order to require Gentiles to honor the prohibitions set out by James (Acts 15:22–35).

The same chapter of Leviticus that commands, "love your neighbor as yourself" (19:18) also forbids blood to be eaten (19:26) and fornication (19:29, see also 18:6–30). The canonical (but secondhand) letter of James calls the commandment of love "the royal law" (James 2:8), acknowledging that Jesus had accorded it privilege by citing it alongside the commandment to love God as the two greatest commandments (see Mark 12:28–32). In Acts, James himself, while accepting that Gentiles cannot be required to keep the whole Law, insists that they should acknowledge it, by observing basic requirements concerning fornication and blood and idolatry.

It is of interest that Leviticus forbids the eating of blood by sojourners as well as Israelites, and associates that prohibition with how animals are to be killed for the purpose of eating (17:10–16). Moreover, a principle of exclusivity in sacrifice is trenchantly maintained: anyone, whether of Israel or a sojourner dwelling among them, who offers a sacrifice which is not brought to the Lord's honor in the Temple is to be cut off from the people (17:8–9). In other words, the prohibitions of James, involving sacrifice, fornication, strangled meat produce, and blood, all derive easily from the very context in Leviticus from which the commandment to love is derived. They are elementary, and involve interest in what Gentiles as well as Israelites do. The position of James as reflected in Acts upholds the

integrity of Scripture in the discipline of the church in a way that recalls both the *mebaqqer* from Qumran and the *episkopos* from the Pastoral Epistles.

James' prohibitions as presented in Acts are designed to show that believing Gentiles honor the law which is commonly read, without in any way changing their status as Gentiles. Thereby, the tent of David is erected again, in the midst of Gentiles who show their awareness of the restoration by means of their respect for the Torah. The interpretation attributed to James involves an application of Davidic vocabulary to Jesus, as is consistent with the claim of Jesus' family to Davidic ancestry. The transfer of Davidic promises to Jesus is accomplished within an acceptance of the terms of reference of the Scripture generally: to embrace David is to embrace Moses. There is no trace in James' interpretation of the Pauline gambit, setting one biblical principle (justification in the manner of Abraham) against another (obedience in the manner of Moses). Where Paul divided the Scripture against itself in order to maintain the integrity of a single fellowship of Jews and Gentiles, James insisted upon the integrity of Scripture, even at the cost of separating Christians from one another. In both cases, the interpretation of Scripture was also—at the same moment as the sacred text was apprehended—a matter of social policy.

In a conference at Trinity Western University, John J. Collins referred to the two citations of Amos 9:11 which are attested at Qumran.[7] He relied on his findings in an earlier work that the two exegeses are quite different from one another, and from James' exegesis.[8] For reasons which will emerge shortly, we would be inclined to describe the relationship among the interpretations as complementary. The more recently identified usage (in 4Q174 3:10–13, a florilegium) is the more straightforward, in that the image of the restoration of the hut of David is associated with the promise to

[7] See Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint, eds., *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, 1997), p. 151. For an accessible and interesting presentation of the texts in English, see Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, Edward Cook, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls. A New Translation* (San Francisco, 1996).

[8] See John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star. The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York, 1995). He develops his reading of the difference between this interpretation and that contained in the Damascus Document on pp. 64–65, following the lead of Joseph A. Fitzmyer.

David in 2 Sam. 7:13–14 and with the Davidic "branch" (cf. Is. 11:1–10), all taken in a messianic sense.[9] Given the expectation of a son of David as messianic king (see *Psalms of Solomon* 17:21–43), such an application of the passage in Amos, whether at Qumran or by James, is hardly strange. On the other hand, it is striking at first sight that the passage in Amos—particularly, "the fallen hut of David"—is applied in the *Damascus Document* (7:15–17), not to a messianic figure, but to the Law which is restored. Now the book of Amos itself makes Judah's contempt for the Torah for pivotal issue (Amos 2:4), and calls for a program of seeking the Lord and his ways (Amos 5:6–15), so it is perhaps not surprising that "the seeker of the law" is predicted to restore it in the *Damascus Document.* Still, *Damascus Document* 7:15–20 directly refers to the "books of the Torah" as "the huts of the king," interpreted by means of the "fallen hut of David." Evidently, there is a precise correspondence between the strength of the messiah and the establishment of the Torah, as is further suggested by the association with the seeker of the law *not only here*, in the *Damascus Document*, but also in the Florilegium. A contextual reading of the two passages demonstrates a dual focus, on messiah and Torah in each case, such that they stand in a complementary relationship. The possibility of influence on James' interpretation of Amos as presented in Acts 15 may not be discounted.

The conditions of the church in Jerusalem, the most intense in its relations with other Jewish groups within the church as a whole prior to the great revolt that culminated in the destruction of the Temple, occasioned the emergence of a new institution. James, the brother of Jesus, whose devotion to the Temple brought him both respect and antagonism in Jerusalem, became the *mebaqqer* of a group whose teaching in regard to the Torah, whose practice of purity, and whose dedication to the sacrificial worship of Israel made for uniqueness. Transferred to a Hellenistic and Christian environment, the Jacobean institution became the episcopate, and saw Christianity through its formative period and beyond.

But the presentation in Acts permits us to see even more. Acts reflects (1) a particular context of consultation in which James' halakhic interpretation becomes normative, and (2) the establishment of a policy and style of argument which substantially contradicts Paul's, even

[9] Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, p. 61.

as it embraces a view of circumcision which he can only have accepted. In both respects, Acts articulates what would become governing structures of Catholic, Orthodox Christianity, apart from which the evolution of the Church in late antiquity cannot be understood.

The Consequences of the Policy of James

In Acts 15, James speaks within a specific context, not only in Jerusalem, but also within international Christianity (such as it then existed). A controversy erupts because "some had come down from Judea, who were teaching the brothers, If you do not circumcise by the custom of Moses, you are not able to be saved" (15:1). The result is a dispute with Paul and Barnabas, which is not surprising, since they have just returned to Antioch after a successful completion of the work which the prophets and teachers there, by the direction of the holy spirit, had sent them out to do (Acts 13:1–14:28; see 13:3 and 14:26 for the framing of the section in terms of the "work" they completed). They announce that, by means of their ministry God has "opened a door of faith for the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27).

That, of course, is the most positive way of relating their experience of preaching in Asia Minor. In the same section of Acts, a pattern is developed according to which Paul and Barnabas announce that they "turn to the Gentiles" because they have been rejected, even persecuted, by Jews (see Acts 13:46, and the whole of vv. 42–51; 14:1–5, 19). Indeed, that is the providential pattern of the whole of Luke-Acts, in which even Jesus is rejected by his own—to the point of being prepared for stoning—and speaks of the extension of the work of the prophets to those outside of Israel as a consequence of that rejection (so Luke 4:14–30).[10] It is frequently and rightly maintained that the rejection of Jesus and his message by the Jews is a pivotal motif in Luke-Acts, in that it permits of the transition in the narrative to the emphasis upon the Gentiles that is a signature concern.[11] But the relationship between Israel and the Gentiles in Acts

[10] See Bruce Chilton, *God in Strength. Jesus' Announcement of the Kingdom* (Freistadt, 1979), reprinted in "The Biblical Seminar" (Sheffield, 1987), pp. 136–143, 147–151.

[11] See Robert Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts: Studies of the New Testament and Its World* (Edinburgh, 1982), p. 183; John T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 187–189.

is actually more than a matter of the apologetic explanation of how Gentiles came to predominate in the church. The mention of the issue of circumcision in Acts 15, and the emphasis that the council in Jerusalem met to address that issue first of all, reflects an awareness that the very identity of the church in respect of Israel is at stake.

Because the question of circumcision has already been dealt with in Acts 11, as a consequence of Peter's baptisms in the house of Cornelius, the mention of the issue in Acts 15 can only be read as taking up a deliberate resumption of what was a genuinely contentious concern within primitive Christianity. The extensive narrative in Acts 10 has already confirmed—by vision and the coming of the holy spirit upon those in Cornelius' house—that non-Jews are indeed to be baptized, and Peter in Acts 11 personally rehearses those events for "the apostles and brothers who were in Judea" (11:1). Having heard his response to "those of the circumcision" in Jerusalem, who taxed Peter for visiting and eating with those who were foreskinned (11:2–3), Peter's hearers are reported to accept that "God has granted even the Gentiles repentance for life" (11:18).

In *Judaism in the New Testament*,[12] attention has already been called to the "romanticized" quality of Acts 15, in which the issues of both circumcision and the purity to be required of Gentiles are taken up in a single meeting. Paul's account of his relations with those in Jerusalem in Galatians 2 was cited in order to support that observation. But now we can observe that the account in Acts is not only romanticized, but that it is self-consciously so. The council will simply confirm the earlier finding in regard to circumcision, on the precedent of Peter's baptisms in the house of Cornelius, and then proceed to the question of the regulations of purity that baptized non-Jews are to uphold.

By dealing with these issues together, Acts conflates not only the particular topics, but also the leaders who settle both questions. The representative function of Paul and Barnabas (along with others) for the church in Antioch is underlined, because they bring news of the conversion of the Gentiles to Phoenicia and Samaria on their way to Jerusalem, to the "great joy" of all (Acts 15:3). These *apostles* of Antioch (see Acts 14:4,14) are then received by both *the apostles and*

[12] Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner, *Judaism in the New Testament. Practices and Beliefs* (London and New York, 1995), pp. 104–105.

the elders of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:3). When the gathering gets down to business, apostles and elders are again named as the participants (Acts 15:6). So the usual reference to this meeting as "the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem" is amply warranted.[13] In fact, we can go a bit further: it would be better to speak of the Council "in" Jerusalem, since apostles from other places are included. In addition, the "elders" are emphatically a part of proceedings, within a document in which elders and bishops together are understood to function within the apostolic succession (see especially Acts 14:23; 20:28). The Council is both apostolic and episcopal, and the latter aspect is especially reinforced by the later appearance of James, the *mebaqqer/episkopos*.

So the two major strands of power, apostolic and episcopal (the latter in the shape of James, its generative authority), are concentrated in the Council, and the first issue of concern is circumcision. Believers who are named as Pharisees insist, "it is necessary both to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses" (15:5). That sets the stage for conflict, not only with Paul and Barnabas, but also with Peter. And it is Peter who, in the midst of great controversy, rehearses what happened in the house of Cornelius yet again (15:7–11). Peter comes to what is not only a Pauline expression, but more particularly an expression of the Pauline school, that "through the grace of the Lord Jesus we believe to be saved, in the manner they also shall be" (Acts 15:11, see Ephesians 2:8). For that reason, it seems natural for the reference to Barnabas and Paul to follow (15:12). That order of names is no coincidence: after all, Barnabas is much better known and appreciated in Jerusalem than Paul.

After this point, any version of Paulinism is difficult to discern in the decision of the Council. For the moment, it is pertinent simply to observe how the Petrine settlement regarding circumcision and baptism is accepted by James (15:13–18), and how the final disposition of the matter is under the signature of "the apostles and elders with the whole church," including Paul and Barnabas as emissaries with Judas Barsabbas and Silas (15:22–23). The Council explicitly

[13] See Kirsopp Lake, "The Apostolic Council of Jerusalem," in F.J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, 1979), vol. 5, pp. 195–212.

declares that the holy spirit warrants the position of James, and that no other requirement as coming from Jerusalem is to be credited (15:24–29). The characterization of Judas and Silas remaining in Antioch in their role as prophets, together with Paul and Barnabas, reinforces that the letter was written unanimously (*homothumadon*, 15:25),[14] and by the authority of the holy spirit (15:28). Every charism of leadership in the church is involved in this decision, Paul's included, under the guidance of the holy spirit: how much more striking, then, that vital characteristics of Paul's position are rejected in their substance. Particularly, although James rejects the first part of the position of the believing Pharisees (Acts 15:5), that circumcision is to be required, he sustains the second part, that the Torah is to be kept throughout the church (also cited in 15:5), and therefore he rejects the policy—specifically endorsed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14—that the question of food sacrificed to idols was a matter of relative indifference.

The Refutation of Pauline Dialectics in Favor of the Temple

What is confirmed here of Paul's activity among Gentiles and his theological vocabulary of grace can hardly conceal what is implicitly denied: there is no assertion of Paul's characteristic claim, that all believers become sons of Abraham—and therefore Israel—by baptism. Even in Paul's own speech in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, the showcase of his theology in the Lukan account, although he imagines that "everyone who believes in him is justified" from what one can not be justified from by Torah (13:39, a properly Pauline formulation), he addresses these words to "sons of the family of Abraham, and those who fear God" (13:26; see also 13:17).[15] In other words, Acts 13 has him make just the distinction he argues

[14] The rendering of the Revised Standard Version here ("in assembly") seems a bit weak; see J. Rawson Lumby, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge, 1904), p. 282.

[15] Of course, these are just the people, and just the recognition of categories of people, one should expect to find in a synagogue (see Martinus C. de Boer, "God-Fearers in Luke Acts," in M. Tuckett, ed., *Luke's Literary Achievement: Collected Essays* [Sheffield, 1995], pp. 50–71). In the presentation of Luke-Acts, Paul is careful to observe the traditional distinction, and is persecuted by "the Jews" for his Christology. It is much more likely that his profound challenge of the very definition of Israel brought about discord. But because Luke-Acts does not share Paul's definition, it is silent in that respect.

against in Galatians, much as in Acts 15 he delivers a letter whose policy about purity he rejects in 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14. Acts is very plain: whatever may be acceptable of Paul's theology, his claim that believers become Israel without remainder[16] is jettisoned in favor of James' conviction, that Gentile belief is meant to restore the fortunes of the family of David,[17] consonant with the prophecy of Amos (Acts 15:16–21).

To understand the position which is evolved in Acts, and which is woven into the fabric of apostolic-episcopal authority, we must again refer to James' position, in this case in regard to circumcision. Acts 15:14–15 is explicit: James accepts Peter's account of how "God first visited, to take a people from Gentiles for his name" (15:14). That "first" is notable, because it confirms the impression that the Pentecostal theology of the Petrine school occasioned a new understanding of the horizon of God's spirit. Moreover, James here acknowledges that Peter's experience amounts to a precedent, which he personally accepts. Gentiles who believe in Jesus are not to be required to circumcise.

Recently, that picture in Acts has been rigorously denied by Robert Eisenman:[18]

> Whenever Acts comes to issues relating to James or Jesus' brothers and family members generally, it equivocates and dissimulates, trailing off finally into disinformation, sometimes even in the form of childish fantasy. Though sometimes humorous, especially when one is aware of what the parameters of the disputes in this period really were, this is almost always with uncharitable intent.

Most scholars of the literature would agree that this is an exaggerated finding.[19] One of the reasons for the freighted rhetoric is that Eisenman is concerned to insist, in the face of good indications to the contrary, that James required all believers to be circumcised.[20]

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[16] See *Judaism in the New Testament*, pp. 98–104; *The Intellectual Foundations of Christian and Jewish Discourse. The Philosophy of Religious Argument* (London, 1997), pp. 26–31.

[17] That is the general position reached in David Ravens, *Luke and the Restoration of Israel* (Sheffield, 1995), pp. 247–257.

[18] See *James the Brother of Jesus. The Key to Unlocking the Secrets of Early Christianity and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York, 1996), p. 601.

[19] See Anthony J. Saldarini's treatment of Eisenman's position in the *New York Times Book Review* (April 27, 1997), p. 41.

[20] Eisenman, *James the Brother of Jesus*, pp. 159, 600.

In his concern, he illustrates why there has been confusion in this regard. Galatians reflects the obvious dispute between Paul and the circle of James, and at one point Paul accuses Peter and Barnabas of "fearing those of the circumcision" (Gal. 2:12). Eisenman then links that statement with the characterization of James in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, where James warns Peter not to communicate with those who are unworthy. Both of those alleged supports in fact demonstrate the extraordinary weakness of his assertion (which may explain why it is fitted out with so much rhetoric).

When Paul uses the noun "circumcision" (*peritome*), he does so as a metonym for ancestral Judaism. So, for example, in the same chapter of Galatians, he refers to himself as entrusted with the gospel of uncircumcision and Peter as entrusted with the gospel of circumcision, one predominantly for Gentiles and the other predominantly for Jews and God-fearers (Gal. 2:7–8). Moreover, James and John are specifically included in this arrangement with Peter, on the side of circumcision, with Paul and Barnabas on the other side in mutually recognized ministry of the gospel (Gal. 2:9). To give the term a new sense, the sense of those who compel circumcision, is entirely unnatural within the logic of Galatians 2. Within the logic of the letter as a whole, it is even more unnatural: Paul makes a very clear distinction between his disagreement with the circle of James over the question of purity at meals (Gal. 2:11–21) and his open, crudely expressed contempt for those who are attempting to circumcise converts to Christianity (Gal. 5:1–12). When Peter and Barnabas fall in with the policy of James in regard to purity, Paul calls that hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11–13); when unnamed teachers urge circumcision on the Galatians, Paul tells them to cut their genitals off (Gal. 5:1–12). In substance and tone, his attitude is different, because James—following Peter's lead—accepted that circumcision could not be required, while the anonymous disturbers in Gal. 5:12 most emphatically did not. Acts itself recognizes the existence of such teachers, and attests their implicit claim to represent the church in Jerusalem (15:24). The presence in Jerusalem of teacher whom Acts styles as believing Pharisees would suggest that they are the source of the simple conviction that the Torah, in this case Genesis 17:10–14, was to be upheld in the preaching of Jesus. Straightforward as that claim is, Acts attests just as emphatically that James is not its source: rather, he sees a place for Gentiles as Gentiles, in a role of support for an essentially Davidic revelation.

That picture of a place for the Gentiles within Christian preaching is actually confirmed by the pseudo-Clementine literature that Eisenman cites in support of his argument. That literature is particularly pointed against Paul (whom it refers to as *homo inimicus*) and in favor of James. Indeed, the *Recognitions* (I.43–71) even relate that, prior to his conversion to Christianity, Saul assaulted James in the Temple. Martin Hengel refers to this presentation as an apostolic novel (*Apostelroman*), deeply influenced by the perspective of the Ebionites, and probably to be dated within the third and fourth centuries.[21] The ordering of Peter under James is clearly a part of that perspective, as Hengel shows, and much earlier Joseph Lightfoot found that the alleged correspondence between Clement and James was a later addition to the Pseudo-Clementine corpus.[22] But even if the Pseudo-Clementines are taken at face value, they undermine Eisenman's view:[23] they portray James as the standard for how Hellenistic Christians are to teach (see *Recognitions* 11.35.3).[24]

In a sense there is nothing surprising about that portrayal, in that Paul himself—writing in Galatians, where he has every interest in diminishing any sense that he is dependent upon his predecessors in Jerusalem—describes himself as laying out his gospel for the Gentiles for apostolic scrutiny, "lest I were running or had been running in vain" (Gal. 2:1–2). He had earlier framed his gospel in discussion with Peter, and had also met James, whom he describes as an apostle at that point (around the year 35 C.E.; see Gal. 1:18–19). Then, fourteen years later (or around 49 C.E.), it is before three "pillars" of the church—James and Peter and John, in that order—that Paul lays out his case, and receives authorization to continue among the Gentiles (Gal. 2:3–10).

In his description of James' circle, Irenaeus (around 180 C.E.) refers to their permitting activity among the Gentiles, while they themselves preserved their proper customs (*pristinis observantionibus; Against Heresies* 3.12.15). As Hengel points out, most of the sources regard-

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[21] See "Jakobus der Herrenbruder—der erste 'Papst'?" in E. Grässer and O. Merk, eds., *Glaube und Eschatologie. Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 80* (Tübingen, 1985), pp. 71–104.

[22] See J.B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers 1* (London, 1890), pp. 414–420.

[23] Or the view of the "Tübingen school" of the nineteenth century, as Hengel (p. 92) points out is the source of such contentions.

[24] Cited by Hengel, p. 89.

ing James do not involve him in disputes concerning the Law, and when the Pseudo-Clementines target such disputes, they do so by way of an attack on Paul.[25] Epiphanius reports the legend among the Ebionites that Paul accepted circumcision in the first place only to marry the daughter of the high priest, and then—disappointed in his design—attacked circumcision and the law (*Panarion* 30.16). In other words: the Ebionite case against Paul is made, not by claiming James required circumcision, but by asserting that Paul accepted and then opposed circumcision for the worst of motives, whether theological or personal. Implicitly, the sources are in agreement that James did not require circumcision of Gentile converts to Christianity.

Where Eisenman and the Tübingen have erred is, not in imputing controversy to the Christian movement in its earliest stages, but in imputing the same controversy to every division. Paul disagreed with James, Peter, and sometimes with Barnabas, but not over the issue of whether circumcision should be required. Believing Pharisees did, on the other hand, disagree with all of those named apostles. Where James and Paul went their separate ways, ways between which Peter and Barnabas hesitated, was in the identification of non-Jewish believers. For Paul, they were Israel; for James, they were not.

The key to James' position in this regard was brilliantly provided by Kirsopp Lake in his study of the Council in Jerusalem. Scholarship since his time has provided a striking confirmation of his suggestion. Lake uses the proscriptions James insisted upon—of food sacrificed to idols, blood, things strangled, and fornication—as a way of describing how James and the Council would identify believing Gentiles in relation to Israel. He observes the affinity with the rules in Leviticus 17 regarding non-Israelites who reside in the land: they are to desist from offerings to other gods, and from the usage of any altar but in the Temple (Leviticus 17:7–9), they are to abstain from blood (Leviticus 17:10–13), and to avoid the sexual relations described in chapter 18 (Leviticus 18:24–30). By the time of the Talmud (Sanhedrin 56b), such prohibitions were elaborated into the so-called Noachic commandments, binding upon humanity generally, but Lake rightly observes they are formulated too late to have influenced Acts.

The position of James in regard to the book of Leviticus, however, cannot be set aside simply by observing the date of the Talmud.

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[25] Hengel, p. 90, citing the Pseudo-Clementine letter of Peter, 2.3ff.

We have already seen that just the section of Leviticus in which chapters 17 and 18 are included (that is chapters 16–19) were particularly resonant with James' view of how the Torah was to be upheld in respect of Gentiles. Lake is correct to point out that the regulations in Leviticus are for non-Israelite residents in the land, not abroad, and that fact needs to be taken into account. Nonetheless, there is nothing intrinsically improbable with the hypothesis that James' stipulations with regard to non-Jewish believers were framed with their compatibility with worship in the Temple in mind.

In any case, Lake also called attention to the requirements made of Gentiles within a work of Hellenistic Judaism, the fourth book of the Sibylline Oracles (4:24–34):

> Happy will be those of earthly men who will cherish the great God, blessing before eating, drinking and having confidence in piety. They will deny all temples and altars they see: purposeless transports of dumb stones, defiled by animates' blood and sacrifices of four-footed animals. But they will behold the great renown of the one God, neither breaking into reckless murder, nor transacting what is stolen for gain, which are cold happenings. They do not have shameful desire for another's bed, nor hateful and repulsive abuse of a male.

What is especially striking about this prophecy is that it is directed to the people of Asia and Europe (Sibylline Oracles 4:1) through the mouth of the Sibyl (Sibylline Oracles 4:22–23), the legendary oracle of mantic counsel. Her utterance here is explicitly backed up by the threat of eschatological judgment for all (Sibylline Oracles 4:40–48).

A growing body of opinion has found that the emphasis upon prophecy in Luke-Acts accords with the perspectives of Hellenistic historians such as Diodorus Siculus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.[28]

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[26] Lake, "The Apostolic Council of Jerusalem," p. 208. The attempt by Harvey Falk to attribute that program to Jesus is anachronistic, but his contribution does call attention to a genuine perspective within primitive Christianity; see *Jesus the Pharisee. A New Look at the Jewishness of Jessu* (New York, 1985), and my review in *Theology Today* 42 (1986), pp. 563–564.

[27] Lake, "The Apostolic Council of Jerusalem," pp. 208–209, with a citation of the Greek text. For an English rendering and fine introductions and explanations, see John J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles. A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha I* (Garden City, 1983). Collins dates this work within the first century, but after the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 C.E. (pp. 381–382). With due caution, he assigns book four a Syrian provenience.

[28] See John T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 121–154.

The place of Sibylline prophesies, deriving from a prophetess whose origin "was already lost in the mist of legend by the fifth century" C.E.,[29] is prominent in both. But while Luke-Acts invokes the motif of prophecy (literary and contemporary), the Sibyl makes no appearance in a work that is, after all, the largest in the New Testament. That suggests that the way for the synthesis of Hellenistic oracles and Hebrew prophecy had been prepared, especially by works such as the Sibylline Oracles of Hellenistic Judaism, but then that Luke-Acts insists upon the attestation of Jesus' coming (directly or indirectly) as an indispensable criterion of true prophecy.[30]

The development of ethical requirements for Gentiles in view of eschatological judgment was therefore part of the ethos of Hellenistic Judaism at the time Luke-Acts was composed. The demands cited by Lake in the fourth book of the Sibylline Oracles[31] comport well with the requirements set out in Acts 15, except for the specific proscription of blood. Still, reciting a blessing prior to eating might suggest that what is eaten is to be pure, and immersion is mentioned later in the Sibylline Oracles (4:165), so the issue is scarcely outside the range of concerns of Hellenistic Judaism.

Indeed, that concern in inherent in the third book of the Sibylline Oracles, which Collins dates within the period 163–145 B.C.E.[32] There, the Sibyl is portrayed as Noah's daughter-in-law (Sibylline Oracles 3:823–829), and it was Noah whom God instructed with the commandment not to consume blood or to shed human blood (Gen. 9:4–6). Noah receives cognate treatment in books 1 and 2 of the Sibylline Oracles. The dates of that part of the corpus are uncertain, and Christian additions are evident, but Collins seems on secure ground in his argument that the Judaic redaction was completed before 70 C.E. in Phrygia.[33] Noah is here made an articulate preacher of repentance to all peoples (Sibylline Oracles 1:128–129) in an elegant expansion of the biblical story (Sibylline Oracles 1:125–282) that has the ark make land in Phrygia (Sibylline Oracles 1:262). The persistence of such an association between Noah and Asia Minor is

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[29] See Collins, "Sibylline Oracles. A New Translation and Introduction," p. 317.
[30] See Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner, *Types of Authority in Formative Christianity and Judaism* (London and New York, 1999).
[31] He also cites 4:162–170.
[32] Collins, "Sibylline Oracles. A New Translation and Introduction," p. 355.
[33] Ibid., p. 331.

intimated by 1 Peter 3:20, where the number of those in ark (eight) is stressed, as in the Sibylline Oracles 1:282, in comparison to those who were punished.

Within the context of Hellenistic Judaism as reflected in the Sibylline Oracles, then, a prohibition of blood to Gentiles seems quite natural. If it is anachronistic to speak at this point of Noachic commandments, we may at least refer to the motif of Noah's instruction of all humanity as well established by the first century C.E. Unfortunately, the Genesis Apocryphon from Qumran is fragmentary just as it speaks of Noah, but it is notable that Noah is told there that he is to rule over the earth and the seas and that "you shall not eat any blood" (Genesis Apocryphon 7.1; 11.17). Both those statements are more emphatic than what is said in the corresponding text of Genesis in Hebrew (Genesis 9:2, 4).

The possible connection between the motif in the Sibylline Oracles and the treatment of Noah in the Genesis Apocryphon is intriguing. The third book of the Sibylline Oracles is associated with the priestly family of the Oniads that had been pushed out of Jerusalem prior to the Maccabean revolt.[34] They eventually settled in Egypt and enjoyed protection under the Ptolemies there, which is why Collins dates the Sibylline Oracles between 163 and 145 C.E. They were responsible for building the Temple at Leontopolis, in evident protest against the settlement in Jerusalem (Josephus, Jewish War 1 § 33; 7 §§ 420–432). Prior to settling in Egypt, however, Syria had been the Oniads' base.[35] The cultic protest of the Oniads, their chronology, and their association with Syria have all led to the inference that they were connected with the rise of the Essenes, and

[34] See Otto Mørkholm, "Antiochus IV," in W.D. Davies and L. Finkelstein, eds., *The Cambridge History of Judaism 2* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 278–291 and, in the same volume, Harald Hegermann, "The Diaspora in the Hellenistic Age," pp. 115–166.

[35] Onias III, deposed as high priest by his brother Jason, lived in Antioch for three years until his assassination by Menelaus in 172 B.C.E. His son, Onias IV, is reported by Josephus to have fled to Ptolemy in 162 B.C.E., when Alcimus assumed the high priesthood (so Antiquities 12 § 387). Josephus also cites a purported letter from Onias IV to Ptolemy and Cleopatra (Antiquities 13 §§ 65–68), in which he asks for permission to purify and rebuild an old temple in Leontopolis for the cultic usage of Jews there. As part of his case, he cites his service to them in Syria and Phoenicia (Antiquities 13 § 65). During that time, he probably resided in Damascus, a crucial city within the history of the Essenes. See Uriel Rappaport, "Onias," in D.N. Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, 1992), vol. 5, pp. 23–24.

Philo's reference to Essenes in Egypt would support that inference.[36] To this we may add Josephus' observation that the Essenes were noted for their prophecy (for example, in Jewish War 2 § 159):[37] prophecy is a connecting link among the Essenes, the Sibylline Oracles, the emissaries of James and the Council who were prophets, and the ethos of Luke-Acts.

James' interpretation of Scripture, as we have seen, shows similarities to the interpretation instanced at Qumran. His halakhic approach comports with an emphasis upon the necessity for all people, even Gentiles, to keep a degree of purity out of regard for the Torah. The evidence of the Sibylline Oracles reinforces the impression of James' Essene orientation, and shows how that perspective could be developed within a field well prepared by Hellenistic Judaism.

But what James' circle prepared on that field was a particular devotion to the Temple in Jerusalem. The ideal of Christian devotion that James has in mind is represented in Acts 21. There, Paul and his companion arrive in Jerusalem and are confronted by James and the elders' report to them that Paul's reputation in Jerusalem is he is telling Jews in the Diaspora to forsake Moses, and especially to stop circumcising their children (Acts 21:17–21). Paul is then told to take on the expense of four men who had taken a vow, entering the Temple with them to offer sacrifice (Acts 21:22–26).

The nature of the vow seems quite clear. It will be fulfilled when the men shave their heads (so Acts 21:24). We are evidently dealing with a Nazirite vow.[38] As set out in Numbers 6, a Nazirite was to let his hair and beard grow for the time of his vow, abstain completely from grapes, and avoid approaching any dead body. At the close of the period of the vow, he was to shave his head, and offer his hair in proximity to the altar (so Numbers 6:18). The end of this time of being holy, the Lord's property, is marked by enabling the Nazirite to drink wine again (6:20).

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[36] See Günter Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus. Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes* (Minneapolis, 1995), p. 125; Leland R. Deeds, *Cultic Metaphors: Sacrificial Ideology and Origins in Selected Scrolls from the Dead Sea* (Annandale, 1996), pp. 94–101.

[37] See Morton Smith, "The Occult in Josephus," in L.H. Feldman and G. Hata, eds., *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (Detroit, 1987), pp. 236–256, 248–250.

[38] See Roger Tomes, "Why did Paul Get His Hair Cut? (Acts 18.18; 21.23–24)," in C.M. Tuckett, ed., *Luke's Literary Achievement. Collected Essays* (Sheffield, 1995), pp. 188–197. Tomes rightly points out that there is considerable deviation from the prescriptions of Num. 6 here, but the Mishnah (see below) amply attests such flexibility within the practice of the vow.

Just these practices of holiness are attributed by Hegesippus (as cited by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23) to James. The additional notice, that he avoided oil and using a traditional bath, is consistent with the especial concern for purity among Nazirites. They were to avoid any contact with death (Numbers 6:6–12), and the avoidance of all uncleanness—which is incompatible with sanctity—follows naturally. The avoidance of oil is also attributed by Josephus to the Essenes (Jewish War 2 § 123), and the reason seems plain: oil, as a fluid pressed from fruit, was considered to absorb impurity to such an extent that extreme care in its preparation was vital.[39] Absent complete assurance, abstinence was a wise policy. James' vegetarianism also comports with a concern to avoid contact with any kind of corpse. Finally, although Hegesippus' assertion that James could actually enter the sanctuary seems exaggerated, his acceptance of a Nazirite regime, such as Acts 21 explicitly associates him with, would account for such a remembrance of him, in that Nazirites were to be presented in the vicinity of the sanctuary.

As it turned out, James' advice proved disastrous for Paul. Paul's entry into the Temple caused a riot, because it was supposed he was bringing non-Jews in. As a result, he was arrested by a Roman officer (Acts 21:27–28:21), and so began the long legal contention that resulted ultimately in his death. The extent to which James might have anticipated such a result cannot be known, but it does seem obvious that his commitment to a Nazirite ideology blinded him to the political dangers that threatened the movement of which he was the nearest thing to the head.

The particular concern of James for practice in the Temple has left its mark on teaching attributed to Jesus. In Mark 7:15, Jesus set down a radical principle of purity: There is nothing outside a person, entering in that can defile, but what comes out of a person is what defiles a person. That principle establishes that those in Israel were to be accepted as pure, so that fellowship at meals with them, as was characteristic in Jesus' movement from the beginning, was possible. Their usual customs of purity, together with their generosity in sharing and their willingness to receive and accept forgiveness, readied them to celebrate the fellowship of the kingdom of God.[40]

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[39] See Josephus, *Jewish War* 2 §§ 590–594; M. Men. 8:3–5 and the whole of Makhshirin. The point of departure for the concern is Lev. 11:34.

[40] For further discussion, see Bruce Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus. His Sacrificial*

His program was not as suited to Nazirites as it was to those his opponents called "tax agents and sinners;" to them Jesus seemed a drunk and a glutton (see Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34).

But within this same chapter of Mark in which Jesus' principle is clearly stated, a syllogism is developed to attack a particular practice in the Temple (Mark 7:6–13). Two features of this argument are striking. It assumes familiarity with the vow of *qorbana*, which does indeed mean "gift" in Aramaic. One could, in effect, shelter one's use of property to dedicating it to the Temple at one's death, continuing to use it during one's life.[41] The Mishnah envisages a man saying, "Qorban be any benefit my wife gets from me, for she stole me purse" (Nedarim 3:2). The simple complaint about the practice in vv. 11–12 may indeed reflect Jesus' position, since his objection to commercial arrangements involving worship is well attested. But that only focuses our attention all the more on the syllogistic nature of the argument, which is unlike what we elsewhere find attributed to Jesus.

The argument as a whole is framed in Mark 7:6–7 by means of a reference to the book of Isaiah (29:13): the people claim to honor God, but their heart is as far from him as their vain worship, rooted in human commandments. That statement is then related to the custom of *qorban*, which is said to invalidate the plain sense of Moses' prescription to honor parents.[42] The simple and inevitable conclusion is that the tradition violates the command of God (see Mark 7:8–9, 13).

The logic of the syllogism is not complicated, and it can easily be structured in a different way.[43] The association of similar Scriptures is reminiscent of the rabbinic rule of interpretation, that a principle expressed in a text may be related to another text, without identity of wording between the two passages.[44] But the scriptural syllogism by no means requires the invocation of any such formal principle.

Program within a Cultural History of Sacrifice (University Park, 1992); "A Generative Exegesis of Mark 7:1–23," in *The Journal of Higher Criticism* 3.1 (1996), pp. 18–37; *Pure Kingdom. Jesus' Vision of God* (Eerdmans, 1996).

[41] See Mishnah Nedarim; Zeev W. Falk, "Notes and Observations on Talmudic Vows," in *Harvard Theological Review* 59 (1966), pp. 309–312.

[42] Compare Exod. 20:2; 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Deut. 5:16.

[43] As happens in Mat. 15:3–9.

[44] See Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and Israel's Scriptures," in *Studying the Historical Jesus. Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 281–335, 294–295.

The fundamental argument is that the Law and the Prophets are antithetical to the practice of authorities in the Temple.

The rhetoric of the syllogism turns on the necessity of honoring Moses, as in the interpretation attributed to James in Acts 15 (see Acts 15:21). Moreover, the principle inherent here is that Scripture is that which is actually implemented in the case of Jesus' movement. Finally, the centrality of the Temple is manifest throughout.

The stance of James as concerns purity and the Temple, as well as his interpretation of Scripture, comports well with Hegesippus' description of his particular practices. The evidence in aggregate suggests that James understood his brother as offering an access to God through the Temple, such that Israel could and should offer God the Nazirites with their vows, as Moses provided. It has been argued that Jesus himself adhered to such a position,[45] but that seems to put a strain on his usual practice of fellowship at meals.[46]

Indeed, our suggestion that James was a Nazirite, and saw his brother's movement as focused on produces more Nazirites, enables us to address an old and as yet unsolved problem of research. Jesus, bearing a common name, is sometimes referred to as "of Nazareth" in the Gospels, and that reflects how he was specified in his own time. There is no doubt but that a geographical reference is involved (see John 1:45–46).[47] But more is going on here. Actually, Jesus is rarely called "of Nazareth" or "from Nazareth," although he was probably known to come from there. He is usually called "Nazoraean" or "Nazarene." Why the adjective, and why the uncertainty in

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[45] So Marcus Bockmuehl, "'Let the Dead Bury their Dead.' Jesus and the Law Revisited," in *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches. Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics* (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 23–48. Of all the arguments adduced, the most attractive is that Jesus' statement concerning wine and the kingdom involves his accepting Nazirite vows. See P. Lebeau, *Le vin nouveau du Royaume. Etude exégétique et patristique sur la Parole eschatologique de Jésus à la Cène* (Paris, 1966); M. Wojciechowski, "Le naziréat et la Passion (Mc 14,25a; 15:23)," in *Biblica* 65 (1984), pp. 94–96. But the form of Jesus' statement has not been rightly understood, owing to its Semitic syntax. He is not promising never to drink wine, but only to drink wine in association with his celebration of the kingdom. See Bruce Chilton, *A Feast of Meanings. Eucharistic Theologies from Jesus through Johannine Circles* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 169–171.

[46] It is for this reason that the circle of James also sought to restrict the definition of who might participate in the full celebration of the eucharist. Mark 14:12–15 turns that meals into a Seder, in which only the circumcised could participate; see Chilton, *A Feast of Meaning*, pp. 93–108.

[47] Indeed, there was even a place called Bethlehem of Nazareth, according to the Talmud; see Bruce Chilton, *God in Strength. Jesus' Announcement of the Kingdom* (Freistadt, 1979), pp. 311–313.

spelling? The Septuagint shows us that there were many different transliterations of "Nazirite:" that reflects uncertainty as to how to convey the term in Greek. (That uncertainty is not in the least surprising, since even the Mishnah refers to differing pronunciations [see Nazir 1:1].) Some of the variants are in fact very close to what we find used to describe Jesus in the Gospels.

In the Gospel according to Mark, the first usage is in the mouth of a demon, who says to Jesus (Mark 1:24):

> We have nothing for you, Nazarene Jesus!
> Have you come to destroy us?
> I know who you are—the holy one of God!

In this usage, "Nazarene" in the first line clearly parallels "the holy one of God" in the last line. The demon knows Jesus' true identity, but those in the synagogue where the exorcism occurs do not. And they do not hear the demons, because Jesus silences them (so Mark 1:25). This is part of the well known theme of the "Messianic secret" in Mark.[48]

For James and those who were associated with him, Jesus' true identity was his status as a Nazirite. The demons saw what others did not, and after the resurrection the knowledge of the holy one of God could be openly acknowledged and practiced. That practice could include men, women, and slaves, in accordance with the Mishnah (Nazir 9:1). In the Christian movement, the custom was apparently widespread. In Acts 18:18, it is said that even Paul "had his head shorn in Kenkhraea, because he had a vow." Such vows in regard to hair alone were held in Mishnah to equate to a Nazirite vow (Nazir 1:1), so that whatever Paul thought of his vow from his own perspective, many would have seen him as falling in with the program of James, the brother of Jesus. Under the influence of James, they might have said, even Paul was concerned with getting it right.

Where Paul got it precisely wrong, from the point of view of the Council, was in his assertion that food sacrificed to idols could be consumed, provided only it did not mislead anyone into a belief in the actuality of any god behind the idol. His mature articulation of his principle in this regard would involve at most grudging respect for the letter sent from the Council to Antioch (see Romans 14:14–15):

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[48] See Chilton, "Exorcism and History: Mark 1:21–28," in *Gospel Perspectives* 6 (1986), pp. 253–271.

> I know and I am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is impure in itself, but to one who considers something to be impure, it is impure for him. If your brother is aggrieved on account of food, you are no longer walking by love: do not ruin with food that one for whom Christ died.

The whole of chapter 14 is devoted to this issue, so that it is plain that the controversy is significant in Rome, as it had been in Corinth (see 1 Corinthians 8).

At the end of the day, it might be argued that the application of Paul's principle would lead to acquiescence with the ruling of the Council, but his stance is hardly a ringing endorsement. For that reason, it is a bit difficult to imagine Paul—as Acts 15 clearly portrays him—delivering the Council's letter with Barnabas and Judas and Silas (Acts 15:22). After all, for the Council and for James there is something intrinsically impure in what is specified, and believing Gentiles are to avoid it, as a matter of loyalty to the Torah. Paul is not in complete opposition to the policy, and he shows that in matters of sexuality there are impure relations which are to be avoided at the peril of one's eschatological judgment (see 1 Corinthians 5).[49] But to imagine him as complicit in the letter and delivering it in Antioch strains credulity. It is more likely that the meeting in respect of circumcision and the meeting in respect of impurity were distinct events.[50] For that reason, Christians continued to be divided over the question of whether the meat of animals notionally sacrificed to gods could be eaten.[51]

The Council of Luke-Acts controverts Pauline principle not only in substance, but also in style. Gone are the dialectics of discover-

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[49] See Bruce Chilton, "Purity and Impurity," in R.P. Martin and P. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Downers Grove, 1997), pp. 988–996.

[50] See David Catchpole, "Paul, James, and the Apostolic Decree," in *New Testament Studies* 23 (1977), pp. 428–444. Catchpole even suggest that Paul's antagonists in Galatians 2 were delivering the ruling of the Council. Criticism of Catchpole has tended to run along the lines that he "discounts the historical value of Acts;" so Timothy George, *Galatians*, in *The New American Commentary* 30 (n.p., 1994), p. 169, n. 138. What is more to the point is that the people described as "from James" in Gal. 2:12 prompt separation from believing Gentiles, not their maintenance of purity. They more likely correspond to those who claim the support of Jerusalem, but who are then denied support by the Council (see Acts 15:24).

[51] Stephen Benko has suggested that Peregrinus was excommunicated during the second century for eating "meat that was consecrated to pagan gods," *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (Bloomington, 1986), p. 32.

ing one element in Scripture in opposition to another, in order to discover which of them accords with the gospel of Jesus. Gone are the long arguments that explain how the triumphant element in Scripture can have been obscured by others, and how the unity of divine revelation may be maintained nonetheless. Gone is the elevation of that method to the point it offers a way of understanding all human relations with God. Indeed, Paul himself, in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8, is providing an example of how different from the Lukan James' is his own take on what to do with a principle under active discussion within Christianity. Whether or not Paul knows James articulated the principle that food sacrificed to idols is not to be eaten, he obviously knows it is a serious principle, ardently maintained by some Christians. But instead of simply finding for or against the policy, Paul measures each and every act of eating against one's evaluation of the conscience one is eating with. Pauline dialectics are deployed as much in ethics as they are in Scripture.

All of that is set aside by the Council. The food not to be eaten and the behavior not to be indulged are stated, on the assertion that the holy spirit and the council, in accordance with the words of the prophet Amos as cited by James, make that the rule to be followed. Argument is beside the point. Once the consensus of the Council agrees with Scripture, that conciliar interpretation becomes normative. Because the Council in question is both apostolic and episcopal, Luke-Acts here provides a normative model of ecclesiastical authority, as well as a normative ruling.

The Christian Pharisees

The very force of that ruling, of course, necessarily implied a breach with the believing Pharisees, for whom circumcision could not be treated as optional. In a forthcoming article, Paul Flesher has shown how axiomatic the practice of circumcision was within the understanding of conversion. Indeed, he describes the scholarly discussion concerning "proselyte baptism" as an artifact of imposing a Christian paradigm on the sources of Rabbinic Judaism.[52] But that artifact

[52] As he puts it, "the Mishnah neither provides usable first century evidence regarding the immersion of proselytes nor indicates that Jews practiced an unrepeated, one-time-only immersion as part of their conversion rites" ("The Fiction of

pales in comparison to the dominant portrayal in the Gospels of Jesus and the Pharisees in persistence antipathy. In his influential book, *Jesus and Judaism*, E.P. Sanders has demonstrated how deeply anachronistic that portrayal is.[53] Sanders himself develops the thesis, which has not been widely accepted, that Jesus did not require repentance of sinners, which would in fact explain the Gospels' anachronism as being accurate.[54] Herbert Basser's position, that Jesus' debates with the Pharisees represent dispute within a shared religious vocabulary, is far more plausible.[55] In this regard, the friendly warning Pharisees give Jesus about Herod Antipas (see Luke 13:31) stands in telling opposition to the claim that the Pharisees plotted to kill Jesus from the moment they disagreed about healing on the Sabbath (see Matthew 12:14; Mark 3:6; Luke 6:11).

How could dispute with the Pharisees have been elevated to mortal enmity in the portrayal of the Gospels? Jesus' actual disputes with Pharisees might be described as a necessary condition of that portrayal, but they hardly provide the sufficient condition. The growing influence of the Pharisees after 70 C.E. did clearly result in mounting tension with Christian communities (as Matthew 23 reflects), just as it resulted in Josephus' attempt to portray them in a more favorable light in his Antiquities than he had in his Jewish War.[56] But does that really explain why, for example, John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2 should speak of believers being expelled from synagogue (*aposynagogos genesthai*) by Pharisees as a result of belief in Christ? The specificity of the antagonism with those named as Pharisees invites us to discover a focused issue of contention.

The attempt in Acts to kill Paul in the Temple is occasioned by the charge that he intended to introduce the uncircumcised into the

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Proselyte Baptism," in A.J. Levine and R. Pervo, eds., *Traversing Land and Sea. Proselytism in Judaism and Early Christianity* [forthcoming]).

[53] E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 270–293.

[54] See Chilton, "Jesus and the Repentance of E.P. Sanders," in *Tyndale Bulletin* 39 (1988), pp. 1–18.

[55] See his paper, "The Gospels and Rabbinic Halakhah," in B. Chilton, C.A. Evans, and J. Neusner, eds., *The Missing Jesus. Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament* (Boston, 2002), pp. 77–99.

[56] See Shaye J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome. His Vita and Development as a Historian* (Leiden, 1979), pp. 144–151, 236–238, and Bruce Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus. His Sacrificial Program within a Cultural History of Sacrifice* (University Park, 1992), pp. 69–87.

Temple (Acts 21:27–36). Near that time, James himself was killed by stoning, also in the Temple. No doubt, the enmity of the high priesthood was a determinative factor,[57] and it was a principal factor in the execution of Jesus. But by the time of Paul and James, the issue of circumcision had also produced a common front between the high priesthood and the Pharisees that had not existed in the case of Jesus.

Paul was the precipitating cause of the new alliance. After all, he had been "according to the Torah, a Pharisee" as he himself put it (see Phil. 3:5). But that is exactly what he had come to see as "forfeit on account of Christ" (Phil. 3:7). He who had been a convert to Pharisaism became a convert against it, and both conversions had to with the evaluation of the Torah. That it was "Jews from Asia," his own native area, who objected to Paul's presence in the Temple (so Acts 21:27) comports with the reading that Paul the double convert offended just the constituency he had once tried to please.

James' stance in regard to circumcision was not as obviously offensive as Paul's. Yet once Paul had radicalized the situation, by his appearance in the Temple, James had to answer a single question, "What is the gate of Jesus?" (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23). In other words: was there a way into the covenant apart from by the practice of circumcision? James replied to that question by his insistence on Jesus' status as the son of man, who offered a way for both Israel and non-Jews, and the result was his death in Jerusalem.

In both disputes, what was the role of the Christian Pharisees of Acts 15? Insofar as they understood the covenant with Abraham to have been confirmed by Jesus, even as it might be extended to others, there is no reason to doubt the claim that they insisted upon the practice of circumcision. That put them at odds—and at odds which proved to be mortal—with the positions of Paul and of James, and that made Pharisaism a rhetorical category of enmity within Christianity, a category which was then retrojected into the Gospels, to describe the opposition to Jesus.

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[57] The fact that James was clubbed invites comparison with B. San. 81b–82b, where clubbing is inflicted as a punishment on an unclean priest. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 78.13.3–5, makes the connection between Mark 14:51 and James' linen garment.

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A "MOTHER OF SONS" IN ISRAEL AND IN MATTHEW'S JEWISH-CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

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This essay will use the "mother of the sons of Zebedee" to illustrate the possibility of rooting distinctive aspects of the Christian gospel in Jewish sources and models and of finding inspiration for feminist theology in biblical narratives that are admittedly androcentric. My aim, like that of the other contributors to this volume, is to commemorate the work and life of our good friend and colleague, Tony Saldarini. To tell the truth, Tony, though appreciative of feminist thought, was not very receptive to the idea that it could be uncovered in the Gospel of Matthew. However, the other side of my thesis would be much more attractive to him. He was so insistent on the Jewish character of that Gospel that he did not believe even the core Christian belief in Jesus Christ as savior was enough to separate the community of Matthew from its historic faith identity.

I hope to magnify the importance for a Jewish-Christian feminist theology[1] of a fairly minor character in Matthew's gospel, the mother of the sons of Zebedee. I will place her in the light of an example

[1] By feminist theology, as will be clarified further below, I mean an approach to the Bible and other religious resources that is critical, interpretive, and constructive (not just a description of beliefs that were or are in fact held by certain religious communities, persons, or texts). In the present case, the sources and interpretation proposed refer to a view influenced by both Jewish and Christian insights, especially as grounded in the Gospel of Matthew. Whether to call it Christian-Jewish or Jewish-Christian is not easy to decide. I have chosen the usage of Tony Saldarini, in his forthcoming commentary, *The Gospel According to Matthew*. In the introduction, he writes that many scholars of the Gospel of Matthew "have held that the author was a Jew and his audience/community contained many Jews who had become followers of Jesus (so-called 'Jewish Christians'). . . . In this context the author of the Gospel of Matthew seems to be a Jewish teacher who believes in and follows Jesus, who teaches and guides his own community of Jewish followers of Jesus and who tries to refute other Jewish leaders with different views and practices. Thus the Matthean group in the late first century did not differentiate itself as 'Christians' in opposition to 'Jews.'" Although not all scholars agree with the thesis that Matthew's community remained completely within Judaism, the term "Jewish-Christian" helps keep the accent on its Jewish roots.

of Jewish piety, the mother of the seven Maccabean martyrs. The mother of Zebedee's sons, James and John, in fulfilling Jewish ideals of faith and action, gives testimony to the heart of the gospel for Matthew's Jewish-Christian community. Each woman testifies to her children and to her people of the atoning value of suffering and of hope in resurrection as a reward for fidelity and acceptance of God's will. Each mother exemplifies steadfastness in the face of the sufferings of the just, transcends emotional turmoil and fear, and serves as a model for a community battling internally to define authentic Jewish righteousness and observance of the law. In making this case, I will emulate Tony's ever-irenic and judicious character by bringing him into conversation with fellow New Testament scholars Amy-Jill Levine and Elaine Wainwright, with whom he agreed and disagreed, respectively, on the Jewish character of Matthew's gospel and on the presence of a challenge to patriarchy within it.

The personal context for this project extends back to the mid-seventies, when Tony and I became colleagues at Boston College. We, our spouses, and our families have been close friends over the decades. Tony and I were godparents to one another's sons; we shared many family holidays; we installed ourselves in neighboring lake cottages in New Hampshire, where we had hoped to continue our friendship in years to come, enjoying the company of spouses, children, and grandchildren.

During the summer of 2001, Tony was more or less confined to his bedroom, where he received visits from friends and family. One day his wife Maureen asked me to help Tony review some overdue galleys for publication in A.-J. Levine's *Feminist Companion to Matthew*.[2] As it turned out, Dr. Levine had already discerned the situation and arranged for the corrections to be made by others. However, my review of Tony's contribution gave me the opportunity for one last conversation with him over the relation between biblical studies and theology. As is evident from his collaboration in a project on feminist thought, Tony supported feminist goals. Yet, in his chapter, he had argued against efforts of feminists like Elaine Wainwright to warrant a reforming agenda by locating women's voices or perspectives within what Tony regarded as the insistently androcentric agenda of

[2] Amy-Jill Levine with Marianne Blickenstaff, eds., *A Feminist Companion to Matthew* (Sheffield, 2001).

Matthew. My question was whether a religious text with the complexity and staying power of this gospel could not contain and convey a number of multifaceted themes and subtexts, whether or not they flow directly from the narrative's governing outlook. This possibility seems especially likely for a text that is not the original product of a sole author but the reflection and consolidation of a whole community's experience of the divine. Just as this community was able to include both Jewish and Gentile Christians in a faith with both strong Jewish roots and a focus on Jesus, so could it include both men and women in a fundamentally patriarchal social organization that was being challenged by women's leadership.

Tony was by then mentally sharp but physically weak; our debate about critical interpretation could not be extensive. In retrospect, I recall clearly how resistant he always was to simplistic readings of texts that overstate evidence or try to bring a diversity of biblical voices into line with one clear agenda. I think perhaps his main problem with some expressions of feminist biblical scholarship is that he perceived it as too readily reducing the pluralism of viewpoint that he believed completely essential to the collection of biblical materials. Tony also may have believed that a good deal of speculation about first century Christian women authors, women's communities, or gender-equal groups behind New Testament texts is unsupported by the texts themselves or by demonstrable historical probabilities. He was always a clear, measured, and demanding thinker.

Tony was also an eminently reasonable man, no lover of pointless polemics, always open to discussion and to reconsideration of his views. Therefore, to continue the conversation begun in the upstairs bedroom, I will take some clues from his own writings on the Gospel of Matthew and from some indications of his fundamental appreciation of Wainwright's feminist concerns. I will develop the hypothesis that feminist theology may indeed have a friend in the author of Matthew, or at least in the narrative that he and his community compiled. Moreover, the Jewish mother of two male members of Jesus' inner circle might serve as the patron saint of a uniquely Jewish-Christian feminist theology.

What Is Feminist Theology?

Feminist theology, Jewish or Christian, studies and interprets authoritative texts and traditions from the standpoint of women's experience. It uses elements within those sources, along with contemporary scholarship, to subvert patriarchal assumptions, teachings, practices, and institutions. The Bible has been central to feminist theology, both as a target of resistance to the subordination of women and as the source of a critical hermeneutic grounded in examples of women's faith and leadership. Feminist theology is always dialectical and political, aiming to break down gender stereotypes and to transform social hierarchies of class, race, and ethnicity. In the words of feminist biblical scholar and theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "becoming a feminist interpreter means shifting your focus from biblical interpretation as an ever better explanation of the text to biblical interpretation as a tool for becoming conscious of structures of domination and for articulating visions of radical democracy that are in inscribed in our own experience as well as *in that of texts*."[3] I would place feminist biblical scholarship, undertaken in this way as a critical and constructive project, within the general category of feminist theology, broadly defined.

While biblically-oriented feminist theology is not reducible either to the content of biblical texts as such nor to the historical circumstances of the communities producing them, neither is it a mere invention or addition of concerns and claims foreign to biblical sources. Arguably all cultures, even today, have been androcentric and patriarchal. However, neither Christian nor Jewish feminist theology would be possible if the sacred texts of their traditions did not disclose glimpses of a more gender-equal and inclusive way of life and suggest that these glimpses intimate an ideal of existence more fully in accord with the creating and reconciling will of God. The primary orientation and structure of virtually every biblical text or narrative may be patriarchal, presenting men as the primary bearers of revelation. Yet the collected biblical texts have functioned as "sacred scripture" through the ages because their disclosive power is rich and multifaceted, grounded in certain paradigmatic but always

[3] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll, 2001), p. 3. Italics added.

mysterious, inexhaustible, and renewable experiences of God's presence in history. The final authors or redactors of these texts (whether an individual or a group) gain authority precisely because they have the ability to capture symbolically, aesthetically, and poetically dimensions of the human experience under God that no summary or system could ever contain or convey. Even contested and marginal voices are audible as a sort of undertone in a symphony of religious meaning whose crescendo might be reached only in a later age.

The Bible is a "classic" in David Tracy's sense of the word—a piece of literature that has an excess or surplus of meaning transcending its cultural background and the limits of an era, and addressing people in all historical periods. Yet the classic also "lives as a classic" when and because it finds readers who are provoked by it and whose own questions and history "open anew the subject matter of the text" in a mutually transformative way.[4] Both the text of the past and the present world of the interpreter participate in constituting and negotiating the identity of the classic. Elaine Wainright speaks for many feminist theologians when she states that even within androcentric biblical stories, a feminist hermeneutic of suspicion, remembrance, and reclamation can lead to an inclusive reading in which "women together with men stand at the heart of the gospel story."[5]

While some biblical scholars may attempt scientifically to define and delimit branches of study and types of results into subcategories of historical criticism and narrative criticism, most contemporary theologians, including feminist theologians, operate with a more tensive relation among layers, senses, and uses of "the Bible." Many dimensions together have an interactive authority for the final claims that are made. Sources of meaning and authority include knowledge about the historical Jesus; oral and written memories of Jesus that extend from Jesus' lifetime to that of Matthew's community; the first century community for whom and with whom the Gospel of Matthew was written; the text known as the Gospel of Matthew; historical traditions interpreting this text; and the experiences, needs, insights, and values of today. The critical theological interpreter of the Bible

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[4] David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York, 1981), p. 102.

[5] Elaine Wainwright, *A Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Berlin and New York, 1991), p. 152.

is interested in historical information about Jesus and about first-century Christian communities but will also recognize that the few "facts" about the life of Jesus that can be known are refracted through interpretive memories shaping the gospels and epistles. More important than historical data are identifiably similar portraits of Jesus and his message that convey for later generations the lasting significance of Jesus, his deeds, his teaching, and the experiences of his first followers. While descriptive types of research on the first century C.E., including social history and sociology, can shed light on the meaning of New Testament documents to their first audiences, today's interpreter always approaches the texts through the lens of his or her own historical setting and within a tradition of interpretation that shapes the questions we ask, even when we are "resistant" to the text's ostensible meaning. Thus the interpreter today can never simply replicate a meaning from the past, but always mediates an analogous meaning within a new context for which what we reconstruct as the "original" meaning can at best serve as a "prototype."[6]

According to Tony Saldarini, the author of the Gospel of Matthew neither attacks women nor tries to reimagine their place in society. "He seeks to reshape society and his community according to the teachings of Jesus from the top down, working through male heads of the community and its households."[7] Though women may have taken part in this process, or benefited from the ideals of service held up for men, all that Matthew provides on this score is "gaps" in the androcentric text. Even though the mother of the sons of Zebedee, for instance, appears to have heeded Jesus' call to follow him in suffering (Matt. 20:22), keeping watch as he died on the cross (Matt. 27:55–56), the text itself does not recognize that either she or other women have assumed a role parallel to that of the eleven male disciples who are finally commanded to carry the gospel to all nations (Matt. 28:16–20). Filling in the gaps is essentially a matter of imagination—not of any textual or historical evidence.

A feminist theologian, on the contrary, would turn precisely to the apparent gaps and inquire whether there is more behind them than initially meets the eye. The first object of scrutiny would be

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[6] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York, 1983), p. 33.

[7] Anthony J. Saldarini, "Absent Women in Matthew's Households," in Levine, *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, p. 170.

the "classic" text itself, complemented by comparative study of other biblical and extra-biblical texts, and by historical knowledge about the composition of the text, the traditions preceding it, or the community in which it was produced. Interestingly, Saldarini approves of the way Elaine Wainwright indicates the task of feminist biblical interpretation when she writes that, although biblical imagery interpreting Jesus often has supported the status quo, "a feminist reading of that imagery within the creative meaning-making potential of narrative and attention to the agency of those previously silenced has yielded not only other ways of reading but also Another, the incarnation of divinity, which will not be confined and about whom feminist women and men can speak in new ways."[8]

Clearly, Wainwright and most other feminist theologians believe that the key resource for reinterpreting the Gospel of Matthew is an iconoclastic subtext within that Gospel itself. "The important roles of women and Jesus' response to women supplicants strain the boundaries of the gospel's patriarchal worldview," creating "tensions" in the Gospel that can be explored through narrative criticism informed by historical research on first century culture and religion.[9] Many innovative interpretations of women in the Gospel have been proposed in pursuit of feminist reconstruction. These include the genealogy and birth narrative (Matt. 1:1–2:23), the hemorrhaging woman (9:20–22), the Canaanite woman (15:21–28), the ruler or leader whose daughter was possessed (9:18–19, 23–26), the women in the parable of the foolish and wise virgins (25:1–13), the woman at Bethany (26:6–13), the women at the cross (27:55–56), and the women at the tomb (27:61, 28:1–10).[10] Unfortunately, many attempts to re-place women in Matthew's gospel have done so at the cost of displacing Jews, even though scholars agree that this gospel was produced by a Jewish-Christian community whose loyalty to Jewish traditions defined its faith more than for any other gospel.[11]

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[8] Ibid., citing Elaine M. Wainright, *Shall We Look for Another? A Feminist Rereading of the Matthean Jesus* (Maryknoll, 1998), p. 120. See also Wainwright, *Feminist Critical Reading*, pp. 322–324, which infers "community traditions" affirming women within a predominantly "androcentric narrative."

[9] Janice Capel Anderson, "Matthew: Gender and Reading," in *Semeia* 28/1 (1983), p. 21. A version of this essay appears in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*.

[10] See, for example, Wainwright, *Shall We Look for Another?*; and Levine, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*.

[11] This is the keynote of Saldarini's scholarship on Matthew. See his "Reading

The striking and notorious "anti-Jewish" polemics in the gospel are in fact directed by one Jewish teacher and his followers at other Jewish leaders with different views and practices, all of whom are in competition for the most faithful and legitimate interpretation of a common religious heritage after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 C.E.[12] It is all the more regrettable then that Christian feminists interpreting Matthew continue to make a negative picture of Judaism complementary to a liberating message of Jesus. Amy-Jill Levine has identified numerous instances in which Christian feminists maintain, for instance, that Jesus' inclusive stance toward women is remarkable in contrast to oppressive Jewish attitudes or to the marginalization of women through purity regulations and other observances.[13] Rarely do we give equal time to the facts that Judaism and its scriptures also supply positive roles for women and that all first-century cultures, including emerging Christianity, took the subordination of women for granted and implemented it through the use of religious ideology and exclusionary practices. This situation calls for renewed efforts to maintain the Jewish-Christian link in a feminist theological interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew.

The Mother of the Sons of Zebedee

A relatively minor and largely neglected but promising figure for such an interpretation is a woman whose characterization by Matthew most feminists have deplored because she is presented "only" in her maternal role to two of Jesus' first disciples, James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Matt. 4:21–22, 10:1–2, 26:36–37). This woman's name is never given; she seems "embedded" in the patriarchal family and identified by her relation to male family members.[14] She is

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Matthew without Anti-Semitism," in David E. Aune, ed., *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, 2001), pp. 166–184; *The Gospel According to Matthew,* "Introduction" (Grand Rapids, forthcoming), read in manuscript.

[12] Ibid. See also Howard Clark Kee, Eric M. Meyers, John Rogerson, and Anthony Saldarini, *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, 1997), pp. 504–506; and Saldarini, "Reading Matthew without Anti-Semitism," p. 180.

[13] See Amy-Jill Levine, "Introduction," in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, pp. 16–17; "Lilies of the Field and Wandering Jews: Biblical Scholarship, Women's Roles, and Social Location," in Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger, ed., *Transformative Encounters: Jesus & Women Re-viewed* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 329–352.

[14] Saldarini, "Absent Women," p. 168; Anderson, "Gender and Reading," p. 18.

explicitly mentioned only twice, once when asking favored treatment from Jesus for her sons (20:20–21); and later as one of three specifically identified among the "many women" who had followed Jesus from Galilee, serving or providing for him, and witnessed his death at some distance from the cross (27:55–56). The father, Zebedee, has a bit more identity in his own right but significantly less agency, it being said simply that he was a fisherman mending his nets with his sons when they suddenly "left the boat and their father" to follow the call of Jesus (4:22).

The brothers' mother, however, is traveling with the disciples as they accompany Jesus toward Jerusalem. Immediately after Jesus takes the twelve aside to confide that "the Son of Man" will be condemned to death, crucified, and raised on the third day (20:17–19), James and John return with their mother, who kneels before Jesus. On their behalf, she asks that one sit on his right hand and one on his left "in your kingdom" (20:21). As Saldarini observes, "the request for places of honor and power next to Jesus when he rules fits the apocalyptic scenarios of the Son of Man ruling the universe (Dan. 7) but ignores God's ultimate authority over the kingdom and Jesus' teaching about serving one another and suffering."[15] Accordingly, "Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" (20:22). Although sons and mother reply in the affirmative, Jesus seems unconvinced of the depth of their knowledge and commitment, since, even though he grants that they will indeed share in the destiny given him by God, he goes on to explain to them and the other disciples that the kingdom of God is not what they expect. He makes four points: disciples are to act as the Son of Man acts; they are to act as servants and slaves; the Son of Man, at least, will "give his life a ransom of many;" and the opposite of the disciples' calling is to try to "lord it over" others just as Gentiles and tyrants do. The kingdom that God is about to realize through Jesus' action can be entered only by those who are willing to reverse their expectations of worldly power and status, to be obedient to God's will, and to offer themselves through action that brings about suffering.

The brothers next appear as Jesus departs to pray in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37). Earlier in the same chapter, Matthew places an incident

[15] *Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 207, manuscript.

at Bethany, in which another unnamed woman pours expensive ointment on Jesus' head at a dinner party. Jesus appreciatively accepts this action as a sign of his preparation for burial (26:6–13). Four points are important to note in connection with the unfolding story of the mother of the sons of Zebedee: only the anointing woman understands the fate that awaits Jesus; she takes action to express her commitment to Jesus, even though this offends the sensibilities of others in Jesus' company; she is contrasted favorably with "the disciples" in particular, who become "angry" and complain about her wastefulness (26:8); and Jesus promises that "wherever this good news is told in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her" (26:13). It may be that a patriarchal tradition has forgotten her name; on the other hand, the omission makes a positive point that may be deliberate. For Matthew, it is action that confers significance on characters, not titles or names.[16] This woman's deed represents her recognition of Jesus' disclosure of the true nature of the kingdom. She expresses her faith not in merely verbal assent but in action.[17]

The mother of the sons of Zebedee has a similar function in the narrative, proving by her action that she recognizes the meaning of Jesus' suffering and death. She understands the "cup" Jesus must drink, even though her sons have misunderstood; she acts in solidarity with Jesus even when he has been marked for destruction as a criminal; she is contrasted favorably with the disciples, who have disappeared; and she is remembered for her action in Matthew's retelling of the story of Jesus.

After eating the Passover meal with his disciples, Jesus is burdened with grief and "agitated." Going to pray "that this cup pass away from me," he takes with him for company Peter and the sons of Zebedee (26:36–39). The disciples, however, fall asleep and pay little

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[16] For this observation, I thank Amy-Jill Levine, who kindly read a draft of this essay. She notes that Jesus' name is said to be Emmanuel, but he is never called this; this identity is reinforced by his action throughout the gospel, and his concluding statement, "I am with you always" (Matt. 28:20). In addition to the anointing woman and the mother of James and John, the centurion at the cross who recognizes Jesus as the Son of God (Matt. 28:56) and the angel at the tomb—all of whom confirm Jesus' identity—are unnamed.

[17] This story is paralleled in all four gospels and closely matched in Mark (26:6–13) is the keynote of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's groundbreaking work in feminist biblical theology, *In Memory of Her* (p. xiii).

heed to his warning that "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (26:41). Throughout Jesus' trial, torture and execution, the disciples have in fact vanished; yet many women accompany him to the cross. At this point the mother of the sons of Zebedee makes her second and final appearance, identified again "only" as a "mother of sons" (27:56). The absence of speech attributed to the faithful women serves to accentuate their action: presence in a dangerous situation that might well have evoked the same emotions of grief and agitation that afflicted Jesus. Wainwright notes the feminist message in conversion and action by a woman who acts on the basis of her own faith, departing from the decision of her male family members.[18] Whereas earlier this woman's action of special pleading revealed her still-worldly assumptions about the rewards of righteousness, now her committed behavior shows that she, though apparently not yet her sons, has understood what Jesus reveals about the coming reign of God.

Wainwright also notes that Matthew places special emphasis on the mother-son link, since, in the Markan parallels, the sons ask for special favors in their own name; and at the cross the two Marys are accompanied by "Salome," not the mother of the sons of Zebedee.[19] Therefore it is worth considering whether the identity of this woman as a mother is important to Matthew's presentation of her actions. At the conclusion of Matthew's gospel, the sons have improved in their emulation of their mother's example. They turn out to be included in "the eleven" who are reunited with Jesus on a mountain in Galilee and sent to "make disciples of all nations" (28:16, 19). At some point, though perhaps only after the two Marys have testified to the event of Jesus' resurrection, they have shared in the faith held fast by their mother when danger and darkness were still at hand.

The Mother of the Maccabean Martyrs (2 and 4 Maccabees)

A clue to the interpretation of the distinctively Jewish-Christian role of the mother of the sons of Zebedee is given in Saldarini's commentary on the Gospel of Matthew. The association of Jesus' death

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[18] Wainwright, *Feminist Critical Reading*, p. 256.
[19] Ibid., pp. 254–255.

with ransoming indicates a freeing of humans from the power of sin (Matt. 26:28) through a vicarious sacrifice on behalf of the whole people that has precedents in Jewish tradition. "The giving of one's life also recalls the heroes and martyrs of Jewish history, especially the Maccabean period, who gave their lives for others (1 Macc. 2:50, 6:44; 2 Macc. 6–7) and the Greco-Roman stories of the noble deaths of virtuous leaders."[20] If the mother of the sons of Zebedee can be connected in her discipleship action to the mother of the Maccabean martyrs, then she will reinforce the narrative linking of Jesus himself to Jewish beliefs and religious imagery, and serve as a model of discipleship in continuity with Judaism.

2 Maccabees, and the retelling of its martyr stories in 4 Maccabees, include the memorably lurid tale of a mother of seven sons (a woman also otherwise unnamed) who urges her children on through torture and death, refusing to acquiesce to a Gentile tyrant's demands for the violation of Jewish law. This mother "reinforced her woman's reasoning with a man's courage" and encouraged her sons "in the language of their ancestors" (7:21), especially recalling Abraham's trust in the God who calls for the sacrifice of his child.[21] Overcoming anguish at her children's suffering and facing death herself, this woman is steadfast in her piety, confident in the resurrection of the just and, like the woman at Bethany, is praised by the narrator as "especially admirable and worthy of honorable memory" (7:20).

Her story is set in the Maccabean revolt against an oppressive foreign regime. The Jewish people had enjoyed a relatively peaceful relationship with the Persian and Greek imperial governments for about three centuries, when, in the second century B.C.E., the Seleucid rulers initiated a crackdown on Jewish religious practice that would embroil the Jews in a series of violent conflicts. Jerusalem and the entire province of Judea had been living symbiotically with Hellenistic culture, though Jews still preserved their own laws and customs. Still, there were contentious differences among Jews themselves, and not only with their rulers, about how to live their faith, adapt to Hellenism, and decide access to religious and political power.

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[20] Saldarini, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 208.

[21] Robin Darling Young, "The 'Woman with the Soul of Abraham:' Traditions about the Mother of the Maccabean Martyrs," in Amy-Jill Levine, ed., *"Women Like This:" New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World* (Atlanta, 1991), pp. 67–81.

The pressure to conform to Greek culture was especially strong on elites, who had to compete for influence within the foreign empire, which, for example, appointed the high priest. Jewish leaders had to balance the expectations of the dominant culture with the internal identity of Judaism. High priests and other officials curried favor with the rulers by promising to collect large revenues from Judea. The people's strong commitment to Jewish religious practices and their distinctive way of life provided cultural and symbolic resistance to such programs of exploitation. It was in the interests of the Seleucid rulers, and possibly of some Jewish factions, to disrupt Jewish religious cohesion. Antiochus IV, who reigned from 175–164 B.C.E., decided to dedicate the Jerusalem Temple to Zeus, desecrate it with pagan sacrifice, compel Jewish villagers to sacrifice to his gods, and outlaw circumcision, Sabbath observance, and reading or practicing Torah.[22]

These moves evoked intense popular resistance, led in Judea by a priestly family, the Hasmoneans, who used strong-arm tactics to ensure conformity to Jewish law. Judah Maccabee, one of five brothers, led the revolt against Antiochus IV, using guerilla tactics and engaging the enemy in mountainous territory. The Maccabees gained victory, including command of the Temple mount. The Seleucid decrees were set aside, and the Hasmoneans controlled the government for the next century. 2 Maccabees, written in Greek in the late second century or the first century B.C.E., is an abbreviated version of a five-volume account of these events by Jason of Cyrene, a Greek-speaking Jew. According to the author of 2 Maccabees, the Temple and the fidelity of the people of God to the Torah, not the Hasmonean enforcers, are central to the survival of Judaism and its faith. Martyrdom in fidelity to God's law and in trust in God's power is valued as much as military resistance, and may influence God to grant military victory (2 Macc. 8).[23] Those who suffer for the nation's sins ultimately will be rewarded with resurrection.

4 Maccabees, a first-century C.E. work, develops the martyr stories of 2 Maccabees in a manner more reflective of Hellenistic culture and philosophy, especially the Stoic value of reason and the importance of control over emotions and passions. It was likely composed

[22] Kee, *Cambridge Companion*, pp. 306–313.
[23] Ibid., pp. 324–325.

for a Jewish audience in Syria, possibly in Antioch. In it, the mother of the seven martyrs is again held up as a Jewish heroic ideal. This mother subdues her natural instinct to protect her children and further their earthly welfare out of a higher regard for Jewish law and hope in resurrection of the just. Her heroism and that of her children is ultimately attributed to true worship of the one God, not to strength of human character alone, distancing her example in an important respect from the rational ideal of Greek philosophy. Nor is she semi-divine, like the heroes of antiquity. The heroism of this mother is rooted in Jewish piety. Still, the danger of cultural assimilation is evident from the fact that 4 Maccabees uses Greek philosophy and rhetorical strategy to warn Jews against foreign cultures and political power.[24]

Though apocryphal, these interpretations of an episode in the recent Jewish past convey a milieu of struggle, courage, and religious commitment that closely resembles that of the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew's community appropriates familiar Jewish themes and symbols to capture the significance of Jesus. It is not certain whether Matthew and his community, toward the end of the first century C.E., knew the written texts of 2 Maccabees, much less the later 4 Maccabees.[25] However, the tale of the mother of the seven martyred sons seems to have been a frequently retold and reworked example of Jewish piety.[26] It seems likely that the colorful and compelling lore about the Maccabean martyr figures, recalling not-too-distant historical events, would have enjoyed earlier and wider circulation in the first century than the final written versions. The trials and bravery of a dissident group revolting against the perceived corruption of Jewish leadership and against foreign government would have had wide appeal for Jewish Christians living likewise in a time of strife caused by foreign oppression (by Rome) and internal divisions, this time centered around the identity and role of Jesus. By casting their adherence to Jesus in terms of a parallel narrative of adherence to the Torah under persecution, in which virtuous suffering is vindicated by resurrection, Matthew's Christians could have sought the Jewish high ground in the contest with their religious siblings.

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[24] Ibid., pp. 404–405.

[25] Gerbern S. Oegema, "Portrayals of Women in 1 and 2 Maccabees," in *Transformative Encounters*, pp. 259–260.

[26] See Young, "Woman with the Soul of Abraham," pp. 67–68.

Moreover, and at the very least, a narrative and literary approach to the collection of biblical materials broadly understood permits comparison of the mother of the sons of Zebedee to the mother of the Maccabbean martyrs.

The significance of the Maccabean mother is prefigured in the story of the other focal character in 2 Maccabees, Eliezer, whose story is told before hers. An old man, who likewise refuses to eat pork and dies after enduring gruesome tortures at the hands of Antiochus, Eliezer intends to serve as "a noble example" of dedication to "the revered and holy laws" (6:28). He is commended for leaving "a memorial of courage, not only to the young but to the great body of the nation" (6:31). Though characterized as a mother, his female counterpart hardly appears to be "embedded" in male relations. She is an independent paragon of sacrifice, leading her sons honorably, confident in resurrection (reaffirmed eight times), and more memorable than all her sons together (7:20). Themes of suffering, ransoming, and servanthood found in Jesus' explanation to James, John and their mother of the true nature of his kingdom echo the dying speech of the last and youngest son. Antiochus has already attempted to beguile him with promises of the very same favors and power (7:24) that the mother of the sons of Zebedee wrongly sought for her sons from Jesus. In reply the child exclaims, "we are suffering because of our own sins. And if our living Lord is angry for a little while, to rebuke and discipline us, he will again be reconciled with his own servants" (7:33).

4 Maccabees carries acclaim for the mother even further, emphasizing her almost superhuman self-control, her "manly" virtue, and her mediation of the example of Abraham and the patriarchs. Citations could be multiplied, but the following shall suffice: "O mother of the nation, vindicator of the law and champion of religion, who carried away the prize of the contest in your heart! O more noble than males in steadfastness, and more courageous than men in endurance!" (4 Macc. 15:29–30). For this, she, as well as her sons, "have received pure and immortal souls from God" (18:23). This inspiring role model could have helped members of Matthew's community cope with present unavoidable tribulations. 2 and 4 Maccabees provide a hermeneutic key in the figure of a Jewish woman whose piety outstrips that of her sons and leads them on by her example. Through the Maccabean mother, of whom Matthew's community reminds us in its charter of faith with a parallel "mother of sons," persecution and

even death can be viewed as noble in character, personally undeserved, due to the sins of those who wrongly represent "the nation," redemptive in purpose, and completed in the resurrection of the righteous whom God will ultimately vindicate.

The concept of the resurrection of righteous individuals was a late development in Israelite religious belief, having no clear precedent in the Hebrew Bible. Future hope and vindication of righteousness were expressed more in terms of corporate life than of individual existence beyond the grave. However, in the second century B.C.E., the belief in a general resurrection of the dead arises (Dan. 12:2–3), and the unjust suffering of the defenders of the Torah during the Maccabean revolts gives belief in the resurrection of the just new power.[27] The books of the Maccabees unambiguously embrace this concept. Jesus' resurrection from the dead, eventually to be shared by all believers, is a distinctive aspect of Christianity, and one to which not all Jews would have been receptive. The acceptance of Jesus' crucifixion by his followers is enabled by the experience of his presence as having been raised by God. Thus the Maccabean accounts would have had a special appeal and usefulness to early followers of Jesus who maintained a strong sense of Jewish identity, but who were also committed to Jesus as having died, been vindicated, and raised by God. This makes it all the more plausible that the mother of the sons of Zebedee serves in Matthew's Gospel as a link to 2 and 4 Maccabees, or at least to similar traditions about the Maccabean martyrs.

The Mother of the Sons of Zebedee Re-envisioned

Shifting our gaze back to the unnamed mother in Matthew's Gospel, it is worthwhile to reemphasize a few aspects of her character and their significance for the Gospel's message about discipleship. First of all, she is a useful vehicle for enabling us to understand that the threatening powers to which resistance is urged are not primarily Jews, even Jewish elites, but the imperial government, its powers of enslavement and death, and its armies.[28] She stands watch at the

[27] Kee, *Cambridge Companion*, p. 279.

[28] See Amy-Jill Levine, "Matthew's Advice to a Divided Readership," in *Gospel of Matthew in Current Study*, pp. 39–40.

death of a man whom the Romans executed for a capital crime, a man who seemed to threaten their control over a dissident population. The worldly powers of domination and their enticements must be rejected in favor of an ethos of service, just as the youngest Maccabee resisted Antiochus's promises to "make him rich and enviable" and "take him for his Friend" (4 Macc. 7:24).

Second, in heeding Jesus' call to sacrifice, the mother of the sons of Zebedee recognizes that discipleship requires personal recognition, decision, and action, and that only committed action can unite disciples in one family of faith. It is sometimes observed that family religious traditions are crucial to Jewish identity and survival, and this view finds considerable support in the biblical narratives of the patriarchs and the exodus event. The mother of the sons of Zebedee both acts on her own faith and, like a good Jewish mother, models the faith of Abraham to her sons. Her primary familial link with them, however, becomes their common commitment to the will and reign of God (Matt. 12:46–50), now manifest in Jesus. 4 Maccabees in particular establishes a Jewish reference for this iconoclastic notion of maternal devotion and true kinship by emphasizing that its heroic woman has to overcome the protective maternal instincts that would lead her to make her sons' earthly welfare her priority. "But devout reason, giving her heart a man's courage in the very midst of her emotions, strengthened her to disregard, for the time, her parental love" (4 Macc. 23). She gives birth to them again through faith (4 Macc. 17:6).[29] The mother of the sons of Zebedee shows by her action her comprehension of Jesus' saying that, "whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." To be a mother of sons in faith is to be united with them in the new family she enters by her presence at the cross, a family her sons enter by their subsequent presence on a mountain in expectation of an appearance of the risen Christ.

Third, the mother of the sons of Zebedee stands with Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" at the cross, but she does not with them become a witness to the resurrection as announced by the angel at the tomb (Matt. 28:1–7). As in Jewish tradition, the women at the cross give testimony to hope in resurrection life prior to any resurrection appearance, and act as "messengers" of resurrection

[29] Young, "Woman with the Soul of Abraham," pp. 73–81.

simply by being noble examples of prayerful courage in the face of mortal threat and suffering.

Fourth, the essential definition of martyrdom is not physical death but piously accepted suffering. Neither the sons of Zebedee nor their mother undergo death or even physical torment within the confines of the Gospel narrative (though the martyrdom of James is recorded in Acts 12:2). The story of the mother of the Maccabees, especially in the version of 4 Maccabees, provides a paradigm of martyrdom that can accommodate the family of Zebedee. The stress in 4 Maccabees (and to a lesser extent 2 Maccabees) is on overcoming emotions in order to let one's actions be governed by obedient righteousness. This provides one approach among several in Matthew's Gospel for seeing Jesus' own redemptive acts in Jewish terms. Though he ultimately met the fate of the Maccabeans, the anguish at Gethsemane that provided the failed test for the uncomprehending and inattentive disciples was emotional in character for Jesus. The story of the Maccabees allows the mother of the sons of Zebedee and the other faithful women to be considered martyrs along with Jesus, though they do not literally share his death. The Maccabean mother is praised above all for her steadfast faith even while witnessing her sons' executions, before and beyond undergoing any physical harm herself.

The mother of the sons of Zebedee likewise communicates that discipleship is like holy martyrdom if paralyzing fear is overcome in favor of true commitment, even if no fatal consequences actually ensue. Her example projects ahead to what will be required of her own sons and the rest of the eleven at the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16–20). Her sons' presence at the end of the Gospel proves that they have finally understood what the actions of their mother already demonstrated on a day of even less clarity and more peril. Even after seeing Jesus, some men still harbor doubts (28:17); moreover, danger from adversaries still remains acute. Hence, their fulfillment of Jesus' mandate will require self-control, courage, steadfastness, and a willingness to go forth without the protection of any worldly power, embodying a "merely" spiritual authority that will take them in close proximity to physical destruction. As did the seven male martyrs of the Maccabees, the sons of Zebedee have a mother in whom the true mettle of faith has been tested for their edification.

The exemplary righteousness of the lowly, women and children; contempt for worldly power; vicarious suffering; redemption through

sacrifice; exaltation through servanthood; and resurrection of the dead are certainly reversals of standard expectations and criteria of success in Jesus' (or any) culture. Yet they are fulfillments and not reversals of models of extraordinary faith and action available in Jesus' and Matthew's Jewish heritage.

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ABRAHAM IN MARCION'S GOSPEL AND EPISTLES: MARCION AND THE JEWS

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Anthony J. Saldarini was a leading member of the Catholic Biblical Association's continuing seminar on "Biblical Issues in Jewish Christian Relations," which is currently convened by Philip Cunningham and me. In our annual discussions, Tony continually pressed for getting second century authors on the agenda for discussion. He was convinced that the reception and use of New Testament texts in the second century was to have a decisive impact on all Jewish-Christian relations thereafter. For this insight, and for countless leads into incisive literature on the subject, several of which are cited in this paper, I and all the members of the seminar are deeply indebted to him.

This study comprises an examination of the passages from the letters of Paul and the Gospel of Luke that refer to Abraham, as they appear in the Marcionite Bible. In all but a few cases the presence or absence of these passages can be determined from the writings of Marcion's opponents: Tertullian, Epiphanius, and the author of the *Dialogue of Adamantius*.

Jeffrey Siker broached the question of Marcion's view of Abraham in his work *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy*.[1] He spent two pages on Marcion and did not examine the recoverable portions of Marcion's Bible text. The study presented here substantiates Siker's basic judgment that Marcion was among those early Christian writers who used "Abraham to argue for Jewish exclusion from God's purposes."[2] But since a greater amount of evidence relevant to Marcion's view of Abraham is under scrutiny here, greater light can be shed on how Marcion's treatment of the Abraham references affects our understanding of Marcion and his relationship to the Jews.

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[1] Jeffrey Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews: Abraham in Early Christian Controversy* (Louisville, 1991).

[2] Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, p. 193.

A careful examination of the references to Marcion in the writings of his opponents reveals fewer details and more general positions, which were noted and then repeated. As Gerhard May notes, "a definite profile of the heretic emerges which is then handed down."[3]

- Marcion saw the Law as opposed to the Gospel;
- he attributed the difference to different deities;
- Jesus proclaimed an unknown god;
- Paul was the only true apostle;
- Marcion tampered with the Pauline epistles and the Gospel of Luke;
- he had a docetic understanding of Jesus' humanity.

A few other short propositions could be added to this list. One important addition is the single Marcionite reference to Abraham discussed by Siker. From Irenaeus's *Adversus Haereses* 1.27.3 and 4.8.1 we learn that Marcion saw Abraham as excluded from salvation while those punished by God were saved by Jesus when he descended among the dead after the crucifixion.[4] Little or no effort was made by his opponents to flesh out the Marcionite position, let alone to present the material sympathetically. The reasons why Marcion took a particular position are readily supplied as: vanity, demonic inspiration, ignorance, or pride. R. Joseph Hoffmann's caution is in order: "We must not mistake the accusations of Marcion's opponents for the substance of his opinions."[5]

Tertullian on occasion provides more than the stock profile. He sometimes quotes from Marcion's texts and makes causal connections that are plausible. It is from Tertullian that we learn that Galatians was the source of Marcion's conviction that Paul was the only trustworthy apostle and that false apostles have adulterated a "true Gospel" (*Adv. Marc.* 1.20.2–4; 5.2 and 5.3). But even with Tertullian one must wade through five pages of his argument to find one sentence of Marcionite thought and even then it is usually something that one already knew.

It is the lack of available information from the man himself that

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[3] Gerhard May, "Marcion in Contemporary Views: Results and Open Questions," in *Second Century* 6.3 (1987–1988), p. 134.

[4] Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, p. 156.

[5] R. Joseph Hoffmann, "How Then Know This Troublous Teacher? Further Reflections on Marcion and His Church," in *Second Century* 6.3 (1987–1988), p. 179.

makes the evidence from Marcion's biblical texts so important. If it can be conclusively demonstrated that Marcion made certain alterations, these would the nearest thing we have to texts written by the man himself. His editorial activity could be seen as evidence of his intentions. If a pattern of Marcionite excisions of references to Abraham were to emerge, we would have good grounds on which to draw conclusions about his view of Abraham.

The actual extent of Marcion's editorial activity is subject to debate.[6] Marcion's opponents charged him of altering the canonical texts, but many of the changes charged to him can be shown to have been inherited by Marcion.[7] Very often small deletions or variations of wording are in fact the result of economy in citation or variation of wording on the part of Tertullian or another of Marcion's opponents. But although many of the changes he is reputed to have made must be doubted, many others stand up to questioning. They are attested nowhere else; they correspond to what we know of Marcion's teaching; and the heresiologists are in independent agreement about their contents.[8] This general concurrence among Tertullian, Epiphanius, and the author of the *Dialogue of Adamantius* establishes beyond question the basic reliability of the citing authors. In this study their words were carefully weighed to rule out variation or deletion caused by them rather than Marcion.

Finally, for this study the precise wording of the passages about Abraham is rarely necessary. In most cases we need only determine whether the reference to Abraham was maintained or excised. This can be done in all but two cases.

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[6] See Hans von Soden's review of Harnack's *Marcion* in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 40 (1922), pp. 191–206, Ekkehard Muehlenberg, "Marcion's Jealous God," in D. Winslow, ed., *Disciplina Nostra: Essays in Honor of R.F. Evans* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 96, and R. Joseph Hoffmann, *Marcion: On the Restitution of Christianity: An Essay on the Development of Radical Paulinist Theology in the Second Century* (Chico, 1984), p. 117. John Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament* (Chicago, 1942), pp. 50–51, criticizes Harnack's reconstruction but admits that Marcion did make a number of sizable deletions from the Pauline letters.

[7] A large part of my monograph, *A Lost Edition of the Letters of Paul: A Reassessment of the Text of the Pauline Corpus Attested by Marcion* (Washington, D.C., 1989) is directed to this.

[8] See my discussion of the problem in *A Lost Edition*, pp. 14–39 and 69–80.

Abraham in Marcion's Apostle

There are nineteen mentions of Abraham in the catholic text of the Pauline letters.[9] They can be discussed here as six passages containing references to Abraham.

1. *Gal. 3:6–18: Discussion of Genesis Passages on Abraham's Justification*

In our text of this passage Abraham is named seven times. Paul connects those who have faith in Jesus to the blessing of Abraham, which all the nations were to receive. While the precise wording of Marcion's version of this passage eludes us, we can be certain of some significant alterations. Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* 5.3.11) in commenting on Gal. 3:11 (cited in 5.3.10) remarks:

> And again when he adds, *For ye are all the sons of faith* (a variant form of Gal. 3:26), it becomes evident how much before this the heretic's diligence has erased, the reference, I mean, to Abraham, in which the apostle affirms that we are by faith the sons of Abraham, and in accordance with that reference he here also has marked us off as sons of faith.[10]

Tertullian refers to the removal of "Abraham" from Gal. 3:7 or conceivably to the removal of the entire verse but his reference to "how much before (*quid supra*)" is not precise.[11] An additional problem is the precise meaning of Tertullian's phrase "the reference . . . to Abraham." Does he mean one particular instance or every reference to Abraham in the section? He does not say that Marcion excised the entire passage from Galatians, nor can we be certain that all seven "mentions" of the name are gone. Epiphanius' testimony is helpful. He cites a "cut-and-paste" version of Gal. 3:11b, 10a and 12b in *Panarion* 42.11.8: "Learn (plural) that the just one will live by faith, for those who are under the Law are under a curse, but the one who does them will live by them." The mixture of singulars and plurals causes one to doubt that Epiphanius has accurately trans-

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[9] Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, p. 27.

[10] Citations from *Adversus Marcionem* are from E. Evans' translation in *Tertullian, Adversus Marcionem*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1972).

[11] Harnack concludes that Marcion deleted 3:6–9 (*Marcion* English translation by J. Steely and L. Bierma [Durham, 1990, hereinafter *Marcion* English trans], p. 32). Evans follows him in this (*Tertullian* 644).

mitted the Marcionite text.[12] His version does agree with Tertullian's remark that the "mention of Abraham" is gone. Unfortunately, Epiphanius does not cite the entire pericope to 3:26. What he does cite allows that all references to Abraham may have been removed. Yet by the way Tertullian argues in *Adv. Marc.* 5.3.12 ("if Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned for righteousness, and thenceforth he had the right to be called the father of many (gentile) nations . . .") it seems that some of the references to Abraham had to be in the Marcionite text of Gal. 3. On the other hand, in *Adv. Marc.* 5.4.2, after citing Gal. 3:15 and then 3:16, and just before he cites Gal. 4:4, Tertullian remarks, "Let Marcion's eraser be ashamed of itself: except that it is superfluous for me to discuss the passages he has left out, since my case is stronger if he is shown wrong by those which he has retained." Gal. 3:15–16 were definitely not in the Marcionite Apostle.

The amount of agreement among the sources is reassuring. Tertullian and Epiphanius both refer to Gal. 3:13. The *Dialogue of Adamantius* refers to Gal. 3:13, but reflects nothing between Gal. 2:20 to 3:13. Several of the mentions of Abraham may have been removed from Galatians 3. But the evidence is insufficient to prove that all references have been removed.

2. *Gal. 3:29: "And if you are Christ's you are Abraham's offspring"*

We can be certain that this verse was not in Marcion's Apostle. It is cited in none of the three main sources for the Marcionite text. In *Adv. Marc.* 5.4.1 Tertullian cites a form of Gal. 4:3 that begins with a phrase from 3:15. It may be concluded from this that Gal. 3:16–4:2 were missing from the Marcionite text. Thus, the strong reference to Abraham in Gal. 3:29 was excised and so were the other references in 3:16 and 18.

And so, out of eight specific references to Abraham in Galatians 3 we have specific remarks in Tertullian about the removal of at least four (Gal. 3:7, 16, 18 and 29). Some of the other references (3:6, 8, 9 and 14) may have stood. But the associations between

[12] Further doubt is cast on Epiphanius' reliability here in that the same scholion of *Panarion* 42.11.8 in which he cites Gal. 3:13, namely scholion 2, he cites Gal. 4:23 with no words intervening. This contradicts information from Tertullian that there were other verses intact between Gal. 3:13 and 4:23.

Jesus-believers and Abraham which Paul attempted to establish in the original form of the text have been eliminated.

3. *Gal. 4:22: "For it is written, Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman"*

Tertullian saw this verse in the Marcionite text and gloated "Now it does happen to thieves that something let fall from their booty turns to evidence against them" (*Adv. Marc.* 5.4.8). It is a problem for the Marcionites that Paul's typological interpretation was retained, since they were opposed to such interpretations. But Tertullian seems unaware of the advantages Marcion may have seen in retaining the verse (and the passage as a whole) in spite of this anomaly. The passage contains an antithetical contrast between the Law and the Gospel—the slave and the free. The "earthly Jerusalem" (read "the Synagogue") is associated with the slave. The "heavenly Jerusalem," the reference to which has been amplified by a pre-Marcionite interpolation from Eph 1:21 is referred to as "lifted high up."[13] This is in keeping with Marcion's teaching of the superiority of the God of Jesus and his following to the Creator and those who are faithful to him.

4. *Rom. 4:1–25: "What shall we say about Abraham our forefather according to the flesh?"*

This is the most extensive discussion of Abraham in Paul's letters. He is named seven times.[14] There is good reason to conclude as Harnack does that the entire chapter was missing from Marcion's Apostle,[15] but we cannot be absolutely certain. The problem is that

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[13] Clabeaux, *A Lost Edition*, pp. 23–24 and 55.

[14] Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, p. 58.

[15] Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (Leipzig, 1924), p. 102, followed by Evans, *Tertullian*, p. 645, and E.C. Blackmann, *Marcion and His Influence*, (London, 1948), p. 45. John Knox (*Marcion and the New Testament*, pp. 50–51) after voicing his objection that we do not have "decisive evidence" for all the omissions from Romans which Harnack lists, notes that "it is all but certain that (Rom.) 4:1–25 . . ., if, as is probable, it was lacking in Marcion's text, was lacking because Marcion deliberately omitted it." This is not the case for all the omissions from Romans. Romans 15 and 16 were not in Marcion's text, but it is unlikely that he was responsible for their omission. For the demonstration of this position see H. Gamble, *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism* (Grand Rapids, 1977).

Tertullian's coverage of Romans 1–7 is only three-and-one-half pages. His brevity is determined by his desire not to repeat arguments he made earlier.[16] Tertullian alludes to Rom. 2:29 (*Adv. Marc.* 5.13.7) and then to Rom. 3:21–22 (*Adv. Marc.* 5.13.8). The next allusion is to Rom. 5:1 (in *Adv. Marc.* 5.13.9). But earlier (in 5.13.4) Tertullian remarked as he began his discussion of Romans 2, "But how many ditches Marcion has dug, especially in this epistle, by removing all that he would, will become evident from the complete text of my copy." He cited five or six passages from Romans 2, and then come the allusions to 3:21–22 and then 5:1. What is important is that Tertullian has made mention of sizable excisions very near the passage in question (Rom. 4:1–25).

The situation is similar with Epiphanius. He cites no passages between Rom. 2:20 and 5:6, however, he cites a total of only eight passages from Romans.

Adding to the probability that Marcion omitted this chapter is the unambiguous evidence of the omissions of Abraham references from Galatians 3, discussed above. Still, Romans 4 must be seen as very probably—but not definitely—omitted.

5. *Rom. 9:7: "And not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants. . . ." and*

6. *Rom. 11:1: ". . . I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham. . . ."*

These may be discussed together since the situations of their status in the Marcionite text are so similar. Neither verse is cited by Tertullian, Epiphanius, or the *Dialogue of Adamantius*. In *Adv. Marc.*, very near the place where we would expect a discussion of these verses, Tertullian makes a specific remark about a sizable excision by Marcion (5.14.6 and 5.14.9).

Rom. 9:7 is the more important of the two in terms of the

[16] He points this out explicitly in *Adv. Marc.* 5.13.1: "The nearer this work draws to its end, the less need there is for any but brief treatment of questions which arise a second time, and good reason to pass over entirely some which we have often met with." It should be noted, however, that he contradicts this principle in 5.16.1: "We are forced to repeat certain things again and again in order to confirm their coherence." If there are points to be scored against Marcion, Tertullian will not spare the paper and ink to make them.

significance of Abraham for Marcion. In our text the verse implies that being children of Abraham (as opposed to being "seed of Abraham") is a matter of some importance to Paul. Had Marcion retained the verse, it is likely that Tertullian would have noted that implication and used it to illustrate inconsistency on the part of Marcion, but he does not. In addition, in *Adv. Marc.* 5.14.5 Tertullian cites Rom. 8:11b rather carefully. Although the first and last clauses of the verse are dropped the word order of 8:11b is remarkably close to the Greek of our text of Romans. After a short argument on the reality of the resurrection of the body Tertullian writes, "I overleap here an immense chasm left by scripture carved away: though I take note of the apostle giving evidence for Israel that they have a zeal of God. . . ." The words "giving evidence for Israel that they have a zeal for God" are an allusion to Rom. 10:2. A careful citation of Rom. 10:3–4 follows. The exact size of the excision between Rom. 8:11 and 10:2 cannot be determined. There is much in the remaining verses of Romans 8 that would be congenial to Marcion's dualism and the Marcionite emphasis on the Christians as "suffering ones." But with Rom. 9:1 the explicit discussion of the situation of the Jews begins. Citations from Genesis and the prophets abound. It is easy enough to imagine Marcion excising this section. But the problem is that we know for certain that Marcion retained Rom. 10:2ff. That chapter begins with several mentions of "them" the antecedent of which can only be found in Romans 9.[17] Marcion had to have something like Rom. 9:1–5, but Rom. 9:5 "from them is Christ according to the flesh" he could not possibly have left unchanged. And so, Rom. 9:7 is probably, but not definitely, a part of what Tertullian calls the "sizable chasm" of excised text.

In Rom. 11:1 it is more likely than it was with Rom. 9:7 that the verse was missing in Marcion's text. In *Adv. Marc.* 5.14.6–9 Tertullian jumps from Rom. 10:4 to 11:33, with nothing more for a connective than "*atquin exclamat.*" Upon citing Rom. 11:33, Tertullian suggests that Paul's proclamation "O the depth of the riches and wisdom of God. . . ." stands as a *non sequitur* without the promises from the Hebrew bible which are cited in our version of Romans 10 and 11, namely, 10:13, 18b, 19b and 20 and 11:4, 9, 10 and

[17] It is possible of course that Marcion supplied a term like οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in 10:1.

26b–27. This is the best evidence that the OT allusions and citations were missing from Marcion's text; otherwise there would not be a *non sequitur* for Tertullian to point out. Thus, it is nearly certain that the greater part of Romans 11 comprises the excision Tertullian refers to in *Adv. Marc.* 5.14.9. Since Rom. 11:1 makes little sense without the rest of the chapter, it is likely to have been missing as well.

7. *2 Cor. 11:22: "Are they seed of Abraham, so am I"*

There is insufficient evidence that Marcion omitted this verse. Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* 5.12.7–8) alludes to 2 Cor. 11:14 and then to 2 Cor. 12:3. But there is no mention of an excision, as there was in cases 1, 4, 5, and 6 above. Tertullian covers nine chapters of 2 Corinthians (chaps. 5–13) in about two-and-a-half pages. This section of the *Adversus Marcionem* immediately precedes his "whirlwind tour" of Romans—fourteen chapters in six-and-a-half pages. The other heresiologists provide little help. Epiphanius does not cite the verse in *Panarion* 42.11.8, but then, he only cites three verses from 2 Corinthians. The verse is not cited in the *Dialogue of Adamantius*. The most we can say, then, is that it may not have been in Marcion's Apostle.

This survey of Pauline references to Abraham in the Marcionite Apostle may be summarized as follows:

1) Gal. 3:6–18: Discussion of Genesis passages on Abraham's Justification: The references to Abraham were either completely removed or at least significantly reduced.
2) Gal. 3:29: "You are Abraham's offspring:" This reference was removed with Gal. 3:16–4:2. Thus, the main point of the Abraham references in Gal. 3:6–18—if any still remained—was eliminated.
3) Gal. 4:22: Typology of Sarah and Hagar: This reference remained but Abraham is less in view than are his wives and sons.
4) Rom. 4:1–25: Discussion of Abraham's Justification by Faith: The entire section was very probably excised.
5) Rom. 9:7: "Not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants:" This reference was probably excised.
6) Rom. 11:1: "I myself . . . a descendant of Abraham:" This reference was very probably excised.
7) 2 Cor. 11:22: "Are they seed of Abraham, so am I:" This reference is merely unattested for the Marcionite text.

The evidence suggests that Abraham has practically been written out of the Pauline Corpus by Marcion and none of the excisions can be attributed to Marcion's textual sources. They reflect a consistent effort on his part to alter what Paul said about Abraham, and what he argued by making reference to Abraham.

By his excisions Marcion manifests an approach to the Jews that is different from that of his apostolic protégé—Paul, and much closer to that of Justin. This accords with Siker's analysis that by Marcion's time the justification of the Gentile mission had ceased to be a live issue.[18] With Christianity a predominantly Gentile movement, the concern about the salvation of the Jews had receded. It is especially significant that Romans 9–11, the chapters with the most unambiguous assertions in early Christian literature regarding God's faithfulness to Israel, were almost entirely removed. The one reference to Abraham which is certain to have survived the editorial work of Marcion is Gal. 4:22—a passage that is used to put the Jews in an inferior position. It is ironic that Marcion, in spite of his efforts to restore the "true Paul," has, on the issue of the relationship of Christianity to Judaism, been found to be much closer to his own (that is, Marcion's) most bitter enemies.

Abraham in Marcion's Gospel

There are fifteen mentions of Abraham in the generally accepted text of the Gospel of Luke.[19] They occur in nine separate passages. Whether Luke 1–2 were known to Marion is debated. But I have concluded that he did not receive the Gospel without them for the following reasons:

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[18] Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, pp. 191–195.

[19] The additional seven references to Abraham which are in Acts of the Apostles (Siker deals with them in *Disinheriting the Jews*, pp. 103–127) are not dealt with in this study. Whether Marcion removed Acts or simply did not know of it cannot be definitively resolved. Tertullian asserted that he eliminated it (*Adv. Marc.* 5.2.7 and see Pseudo-Tertullian *Adversus Omnes Haereses* 6.1). But it has not been established that Acts was generally accepted early in the second century. Some argue that it was not even written until after Marcion (so John Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament*, pp. 120–139 and more recently John Townsend, "The Date of Luke-Acts" in C. Talbert, ed., *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the SBL Seminar* [New York, 1984], pp. 47–62). Most scholars set the date of Acts earlier. Yet even it Acts had been written as early as 90, this would not necessitate Marcion's having been familiar with it. Justin Martyr is the first to cite from it.

1) The author of Luke 1 and 2 is certainly not other than the author of Luke 3–24 and Acts.
2) There is no material or textual evidence that a shorter edition of Luke, which consisted only of chaps. 3–24, was ever in circulation.[20]
3) Although the events of Luke 1 and 2 do not seem to affect the course of Luke 3–24, both thematically and in terms of the structure of Luke 1–24 they are exquisitely connected. A convincing example of this is to be found in the use of the figure of Abraham throughout the Gospel as described by Siker.[21] The essential agenda of the references to Abraham is set in chaps. 1–3. This will be described further below. At this point it can be said that if "Proto-Luke," which presumably lacked chaps. 1 and 2, was reworked by an editor who produced our version, that editor would be responsible for a rather elaborate system of interconnected references to Abraham. Is it more likely that the Third Gospel was enhanced with Abraham references, or that they were removed by Marcion? On the face of it the latter is more likely, but the passages will need to be examined one by one.
4) Although Marcion's Gospel begins at Luke 3:1a, it moves immediately to 4:16. This is the greatest obstacle for those who hold that there was a shorter form of the Gospel from which Marcion worked. While it may be argued that there is a literary seam between Luke 2:52 and 3:1, there is no such seam between 4:15 and 4:16. Clearly, Marcion excised 3:1b–38 and 4:1–15. To argue that Marcion did not also remove Luke 1 and 2 requires nothing short of special pleading.

1 and 2: *The References to Abraham in the Magnificat (1:54–55) and the Benedictus (1:73–75)*

Neither these references nor the passages of which they are a part appeared in Marcion's Gospel. This is clear from statements made by Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* 4.7.1 and 4.7.12) and Epiphanius (*Panarion* 42.11.4). The only matter in dispute is whether Marcion eliminated these sections or received a form of the Gospel which lacked them.[22]

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[20] The situation of the shorter form of Romans, i.e., without chaps. 15 and 16 is quite different. As was noted above there is textual evidence that Romans circulated at one time without those chapters.

[21] Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, pp. 104–118.

[22] A radical articulation of the priority of the Marcionite Gospel is that of Paul

3. *Luke 3:7–8: The Preaching of John: "Children of Abraham from Stones" and*

4. *Luke 3:34: Mentions of Abraham in the Genealogy of Jesus*

Both Tertullian and Epiphanius in the passages cited directly above indicate that these sections were missing from Marcion's Gospel. I have not encountered the argument that Marcion did not delete these sections. The likelihood that he excised them increases the likelihood that he excised Luke 1 and 2 as well. At any rate, both the Baptizer's reference to Abraham and the appearance of Abraham in the genealogy were almost certainly removed by Marcion. The latter excision says a great deal about Marcion's relationship to the Jews. For him Jesus was simply not a Jew. He was ἀγεννητός.

5. *Luke 13:16: The Healing of the Crippled Woman: "this daughter of Abraham"*

Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* 4.30.1) attests by his citation of Luke 13:15b that the controversy over healing on the Sabbath in 13:10–18 was present in Marcion's text. But that is the only citation he gives. Epiphanius (*Panarion* 42.11.6 scholion 6) cites nothing but 13:16a from this pericope: "ταύτην δὲ θυγατέρα Ἀβραὰμ ἣν ἔδησαν ὁ Σατανᾶς." This would be the first mention of Abraham in Marcion's Gospel. It says little about Abraham's significance. It only indicates that the woman healed was Jewish. Unlike the situation in canonical Luke, there are no other references to Abraham thus far to provide a context for this one.

6. *Luke 13:28: ". . . when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God but you yourselves thrown outside"*

Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* 4.30.5) attests the presence of this verse in Marcion's Gospel. He has: "When *they* see the righteous *entering into* the Kingdom of God, but *themselves* kept outside." But in this paragraph Tertullian is not citing carefully but pulling bits and pieces from the pericope and weaving together a lively argument. Epiphanius

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Louis Chacoud, "Is Marcion's Gospel One of the Synoptics," in *The Hibbert Journal* 34 (1935–1936), pp. 265–277. His arguments are effectively controverted at every point by A. Loisy in "Marcion's Gospel: A Reply," in ibid., pp. 378–387.

(*Panarion* 42.11.6 scholion 40) remarks, "again he has changed the 'then you will see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God' and instead of this he makes (it) 'when you see all the just ones in the Kingdom of God but yourselves thrown out' only he makes it 'held outside.'" Epiphanius is citing carefully and there are enough differences between his citation and Tertullian's to prevent our concluding that Tertullian was the source for Epiphanius. Thus we have evidence of a deliberate removal by Marcion not only of Abraham but also of Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets. Both the patriarchs and the prophets are excluded from the Reign of God.

7. *Luke 16:19–31: The Story of Lazarus and the Rich Man*

This is a very important passage. We have it from Tertullian, Epiphanius, and the *Dialogue of Adamantius* that this passage, without major changes, was in Marcion's Gospel. Abraham is mentioned six times in the pericope. He is spoken to (16:24, 28, 30); he speaks (16:25–26, 29, 31); and Lazarus' eternal reward is described as "being at the bosom of Abraham." But can we discern anything from the inclusion of the passage about Marcion's attitude toward the Jews? The discussions of the passage both in Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* 4.34.10–17) and the *Dialogue of Adamantius* (2.10–11) provide answers to these questions. For both it is an extremely important passage. Tertullian cites only a few snatches of verses from it, but he devotes eight complex sentences of argumentation to it. Adamantius cites Luke 16:19–31 in full, with no objection by the Marcionite interlocutor about the wording. For Tertullian and for the combatants in the *Dialogue of Adamantius*, the issue is the depiction of "heavenly reward" and the place of Abraham in it.

Tertullian seeks to establish from the first that the parable is about eternal salvation. He argues that the main issue of Luke 16:19–31 is the eternal reward of Herod, who would receive the punishment of the rich man, and John the Baptizer, who would receive the reward of Lazarus. Then he explains how the Marcionites use the passage. In his view Marcion misinterprets it to ground his belief that there are separate rewards for those who obeyed the Creator and those whom Jesus saves. Tertullian says (in 4.34.11) that the Marcionites imply that Abraham and Lazarus are far away from the rich man, but in Hades nonetheless. Tertullian ridicules Marcion for failing to appreciate that the rich man had to "lift up his eyes" to

see Abraham; to Tertullian this does not make sense if Abraham were in Hades. But having said this Tertullian has a problem which requires five more rather tortuous sentences of discussion. He does not want to admit that Abraham has arrived at the place of the fullness of salvation. He cannot say that outright, since it would give support to the Marcionite position that Lazarus is not in Christ's heaven, but is somewhere else. Tertullian has to explain that the bosom of Abraham is "a sort of distinct locality . . . for the reception of the souls of his sons . . . though not in heaven, yet not so deep as hell . . . until the consummation of all things makes complete the general resurrection with its fullness of reward."

The *Dialogue of Adamantius* 2:10–11 follows a similar line of argument.[23] Adamantius cites Luke 16:19–31 to prove that the person who does not receive the Law does not receive the Gospel. His Marcionite opponent Marcus immediately points out that "He (Jesus) said that Abraham is in hell, not in the kingdom of heaven."[24] Marcus goes on to say that one cannot conclude that Abraham is in hell from the dialogue which takes place in the pericope. Adamantius' rejoinder is that Marcus missed the reference in the Gospel dialogue to the "chasm" between the rich man and Abraham. If Abraham and the rich man are both in hell, then what are we to make of the great chasm between them? Marcus' response is that the rich man cannot possibly have looked from hell to heaven because the human eye cannot see even from earth to heaven (much less from hell to heaven). Adamantius replies that what the physical eye cannot see, the eyes of the soul certainly can see. Eutropius, the appointed judge of the contest, is thoroughly persuaded by Adamantius.

Clearly then, for the Marcionites, Luke 16:19–31 was the proof text for the separateness of salvations.[25] The rich man was a wicked

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[23] Since Tertullian does not cite enough of the Lukan passage to allow a comparison of citations, the possibility that his *Adversus Marcionem* was a source for the *Dialogue of Adamantius* in this passage cannot be completely ruled out. It is conceivable that Tertullian's argument was received by the author of the dialogue through an intermediary. There is enough difference in the lines of argument of the discussions, however, to make dependency unlikely. Both focus on the fact that the Marcionites see Abraham in a salvation place distinct from that of Christ. Yet each opposes the Marcionite teaching on the passage by appealing to different verses.

[24] This is consistent with the Marcionite removal of Abraham from the Kingdom of God in the Marcionite Luke 13:28.

[25] This is a confirmation of the position expressed by Irenaeus in *Adv. Haer.* 4.8.1 and 1.27.3 that the Marcionites saw salvation for the Jews as separate and different from that of the Christians.

Jew who was punished by the Creator. Lazarus was a righteous Jew who was rewarded by the Creator. The Creator let him be at the bosom of Abraham. The relatives of the rich man have not listened to the Creator, nor will they listen to someone who rises from the dead. While this Marcionite reading of the parable is favorable toward the Jews in that the obedient Jew in the story is rewarded, still this righteous one and the Jews he exemplifies are viewed as children of a lesser god. At one point in the *Dialogue of Adamantius* the Marcionite interlocutor says, "I am not persuaded by Jewish voices, for they are of another god."[26] Thus, it is not out of any respect for "Israel according to the flesh" that Marcion let this passage stand. He kept it because, like the Sara/Hagar allegory in Gal. 4:22–31, he saw in it a grounding for differentiation between Christians and Jews.

8. *Luke 19:9: Jesus' Encounter with Zacchaeus: "He also is a son of Abraham"*

It is regrettable that we do not know for certain how Marcion dealt with this passage, since clear evidence that he removed or left the "son of Abraham" reference would be significant. There is more at stake here than in 13:16 where the crippled woman who was healed was referred to as "this daughter of Abraham." Here in 19:9 an explicit connection is made between salvation and being a son of Abraham.

Tertullian discusses Marcion's version of Luke 19:1–10 in *Adv. Marc.* 4.37.1–3. Of the ten verses he cites only a verse and a half. He makes no explicit remarks about deletions or changes. The passage does not appear in the *Panarion* nor in the *Dialogue of Adamantius*. Tertullian's remark (4.37.1), "*Zacchaeus esti allophylus*," led Harnack to conclude that the words "for he also is a son of Abraham" must have been missing from the Marcionite version of Luke 19:9.[27] His argument is not compelling. Tertullian could have presumed that Zacchaeus was a Gentile based on his profession as a tax gatherer. Or he could have been informed by a later tradition about the character Zacchaeus. In fact, Zacchaeus' being a Gentile would make

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[26] *Der Dialog des Adamantius*, ed. W.H. Van de Sande Bakhuyzen, GCS (Leipzig, 1901), pp. 76–77, translation my own. While Marcus is a fictitious character in the dialogue, one can conclude from the entire section (2.10–11) that his remark "they are of another god" is an apt depiction of the Marcionite view.

[27] Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium*, p. 227*.

the remark "for he also is a son of Abraham" even more significant. One is tempted to accept that Marcion deleted the Abraham reference since Tertullian cites some of the words just before it and some of the verse immediately after it. Yet since Marcion let the "daughter of Abraham" reference stand in 13:16 and since Tertullian had no clear need to refer to this phrase (nor does he remark that Marcion deleted it), we simply cannot know.

9. *Luke 20:37: Controversy with the Sadducees over Resurrection: "when he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob"*

In this case it is not so much the reference to Abraham that would be a problem for Marcion but the very use of an Exodus passage by Jesus as a proof. The evidence strongly suggests that Marcion eliminated the entire verse and possibly part of the next as well.

From Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* 4.38.4–9) we know that Marcion's Gospel had this dispute with the Sadducees. But Tertullian makes few, short allusions. He uses the passage to attack the Marcionite exclusion of marriage. Apparently the Marcionites made much of Luke 20:35 that "those who are deemed worthy . . . of the resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage." Tertullian's argument centers on this. He says nothing about Luke 20:36–38.

Epiphanius reports on the Marcionite text of Luke 20:37 twice but it is a bit different each time.[28] Why twice? One possibility is that he did not have Marcionite texts in front of him as he wrote,[29]

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[28] In *Panarion* 42.11.6 scholion 56 he says Marcion "removed 'that the dead are raised Moses indicated at the Bush, as he says "Lord, the God of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob. But God of the living and not of the dead."'" This seems to be a rather free rendering by Epiphanius of Luke 20:37–38a. He drops "also" before "Moses" and then "the God" before "Isaac and Jacob." Then he reverses the order of "the dead" and "the living" in 20:38a. Epiphanius is not saying that Marcion made these changes. He is saying Marcion deleted the entire verse and half of the next. But then he says (*Panarion* 42.11.6 scholion 57) that Marcion "did not have these: 'that the dead are raised even Moses indicated saying "God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob, God of the living."'" This is an even shorter rendering of 20:37–38a, yet with the "also" and the "God of" phrases left in.

[29] This is to be concluded from the fact that he cites verses from Ephesians and Laodiceans (*Panarion* 42.11.8 scholia 36–38 and 40), both of which could not have been present in a Marcionite Pauline Corpus. The single verse from Laodiceans is really Eph. 4:5. I am not able to make sense out of the reason Epiphanius gives for citing Luke 20:37 twice. He says (*Panarion* 42.11.15 refutation 57) "διὰ τὸ δευτερῶσαι τὸν σωτέρα τὴν παραβολήν, δίττως παρ' ἡμῶν ἐτέτακται" which can be

but was relying on his own notes from when he last saw the Marcionite text. It is also possible that he had heresiological material written by others from which he was garnering citations. There may have been a slight discrepancy in how the deletion was reported in his sources. But since it is not the precise wording of the verse that we are seeking, this anomaly in Epiphanius' reporting does not eliminate the evidence important for this study. It is clear from both of his citations that the reference to Exod 3:6 (or 3:15) and the reference to Abraham which it contained was not in Marcion's Gospel. Just the same, Epiphanius' garbled rendering of the evidence prevents us from being completely certain.

Summary of Evidence from Marcion's Gospel

So we are in a position to review the evidence from Marcion's Gospel.

1) Luke 1:55: Mary's Canticle: "The oath God swore to . . . Abraham" was probably intentionally deleted by Marcion.
2) Luke 1:73–75: Zachary's Canticle: "the oath God swore to our father Abraham" was probably intentionally deleted by Marcion.
3) Luke 3:7–8: John the Baptist's Preaching: "sons of Abraham from stones" was almost certainly removed by Marcion.
4) Luke 3:34: "Abraham" in the Genealogy was almost certainly removed by Marcion.
5) Luke 13:16: Healing of the Crippled Woman: "daughter of Abraham" definitely stood in Marcion's text.
6) Luke 13:28: "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob . . . in the Kingdom" was definitely altered to "the righteous in the Kingdom" by Marcion.
7) Luke 16:19–31: Lazarus and the Rich Man: Six mentions of Abraham all apparently stood in Marcion's text.
8) Luke 19:9: Encounter with Zacchaeus: "he too is a son of Abraham" may or may not have stood in Marcion's text.

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rendered "because the Savior repeats the parable (or the illustration) it is registered twice by us." I have not been able to figure out in what sense anything has been repeated, unless the catholic text which Epiphanius had before him contained a repetition of the entire pericope or a part thereof. One further possibility is that by παρβολην Epiphanius refers to the phrase "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" which appears in Luke 13:28 and 20:37. But Epiphanius makes no direct reference to 13:28 here.

9) Luke 20:37: Sadducee Controversy over Resurrection: "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" was probably deleted by Marcion.

The evidence from Marcion's Gospel is even clearer than the evidence from his Pauline letters. Only one of the nine passages (i.e., #8, Luke 19:9) is completely irresolvable. Many scholars will remove numbers 1 and 2 from consideration as not certainly present in the text Marcion received. Even with that restriction, out of six possible Abraham references for which there is decisive evidence, four can be shown to have been deleted by Marcion. Of the two that are left, the first (#5, Luke 13:16) is relatively inconsequential as there are no prior references to "offspring of Abraham" to which it can be connected. The second (#7, Luke 16:19–31) can be shown to have been preserved by Marcion for dogmatic reasons, namely, to support his teaching of separate salvations from the Alien God and the Creator. If Marcion did remove chaps. 1 and 2 from Luke then he has eliminated at least six out of eight passages referring to Abraham.

The evidence indicates that Marcion eliminated references to Abraham unless they were innocuous or supportive of his agenda. This is the more remarkable in that the Gospel of choice for Marcion was the one with the most sustained interest in the figure of Abraham.

What Marcion has done to the picture of Abraham in Luke is even more apparent when one considers Siker's presentation of Luke on Abraham.[30] According to Siker, the Abraham references in Luke 1 and 3 set the context for the characters associated with Abraham in Luke 13:16; 13:28; 16:19–31; and 19:9. Abraham is mentioned in connection with a) the *'anawim* ("lowly ones," in this case: Mary and Zachary) in Luke 1 and b) the repentant in the preaching of John the Baptist in Luke 3.

The crippled woman healed in Luke 13 is an example of a lowly one who receives the mercy of God like Mary and Zachary in Luke 1. So is Lazarus in Luke 16. Zacchaeus is the repentant one who receives God's mercy like the ones who "bear fruits that befit repentance" in Luke 3:8. The rich man in Luke 16:19–31 is a contrary example of the same.

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[30] Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, pp. 103–118, but see especially, p. 103.

All of this was lost in the Marcionite version of the Gospel. In Marcion's Gospel the healed crippled woman was a "daughter of Abraham," but there was no association with *'anawim* who remind God in their prayers of the promise to Abraham. Zacchaeus may have been a "son of Abraham" in Marcion's Gospel, but he was not associated with the repentant in the preaching of John the Baptist, since that section was not in Marcion's Gospel. Lazarus and the rich man were similarly deprived of any association with the *'anawim* or the repentant. One may object that since we cannot be sure that Marcion excised Luke 1 and 2, we cannot hold him responsible for breaking up the pattern of associations. Yet even if Marcion did not excise Luke 1 and 2, and I am inclined to think he did, he certainly is responsible for excising Luke 3. And so, at the very least Marcion did serious damage to the inter-connections or associations among the characters who call upon or are called by the name of Abraham.

Marcion and the Jews

Little has been written on the relationship between Marcion and the Jews. In addition to Siker's short treatment there is an article by Stephen G. Wilson under the same title as this sub-section. Wilson surveys the more recent works on Marcion with little yield on this issue. A notable exception is the work by David Efroymson, "The Patristic Connection," which Wilson supports in several of its conclusions.[31]

Although recent scholars are more reticent, Harnack had much to say about Marcion's relationship to Judaism. He argued that Marcion did not reject the OT entirely but relegated it to a status of "supportive literature."[32] He went so far as to argue that Marcion

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[31] Stephen G. Wilson, "Marcion and the Jews," in S. Wilson, ed., *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity: Volume 2: Separation and Polemic* (Waterloo, 1986), pp. 45–58. He cites David Efroymson, "The Patristic Connection," in A.T. Davies ed. *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity* (New York, 1979), pp. 98–117.

[32] Harnack, *Marcion* English trans., pp. 74–79 and 133. His only support for this position is the fact that Marcion left 1 Cor. 10:1–6, as well as a few other passages which contain allusions to OT passages in his Bible. He also seems to have left in some moderately positive statements about the law from Romans 2 and 7. This to Harnack was evidence for instructional use of the OT in Marcionite churches. Subsequent researches have not been convinced.

himself had been a Jew.[33] Research since Harnack's time has not substantiated these views. When one examines the works of May, Aland, Bianchi, Drijvers, Muehlenberg, Gager, and Balas, one finds very little on Marcion's relationship to Judaism.[34] Most of these authors imply that what Harnack confidently asserts simply cannot be known. The most notable exception to this is J. Robert Hoffmann who agrees with Harnack on both of the points mentioned above and asserts even more strongly that Marcion learned his biblical interpretation from the Jews.[35]

The most damaging criticism of Harnack's (and Hoffmann's) positions on these matters is that of Wilson who, in line with others before him, argues that Harnack sees Marcion too much in the image of Paul.[36] To Harnack, just as Paul was a Jew who struggled with elements of his Judaism as he became a follower of Christ, so Marcion experienced such a struggle. Wilson deftly points out that the boundaries between synagogue and church were far more clearly drawn in Marcion's time than they had been in Paul's. For a Jew to become a Christian in the second century was quite a different matter from becoming a Christian in the middle of the first. The serious differences between Paul and Marcion on this matter of the relationship to Judaism must be acknowledged. The findings of the present study show yet another difference between Paul and Marcion. Abraham continued to mean something to Paul; the data here suggest that Abraham meant nothing to Marcion. There seems to have been no effort on Marcion's part to maintain Abraham as an example of righteousness or faith. In this Marcion is not only unlike Paul but is also unlike the other two first century Jews from

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[33] Harnack, *Marcion*, English trans., p. 15.

[34] Gerhard May, "Marcion in Contemporary Views: Results and Open Questions," in *Second Century* 6.3 (1987–1988), pp. 129–152; Barbara Aland, "Marcion," in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 70 (1973), pp. 420–447; U. Bianchi, "Marcion: Theologien biblique ou docteur gnostique?" in *Vigiliae Christianae* 21 (1967), pp. 141–149; Hans Drijvers, "Marcionism in Syria: Principles, Problems, Polemics," in *Second Century* 6.3 (1987–1988), pp. 153–172; John Gager, "Marcion and Philosophy," in *Vigiliae Christianae* 26 (1972), p. 58; Ekkehard Muehlenberg, "Marcion's Jealous God" (see n. 6 above), pp. 93–113; and David Balas, "Marcion Revisited," in W.E. March, ed., *Texts and Testaments* (San Antonio, 1980), pp. 95–108.

[35] Hoffmann, *Marcion: On the Restitution* (see n. 6 above), p. 233, and "How Then Know This Troublous Teacher," pp. 175, 179, and 182.

[36] Wilson, "Marcion and the Jews" p. 47. He cites David Balas, "Marcion Revisited" in support. See also Muehlenberg, "Marcion's Jealous God," pp. 93–94.

whom we have a significant amount of literature, namely Josephus and Philo.[37]

Another way in which Marcion differs significantly from Paul is that he shows repugnance for Israel's God. Ekkehard Muelenberg persuasively argued from his analysis of the arguments of Tertullian in *Adversus Marcionem* that it is apparent that Marcion objected to the God of Israel on the basis of his manifestation of the quality *aemulatio*.[38] Muehlenberg noted that according to Tertullian Epicurean thought was the source of this argument. Harnack had asserted that Marcion was not affected by philosophy. Aiding his case is the fact that the heresiologists disagree as to which philosopher Marcion was dependent upon. But John Gager has successfully argued that Tertullian was right in his charge that Marcion received from the Epicureans. He adduced a citation from Epicurus in Lactantius's *De ira dei 13.20–21* in which it is argued that 1) whereas evil exists in the world and 2) whereas it is correct to presume as attributes for deity goodness, power and knowledge of the future 3) therefore, a god with these attributes cannot be responsible for the affairs of the world.[39] Gager's case is strengthened by the fact that elsewhere Tertullian points out that Marcion broods over the problem of evil (*Adv. Marc.* 1.2.2).

Harnack had ruled out philosophy as a significant influence on Marcion on slim evidence, namely the appearance in Marcion's Bible of Col. 1:8, which makes a negative reference to philosophy. The influence of Epicureanism on Marcion, which Gager has demonstrated, is important in another regard. Epicurus was among the philosophers who opposed allegorical interpretation. If Marcion were indebted to Epicureanism for his concept of deity, could he not have inherited his aversion to allegorical interpretation from that source as well? Recent literature on Marcion has not reached a consensus on this. Most follow Tertullian in his assertion that Marcion learned his biblical interpretation (and the aversion to allegorical interpretation

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[37] The importance of Abraham among Jews in the First Century is well documented by Siker (*Disinheriting the Jews*, pp. 15–27). In addition to Philo and Josephus a substantial number of other examples can be adduced including apocalypticists, Dead Sea covenanters, and the early rabbis. For more detail see Samuel Sandmel, *Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature* (Cincinnati, 1956), pp. 30–95, and G.W. Hansen, "Appendix 2: Abraham in Jewish Literature," in *Epistolary and Rhetorical Texts* (Sheffield, 1989).

[38] Muehlenberg, "Marcion's Jealous God," pp. 101–105.

[39] Gager ("Marcion and Philosophy," p. 55) points out that a similar argument is reported of Epicurus in Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 3.9–11.

which this included) from contemporary Jews.[40] The conclusions of the present study do not settle the matter. They do, however, rule out the likelihood that it was because he was a Jew that Marcion was opposed to allegorical interpretation.

The only other position Marcion is alleged to have held that is positive toward the Jews was his willingness to see their messianism as yet to be fulfilled. Unlike the Christians who opposed him, Marcion did not contend that the Jews were misreading their own prophetic scriptures by not seeing the references to Jesus. He argued that they did not see them because they were not there; Jesus was not anticipated by the prophets of Israel. Rather, another Messiah and Messianic age were awaited by them—quite different from that of Jesus. While it is tempting to see in this a residual respect for Jewish reading of their own scriptures, which would make sense had Marcion been a Jew, it is better explained as resulting from Marcion's emphasis on the discontinuity between Israel and the Gospel of Jesus. He may have had recourse to arguments made by Jews against Christians that Jesus is not to be found in the plain meaning of a number of passages which were said to refer to him. But even if he had such recourse, it is unlikely that it was driven by any sort of respect for "Israel according to the flesh." As Wilson aptly pointed out, "Marcion's teaching in general contains a profound denigration of Judaism and the symbols precious to its life and faith. Whether it is in his view of their god, their scriptures, their law, or in his account of Jesus, Paul, or the Jewish Christian conspiracy, in each case Judaism appears as an inferior religion."[41]

This position of Wilson is supported by the conclusions of the present study as is the portrayal of Marcion's view of Judaism argued by Siker. Siker focused on Irenaeus's allegations that according to Marcion Abraham was in some form of hell and the OT characters who were punished by Israel's God received salvation from Jesus. This negative view of Abraham is fully supported by the data of this

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[40] Wilson ("Marcion and the Jews," p. 57) and Balas ("Marcion Revisited," p. 99) both find it likely that Marcion was affected by the live controversy between synagogue and church over the issue of Messianism.

[41] Wilson, "Marcion and the Jews," p. 54. Wilson is right to caution against the position taken by R.M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* (New York, 1959), pp. 121–128, that both Marcion and his Christian opponents were seeking to distance themselves from the Jews in the wake of the Jewish revolts of the 130s. We are simply not sure how these events affected Christians in Asia Minor.

study. The particular detail of Abraham's salvation in a realm other than that of Christ is also born out by the discussions of Luke 16:19–31 (Dives and Lazarus) in *Adversus Marcionem*.

Conclusions

Samuel Sandmel remarked that, "To see what the writer makes of Abraham is often to see most clearly what the author is trying to say."[42] This study has demonstrated that Abraham was *not* important to Marcion, except to distance Jews from Christians. It remains for us to ask about the further implications of Marcion's view of the Jews. Wilson followed Efroymson's argument that the attempt by the Church Fathers to hold onto the Hebrew Scriptures as their own actually escalated the degree of enmity with the Jews. For the Christians to be right about the messianic passages, the Jews had to be wrong. The problem with the God of the OT, which Marcion or others might raise, was seen as a problem with the people of the OT. Thus, the Church Fathers, particularly Tertullian, Justin, Irenaeus, and Origin defended the OT God and the OT scriptures at the expense of the Jews. Efroymson suggests that Marcion was indirectly involved in this process. His challenge to his opponents escalated the conflict, and with dire results for the Jews. I agree with Efroymson.

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[42] "Philo's Place in Judaism," in *Hebrew Union College Annual* 25 (1954), p. 237. On the advice of several colleagues at the Boston Theological Institute NT Colloquium, I checked on how other OT characters fared in Marcion's texts. David is mentioned thirteen times in our text of Luke. In Marcion's text he is mentioned three times, or possibly five, depending on how one adjudicates a difference between Tertullian and Epiphanius. Epiphanius (*Panarion* 42.11.6 scholion 53) indicates that Marcion deleted Luke 18:38–39 but Tertullian seems to indicate that he had it. David is mentioned three times in Romans. Marcion had none of the passages. Moses is mentioned ten times in Luke. In Marcion's text seven of these remained, but in most of the cases the references to Moses serve to dissociate Christians from Jews. Paul's letters Romans and 1–2 Corinthians have nine references to Moses. Four of these stand, but three are in 2 Cor. 3:7–15, where the Jews are unfavorably compared to Christians. Jacob is mentioned four times in Luke; none of these passages appear in Marcion's Gospel. Jacob is mentioned twice in Romans; neither passage appears in Marcion's version. This all accords rather well with the results of the Abraham survey in this study. But this evidence is not as significant as the Abraham evidence, since six of the David references in Luke were in the first two chapters of that Gospel, which may not have been known to Marcion. The situation is roughly the same for Jacob. Also, as Stanley Marrow pointed out to me, Paul's references to Moses are rarely favorable even in the catholic text of his letters.

But Wilson goes one step further hypothesizing that, had the Marcionites prevailed, perhaps things would not have proceeded so tragically. But the results of this study and my analysis of Marcion's relationship to the Jews suggest otherwise. Marcion was subject to the currents of a gentilized Christianity that no longer saw itself in close association with the Jews. Marcion was not heir to Paul's conviction that "all Israel will be saved." His Bible lacked that verse. He was also not heir to a number of the distinctively Jewish aspects of Paul. Marcion was more affected by Philosophy than Paul. He could not abide a God who demonstrated *aemulatio*. Finally, it must be noted that for Marcion, Jesus of Nazareth was not a Jew. Thus Marcionites would be invulnerable to any appeals to the fact that Christians are connected to Judaism by incorporation into Christ. It is questionable to what degree the Church Fathers were influenced by such a view, but the possibility of seeing that connection in a positive way and acting upon it, was at least there.

It is risky to speculate on what the Marcionites would or would not have done to the Jews had they prevailed. It is true, we have no record of their harassing the Jews, but then neither do we see Marcionites obtaining the positions of power in the Roman world that their opponents were later to attain, which enabled them to make life difficult for the Jews. Still, Marcion was no friend of Abraham nor of Abraham's God, and humanity's history of how people deal with people whom they consider to be "children of a lesser God" does not suggest to us that the Marcionite view would have avoided the abuses the Christians were to inflict on Jews in the course of history. If Marcionism had won out in Christianity, any appeal to kinship with the Jews through Abraham and through Jesus would have been lost. That linkage to Abraham and to the Hebrew Bible is an important motivating factor for present day Christian efforts, championed by people like Anthony J. Saldarini, to repudiate Anti-Judaism.

TARGUMIZING TENDENCIES IN MATTHEAN REDACTION

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Anthony Saldarini's work on Jewish sects, the Targum, and rabbinic literature uniquely qualified him to investigate the Gospel of Matthew,[1] the most Jewish of the four New Testament Gospels. Saldarini's study of this Gospel represents his most significant work in New Testament exegesis and theology. His untimely passing is a great loss for scholarship that appreciates the significance of the Jewish world, the world in which early Christianity took root and grew.

Saldarini believed that the Matthean evangelist was himself a Jewish teacher competing for the minds of the Jewish people in the aftermath of the calamity of 70 C.E. The evangelist's harsh criticisms (e.g., Matt. 23:13: "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!;" 27:25: "His blood be on us and on our children!") were not directed against the people as a whole,[2] but against the religious leadership that opposed and persecuted the messianic movement.[3]

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[1] On these topics, see his following publications: A.J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington, 1988); D.J. Harrington and A.J. Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets* (Wilmington, 1987), and A.J. Saldarini, "'Is Saul Also among the Scribes?' Scribes and Prophets in *Targum Jonathan*," in C.A. Evans, ed., *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Sheffield, 2000), pp. 375–389; A.J. Saldarini, *The Fathers according to Rabbi Nathan (Abot de Rabbi Nathan Version B): A Translation and Commentary* (Leiden, 1975); A.J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago and London, 1994).

[2] *Pace* G.N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Edinburgh, 1992; Louisville, 1993), esp. pp. 113–168. Stanton recognizes the intensity of Matthean polemic, which he rightly notes is not always fully appreciated by interpreters of this Gospel. But in the opinion of several other interpreters, with whom the present writer agrees, the Matthean perspective is still best understood in terms of intramural Jewish controversy.

[3] The polemic of Matthew (and John, for that matter) is often misunderstood because it is not read in the light of the harsh and colorful language found in the Hebrew Bible (esp. the Prophets) and in Jewish literature of late antiquity. For more on this, see L.T. Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989), pp. 419–441; C.A. Evans, "Faith and Polemic: The New Testament and First-Century

Saldarini is not alone in his Jewish contextualization of Matthew. Others have come to similar positions. For example, Andrew Overman believes that the Matthean community was in essence a sect within Judaism whose home was Galilee (and not Antioch).[4] In recent work David Sim agrees in large measure with Saldarini and Overman, describing the Matthean community as a "Jewish group of believers in Jesus."[5] Though members of this community may believe in Jesus as the Christ, their community, Sim thinks, is not what would eventually emerge as *Christianity*.[6]

Ongoing study of Matthew's technique as scribe points in the same direction.[7] The recent and welcome appearance of "Scribal Methods in Matthew and *Mishnah Abot*," by Lawrence M. Wills,[8] encourages me to present in Tony's memory this paper, which grew out of a graduate seminar in the spring of 2001. Wills begins his study with these words: "A peculiarity of Matthew's redactional style, one that may be one of some significance, has nevertheless not received sufficient attention in scholarly work on this gospel."[9] This peculiarity is Matthew's antithetical parallelism, something closely paralleled in Abot. In fact, not only do Matthew and Abot share important formal similarities, their approach to wisdom (incarnate in Torah, according to the school of Aqiba; incarnate in Christ, according to

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Judaism," in C.A. Evans and D.A. Hagner, eds., *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith* (Minneapolis, 1993), pp. 1–17.

[4] J.A. Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis, 1990).

[5] D.C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh, 1998).

[6] Aspects of the studies by Saldarini, Overman, and Sim have of course been criticized. The principal objection alleges that these books tend to minimize elements of discontinuity between the Matthean community and the larger Jewish community. Perhaps. Nevertheless, most scholars acknowledge that their work is moving in the right direction. For a recent and helpful assessment of the state of the question, see W. Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Socio-Political and Religious Reading* (Sheffield, 2000), pp. 30–33.

[7] For an older study, see O.L. Cope, *Matthew: A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven* (Washington, 1976). The older studies by B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Lund, 1961), and idem, *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Lund, 1964), both combined and reprinted, with a foreword by J. Neusner (1998), though not limited to the Gospel of Matthew, nevertheless do speak to this issue in a relevant way. See also S. Westerholm, *Jesus and Scribal Authority* (Lund, 1978).

[8] L.M. Wills, "Scribal Methods in Matthew and *Mishnah Abot*," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 63 (2001), pp. 241–257.

[9] Wills, "Scribal Methods," p. 241.

the school of Matthew) has much in common. Wills concludes that the Matthean evangelist lived and worked in scribal circles not too different from those out of which the tradents and editors of Abot emerged. He is correct; comparison with targumizing tendencies in Jewish late antiquity leads to the same conclusion.

Wills's contextual inferences of the Judaic nature of the Gospel of Matthew are consistent not only with Tony Saldarini's arguments, but also with observations made by Bruce Chilton, who has suggested that "the Gospels took shape in much the same way that Targumim did."[10] The plausibility of Wills's thesis as it relates specifically to Matthew and of Chilton's thesis as it relates to the Gospels in general is strengthened when it is observed that the Matthean scribe frequently edits his sources in a manner much like that of the meturgeman who edited and interpreted Isaiah, as he rendered it into Aramaic. This claim will be tested in the balance of the present study.[11] We begin with a review of the tendencies in the Isaiah Targum.

Tendencies in the Isaiah Targum

Bruce Chilton identifies fifteen characteristic terms or phrases, some of which may be regarded as theologoumena, in the Isaiah Targum.[12] It will be helpful to work through this list, even if very briefly.

1. *Law* (אוריתא)

The Isaiah meturgeman, Chilton finds, is "convinced that law is the means offered God's people for relating themselves to him" and that "law is Israel's only way of putting herself on the path to restoration.

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[10] B.D. Chilton, *Profiles of a Rabbi: Synoptic Opportunities in Reading about Jesus* (Atlanta, 1989), pp. 120–121.

[11] Numerous studies have appeared since World War II that have pointed to this parallel and that between the New Testament the Targum. Not all of these studies have exercised the due care that is especially needed in making comparisons with literature that for the most part was composed centuries after the New Testament writings first made their appearance. For a cautious assessment, see B.D. Chilton, *Targumic Approaches to the Gospels: Essays in the Mutual Definition of Judaism and Christianity* (Lanham and London, 1986).

[12] B.D. Chilton, *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Provenience of the Isaiah Targum* (Sheffield, 1982). See also idem, *The Isaiah Targum* (Wilmington, 1987), whose translation is followed (though sometimes with minor modification).

To forsake the law is to forsake life."[13] The data bear this out. According to MT Is. 1:2–3:

> Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: "Sons have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not understand."

But in the Targum we read (with departures from the Hebrew in italics):

> Hear, heavens, *which trembled when I gave my law to my people* . . . they have rebelled against my memra . . . my people has not had the intelligence *to return to my law*.

And in Is. 5:10:

> MT: Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!
>
> Targ.: *And the words of the law* are sweet *to the ones who do them*, and bitterness will come to the wicked, and they will know that in the end sin is bitter to the one doing it.

Compare also 2:3; 26:19; 28:9. Chilton observes an association of "teaching" and "law," from which he plausibly infers that the law was viewed as a living tradition.[14]

2. *Sanctuary* (מקדשׁא)

For the Isaiah meturgeman God's very presence makes the Temple the sanctuary, or holy place.[15] It is therefore not surprising that the meturgeman is highly critical of the first-century ruling priesthood,

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[13] Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, p. 13. A half century ago, J.F. Stenning, *The Targum of Isaiah* (Oxford, 1949), p. xv, remarked: "A noticeable feature of the translation is the frequent reference to the Law and the insistence on obedience to it as the basis of religion." See also M. McNamara, "Some Targum Themes," in D.A. Carson, P.T. O'Brien, and M.A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism*. Volume I: *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* (Tübingen, 2001), pp. 303–356, esp. pp. 309–319.

[14] Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, p. 15.

[15] See B.D. Chilton, "The Temple in the Isaiah Targum," in B.D. Chilton and C.A. Evans, *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration*, with Bruce Chilton (Leiden, 1997), pp. 251–262. The plural "sanctuaries" probably refer to synagogues, where, again, the divine presence may be felt. See Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, p. 18.

under whose administration the Temple was profaned and finally destroyed (cf. 28:1, 10).[16] Note the paraphrase in 32:14:

> MT: For the palace will be forsaken, the populous city deserted. . . .
>
> Targ.: For the sanctuary house is desolate. . . .

The Isaiah meturgeman expects the Temple to be rebuilt by the messiah (see below).

3. *Jerusalem*

The holy city is reassured of her salvation and of the destruction of those who oppress her (cf. 54:15; 56:9). Indeed, it is in Jerusalem that the wicked will be judged (cf. 33:14). In 54:1, the "barren one" who is comforted is explicitly identified as Jerusalem:

> MT: Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in travail! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her that is married, says the Lord.
>
> Targ.: Sing, O *Jerusalem* who was as a barren woman who did not bear; shout in singing and exult . . . For the children of desolate *Jerusalem* will be more than the children of *inhabited Rome*, says the Lord.

Chilton reasonably surmises that the expectation of Jerusalem's comfort and fruitfulness (at the expense of Rome's) may well reflect the growing sentiment in the synagogue between the two great wars with Rome.[17]

4. *Exile* (גלותא)

Israel's sin results in exile (cf. 43:14):

> MT: Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "For your sake I will send to Babylon and break down all the bars, and the shouting of the Chaldeans will be turned to lamentations."
>
> Targ.: . . . *because of your sins you were exiled* to Babylon . . .

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[16] Chilton (*The Glory of Israel*, pp. 20–24) dates much of the criticism and polemic to the Herodian period and therefore to times prior to the destruction of the Temple. The promise that no pagan house of worship will be built in Jerusalem (cf. Tg. Is. 25:2) fits better the pre-70 C.E. period.

[17] See Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum*, pp. 105, 107. The sentiment may even have antedated the first great war; cf. Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, p. 26.

Repentance, however, will void the divine decree of exile (cf. 8:18):

> MT: Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.
>
> Targ.: Behold, *while* I *exist*, and the children whom the Lord has given me, signs and portents *will be realized among us which were promised to come upon* Israel, *that if they see and repent, the decree which was decreed against them—that they go into exile so as not to appear before* the Lord of hosts, *whose Shekhinah is* on the Mount of Zion—*will be void.*

Accordingly, there is hope of regathering (cf. 46:11):

> MT: . . . calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.
>
> Targ.: (I am he) that says *to gather exiles* from the east, to bring openly as a swift bird from a far land *the sons of Abraham my chosen.*

Compare also 53:8; 54:7; 57:17; 66:9.[18]

5. *House of Israel* (בית ישׂראל)

This epithet is used of the people of Israel, whether blessed of God or estranged from God. If Israel keep God's law, her enemies will be punished (cf. 27:4):

> MT: I have no wrath. Would that I had thorns and briers to battle! I would set out against them, I would burn them up together.
>
> Targ.: . . . *if the house of Israel set their face to do the Law*, would I not send my anger and wrath *against the nations* . . .?

Compare also 28:25; 30:13; 42:7.

6. *Repentance* (תיובתא)

According to the meturgeman, if Israel repent *from* iniquity and turn *to* the law,[19] she will be forgiven and restored (cf. 10:21; 28:10):

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[18] See Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, pp. 28–33; idem, "Salvific Exile in the Isaiah Targum," in J.M. Scott, ed., *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (Leiden, 1997) pp. 239–247.

[19] See Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, p. 37.

MT: A Remnant will return. . . .

Targ.: The remnant *that have not sinned and that have turned from sin, the remnant of the house of Jacob*, shall return. . . .

MT: For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.

Targ.: *They were commanded to do the Law*, and what they were commanded they did not wish to do. *The prophets prophesied to them, that if they repented it would be forgiven them* . . .

Compare also 1:3, 6, 16, 18; 17:11; 21:12; 42:14, 19; 50:2; 57:18–19.

7. *Abraham*

Because the house of Israel are descendants of Abraham, who functions as a symbol of God's elect, restoration is possible[20] (cf. 48:15–16):

MT: I, even I, have spoken and called him, I have brought him . . . from the time it came to be I have been there.

Targ.: I, even I, *by my word did make a covenant with Abraham your father*. Indeed, I appointed him. I brought him up to the land of my Shekhinah's house . . . from the time the nations separated from my fear, from *them I brought Abraham near to my service.*

Compare 41:2; 46:11.

8. *Holy Spirit* (רוח קודשא)

In the Isaiah Targum, the Holy Spirit is associated with prophecy[21] (cf. 40:13):

MT: Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord?

Targ.: Who has directed the *Holy* Spirit *in the mouth of all the prophets*; is it not the Lord?

Compare also 42:1; 59:21.

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[20] See Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, p. 46; McNamara, "Some Targum Themes," pp. 339–342 (on Abraham, Jacob, and Judah).

[21] Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, pp. 48–52. For a broader treatment of the Holy Spirit in the Targums, see M. McNamara, *Targum and Testament: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible: A Light on the New Testament* (Shannon and Grand Rapids, 1972), pp. 107–114.

9. *Prophet(s)*

The meturgeman emphasizes the prophetic nature of the oracles by prefacing several with the words, "the prophet said" (cf. 5:1; 61:1):

> MT: Let me sing for my beloved a love song concerning his vineyard.
>
> Targ.: *The prophet said*, "I will sing for Israel, which is like a vineyard, the seed of Abraham my beloved, a song of my love for his vineyard . . ."
>
> MT: The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted . . .
>
> Targ.: *The prophet said*, "A spirit *of prophecy* before the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has exalted me to announce good tidings to the afflicted . . ."

Compare also 5:3, 6; 8:17; 9:5; 22:14; 24:16.

10. *My Memra* (מימרי)

The function of Memra in the Isaiah Targum is complicated; Chilton identifies no fewer than eight.[22] One of these functions sees the Memra as offering Israel divine protection (cf. 27:3):

> MT: Lest any one harm it, I guard it night and day.
>
> Targ.: But though their sins already demand that retribution be taken from them, night and day *my memra* protects them.

Compare also 17:10; 29:19; 41:10, 13, 14; 42:1; 43:2, 5; 45:2; 49:5.

11. *My Shekhinah* (שכינתי)

The meturgeman emphasizes the dynamic presence of God, usually in reference to the Temple, with the theologoumenon My Shekhinah. With the destruction of the Temple, God removed his Shekhinah from Israel (cf. 1:15). But the day will come when the Shekhinah will return (cf. 4:5):

> MT: Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud . . . for over all the glory there will be a canopy and a pavilion.

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[22] Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, pp. 56–69.

> Targ.: And the Lord will create upon all the sanctuary mount of Zion and upon *the place of the Shekhinah house* a cloud of glory . . . for with glory greater than he said he would bring upon it *the Shekhinah will shield it as a shelter.*

Compare also 6:3, 6; 28:10.

12. *Glory* (יקרא)

The term Glory is closely related to Shekhinah and often appears in the same context. Although the former may parallel the latter, its principal reference is to the status, power, or prestige of God (and sometimes of mortals also). In reference to God (cf. 26:10) we have:

> MT: . . . and does not see the majesty of the Lord.
>
> Targ.: . . . and do not see the praise of *your glory.*

Compare also 2:10, 19, 21; 3:17; 35:10.

13. *Kingdom of God* (מלכותא דאלהא)

The meturgeman understands the kingdom of God as the very presence of God himself[23] (cf. 24:23; 40:9):

> MT: . . . because the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion . . .
>
> Targ.: . . . because *the kingdom* of the LORD of hosts will *be revealed* on Mount Zion . . .
>
> MT: Behold your God.
>
> Targ.: *The kingdom* of your God *is revealed.*

Compare also 31:4; 52:7.

14. *The Righteous* (צדיקיא)

The righteous of Israel are promised vindication, often in contrast to the judgment that will fall upon the wicked[24] (cf. 66:24):

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[23] Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, pp. 77–81; McNamara, "Some Targum Themes," pp. 342–346.

[24] Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, pp. 81–86; McNamara, "Some Targum Themes," pp. 319–332, esp. pp. 320–323. For linguistic analysis of the terminology, see K. Koch, "Die drei Gerechtigkeiten: Die Umformung einer hebräischen Idee im aramäischen Denken nach dem Jesajatargum," in J. Friedrich, W. Pöhlmann, and

MT: . . . and they will be an object of aversion to all flesh.

Targ.: . . . and *the wicked will be judged in Gehenna until the righteous say of them, "We have seen enough."*

Compare also 5:17, 20; 11:5; 24:16; 40:13; 65:8.

15. *Messiah* (משיחא)

The messiah envisioned by the Isaiah meturgeman is associated with the restoration of Israel, the gathering of Israel's exiles, and the rebuilding of the Temple. The messianic tradition seems to reflect the hopes of the Jewish people between the two great wars with Rome (i.e., between 70 C.E. and 132 C.E.).[25] The messiah of course is understood as the royal descendant of David (cf. 11:1):

MT: And a shoot will come forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch will grow from his roots.

Targ.: And the *king* will come forth from the *sons* of Jesse, and the *messiah* from his *sons' sons* will grow up.

The messiah will rebuild the Temple (cf. 53:5) and gather the exiles (cf. 53:8–9):

MT: But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

Targ.: He *will build the sanctuary house which was profaned* by our sins and delivered by our iniquities and *by his teaching* his peace will be increased upon us, and by our *devotion to his words* our sins will be *forgiven* us.

MT: By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Targ.: From bonds and retribution he will *bring our exiles near*; the wonders which will be done for us in his days, who will be able to recount?

P. Stuhlmacher, eds., *Rechfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann zum 70. Geburtstag* (Tübingen and Göttingen, 1976), pp. 245–267.

[25] See Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, pp. 86–96. On the restoration of the Temple in the Isaiah Targum, see idem, "Temple Restored, Temple in Heaven: Isaiah and the Prophets in the Targumim," in J.M. Scott, ed., *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 335–362.

> *For he will take away the rule of the peoples from the land of Israel*, the sins which my people sinned he will bring on them. And he will deliver the wicked to Gehenna and those rich in possessions which they robbed to the death of the corruption, lest those who commit sins be established, and speak of possessions with their mouth.

Compare also 4:2; 9:(5)6; 14:29; 16:1, 5; 43:10; 53:10, 11, 12.

Targumizing Tendencies in Matthean Redaction

Several tendencies that have been observed in the meturgeman's rendering of Hebrew Isaiah correspond closely to the editorial tendencies we observe in Matthew. Most of the characteristic terms and phrases observed in the Isaiah Targum are found in Matthew. Indeed, depending on the question of nuance here or there, all fifteen characteristics that Chilton has observed may well have their counterparts in the Matthean Gospel.

Here we are not speaking necessarily of dominical tradition (though in some instances that may well be the case); we are speaking of Matthew's editing, contextualizing, and augmenting the tradition in a manner that reflects or at least coheres with the characteristics that have been observed in the Isaiah Targum. In other words, has the Matthean evangelist handled his principal sources (i.e., Mark and Q) in a manner that is cognate to the meturgeman's handling of Hebrew Isaiah?

Let us consider each of the fifteen characteristic terms and phrases that have been observed in the Isaiah Targum.

1. *Law* (νόμος)

The Matthean evangelist holds to a very high view of the Jewish law. This is seen in the pentateuchal presentation of Jesus' major teaching,[26] as well as in passages that are either unique to Matthew

[26] Jesus' major teaching is presented in five discourses (chaps. 5–7, 10, 13, 18, and 24–25), each concluding with a phrase from Torah, "when Moses/Jesus finished . . ." (cf. Matt. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1; cp. Num. 16:31; Deut. 31:1, 24; 32:45). This was first observed by J.C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae: Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1909), pp. 163–164, and has been accepted by many commentators since; e.g., W.D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 14–25; and more recently D.A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13* (Dallas, 1993), p. li; R.H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids, 1982), pp. 10–11.

or, if parallel to another Gospel, contain otherwise unparalleled references to the law:

5:17–18: Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them . . . not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. (cp. Luke 16:17)

7:12: So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets. (cp. Luke 6:31, which does not have "Law and Prophets")

12:5: Or have you not read in the law. (no equivalent in Mark 2:25; Luke 6:3)

22:36: Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? ("in the Law" not found in Mark 12:28)

22:40: On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets. (no equivalent in Mark 12:31)

23:23: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. (Luke 11:42 makes no reference to law)

The last example is interesting, in that a saying of Jesus in which reference is made to tithing various herbs, such as dill and cumin, is explicitly linked with the law. We find the same association in the Isaiah Targum (cf. 28:25):

> MT: When he has leveled its surface, does he not scatter dill, sow cumin, and put in wheat in rows and barley in its proper place, and spelt as the border?
>
> Targ.: If the house of Israel set their faces to do the law, would he not turn and gather them?

Interpreters identify Is. 28:23–29 as the parable of the Farmer, which teaches the lesson that just as the farmer goes about his work according to a plan, so God also has a plan for Israel and the nations. Scattering dill and cumin in the Hebrew becomes doing the law in the Aramaic. The parabolic form invites further interpretation, and the reference to God instructing and teaching in v. 26 was more than sufficient inducement for the meturgeman to make explicit reference to the law. That the same association appears in Matthew's form of the dominical tradition may well be more than coincidence, but may be evidence of contact with the emerging Aramaic tradition at this specific place in Isaiah.[27]

[27] For another example of possible direct contact between Matthean redaction

2. *Sanctuary* (ναός, ἱερόν, and ἅγιος)

There is a pronounced interest in the Temple in the Gospel of Matthew. Compare, for example, the story of plucking grain on the Sabbath (cf. Matt. 12:1–8; Mark 2:23–28; Luke 6:1–5). At many other points in the dominical tradition reference to the Temple and its priesthood is inserted (e.g., Matt. 5:23–24; 21:12, 14, 15; 24:15; 26:61; 27:5). As in the Isaiah Targum, in Matthew the Temple is sanctified by God's presence:

> 23:16–22: Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If any one swears by the Temple, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gold of the Temple, he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the Temple that has made the gold sacred? And you say, 'If any one swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; and he who swears by the Temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it; and he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it. (cf. Matt. 5:34–35)

There is also specific coherence between Matthew and the Isaiah Targum in reference to the desolation of the Temple. In the example of Is. 32:14 cited above it was observed that the Hebrew's "the palace will be forsaken" becomes in the Targum "the sanctuary house is desolate." Compare the respective forms of the following dominical saying:

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and the Aramaic tradition that eventually finds its way into the Isaiah Targum, compare Matt. 26:52 "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" with Tg. Is. 50:11: "Behold, all you who kindle a fire, *who grasp a sword*! Go, *fall* in the fire *that you kindled* and on the *sword that you grasped*! This you have from my *Memra*: you shall *return* to *your stumbling*" (with italics indicating targumic innovations). Saldarini has also remarked upon the interest in scribes in both the Isaiah Targum and in the Gospel of Matthew. *Scribe* sometimes replaces *prophet*, e.g., Is. 28:7: "The priest and prophet reel with strong drink;" cp. Tg. Is. 28:7: "Priest and scribe are filled with old wine." Similarly, Matthew inserts references to scribes, e.g., Matt. 23:34: "Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes;" cp. Luke 11:49: "I will send them prophets and apostles." See also Matt. 13:52: "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven." For discussion, see Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, p. 54; Saldarini, "'Is Saul also among the Scribes?'," pp. 380–383. Matthew's predilection for scribe may indeed reflect targumic tradition, but it is a tendency found in several other Prophet Targums also, as is well documented in Saldarini's aforementioned essay.

> Matt. 23:38: Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate.
> Luke 13:35: Behold, your house is forsaken.

Interpreters are divided over the meaning of "house" in this saying. Does it refer to the people of Israel (or of Jerusalem, given the apostrophe to Jerusalem at the beginning of the dominical utterance; cf. Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34) or to the Temple? Plausible arguments have been made for both interpretations. But Matthew's addition, "and desolate," favors reference to the Temple, which in the eschatological discourse that follows will be left desolated (cf. Matt. 24:15).[28]

One of the most curious points of coherence involves Jesus' promise to Peter that he will be given the "keys of the kingdom" and that upon him Jesus will build his church (cf. Matt. 16:18–19). When Jesus further promises Peter, "whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," we have coherence with Is. 22:22.

> MT: And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.
>
> Targ.: And I will place the key of the sanctuary house and the authority of the house of David in his hand; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

Isaiah speaks of opening and shutting with authority, which equates with the dominical loosing (or permitting/forgiving) and binding (or forbidding/retaining).[29] However, the Hebrew's "key of the house of David" becomes in the Aramaic the "key of the sanctuary house and the authority of the house of David." We have a collocation and blending of priestly and royal terms, not unlike what we have in Matthew 16, where Peter confesses Jesus to be the messiah and where Jesus promises Peter the keys of the kingdom, whereby he may bind and loose with authority. Given the possible parallel with Is. 22:22 and its Temple orientation in the Aramaic, we may rightly

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[28] See D.A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28* (Dallas, 1995), pp. 680–681; D.C. Allison and W.D. Davies, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*. Volume III: *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII* (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 321–323.

[29] See J.A. Emerton, "Binding and Loosing—Forgiving and Retaining," in *Journal of Theological Studies* 13 (1962), pp. 325–331.

wonder if the reference to building the church on "rock" intentionally alludes to the Temple.[30]

3. *Jerusalem*

The city of Jerusalem also figures prominently in the Gospel of Matthew, as seen in the following examples of material either unique to Matthew, or in edited material paralleled in Mark or Q:

2:1: wise men from the East came to Jerusalem
2:3: When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
4:25: And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan. (Jerusalem not in Mark 1:39; Luke 4:44)
5:35: (Do not swear) by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.
16:21: From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things . . . (Jerusalem not in Mark 8:31)

The reference in 5:35 to Jerusalem as the "city of the great king" alludes to Ps. 48:3: "beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King" (Eng. 48:2).

4. *Exile* (μετοικεσία)

The word *exile* occurs in Matthew's genealogy and nowhere else in the New Testament. The Matthean evangelist uses the exile as one of three major turning-points in Israel's sacred history:

1:11–12: and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the exile to Babylon. And after the exile to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel. . . .
1:17: So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the exile to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the exile to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

[30] See 1 Kgs 5:18 and 6:7, where mention is made of the stone used to build the Temple. Chilton ("Shebna, Eliakim, and the Promise to Peter," in Chilton and Evans, *Jesus in Context*, pp. 319–337, here 336) remarks that, "Jesus is presented as developing *halakhoth* in respect of the Temple."

Although nowhere else in Matthew does the exile come into play, it seems to be an underlying presupposition, in the light of which the Matthean Jesus, as Israel's messiah, should be understood: ". . . you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21); ". . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (10:6); "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (15:24). Jesus is sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, in order to gather them in from exile.

5. *House of Israel* (οἶκος Ἰσραήλ)

Only Matthew's Gospel employs the epithet "house of Israel," both times to signify Israel's priority over against the nations (cf. 10:6; 15:24; for elsewhere in the New Testament, see Acts 2:36; 7:42; Heb. 8:8, 10). The epithet occurs dozens of times in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Exod. 16:31; 40:38; Lev. 10:6; etc.). A "new covenant" is promised the house of Israel: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Jer. 31:31). But Israel must repent: "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Repent . . ." (Ezek. 14:6; cf. 18:30).

The epithet "house of Israel" in Matthew recalls this prophetic summons to national repentance, which is explored further in the following section.

6. *Repentance* (μετάνοια)

At certain points Matthew inserts references to repentance. In 3:2 he places a call for repentance into the mouth of John the Baptist (compare Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). In 3:11 he adds "for repentance" to "I baptize you with water" (compare 1:8; Luke 3:16). At 11:20 he prefaces a woe saying from Q (compare Luke 10:13, which has no such introduction):

> Then he began to upbraid the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent.

Similarly, at the end of the parable of the Two Sons (Matt. 21:28–32), the Matthean Jesus concludes:

> For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and even when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe him.

Repentance is the prerequisite for national restoration, which coheres with the perspective of the Isaiah meturgeman (cf. Tg. Is. 1:18; 10:21; 21:12; 28:10; 57:18–19).

7. *Abraham*

The great patriarch appears in Matthew's incipit, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1), and then of course appears as the point of departure in the first period of time in Israel's sacred history, leading to the appearance of the messiah (cf. Matt. 1:17). Perhaps of more significance is Matthew's form of Q at 8:11:

> I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness

In the Lukan parallel, the three patriarchs appear, but nothing is said explicitly of the righteous sitting *with* them at table (cf. Luke 13:28–29).

8. *Holy Spirit* (πνεῦμα ἅγιον)

It is by the Holy Spirit that Jesus is conceived (Matt. 1:18, 20). When Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit descends upon him (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10 only says "Spirit"). Adding the adjective "Holy" is routinely done in the Isaiah Targum (cf. 40:13; 42:1; 59:21). At 12:18, Matthew quotes Is. 42:18 and applies it to Jesus: ". . . I will put my Spirit upon him. . . ." It is by the Spirit that the disciples speak (cf. Matt. 10:20: "for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you"), as surely as in the Targum it is by the Spirit that there is prophetic utterance (e.g., 40:13; 59:21), and it is in the name of the Holy Spirit that the apostles of Jesus are to baptize disciples (cf. Matt. 28:19).

9. *Prophets* (προφῆται)

Matthew emphasizes the prophetic nature of Jesus' life and ministry. Five times in the infancy narrative Scripture is said to be fulfilled (cf. 1:22; 2:5, 15, 17, 23). Many times elsewhere in Matthew Scripture is said to be fulfilled (cf. 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9). In a saying evidently drawn from Q only Matthew speaks of a prophet (cf. 10:41):

> He who receives a prophet because he is a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and he who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

The Lukan parallel says nothing about a prophet (cf. Luke 9:48). Whereas Luke 11:29 speaks of the "sign of Jonah," Matt. 12:39 speaks of the "sign of the prophet Jonah" (cf. 24:15, where Matthew speaks of the "prophet Daniel"). In Matt. 14:5 John is said to be viewed as a prophet (compare Mark 6:20). In Matt. 21:11 Jesus is said to be hailed by the crowd as a "prophet" (no parallel in Mark or Luke). This is said again in Matt. 21:46 (compare Mark 12:12; Luke 20:19). In 23:30–31 Jesus criticizes the scribes and Pharisees for standing in the tradition with those who have murdered the prophets (not paralleled in Luke 23:30–31).

10. *Word* (ῥῆμα, λόγος)

We should hardly expect to find a parallel to the targumic *memra*, yet Matthew does attest the power of the Word that is consistent with ideas of *memra*:

> 4:4: But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (Luke 4:4 does not have "but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God")
> 8:16: That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick. (cp. Mark 1:34)

With respect to the second quotation, it should be mentioned that the targumic *memra* is linked to healing in Neof. and Ps.-J. Deut. 32:39; Tg. Hos. 14:5–6 (Eng. vv. 4–5); Tg. 2 Chr. 7:14–15; though normally "heal" is translated "forgive" in the Targum.

11. *Shekhinah*

The word Shekhinah or equivalent does not occur in Matthew. However, the idea that God dwells in Jerusalem, or Zion, which we saw above in Tg. Is. 4:5, is also found in a passage unique to Matthew:

> 5:35: . . . or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

But the closest parallel is seen in a post-Easter dominical utterance:

> 18:20: For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

This compares closely to rabbinic sayings, in which mention of the Shekhinah is found:

> M. Abot 3:2: If two sit together and the words of the Law (are spoken) between them, the Shekhinah rests between them.
> B. Sanh. 39a: Wherever ten are assembled (for prayer), there the Shekhinah dwells.

Commenting on Matt. 18:20, D.C. Allison and W.D. Davies conclude that, in Matthew, Jesus has himself been identified with the divine Shekhinah.[31]

12. *Glory* (δόξα)

The word *glory* appears in distinctive passages in Matthew. The first example is redactional, a Matthean gloss that lends a hortatory touch to related metaphors in Q[32] (cf. Luke 8:16; 11:33):

> 5:16: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

The second example is found in redacted Q material:

> 19:28: Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his throne of glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The parallel in Luke (cf. Luke 22:28–30) says nothing about the Son of man sitting on "his throne of glory," elements that derive from Daniel 7. The third example reflects similar tradition and has no parallel outside the Matthean Gospel:

> 25:31: When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his throne of glory.

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[31] Allison and Davies, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 3, pp. 789–91; cf. vol. III, p. 323: "Matthew identified Jesus with the Shekhinah."

[32] Allison and Davies, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, vol. I, p. 478.

13. *Kingdom of God/Heaven* (βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ/τῶν οὐρανῶν)

Bruce Chilton has shown that Jesus' proclamation of the appearance of the kingdom of God reflects a manner of speaking that is found in the Targums, especially the Isaiah Targum.[33] This distinctive understanding is not limited to Matthew, of course (as seen, for example, in Mark 1:15; Luke 11:20). However, Matthew's special interest in this theologoumenon suggests once again an affinity with the Targum. The evangelist makes reference to the kingdom, where none is present in his sources:

4:23 And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. . . . (cf. Matt. 9:35; cp. Mark 1:39; Luke 4:44)

5:19 Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (unique to Matt.)

7:21 Not every one who says to me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (cp. Luke 6:46)

13:19 When any one hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart; this is what was sown along the path. (cp. Mark 4:14–15; Luke 8:11–12)

13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (unique to Matt.)

16:19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (unique to Matt.; cp. Is. 22:22 and Tg. Is. 22:22)

18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (cp. Mark 9:34; Luke 9:46)

18:35–35 Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king. . . . (unique to Matt.)

19:12 there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for

[33] B.D. Chilton, "Regnum Dei Deus Est," in *Scandinavian Journal of Theology* 31 (1978), pp. 261–270; idem, *A Galilean Rabbi and His Bible: Jesus' Use of the Interpreted Scripture of His Time* (Wilmington, 1984), pp. 57–64; idem, *Targumic Approaches to the Gospels*, pp. 99–107.

the sake of the kingdom of heaven. (unique to Matt.; cp. Is. 56:1–8, esp. v. 4)

21:31: "Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." (unparalleled in Mark and Luke)

21:43: Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it. (added to Mark 12:11)

23:13: But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in. (unique to Matt.)

25:34: Then the King will say to those at his right hand, "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (unique to Matt.)

Matthew uses the theologoumenon "kingdom of God/heaven" more than the other Gospels and nearly three times as often as Mark. It would be claiming too much to say that in Matthew, as in the Isaiah Targum, "kingdom of heaven" refers to God himself.[34] However, in Matthew it is clear that the kingdom belongs to God the Father (cf. Matt. 26:29 "my Father's kingdom") and that it is the sphere in which God rules and in which the righteous will have their existence, when the kingdom is fully come.

14. *Righteous/Righteousness* (δίκαιος/δικαιοσύνη)

Commentators have long recognized the importance of righteousness in Matthew. For the evangelist it falls into two basic categories: righteousness as obedience to the law (e.g., 3:15; 5:20; 21:32) and righteousness as obedience to the teaching Jesus (e.g., 5:48; 7:13–27).[35]

But Matthew's emphasis on the righteous has even greater affinity with the Isaiah Targum.[36] The Matthean theme begins with Mary's husband Joseph, who is said to be a righteous man (1:19) and as such adumbrates many Matthean references to the righteous:

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[34] Chilton, "Regnum Dei Deus Est;" idem, *Glory of Israel*, pp. 77–81; cf. K. Koch, "Offenbaren wird sich das Reich Gottes," in *New Testament Studies* 25 (1979), pp. 158–165.

[35] B. Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and His World of Thought* (Cambridge, 1980). The value of Przybylski's work lies in its nuanced approach, in which he distinguishes, among other things, Paul's forensic understanding of righteousness from righteousness in Matthew and in other Jewish sources of late antiquity.

[36] See Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, pp. 81–86.

10:41: He who receives a prophet because he is a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and he who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. (unique to Matt.)
13:17: Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see. (cp. Luke 8:24 "many prophets and kings desired to see what you see")
13:43: Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. . . . (unique to Matt.)
13:49: So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous. (unique to Matt.)
23:28: So you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. (unique to Matt.)
23:29: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous. . . . (unique to Matt.)
23:35: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah. . . . (cp. Luke 11:51 "blood . . . blood of Abel")
25:37: Then the righteous will answer him. . . . (unique to Matt.)
25:46: And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (unique to Matt.; cp. Tg. Is. 66:24)
27:19: Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man. . . ." (unique to Matt.)

15. *Messiah* (Χριστός)

Bruce Chilton remarks that the Isaiah meturgeman's vision of Israel's messiah seems "unqualified by the bitter experience of the Bar Kokhba period" and therefore probably predates 135 C.E.[37] If so, Matthew's understanding of the messiahship of Jesus may well reflect, whether supportively or critically, the hopes embraced by the Isaiah meturgeman and others. The data seem to suggest that this is indeed the case. The Matthean Jesus is introduced as the "Messiah, the son of David" in the opening verse (1:1). Jesus' Davidic ancestry is underscored in the genealogy that follows (1:6, 16, 17, 20), including notice of the birth in Bethlehem, in keeping with the Davidic prophecy of Mic. 5:2 (Matt. 2:1–6). The story of the blind man(men) who hailed Jesus as "son of David" is repeated in Matthew (9:27; 20:30–31; cp. Mark 10:47–48). Only in Matthew does the amazed crowd ask, "Can

[37] Ibid., pp. 86–87.

this be the Son of David?" (12:23). Only in Matthew does the Gentile woman appeal to Jesus as "son of David" (15:22; cp. Mark 7:25). In the entrance narrative Mark's "Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming" (11:10) becomes in Matthew "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (21:9), a cry that continues right on into the Temple precincts (21:15; part of the narrative not paralleled in either Mark or Luke).

The Matthean evangelist summarizes Jesus' activities as the "deeds of the Messiah" (in 11:2; cp. Luke 7:18 "these things"). The Matthean Jesus sends his apostles to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," not to the Gentiles (10:5–6). Indeed, he himself has been sent only to Israel (15:24). Matthew makes use of a Q tradition that speaks of Jesus' gathering Israel (implied; cf. 3:12; 12:30), and makes use of similar Markan tradition (cf. Matt. 24:31: "he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds;" Mark 13:27). All of this material coheres with Targumic tradition (cf. Tg. Is. 53:8–9).

The charge that Jesus had threatened to destroy and then rebuild the Temple brings to mind the Targumic anticipation that the messiah "will build the sanctuary house" (Tg. Is. 53:5). However, the Matthean Jesus has promised to build his church on a rock of a different sort (cf. Matt. 16:18–19), for the kingdom of God will be taken away from the ruling priests and given to another people (cf. Matt. 21:43). The Matthean perspective coheres but does not agree with the Isaiah Targum on this point.

Finally, the risen Messiah of Matthew, to whom all authority has been given, sends his apostles forth to make disciples of all the nations, thus bringing Gentiles under the authority of restored and renewed Israel (cf. Matt. 28:18–20). The day will come when the messiah will sit on his throne of glory, judging the nations (cf. Matt. 19:28; cp. Tg. Is. 16:5: "Then the throne of the messiah of Israel will be established in goodness, and he will sit on it in truth in the city of David").

Conclusion

It is not the hypothesis of this study that Matthew was acquainted with the Isaiah Targum, though the evangelist may have heard some of the Aramaic interpretive and paraphrasing traditions that were

current in the synagogue of his day that would eventually find expression in the later Targum. The tentative hypothesis of the present study is that the Matthean evangelist's approach to the sources that he regarded as dominical, that is, Mark and Q, is at several points cognate to the approach the meturgeman took when translating and interpreting the text he regarded as dominical, namely, the book of Isaiah.

The editorial similarities in the respective works of the evangelist and the meturgeman encourage us to continue study of the Gospel of Matthew in a Jewish context—as Tony Saldarini vigorously contended—a context not far removed from the synagogue and perhaps not far removed from the academy of the post-70 period. It was a tumultuous time, a time of uncertainty and anxiety. The Jewish people were recovering from the recent, devastating war with the Roman Empire. With this recovery came a reassessment of what the Jewish faith entailed and not surprisingly leading voices were urging sharper, less inclusive definition. It was within such a context that a marginal Jewish community, committed to Gentile mission and clinging to its conviction that Jesus was indeed Israel's messiah and fulfillment of prophecy, was attempting to survive. Like the meturgeman in the synagogue, so the evangelist in the church interpreted and paraphrased the sacred story afresh that it might continue to speak to the faithful and to prepare them for what lay ahead.[38]

[38] Retelling Israel's sacred story in the aftermath of the great war with Rome became, one could almost say, a cottage industry among Jewish scholars and seers in the last quarter of the first century. Prominent among these authors was of course Joseph bar Matthias, better known as Flavius Josephus. A great host of apocalyptic literature, such as 2 Baruch, was either produced outright or was significantly updated after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. The Targums and some of the writings of the New Testament at points reflect this general trend.

THE PHARISEES AND JESUS IN GALILEE AND Q

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> Data on the Pharisees is so sparse and difficult to evaluate that any historical reconstruction must remain incomplete and uncomfortably hypothetical
>
> Anthony Saldarini

Tony Saldarini was one of those "young Turks" in our generation of biblical scholarship who realized that the received paradigm in the fields of New Testament studies and Jewish history was no longer tenable. In much of his groundbreaking scholarship, he set about dismantling and replacing the old paradigm heavily determined by modern European Christian (esp. German Lutheran) theology. In graduate school we were drilled on the master narrative of one religion having displaced another. Once upon the fullness of time there was a decadent parochial and overly political religion, Judaism, that reacted against the opportunities presented by rational universalist Hellenic culture. By divine providence, however, in the ministry of Jesus and the conversion and mission of Paul to the Gentiles, emerged a universal and spiritual religion, Christianity, that superseded the tired old religion. The principle problem with Judaism was its obsession with strict observance of the Law, whose normative teachers were the Pharisees, the early rabbis. But Jesus, the prophet who preached forgiveness and love, challenged the Law and the Pharisees' obsession with ritual observances and purity codes; and Paul, the great *homo religiosus*, provided the paradigm of conversion from works-righteousness to righteousness by faith.

Saldarini and others of his generation, particularly those who specialized in late second-temple Judean and early Rabbinic sources, could not avoid recognizing two prominent features of their subject matter: There was considerable diversity among the literatures and groups or movements that were usually lumped together as Judaism. And what later emerged as "normative" Rabbinic Judaism was not yet a historical reality at the time of Jesus and Paul. Still assuming

that the standard "philosophies" or "sects" of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes (and "Zealots") constituted the important groups—and perhaps focused on the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls—many scholars moved to the concept of "sectarian Judaism." Jacob Neusner, who pioneered the new critical study of Rabbinic literature and has profoundly influenced our generation of scholarship, suggested that, since what later emerged as a normative Rabbinic Judaism was still undergoing a process of formation, the appropriate term was "formative Judaism." And he and some of his students also suggested that, considering the diversity within Judaism, it was only appropriate to think in terms of "Judaisms" prior to the emergence of "formative Judaism."

Although he continued to use the term "Judaism," Saldarini pushed our fields to rethink the literature, groups, and history that constituted our subject matter in other key respects. In contrast to the historically distinctive separation of religion from political-economic affairs in modern western societies, "in traditional society, including the Roman empire and Jewish Palestinian society, religion was embedded in the political and social fabric of the community. Religious belief and practice were part of the family, ethnic, and territorial groups into which people were born."[1] In studying texts, groups, and movements in late second temple Judea, therefore, we are dealing with a whole society, in the same way that other fields deal with a whole society. It is an obvious step, therefore, to borrow and adapt disciplines such as sociology and anthropology in approaching Judean history and literature and their embedded religious dimension. In much of his seminal scholarship of the 1980s and 1990s, this is what Saldarini pioneered and taught the rest of us, particularly with regard to the Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees and the Gospel of Matthew and its Christian Jewish community.[2] And in challenging and replacing the old paradigm in biblical studies, Saldarini virtually reversed the dominant previous understanding of the historically most influential Gospel, that of Matthew. Far from presenting the good news of the new religion of Christianity that condemned and superceded the old religion of Judaism, Matthew was situated firmly within the strug-

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[1] Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington, 1988), p. 5.

[2] I cite only the two principal books from the late 1980s and early 1990s: *Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees . . .*; and *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago, 1994).

gles among the diverse groups and movements struggling to chart a path of social renewal in the aftermath of the Roman devastation of Israel in Palestine in suppression of the great revolt of 66–70.

With Saldarini having already laid out definitive analysis of the Pharisees and the Gospel of Matthew, I would like to honor his path-breaking scholarship by slipping underneath Matthew's gospel to one of its sources, the sequence of Jesus speeches called "Q," to investigate its representation of Jesus' attack on the Pharisees. In pursuing this investigation, moreover, I would like to proceed further along the lines of investigation that Saldarini pioneered on the Pharisees.

Pharisees and Scribes as Retainers of the Jerusalem Temple-State

In a systematic analysis of the sources, Saldarini laid out a convincing case that the Pharisees, along with the scribes, were intellectual-legal *retainers* deployed by and dependent on the governing class of the ancient agrarian society in Judea (Palestine). More precisely, we might say that the Pharisees and scribes were scribal retainers of the Jerusalem temple-state that ruled Judean and other Israelite peoples in Palestine, prior to and later in cooperation with the Roman imperial regime and their client Herodian "kings." This conceptualization offers a far more historically precise replacement for the vague and questionably historical concept of proto-rabbis as the normative interpreters of the Torah and the anachronistic concept of a "sect" of a "religion."

Saldarini's case in *The Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees* is based on a well-reasoned critical analysis of the sources, among which Josephus is of particular importance. He finds that the previous thesis about Josephus' *Antiquities*, in contrast with those in the *War*, presenting a brief for the Pharisees' recognition by the Romans as the appropriate leaders of post-70 Judea lacks plausibility. His own and others' careful critical analysis of key sources, particularly legends of Yohanan ben Zakkai and the council of Yavneh, suggested that the Romans did not recognize the Pharisees or any other body as leaders of Judean society for several generations after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.[3] "The emerging rabbis did not immediately take

[3] Review of the evidence in Lee I. Levine, 'The Jewish Patriarch (Nasi) in

over and receive recognition from the people and the Romans" (p. 131)—perhaps until the time of Judah the Prince. Therefore, "Since Josephus' accounts of Pharisaic disruptive and revolutionary political involvement in the *Antiquities* do not derive from or especially serve his political purposes, these accounts are to be trusted as representative of Pharisaic political involvement" (p. 131). That also pulls the rug out from under much NT scholarship on Jesus and the synoptic Gospel tradition and Gospels which was based on the assumption that soon after 70, from Yavneh on, the Romans had placed the Pharisees in charge of Palestinian Jewish society.

Saldarini's social location of the Pharisees and scribes as retainers in an ancient agrarian society uses the widely influential comparative historical-sociological scholarship of Gerhard Lenski and other studies, such as John Kautsky's on "aristocratic empires." "Agrarian societies . . . are constituted by two major classes separated by a wide gulf and unmediated by a middle class . . . a large peasant class which produces . . . and a small, elite governing class which . . . lives off the agricultural surplus. . . . [T]he peasants are forced to produce a surplus which can be extracted from them, usually by burdensome taxes" (p. 36).[4] "The governing class maintained its position with the assistance of what Lenski calls retainers, whose roles in society were military, governing, administrative, judicial and priestly" (p. 37).

Saldarini finds a vivid illustration of his argument in Josephus' account of the confrontation between the Pharisees and the Hasmonean high priest John Hyrcanus, when the latter angrily rescinded the Pharisees' "rulings" not found in the law of Moses as state law and replaced them in the state administration with the Sadducees. "The Pharisees are pictured as part of Hyrcanus' circle of retainers and as a group they have achieved considerable influence. . . . Any power they have is based on influence with Hyrcanus. . . ." (87–88). Again Josephus portrays the Pharisees as retainers of the temple-state when Alexandra Salome reinstates them into governmental administration

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Third-Century Palestine," in *Aufsteig und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* 2.19.2 (1979), pp. 649–688; and *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (New York, 1989), chap. 4; Shaye Cohen, "The Significance of Yavneh: Pharisees, Rabbis, and the End of Jewish Sectarianism," in *Hebrew Union College Annual* 55 (1984), pp. 36–38.

[4] Drawing on Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York, 1966); John H. Kautsky, *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires* (Chapel Hill, 1982); and others.

and their "rulings" as state law (p. 91). Sociologically, the Pharisees are part of Lenski's retainer class, in the service of the ruling class as bureaucrats, educators, and officials" (p. 94). These are not merely squabbles about religious interpretation of the Torah. Rather, "the views of these groups affect the running of the Jewish state"(p. 117).

Neusner had already noted the prominent political role that the Pharisees played under the Hasmoneans.[5] Most influential in the fields of Jewish history and New Testament studies, however, was his thesis that under Herod's iron-fisted rule, they had more or less withdrawn from political affairs and focused mainly on a set of religious issues such as table fellowship, purity, and tithing. Saldarini argued instead that "the Pharisees remained influential actors at the highest levels of society, both in Herod's court and in the Sanhedrin. . . . The Pharisees, like all upper classes, were controlled by Herod and failed to attain any real power while he lived, yet they did not withdraw, but remained active participants in political life" (p. 95). In fact, they had "considerable influence on the opponents of Herod" (p. 100). Moreover, again on the eve of the revolt, "the Pharisees are in the thick of things as part of the "governing class" (p. 102). "That the Pharisees did survive after the reign of Herod as a political force is attested to by the presence of Pharisees among the Jerusalem leaders at the beginning of the war with Rome and on the delegation sent from Jerusalem to Josephus in Galilee" (p. 133).

About the scribes as well, Saldarini concludes that they were retainers of the temple state in Jerusalem. This is evident, for example, even in early sources such as Antiochus III's letter to Ptolemy, governor of Coele-Syria (c. 200), where "the scribes of the temple," mentioned along with the senate, the priests and the temple-singers, are "concerned either with the financial and organizational functions of the Temple or with the recording and teaching of sacred traditions and laws . . ." (pp. 249–250). Scribes are dependent on Temple revenues and subordinate to the priests who controlled the Temple. Indeed, scribes appear in the same or similar position in Ben Sira's teaching of scribal protégés, Josephus' historical accounts, and the Gospels, among other sources, where they "are associated with Jerusalem and the chief priests as part of the government, high

[5] Jacob Neusner, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1973), chap. 3.

officials and advisors, thus typical members of the retainer class . . ." (pp. 254–255, 261–266).[6] That is, like the Pharisees, the scribes based in the Temple were not just or even primarily interpreters of the Torah, but were advisors, administrators, and aides in the religiously constituted political economy of the temple-state.

Saldarini's determination, by careful examination of the sources (separately), that the Pharisees, like the scribes, were retainers of the Jerusalem temple-state enables us to locate them in the overall political-economic structure of ancient Judean society and to discern their social role/function. Although still regnant for most in the New Testament field, the dominant older picture of the scribes and Pharisees as *Schriftgelehrte*[7] was no longer credible to those with closer knowledge of the sources. Neusner had already decisively challenged this standard old picture, suggesting that scripture interpretation was not even their primary activity. Saldarini was able to inscribe the Pharisees and scribes on the sociological map of Judea and to explain their function as administrators of the temple-state, one that continued through the significant changes in the governing class from Hasmoneans to Herod to priestly aristocracy under Roman governors and eventually the provisional government of the great revolt. This allows us to take seriously Josephus' statements not only that they had once cultivated extra-scriptural rulings that had been part of state law and were unrivalled interpreters of the laws, the Qumranites complaints that they were "smooth interpreters," and their representation in the Gospels' as challenging Jesus on questions of the laws. But their activity in legal interpretation and promulgation can no longer stand as the be-all and end-all of their function as scribal retainers, administrators and representatives of the Jerusalem temple-state, instrumental to and (politically-economically) dependent on their high priestly patrons.

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[6] See further Richard Horsley and Patrick Tiller, "Ben Sira and the Sociology of the Second Temple," in *Second Temple Studies 3* (Sheffield, 2002), pp. 74–107, for a critique of Lenski's sociological model and close analysis of evidence in the book of Sirach on the political-economic structure and social roles in Second-Temple Judean society.

[7] Standardized by Emil Schürer, *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (various editions since 1874; Leipzig, 1886–1911); perpetuated in standard scholarly works through Martin Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus* (Tübingen, 1969).

Jesus and Jesus-Movements among the Peasantry

Saldarini's sociological location of the Pharisees and scribes as retainers in the Jerusalem temple-state that headed the traditional agrarian society of Judea/Palestine has obvious implications for the conflicts between the Pharisees and Jesus as represented in the Gospels. In such a society divided between the rulers and the peasants, Jesus and his followers obviously belonged to the productive peasantry who constituted the vast majority of the people governed with the assistance of the Pharisees and scribes. The conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees portrayed in Mark and other Gospel materials was rooted in the religiously sanctioned political-economic structure of the historical situation. As Saldarini explained briefly at certain points, on the basis of the standard comparative historical-sociological studies on which he was drawing, "The activities, interests and outlooks of the governing and peasant classes totally differed from each other. The peasants . . . lived in a world apart from the upper classes and the townsfolk who were dependent on the governing class" (p. 37).

Although such information was not necessary for his analysis of the social position and function of scribes and Pharisees, Saldarini was already aware of some key aspects of the class division that previous scholarship had tended to ignore, which some of us in conversation with him here in Boston were beginning to explore. He mentioned in passing that peasant villages were basically semi-autonomous communities in charge of conducting their own affairs. Although he was not quite sure how to take Gospel accounts that seemed to portray the Pharisees as active in Galilean villages, he was clear that "the leaders of a village were the elders . . . who were the leaders of prominent families" (pp. 51–52)—and not the Pharisees, as often supposed. He was one of the first to recognize that insofar as all but one or two of the synagogue buildings that archaeologists had explored dated from the third century C.E. and after, the synagogues mentioned in the Gospels must refer not to religious buildings but to local village assemblies. "It is likely that the town assembly for business and celebration was coextensive with the assembly for prayer on Sabbath and feasts" (p. 52). Subsequent studies argued that the synagogue was indeed the form of local community governance, i.e., the village assembly.[8] Gospel texts such as Mark 13:9

[8] Howard Clark Kee, "The Transformation of the Synagogue after 70 C.E.: Its

and Luke 1:11 suggest that local synagogues/assemblies had political jurisdiction and authority to keep the peace and to discipline troublemakers. In the Mishnah (e.g., M. Sheb. 4:10) it is assumed that the village assembly or certain members thereof constituted themselves as a court ("house of judgment"). Tosefta passages indicate that the assembly of a village (*ir*) was competent to regulate its own local economic affairs, such as the wages of workers.[9]

In fact, far from being a unified, homogeneous "society," late second-temple Judea and Galilee consisted of communities at two different levels.[10] The economic base was comprised by hundreds of semi-independent self-governing and economically self-sufficient village communities. The vast majority of Judeans and Galileans were thus largely defined and determined by their membership in village communities, the component families of which were relatively continuous over many generations. The hundreds of village communities were subject to and taxed by the "governing class" of the priestly aristocracy and Herodians located in urban communities of their retainers and the artisans and others who served their needs, mainly Jerusalem, but also, after the Romans placed Antipas in charge of Galilee and Perea, in the cities he (re-)built, Sepphoris and Tiberias. So long as taxes and tithes and offerings were paid regularly, rulers interfered very little in village affairs. We have the impression, however, that Herod and Antipas were quite rigorous in their collection revenues, and both Josephus and certain Rabbinic passages suggest that by mid first century high priestly families had become downright predatory (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.206–7; B. Pes. 57a). Saldarini was clear also about the potential conflict inherent in this political economic structure. "Representatives of the government, such as bureaucratic officials and tax collectors, . . . if they were foreign or perceived as hostile to the villagers, were [seen as] adversaries of the village leaders" (p. 52).

Import for Early Christianity," in *New Testament Studies* 36 (1990); Martin Goodman, *State and Society in Roman Galilee, A.D. 132–212* (Oxford, 1983); Richard A. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics*, People (Valley Forge, 1995), chap 10. In the synoptic Gospels and Acts, only two uses of *synagoge*, Luke 7:5 and Acts 18:7, clearly and unambiguously refer to a building. In all of the Markan occurrences (e.g., 1:21,23,29; 3:1; 6:2; and the Matthean and Lucan parallels) the assumption is that the *synagogai* are local *assemblies*, with nothing in the texts to suggest that buildings might be involved.

[9] Goodman, *State and Society*, 120; Horsley, *Galilee*, pp. 227–233.

[10] Discussed briefly in Richard A. Horsley, *Sociology and the Jesus Movement* (New York, 1989), chap 4; more fully in Horsley, *Galilee*, chaps 8–10.

Historical, Political, and Cultural Factors in Relationship of Pharisees and Jesus

1. *Regional Differences Compounding the Division between Rulers and Peasantry*

Since Saldarini's foundational analysis of the social positions and roles of the Pharisees and scribes a number of other factors have emerged that impinge decisively on interpretation of Jesus and the Pharisees. Most significant perhaps is the difference in regional historical experience between Galilee and Jerusalem/Judea that compounded the class difference between ruling cities and subject villages. According to biblical narratives, most of the tribes of Israel, originally independent of any kingship, had rebelled against the Davidic rule from Jerusalem after Solomon's death. Then Galilean villages remained part of a separate imperial province for centuries, while Judean villagers had for centuries been subject to the "second" Temple under the Persian and Hellenistic empires and participated in the successful war of liberation against Antiochus Epiphanes. Not until 104 B.C.E. were the Galileans subjected to Jerusalem rule by the Hasmoneans. They continued under the Jerusalem Temple and high priesthood under the rule of Rome and Herod the Great. After the latter's death, however, while Judea proper continued directly under the Temple/high priestly administration and Roman governors, Galilean villagers were subject to the regime of Antipas, then to various Herodian or Roman jurisdictions, with the Temple/high priests apparently left to exert whatever influence they could from Jerusalem (but without direct jurisdiction).

These divergent histories combined with a temporary subjection of Galilee to Jerusalem rule resulted in serious cultural divergences and political-religious tensions between Galileans and the ruling institutions in Jerusalem. While most Galileans were presumably Israelite, they were not Judeans. There is simply no evidence of a mass migration of Judeans northward in the generations immediately following the Hasmonean take-over of Galilee. Previous claims that prominent priestly families resided in Sepphoris during the first century C.E. appear to be projections from later sources.[11] The consensus among

[11] Stewart S. Miller, *Studies in the History and Tradition of Sepphoris* (Leiden, 1984), pp. 62–88, 120–127.

Jewish historians is that the migration of sages northward to Galilee happened well after the disaster of 70 C.E., and probably mainly following the further Roman devastation of Judea in suppressing the Bar Kokhba revolt. I have argued that the most compelling reading of the fragmentary evidence from earlier centuries is that most Galileans in second temple times were the descendants of northern Israelite peasants who were left on the land by the Assyrians who deported the ruling class in Samaria. Therefore Galileans were not "forcibly converted" by the Hasmonean army, as were the Idumeans.[12] They were already Israelites, living out of Israelite traditions shared with Judeans and, to a degree, the Jerusalem temple-state (to be explored momentarily).

The inhabitants of Galilee, however, previously subject to the Itureans, and before that under a separate Persian or Ptolemaic or Seleucid imperial administrative district that separated them from Judea, were required by the Hasmonean regime to become subject to "the laws of the Judeans," according to Josephus' account (*Ant.* 13.318). Josephus does not clarify precisely what is meant by "the laws of the Judeans." We may presume what it included "the laws of Moses" in some form or another. We would be hard-pressed to find any evidence that Galilean villagers used or even knew of a written form of the Torah/Law of Moses (in five books, etc.) prior to coming under Hasmonean rule. Because source material is so limited and fragmentary, taking a leaf from Saldarini's notebook, we may seek help from social sciences in attempting to understand what the subjection of the Galileans to "the laws of the Judeans may have meant" in concrete social-historical terms.

2. *Great Tradition and Little Tradition*

In striving to understand the cultural variations they find among the peasantry versus what prevails in ruling circles in agrarian societies, anthropologists have developed the distinction between the "little tradition" cultivated and lived by ordinary people and the "great tradition," the official version of a cultural tradition maintained by professional custodians and interpreters, often partly in written forms.[13]

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[12] Horsley, *Galilee*, chap. 2.

[13] The treatment most useful for ancient Judean and Galilean materials is James C. Scott, "Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition," in

These traditions, moreover, both popular and official, are not simply free-floating culture, but are the stories and customs and laws by which people live or by which rulers and their retainers organize and control social life. The "little" and the "great" traditions may well have much of the same "content" and there is regular interaction between them, as when the official tradition might finally recognize and take into itself stories and even dissident figures who had emerged from the popular tradition or when oral transmission of the popular tradition might be altered under influence by the textually based great tradition as pressed on the people by official interpreters. But there can be differences in content and certainly differences in emphases between the popular and the official traditions, even to the point that they would appear to be different patterns of belief and practice. It is significant that the variation between popular and official traditions depends partly on the "distance" between the village communities and the ruling elite.

There is historical basis for both common content and divergent understanding and emphases between an official tradition based in the ruling institutions in Jerusalem, on the one hand, and Galilean popular tradition(s), on the other. Both were rooted in Israelite history, from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob/Israel through Moses, the exodus, and the covenant, to at least David and Solomon. Thereafter the Israelites, except for Judah and Benjamin, rejected Jerusalem (Solomonic) rule, and continued under different Israelite or foreign imperial rule for eight centuries, all the while developing distinctive traditions of their own, such as stories about Elijah and Elisha. Yet even during that period of divergence, some popular northern Israelite traditions, such as the Elijah-Elisha cycle in 1–2 Kings and the prophecies of Amos and Hosea (along with popular Judean traditions, such as the prophecies of Micah) were taken up into the great tradition established in the post-exilic Temple-state centered in Jerusalem. Neither the Jerusalemite great tradition nor the Judean and Galilean little traditions would have been frozen, fixed in

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Theory and Society 4 (1977), pp. 1–38, 211–46. On Israelite popular tradition, see further Horsley, *Galilee*, 148–56; Horsley, "Israelite Traditions in Q," in Horsley and Jonathan Draper, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg, 1999), chap 5; and Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plor in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, 2001), pp. 156–161.

permanent form, but continuing to develop for centuries prior to the Hasmonean take-over of Galilee.

Indeed, there is increasingly widespread debate in the interrelated fields of Jewish history and biblical studies regarding just when the biblical tradition of the Jerusalem temple-state assumed more or less fixed form as written literature. And that debate must inevitably come to grips with yet another issue that is only beginning to emerge in these fields focused on what most biblical scholars have simply assumed: an ethos of literacy.

3. *Oral communication*

One of the most striking and distinctive aspects of late second temple Judea must surely be its amazing level of literary productivity. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has further illuminated both the remarkable variety and sheer quantity of literature produced in Hebrew and Aramaic by Judean scribal circles during the Hellenistic, Hasmonean, and early Roman periods. Nevertheless, oral communication, not literacy, was still dominant in Judea as well as Galilee, as in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean world generally. A few pioneers in Jewish history and biblical studies have outlined the basically oral communication environment, while most scholars in these fields resist the obvious—understandably since our professional "bread and butter" focuses on the analysis and interpretation of texts, understood and practiced on the assumptions and procedures of print culture.[14] Recent studies by classics scholars have made clear that at most fifteen percent of the people in the Roman empire generally were even minimally literate.[15] And even if we had still relied on special pleading about how literate the "biblical" people of "Judaism" were, a comprehensive recent study has made unavoidably clear that literacy was not more prevalent and practiced in Judea than in the rest of the Roman empire.[16] Rabbinic scholars, of course, have known

[14] Werner Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel* (Philadelphia, 1983); Pieter J.J. Botha, "Graeco-Roman Literacy as Setting for New Testament Writings," in *Noetestamentica* 26 (1992), pp. 201–222; and Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word* (Louisville, 1996).

[15] See especially William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA, 1989).

[16] See especially now, Catherine Heszer, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tübingen, 2001).

for some time that scripture itself as well as Rabbinic learning was memorized, recited, and cultivated and debated orally. Neusner, as usual, was one of the leaders in exploring this issue as it came to the fore, and other Rabbinic scholars have furthered the discussion, particularly by focusing on the "oral Torah," or "Torah in the mouth."[17]

That oral communication was dominant in Judea and Galilee has serious implications for exploring issues such as the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees, as represented in Gospel literature. Galilean and Judean villagers were basically non-literate. But that does not mean that they were ignorant, for such villagers cultivated their revered Israelite traditions orally in families and village assemblies, from generation to generation. Covenant commandments and customs constituted the basis for family and village community life, social-economic as well as religious. Previous scholarly arguments that the (written) Torah was known in Galilee have focused on matters such as observance of the Sabbath and the practice of circumcision. But Galilean villagers hardly needed to be literate to know about and observe the Sabbath, circumcise their male infants, honor their father and mother, refrain from stealing from their neighbors, set aside tithes, leave their fields fallow on the seventh year for the sake of the poor, recite traditional prayers, sing the psalms of Miriam and Deborah, celebrate the Passover, and recite stories about Elijah. Israelite popular tradition was cultivated and practiced orally in village communities, which had little need of writing (except perhaps in dealing with officials of the state). Judean and Galilean peasants may well have held written texts, particularly sacred scrolls, in high regard. Written texts laid up in the Temple may well have been surrounded by an almost divine aura in the popular mind. But parchment scrolls were extremely expensive and beyond the reach of most village communities. In this connection Saldarini was far ahead of most in the field when he wrote the book on the Pharisees and scribes: "It is doubtful that small poor villages had their own Torah scroll or a teacher learned in more than the basics of the law" (pp. 52–53).

Equally difficult for us moderns who assume print culture, perhaps,

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[17] See especially Jacob Neusner, *Oral Tradition in Judaism: The Case of the Mishnah* (New York, 1987); and Martin Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth* (Oxford, 2001).

is that oral communication also dominated in scribal circles, despite their literacy. In his book of wisdom Ben Sira writes about how the scribe/sage devotes himself "to the study of the law of the Most High, . . . and seeks out the wisdom of all the ancients." Yet he does not cite specific laws and sapiential sayings from written texts. Rather, it is by memorization and oral cultivation that "he preserves the sayings of the famous and penetrates the subtleties of parables; seeks out the hidden meanings of proverbs" as he "serves among the great and appears before rulers" (Sira 38:34–39:4). It is not by accident that we do not possess literature written by Pharisees. In a predominantly oral society, including the court of the ruling elite, scribal retainers such as Ben Sira and Pharisees such as Gamaliel were valuable because they had, not at their finger tips, but stored up in their mind for the right situation and moment the appropriate proverbs, parables, and prophecies, as well as the ancestral "laws of the Judeans—whether they were also written in the laws of Moses or were the regulations handed down by the fathers/elders, as in the dispute between the Pharisees and John Hyrcanus (*Ant.* 13.297; cf. 408). Nothing in those accounts of Ben Sira and Josephus suggest that the scribes/sages or Pharisees concerned were engaged in reading written texts, even though such texts existed and part of their "job-definition" was their ability to read them.

4. *The Status and Presence/Absence of Scripture*

This predominance of oral communication even in scribal circles leads to yet another, related issue bearing on the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees, as represented in Gospel texts. Another contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls to current discussions of biblical materials is the evidence they provide for the state of the development of the text of biblical literature. Colleagues who have devoted the better part of their careers to poring over scrolls of the books of the Torah are finally able to report on some of their systematic study of text types and their development.[18] (As I understand it,) several different text types (usually three) were present (simultaneously)

[18] See especially Eugene Ulrich, "The Bible in the Making: The Scriptures at Qumran," in Eugene Ulrich and James VanderKam, eds., *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Notre Dame, 1993), pp. 77–93, and Emanuel Tov, "Biblical Texts as Reworked in Some Qumran

at Qumran, the proto-Masoretic, the proto-Samaritan, and a Hebrew parallel to the LXX, and all three were still developing. Such evidence suggests that we are not at all certain that a standard text of the Torah prevailed in Judea, much less in Galilee, in late second temple times. Josephus writes that the Pharisees were the unrivalled and accurate interpreters of the laws. But what version of the laws, and in what mode, written or oral, were they the accurate interpreters of? And given the general non-literate knowledge of Israelite tradition among Galilean villagers such as Jesus and his followers and the probable unavailability of costly scrolls in villages such as Nazareth and Capernaum, it seems highly unlikely that Jesus and the Pharisees were, as it were, "on the same page," when it came to disputes about the Law.

5. *The Possible Role of Pharisees in Galilee*

All of these complications of class and regional historical and cultural differences, however, may at least frame the way we might approach one of the principal conundrums of the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. The Gospels are the only sources that place the Pharisees in Galilee for more than a short mission as envoys of the Jerusalem government (Josephus' account of the largely Pharisaic delegation sent by the provisional government in 67 to relieve him of his "command" in Galilee). But are the Gospel accounts persuasive and sufficient to evoke confidence that the Pharisees did, in fact, historically operate in Galilee? In his analysis of Gospel sources for the Pharisees. Saldarini saw the problem clearly—and judging from his tentative observations on key Gospel passages had not yet arrived at a solution with which he felt confident. It is likely that no such solution will be possible given our limited sources. Meanwhile, many Gospel interpreters, also recognizing the problem, have seized on that component of the old paradigm that had the Romans recognizing the Pharisees soon after the destruction of the Temple as the new leaders of Palestinian Judaism. As noted already above, however, it is now apparent that the Romans did not so recognize the Pharisaic and other leaders at Yavneh and their immediate successors and that proto-Rabbinic circles did not migrate to Galilee until after the Bar Kokhba revolt and even then had questionable authority

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Manuscripts with Special Attention to 4QRP and 4Qpara Gen-Exod," in ibid., pp. 111–134.

among the people—in an emerging consensus to which Saldarini and other critical scholars contributed.[19]

There is a far more appropriate way to state the question, however. Can we imagine, on the basis of the more precise sketch of the multifaceted history of the relations between Jerusalem rulers and the Galilean people, historical circumstances in which the Pharisees may have played a role in Galilee that would provide a possible historical basis for the emergence of the Jesus-traditions that appear in Mark and the other sources of Matthew and Luke? I can think of two possibilities, one of which Saldarini suggested, at least briefly and in passing.

The Hasmoneans, says Josephus, required the inhabitants of Galilee to become subject to "the laws of the Judeans." If we trust Josephus' accounts, the Pharisees played a significant role as legal-scribal retainers in the Hasmonean regime (under John Hyrcanus) well before the take-over of Galilee and were reinstated in that role (by Salome Alexandra) in the first generation of Jerusalem rule in the area (*Ant.* 13.295–297, 408–409). In that capacity they, among other things, promulgated regulations/rulings not contained in the (written) laws of Moses that were handed down by the(ir) ancestors. And they were supposedly experts in the interpretation of the laws. Who would have been more obvious candidates for the Hasmonean regime to delegate to represent "the laws of the Judeans" to the Galileans?

But two important caveats are immediately necessary on the basis of what we know of Hasmonean history and the division of an agrarian society into village communities, on one level, and the ruling elite, on the other. First, the sixty some years of Hasmonean rule over Galilee were filled with turmoil that would have kept the regime preoccupied with its own survival and less attentive to the consolidation of its rule in Galilee (following Josephus' account in *Ant.* 13). Alexander Jannaeus was utterly devoted to wars of expansion and, far from deploying the Pharisees and other intellectuals, fell into virtual civil war with them, viciously executing many hundreds. After the Pharisees were restored to power under the short reign of Alexandra Salome,

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[19] Anthony J. Saldarini, "Johanan ben Zakkai's Escape from Jerusalem: Origin and Development of a Rabbinic story," in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 6 (1975), pp. 189–220; Peter Schaefer, "Die Flucht Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai aus Jerusalem und der Grundung des 'Lehrhauses,'" in W. Hase and H. Temporini, eds, *Aufsteig und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* 2.19.2 (Berlin, 1979); and the items in n. 3 above.

civil war erupted among rival Hasmonean factions, the Romans took over Palestine, and civil war erupted again periodically between rival Hasmoneans. Thereafter, the Pharisees experienced a demotion of status and lessening of influence and role, insofar as the Romans' client king Herod installed his own political-economic administration, while keeping the temple-state in a subordinate position. Second, that makes it all the more unlikely that in subjecting the Galileans to "the laws of Moses" the Hasmonean regime could possibly have attempted a thorough "re-socialization" of Galilean village communities, i.e., attempting to replace Galilean popular tradition with Judean official or popular tradition. Rather they were imposing "the laws of the Judean temple-state" on the Galileans, laws pertaining to political economic relations between village communities and the Temple/high priesthood on such matters as revenues (including tithes and offerings) and other related matters in which the official Jerusalem-based "great tradition" would have differed from the Galilean Israelite popular tradition. Both of these considerations appreciably lessen the scope in which the Pharisees or other Jerusalem retainers would have attempted to influence political-economic-religious practices among Galilean villagers. But in this limited way the Pharisees could well have played a role in Galilee for most of a century, from the Hasmonean take over in 104 B.C.E. until the end of Jerusalem's direct jurisdiction over Galileans after Herod's death in 4 B.C.E.

The second possibility pertains to the new situation after Herod's death, and sees even less of a role for the Pharisees in Galilee, although it may have been in addition to the first possibility just outlined. The Romans placed Antipas over Galilee along with Perea, thus ending Jerusalem's direct jurisdiction. And Antipas, who pursued massive building programs of two new cities, would presumably have been concerned to guard his revenue base against serious competition for peasant produce. In building Tiberias, moreover, or at least his palace overlooking the new, presumably Roman-style city, he virtually thumbed his nose at the Jerusalem-based guardians of official Judean tradition (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.366–38; *Vit.* 65). Nevertheless, it is at least conceivable that, with or without Antipas' tacit permission, the Jerusalem high priesthood delegated some of the Pharisees to represent Jerusalem's interest in continuing tithes, offerings, and other income from Galilean Israelites. In fact, the Gospel of Mark gives us a specific example: Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem are accused of pressing Galileans to devote property and/or the produce

from it to the Temple (*korban*), to the detriment of Galilean family subsistence. That the provisional government in Jerusalem in the summer of 66 C.E. immediately sent envoys (including Josephus) to take charge of affairs in Galilee and that the priests among them thought they were entitled to collect tithes from the Galileans suggests that the Jerusalem priesthood believed that it had a rightful claim to jurisdiction over Galilee (*Vit.* 63,80; *B.J* 2.562–69). If both possibilities are credible, then the Pharisees could have continued their role, on a more limited basis, even after Jerusalem lost jurisdiction over Galilee. And even if the second possibility is deemed unlikely, then the previous role of the Pharisees in Galilee could have been remembered into the time of Jesus and his followers, providing a basis for the controversy stories in Mark and the woes in Matthew and Luke.

While envisioning the possibilities of Pharisees' role as representatives of and advocates for the Jerusalem temple-state's interests in Galilee, however, it would be well to be explicit about what that did not include. There is no evidence that Pharisees were resident in Galilee, much less members of village communities, on which basis they might have been leaders of village assemblies.[20] It has now been made clear that the later rabbis did not become influential in synagogues until centuries later. It is extremely difficult to say how much and what kind of influence they have exercised in Galilean village communities. Some, or they would not be subject to attack in Gospel materials that presumably derive from Galilean origins. In the first possibility sketched above of their possible role, of course, their influence would have been backed up by the coercive power of the state. But they cannot be said to have held power or authority over Galileans, as those are normally understood. Further, it seems inappropriate to say that they were in competition with Galilean leaders such as Jesus, since the conflict is based in the prevailing structural conflicts in Roman Palestine. In any case, directly contrary to the conclusions he is arguing, the evidence Freyne presents indicates fairly clearly that Galileans tended to resist the demands of the Temple authorities and official interpretation of the Torah.[21]

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[20] The pronouncement stories in which the Pharisees challenge Jesus in Mark are simply not connected with the synagogues, contra Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence* (Philadelphia, 1988).

[21] Sean Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, 323 B.C.E. to 145 C.E.* (Wilmington, 1980), chaps. 7 and 8.

As Saldarini saw clearly, if they played a role at all in Galilee during the time of Jesus, the Pharisees were hardly a leading political or religious force there. They would have been outsiders, representatives of the Jerusalem temple-state. And that "would explain their small numbers in Galilee, their lack of mention in other sources, [and] their hostility to Jesus" (p. 296)—and Jesus' hostility to them, rooted in the very structure of the historical situation.

Jesus' Woes against the Pharisees and Scribes in Q 11:39–52

Having ascertained the Pharisees' limited role in Galilee, albeit somewhat tenuously, we can investigate Jesus' pronouncements against them in Q. The latter is commonly understood as the "Source" from which Matthew and Luke drew the "sayings" of Jesus that they present in a striking parallel sequence and wording, often virtually verbatim. In the case of these woes against the Pharisees and scribes/lawyers, the sequence and wording are sufficiently different that it may be impossible to reconstruct the source with much confidence. Attending to the variations in wording may actually be helpful in sensing the possible range of rhetoric and meaning anyhow, making the reconstruction of the source less important.

Many recent interpretations of Q still work with the standard old Christian theological paradigm of the emergence of early "Christianity" from "Judaism," which thus determines the reading. Since Pharisees/scribes were by definition the principal spokesmen for normative Judaism/Israel, conflict with and condemnation of Pharisees was broadened into Judaism generally. Since the woes against the Pharisees include condemnation of "this generation" and "Jerusalem" as well, the condemnation must be a rejection of "all Israel."[22] Since the focus of the conflict was the Law, with which the scribes and Pharisees were integrally linked as the official interpreters, Q interpreters have tended to find the struggle over the Law at several points in Q, whether it is referred to or not, but particularly in the woes against the Pharisees and scribes/lawyers.[23]

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[22] E.g., John S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q* (Philadelphia, 1987), pp. 167, etc. I choose this illustration because of the formative influence of his book on Q studies in the United States and Canada.

[23] E.g., Christopher M. Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity* (Peabody, 1996), pp. 404–424.

Particularly important for those reading through the lenses of the standard old paradigm are the woe against cleansing the outside of the cup, Luke/Q 11:39–41, and that against the tithing of mint, dill and cumin, Luke/Q11:42 (it is now standard to refer to Q passages according to their order in Luke). On the assumption that these issues lay at the heart of Pharisaic interpretation, and keying particularly on the phrase at the end of 11:42 "these (i.e., justice and mercy) you ought to have done, without neglecting the others (i.e., tithing the herbs)," some have argued recently that cultic laws such as those concerned with purity and tithing were not being rejected, but rather set within a broader context of divine demands.[24] In contrast with Paul, Q did not break or reject the Torah but radicalized it. The Q community was thus in effect another Jewish sect in competition with the Pharisees. Another reading through the same standard lens finds a three-stage development behind the woes against the Pharisees.[25] In the first stage, reflected in 11:39–41 and 42 the Q community is still Torah-observant. But in 11:46, where "loading people with heavy burdens" is understood as referring to the practice of scribal interpretation that multiplies rules, the Q community is rejecting Pharisaic interpretation and leadership of the synagogues. Finally, in the more vituperative woes of 11:44,47–48,52 the Pharisees are condemned as the very enemies of God's purpose. Yet another reading according to the old paradigm, noting that in 11:39–41 Q understands the vessels as metaphors for ethical, not ritual purity, and that in calling the Pharisees "unmarked graves" in 11:44 Q is utilizing corpse-pollution as a metaphor for moral failing, finds that purity is indeed important for the Q community but is redefined in ethical terms.[26]

Before proceeding it is important to establish appropriate principles for analysis and interpretation of ancient biblical and other texts. Along with the standard Christian theological paradigm went the

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[24] Robert A. Wild, "The Encounter between Pharisaic and Christian Judaism: Some Early Gospel Evidence," in *Novum Testamentum* 27 (1985), pp. 105–124; Siegfried Schultz, *Q—Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* (Zurich, 1971).

[25] John S. Kloppenborg, "Nomos and Ethos in Q," in James E. Goehring, et al., eds., *Gospel Origins and Christian Beginnings: In Honor of James M. Robinson* (Sonoma, 1990); and Heinz Schuermann, "Die Redekomposition wider 'dieses Geschlecht' und seine Fuehrung in her Redequelle (vgl Mt 12,1–39 par Lk 11,37–54): Bestand—Akoluthe—Kompositionsformen," in SNTU/A, vol. 11, pp. 33–81.

[26] Kloppenborg, "Nomos und Ethos."

isolation of text-fragments from their literary as well as historical context to be examined closely for their theological content and/or the historical evidence they could be made to yield. In recent years, however, as we have stepped away from the old practices, we have learned to view texts as wholes, in this case to take our Gospels whole. In his book on the Matthew, Saldarini consistently worked with the Gospel as a whole as he explored various aspects. Neusner has shown the way for a whole generation of students and colleagues in dealing with the Mishnah in terms of whole tractates, attending further to the sequence of conceptual units and steps within the whole. Indeed he holds himself to the high standard of dealing with the Mishnah as a whole system. In recent books I have attempted to adhere to the same principle in reading/hearing the Gospel of Mark and Q as a source used by Matthew and Luke.

In the case of a non-narrative text such as Q, which is also uncertain in its reconstruction, this is unusually difficult. Nevertheless by relying on the highly sophisticated recent compositional criticism of Kloppenborg, we can discern the contours of a text very different from its previous conception in the field. Ironically, perhaps, as part of his elaborate stratigraphical analysis of Q, Kloppenborg has convincingly demonstrated that Q is not a collection of sayings but a sequence of speeches or discourses.[27] Again ironically, perhaps, unlike the Gospel of Thomas with which it has been compared, and which does present a mere collection of isolated single, double, or triple sayings of Jesus, Q consists of a whole series of Jesus-speeches on various topics and/or with particular functions. What's more, if we further assume that, like most ancient texts, Q was repeatedly recited in a group context, then the discourses appear to be addressed to the concerns and needs of communities of a Jesus-movement.[28]

Q even has a certain structure and sequence. It opens with John's promise of baptism by the Spirit and threat of baptism with fire and closes with the assurance of the twelve liberating (not judging) the tribes of Israel in a renewal or restoration of the people (3:7–9;

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[27] Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*.

[28] I have attempted to lay out the case for the contours of Q as a "text" consisting of a sequence of speeches, based on but coming to conclusions different from those of Kloppenborg and others in Richard A. Horsley and Jonathan A. Draper, *Whoever Hears You Hears Me: Prophets, Performance, and Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg, 1999), chap 4.

22:28–30).[29] Jesus' opening discourse (6:20–49) offers the kingdom of God to the poor and hungry and provides covenantal instructions for intra-community social and economic relations in what us apparently performative speech, i.e., it is an enactment covenant renewal (as evident in 1 QS from Qumran). Jesus' last full discourse concerning the suddenness of the judgmental "day of the son of man" (17:23–37) provides sanction on the exhortation to the community in the rest of the speeches. In between are several speeches on such matters as the respective roes of John and Jesus (7:18–35), the mission to expand the movement (9:57–10:16), prayer (11:2–4, 9–13), bold confession when apprehended by the authorities (12:2–12), anxiety about the basic necessities of food and shelter (12:22–31), and community discipline (17:1–6), etc. In the two speeches that contain the sharpest language of judgment, Jesus ostensibly addresses outsiders, the Pharisees, in 11:(14–) 39–52, and the Jerusalem rulers, in 13:28–29, 34–35 + 14:16–24. That is, the sequence of speeches in Q presents a renewal of Israel combined with an outright condemnation of the rulers and their representatives.

Simply on the basis of this literary survey of Q it is possible to establish an important corrective to readings of Q based on the old Christian theological paradigm. Contrary to what many recent studies of Q have been claiming, Q represents not a rejection or condemnation "all Israel," but a renewal of the people Israel. Particularly once we recognize the division between rulers and villagers in Judea and Galilee that Saldarini and others have been pointing out, it is unmistakable that the prophetic woes and lament in Q are directed not at Israel generally, but specifically targeted at the Pharisees and the Jerusalem ruling house.

Prominent in recent American interpretation of Q has been the practice of classifying individual sayings according to one of the standard dichotomies of established New Testament scholarship, sapiential and apocalyptic—mainly as the key to sorting out different strata in the document. Quite aside from there being virtually no apocalyptic sayings in Q, this has blocked recognition of traditional Israelite forms taken by the larger speeches of which the sayings are com-

[29] See further, Horsley, in *Whoever Hears You*, 84–90. On Luke/Q 22:28–30, see my earlier analysis and interpretation in Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (San Francisco, 1987), pp. 199–208.

ponents. If we have ears to hear, on the other hand, it is evident not only that the speech in Q 6:20–49 is a renewed covenant, but that the woes against the Pharisees cohere as a sequence of prophetic woes climaxed by the declaration of sentence familiar from the "classical" Israelite prophets and from the Epistle of Enoch, closer to the time of Jesus.[30] In several prophetic books, besides individual woes coupled with statements of sentence, there are sequences of two to four woes followed by a statement of punishment, clearly against injustices by the rulers or their officers (Amos 6:1–3, 4–6 + 7; Is. 5:18–19, 20, 21, 22–23 + 24; Hab. 2:9–11, 12, 15 + 16–17, 19 [another woe]). In the Epistle of Enoch the woes all appear in sets of three to eight, sometimes with each woe having an attached declaration of sentence, sometimes with series of four or five woes capped by a sentence/punishment directed against the wealthy and powerful oppressors of the people and/or the authors (96:4, 5, 6, 7, 8 + sentence; 97:7, 8, 9, 10 + sentence). That is, far from isolating on individual sayings of woe, interpretation must take the woes in Q 11:39–52 as a whole sequence of woes-plus-sentence that draws upon and resonates with other such sets of woes in Israelite prophetic tradition.

It seems evident, furthermore, that the woes are prophetic indictments coupled with the corresponding declaration of sentence. The very monograph that decisively delineated the development of the form of the woes in Israelite prophets ironically also seriously downplays the degree to which those woes (including the sequences) indict the wealthy and powerful rulers and/or their officers (not the people!) for exploiting and oppressing their people.[31] While the prophetic rhetoric is rather general in Is. 5:18–24, except for 5:23, Amos 6:1–3, 4–8, and Hab. 2:6–8, 9–11, 12, specify "those who are secure in Zion/Samaria, the idle rich, those who load up on goods taken in pledge, who get evil gain, and who build a city by bloodshed. Nickelsburg has noted that the woes in the Epistle of Enoch continue the "overtones of a vengeful curse, again indicting the wealthy and powerful "sinners" for exploitative practices against the poor in violation of covenantal principles, in rhetoric that is often reminiscent of the specific language of Amos and other prophets.[32] Exploring

[30] Horsley, in *Whoever Hears You Hears Me*, chaps. 9 and 13 respectively.
[31] Waldemar Janzen, *Mourning Cry and Woe Oracles* (Berlin, 1972).
[32] George W.E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1* (Minneapolis, 2001), pp. 416–417, 460–511.

the implications of Nickelsburg's work I have suggested that the social location and social conflict of the woes in 1 Enoch can be specified even more precisely: the scribal authors of the Epistle, dissident (former?) retainers of the Jerusalem temple-state in the (late third or) early second century are indicting the incumbent aristocracy in no uncertain (prophetic!) terms for exploitation of the people (and apparently persecution of the dissident scribal circle).[33] It is thus an intriguing possibility that the spokesperson(s) for Jesus in Q 11:39–52, aware that scribal circles had long since, in certain circumstances, employed prophetic woes against the ruling aristocracy, turned precisely these woes against the scribes and Pharisees.

If in considering the Q speech of woes against the Pharisees we abandon the old paradigm and read again closely, a picture very different from the previous focus on the Law quickly appears. It is highly questionable, in fact, whether the woes are about the Law at all, even about the supposed Pharisaic/Jewish obsession with purity codes. Only one of the woes (11:42) even refers to the Law, and only two others mention issues of purity (11:39 and 44), and then in a rhetorical mocking of the Pharisees rather than as the main issue of indictment. The second woe begins with reference to tithes, which while not a matter of ceremonial law is surely a matter of law, concerning taxes. The reference to "mint, dill, and cumin" is surely hyperbole and caricature, probably full of sarcasm or ridicule (were such herbs even tithed?). The focus, however, quickly moves from the law about tithes to an exhortation about justice and compassion. The first woe (11:39–41) does indeed refer to the Pharisees' concerns about ritual purity (as Neusner has documented and explained),[34] but quickly shifts the vessels into metaphors, explicitly in Luke's version, implicitly in Matthew's. With that shift, however, the issue is no longer purity. In what may be the most clever woe of all, the accusation that the Pharisees are like "unmarked graves" surely alludes to the concerns of the Pharisees/scribes about purity, but again purity functions metaphorically. In the only three woes that mention either an issue of the law or of purity codes, the focus is on something else. We must take a closer look.

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[33] Richard A Horsley, "Social Relations and Social conflict in the *Epistle of Enoch*," in *For a Later Generation (FS Nickelsburg)* (Harrisburg, 2000).

[34] Jacob Neusner, "'First Cleanse the Inside:' The Halakic Background of a Controversy Saying," in *New Testament Studies* 22 (1976), pp. 486–495.

The (rhetorical) charge in 11:42 that the Pharisees were obsessed with even the minor items, not even cultivated, such as mint and herbs, serves to indicate how rigorous they were about the principal cultivated products subject to tithes/taxes such as grain, on which the very survival of subsistence producers themselves depended. If the Pharisees or scribes/lawyers, as representatives of Jerusalem, were still insisting on payment of tithes in addition to the taxes that Galilean peasants were paying to the government of Antipas or Agrippa and the tribute they were rendering to Caesar, they were indeed neglecting justice and compassion. The latter indictment alludes to prophetic covenantal exhortation demanding *mispat, hesed, sedeq, emet*, known in the "great tradition" from such texts as Hos. 4:1; 12:7; Mic. 6:8; and Zech. 7:9: "Thus says Yahweh Sebaoth, 'Render true judgment, show kindness and mercy each to his brother, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor . . .'." Presumably villagers were also fully aware of this tradition of prophetic call for economic justice. The charge that the Pharisees neglect justice and compassion, with its allusion to the tradition of prophetic exhortation, in connection with the rhetorical mocking of how rigorous they are in enforcing the tithing laws makes this woe not so much a dispute about the laws as it is an indictment of the Pharisees for merciless injustice in their role as administrative retainers.

The two woes that appeared to earlier readers to focus on purity rather use the Pharisees' concerns about purity in a metaphorical way. How the metaphor works is simplest and clearest in Luke 11:44, which surely represents Q more directly, and Matthews version (23:27–28) spells the analogy out explicitly. Drawing on the Pharisees' concerns with purity, this woe compares them to unmarked graves, which people do not see, meaning fairly clearly that they are dangerous to the people in ways that the people cannot see or detect. The simple simile in 11:44 then aids us discerning what is intended in 11:39–41 and Matt. 23:25–26. Again mocking their concerns about purity—peasants would hardly have shared those concerns!—this woe charges the Pharisees with nothing less than "extortion and rapacity." This is an ominous indictment, pertaining evidently to how they operate in their political-economic role as retainers of the temple-state. Insofar as this is the first in the series of woes, moreover, this sets the tone for the whole series. Woes are being pronounced over the Pharisees because of their extortion!

The remaining four woes do not allude to the Law or purity in

any way. But they do focus on yet other aspects of the behavior of the Pharisees and scribes/lawyers in carrying out their role as retainers of the temple-state. It would have been galling for villagers if the representatives of the Temple who pressed them mercilessly to pay their tithes and squeezed them to the limits of their subsistence productivity then presumed to expect honor and deference in public places, the indictment in Luke 11:43//Matt. 23:6 (paralleled in the episode in Mark 12:41–44). The "heavy burdens" in Luke 11:46//Matt. 23:4 were surely not the multiplication of rulers by scribal interpretation, but the burdens of tithing and other dues. One of the functions of the scribes and Pharisees was evidently instruction about, perhaps even administration of, tithing and other dues. The reference to the Pharisees or lawyers not touching those burdens with one of their fingers is thus an allusion to how such interpreters-administrators responsible for interpretation and application of laws and regulations concerning revenues could help alleviate the burdens of the peasant producers through their scribal role, if only they would. As for building the graves/tombs of the prophets in Luke 11:47–48//Matt. 23:29–32, the custodians of such memorials or monuments would have been precisely the retainers of the temple-state, such as Pharisees and scribes/lawyers. It is heavy hypocrisy and irony, however, as well as ideological mystification, for the representatives of the current rulers to be cultivating the sacred memory of those who had protested against earlier rulers, and sometimes paid with their lives. The final woe is a comprehensive indictment that sums up all the previous ones. Matthew's phrase "shutting the kingdom of Heaven" (23:13) and Luke's accusation of "taking away the keys of knowledge" (11:52) are parallel, equivalent expressions. As in key prophetic passages (e.g., Is. 1:2–3), "knowledge" here refers to covenant keeping, which would be synonymous with living under or according to the kingdom of God/Heaven. The Pharisees are accused of blocking the way in their role as retainers, so that the people cannot enter the kingdom (now being proclaimed and manifested in Jesus' mission).

Pulling these observations about each of the woes together, it is clear that the focus in the series is not on the Law and/or purity at all but on the social-political-economic role of the Pharisees and scribes/lawyers. In fact, the whole set of woes constitute a series of prophetic indictments, deeply grounded in Israelite prophetic tradition, for the ways in which they, only partly related to their role as

interpreters of the Torah, were contributing to the exploitation of the people.

The declaration of sentence with which the prophetic indictments in the woes climax in Luke 11:49–51//Matt. 23:34–36 is strikingly harsh in tone, like those in Israelite prophetic tradition in which this Q speech is rooted. It indicates just how seriously the indictments were intended. This is no mere dispute or debate about the laws, but a prophetic pronouncement of judgment. The charge of killing the prophets is repeated from the immediately preceding woe (11:47–48), providing the link between indictments and sentence. It repetition in the prophetic lament over Jerusalem in 13:34–35 suggests that the killing of the prophets was a serious issue for the Q speeches and the movement they addressed. One suspects that the Q people understood John and Jesus as the latest in the long line of martyred Israelite prophets and understood themselves as their successors, also undergoing persecution (see the last beatitude in Luke/Q 6:22–23).

That the blood of the martyred prophets is required of "this generation" has led many to imagine that "all Israel" or "Judaism" in general stands condemned here. But that is hardly the thrust of the declaration. "This generation" (or "this kind") was probably a contemporary idiomatic expression, the meaning of which must be determined from immediate context and other contexts in Q and other Gospel literature. Mark uses the term in a broad general reference, pejoratively in 8:38, neutrally in 13:30. Mark refers the term more specifically to the disciples in 9:19 and to the Pharisees in 8:12, which it the Markan parallel to Luke/Q 11:29–32. Especially if Matt. 12:38 represents the order of Q,[35] then Q as well as mark uses "this generation" in reference to the (scribes and) Pharisees in connection with seeking a sign. Significantly, the only other use of "this generation" in Q occurs in a court context of adversarial address, suggesting figures such as scribes and Pharisees. Q thus appears to be fairly consistent in using "this generation" with direct or indirect implicit reference to scribes and Pharisees.[36] "All Israel" is hardly implicated. As in most prophetic uses of woes plus sentences, the targets are specific, usually the rulers and/or their representatives.

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[35] So John S. Kloppenborg, *Q Parallels*.

[36] See further Richard Horsley, "Social Conflict in the Synoptic Sayings Source Q," in John S. Kloppenborg, ed., *Conflict and Invention* (Valley Forge, 1995), p. 49.

The seeming exaggeration of the persecution of prophets may appear to be mere rhetoric, since few of the "canonical" prophets included or mentioned in the Hebrew Bible were persecuted and killed. We should keep in mind, however, that neither the "great tradition" in Jerusalem nor the "little traditions" of Judean and Galilean village communities were stable, much less canonized, in the first century C.E. It is clear from such literature as the *Martyrdom of Isaiah* and the *Lives of the Prophets* that legends of the prophets' persecution and martyrdom were being actively cultivated.[37] Of the five prophets said to have been martyred under kings, the three said to be in Jerusalem were Isaiah, Amos, and Zechariah son of Jehoiadas, who is the last prophet to appear in the *Lives*. According to the legend, moreover, he was supposedly killed "near the altar" (23:1).[38]

Memory of the prophets, moreover, was being cultivated in monuments as well as literature. Contemporaries claimed to know the burial places of the prophets. And it is not hard to imagine that the building of memorials to the prophets was part of the wider program of building under Herod and his successors. The ostentatious religious-cultural renaissance of buildings and monuments inaugurated by Herod, such as the entrance to David's tomb (Ant. 7.392–94; 16.179–88), was sustained by wealthy diaspora Jews and prominent proselytes from abroad (Ant. 20.95; *B.J.* 5.55, 119, 147).[39] If the temple-state was responsible for supervising these monuments, who more obvious to place in charge but the scribes and Pharisees. The whole program of later rulers and their representatives building memorials to prophets who had condemned ancient rulers and been killed by them, however, appeared as the height of hypocrisy and callous attempt at self-legitimation and mystification to the Galilean peasantry for whom "Jesus" is the spokesperson in Q 11:39–52. And

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[37] See further David Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine: Reassessing the Lives of the Prophets* (Leiden, 1995) who argues that the *Lives of the Prophets* is a much later, largely Christian document; and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Studien zu den frueh-juedischen Prophetenslegenden Vitae Prophetarum* (2 vols; Tübingen, 1995), esp. vol. 1, pp. 65–71, who makes compelling arguments that most material in the *Lives* stems from prior to 70 C.E.

[38] Schwemer, Studien, 2.283–321.

[39] Still useful is Joachim Jeremias, *Heiligengraeber in Jesu Umwelt: Eine Untersuchung zur Volksreligion der Zeit Jesu* (Göttingen, 1958); Up to date is Duane W. Roller, *The Building Program of Herod the Great* (Berkeley, 1998); cf. Peter Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Columbia, 1996), chap. 8.

this issue may have been of special poignancy to the movement that produced Q, which contains nothing that corresponds to the narrative of arrest, trial, and crucifixion in Mark, but apparently did understand Jesus as a prophet like Moses and Elijah, with a program of restoration and renewal of Israel.

I hope to have illustrated how the sociological approach to the Pharisees that Tony Saldarini pioneered, supplemented with the borrowing of other comparative historical studies of agrarian societies, can also begin to illuminate the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees represented in Gospel literature. The resulting picture is a far more credible sense of the historical structural division between what Saldarini identified as the governing class and their retainers, on the one hand, and the productive peasantry, on the other. Far from Jesus and the earliest Gospel traditions having articulated a condemnation of "Judaism" or Israel, they rather articulated a program of renewal of Israel, but in opposition to the incumbent Jerusalem rulers and their representatives. And that should be a credible reconstruction of the development of the Jesus movement represented by Q, one of the sources used by the Gospel of Matthew, which Saldarini explained as a gospel within, not opposed to, the varied spectrum of groups and movements that constituted Israel in the aftermath of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem.

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FROM THE BIRTH OF JESUS TO THE RESURRECTION: WOMEN IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

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With feelings of great sorrow I accepted the invitation to contribute an essay to this volume in memory of Anthony J. Saldarini. I was first attracted to Tony's work because of our shared interest in the synoptic tradition. I quickly came to respect his work on Matthew and made it a point to be present whenever he was giving a paper (or even responding to one) at a national or regional meeting. In time Tony and I became friends as well as colleagues in the discipline, and I valued the time that we had for casual as well as professional conversation. Tony and I also shared an interest in the Jewish origins of Christianity and in contemporary Jewish/Christian dialogue. Finally, in one of the last pieces published before his untimely death, Tony turned his attention to another shared interest, the perspective brought to biblical studies by feminist scholars and an assessment of a methodology that more explicitly includes attention to gender.[1] Tony's work will continue to shape our discipline. He will be deeply and sincerely missed.

This essay's topic touches on most, if not all, of the areas of common interest mentioned above. I begin by returning to an article that I wrote in 1981, in which I explored Matthew's account of the visit of the women to the tomb of Jesus in Matthew 28.[2] In that article my attention was focused on the synoptic problem, and I responded to Michael Goulder's assertion that

> the motive for the women's visit to the tomb is coherent in Mark. Joseph has rolled Jesus' body in linen, but it is not said that he anointed it: the women come to supply this need—they see where he is laid

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[1] Anthony J. Saldarini, "Absent Women in Matthew's Households," in Amy-Jill Levine with Marianne Blickenstaff, eds., *A Feminist Companion to Matthew* (Sheffield, 2001), pp. 157–170. A.-J. Levine's comments about this essay in the Introduction to the book nicely provide a context for his contribution to this volume.

[2] Thomas R.W. Longstaff, "The Women at the Tomb: Matthew 28:1 Re-Examined," in *New Testament Studies* 27, 2 (1981), pp. 277–282.

> (xv.47), and come to anoint him (xvi.1).[3] Matthew's story is incoherent: he does not mention the ointments throughout, and the women, having sat opposite the tomb (xxvii.61) come, weakly, to see the tomb (xxviii.1). On Marcan priority this is easily understood: Matthew has introduced a guard on the tomb, so an anointing venture must seem impossible. But, on Matthean priority, what would they want to come and see the tomb for at first light?"[4]

Given the importance of the Passion and Resurrection stories when the gospels were written, it seemed to me unlikely that an author of Matthew's skill would produce a weak and incoherent narrative as the conclusion to that gospel. My analysis of the story took me to the Talmud (Semahot 8:1) and a different interpretation of the story. I wrote:

> The scene which the author envisions is clear. When the Sabbath is over and the new day begins, the women are free to travel and they come again "to see the tomb." It is the third day and they come, as the law requires,[5] for the final inspection to ensure that Jesus is really dead. This is an onerous task! Therefore we suggest that the Matthean account is not weak and deficient as Goulder believes. On the contrary, it is a powerful and dramatic preparation for the account of Jesus' resurrection. The women who come (surely with sadness) to confirm Jesus' death become (with great joy) the first witnesses to his resurrection.[6]

In 2001 a revised and expanded version of this essay was published in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*. In the new version I focused more attention on Matthew's portrayal of the women, especially the two Marys mentioned by name throughout the story, who are among the many women who have followed Jesus from Galilee and ministered to him.[7] I concluded, "In Matthew's gospel the women emerge as models of faithful discipleship. While the other disciples are con-

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[3] It is worth noting that according to M. Shab. 23:5, which may well preserve earlier tradition, it is explicitly permissible to prepare a body for burial, including washing and anointing it, on the Sabbath, a point that those unfamiliar with Jewish burial practices may not have appreciated.

[4] M.D. Goulder, "Mark xvi.1–8 and Parallels," in *New Testament Studies* 24, 2 (1978), p. 235.

[5] It would be more accurate to say "as custom demands" rather than "as the law requires," a change that I made when a revised and expanded version of this essay was published in 2001.

[6] Longstaff, "The Women at the Tomb," p. 281.

[7] This language likely identifies the women as disciples.

spicuously absent, these women are noticeably present, doing what should be done for a person who has just died."[8] Several colleagues, however, while accepting my interpretation, have challenged me to go further. They asked whether Matthew's portrayal of the women as "models of faithful discipleship" is limited to the stories of the crucifixion and resurrection or can be found throughout the gospel. As we turn to this question, we must recognize that women are not often mentioned in the gospel.[9] Furthermore, Elaine Wainwright makes a convincing case for her view that when they are mentioned, women are quickly relegated to the periphery of the story in keeping with a patriarchal perspective that dominates the gospel narratives.[10] How, then, are women portrayed in those vignettes where they do, if only for a moment, occupy center stage? That is the question I address in this essay.

As I have noted, women are seldom mentioned in Matthew's gospel. Moreover, they are rarely mentioned by name. It is, therefore, striking that four women—five, when we include Mary, the mother of Jesus—are explicitly identified in the genealogy of Jesus, which traces his paternal ancestry from Abraham to Joseph. With three exceptions (the mention of the Queen of Sheba in 12:42, of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in 13:55, and of Herodias and her daughter in the account of the beheading of John the Baptist in 14:1–12) it is only in the final verses of the story of Jesus' death and in the account of his resurrection that women are again identified by name. This observation provides a structure for this essay. We will look first at the story of Jesus' ancestry and birth, then at the way women

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[8] Thomas R.W. Longstaff, "What Are Those Women Doing at the Tomb of Jesus?," in Levine and Blickenstaff, *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, p. 204. Several other scholars, notably Kathleen Corley and Elaine M. Wainwright, have also recognized that the women in this story are portrayed as disciples. See Elaine M. Wainwright, *Shall We Look for Another? A Feminist Rereading of the Matthean Jesus* (Maryknoll, 1998), p. 109. Indeed, Corley's observation (presented more fully below) that the women's behavior does not fit the stereotypical gender role of women reinforces the idea that these women are portrayed as disciples, and my further identification of them as models of faithful discipleship. See also Amy-Jill Levine's comments in the entry on "Matthew" in C.A. Newsom and S. Ringe, eds., *The Women's Bible Commentary* (London, 1992), p. 262.

[9] There are, in fact, only thirty-six passages in which women are mentioned in Matthew. A complete list of these passages appears in the Appendix at the end of this essay.

[10] Elaine Mary Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 39ff.

appear in the body of the gospel, after which we will return to the portrayal of women in the account of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Jesus' Ancestry and Birth

The inclusion of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba), and Mary in an otherwise patriarchal genealogy has, over the centuries, attracted considerable attention and stimulated a wide range of explanations or interpretations.[11] I consider four of these:[12]

1. The four women[13] are identified as sinners, Tamar because she seduced Judah, Rahab because she was a prostitute, Ruth (presumably) because of her seduction of Boaz, and Bathsheba because of her adulterous relationship with David. On this view, they are included because they foreshadow, for Matthew's readers, the role of Jesus as the savior of sinful humanity. They are a "demonstration of God's grace and power: God's purpose for the Davidic line was achieved despite human sin and failure."[14] This view is unconvincing since it is not at all clear that these women are presented as sinners in the biblical narratives, although many later interpreters have seen them as such. I will, in fact, argue that it is more likely that they are portrayed as righteous women whose actions are an integral part of Israel's salvation history, a narrative that surely forms an important background for the Matthew's genealogy.[15] As Brown has noted:

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[11] Summaries of these views appear in W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh, 1991), vol. 1, pp. 170–172, and Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (New York, 1977), pp. 71–74. Wainwright offers a critique of several of these explanations in *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 63–67. A contemporary discussion appears in Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (London, 2002), pp. 18–47. The most detailed and well-documented analysis of the inclusion of these four (or five) women in Matthew's genealogy, however, can be found in Amy-Jill Levine, *The Social and Ethical Dimensions of Matthean Social History* (Lampeter, 1988), pp. 59–88.

[12] This is not a complete list of the interpretations that have been offered but does include the most frequently encountered.

[13] We will treat Mary's inclusion in the genealogy separately for reasons that will emerge in the course of this analysis.

[14] Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 170.

[15] It is certainly the case that these women are portrayed as more righteous than the men with whom they are associated.

> Jesus is heir to the promises made to David and kept alive in Judaism; he is also heir to the wider promise of blessings to the Gentiles made through Abraham. . . . Thus, genealogy is not a record of man's biological productivity but a demonstration of God's providence. . . . A genealogy, then, reflects the working out of God's plan of creation in a history of salvation.[16]

If only for a moment these women appear as significant figures in that salvation history. They are far more than examples of sinful ancestors.

2. The four women are identified as foreigners (Gentiles) who are included to show that Jesus' ancestry includes Gentiles as well as Jews. While this may be an important motif in other contexts,[17] these women are also seen as proselytes, and so their identity as foreigners is not as obvious to the reader as some might think. Indeed, most readers would have seen them as converts to Judaism. This renders the identification of the women as foreigners problematic, since conversion to Judaism is precisely what Christianity did *not* require of Gentiles who became members of the Christian community.

3. The four women are presented as precursors of Mary in two respects: (1) there is something irregular, even scandalous, in their union with their partners, and (2) they show initiative or play important roles in God's plan and thus are to be considered instruments of divine purpose. While this interpretation has much to commend it, the similarities to Mary are not as straightforward as this view suggests. First, the structural pattern ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ, ἐκ τῆς ῾ραχάβ, ἐκ τῆς ῾ρούθ, ᾽εκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου is broken by Μαρίας ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς and second, as Amy-Jill Levine has noted, in Matthew's depiction, Mary is "entirely passive" and Joseph emerges as "the model of higher righteousness."[18]

4. More recently, Nancy de Chazal has noted that the five women in Matthew's genealogy all live at important moments in Israel's history: Tamar, from the time of the patriarchs; Rahab, from the time of Israel's entering the land of promise; Ruth, at the time of the Judges; Bathsheba, from the golden age of monarchy; Mary, through

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[16] Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, p. 68.

[17] Surely one of the themes of the book of Ruth is to show that David is the great-grandson of a Moabite convert (Ruth 4:21).

[18] Amy-Jill Levine, "Matthew," in Newsom and. Ringe, *The Women's Bible Commentary*, p. 254. In short, there are differences as well as similarities in the way the first four women are mentioned and the way Mary is mentioned.

whom the Son of God took flesh and dwelt among us.[19] Richard Bauckham has also observed that "important additional notes relate to the function of genealogies in Genesis and 1 Chronicles, which is not only to trace descendants or ancestry, but to resume and summarize history . . . genealogies are actually a way of telling the whole course of history . . . the names evoke the narratives."[20] It is possible that Matthew envisioned such "milestones" in salvation history[21] although, as is also true of the alternatives listed above, this sheds little light on the way women are portrayed in the narrative.

Although, as we have seen, a good deal of attention has been given to *why* these women were included in Matthew's genealogy (and the explanations need not be mutually exclusive; more than one motif might well be operative in this section),[22] less attention has been given to *the way the women are portrayed* in the narratives these references call to mind. What images would these names evoke in Matthew's audience, a congregation thoroughly familiar with the traditions and practices of Judaism, even if those traditions and practices were being modified for a congregation that included increasing numbers of Gentile members?

We turn first to Tamar, the mother of Perez and Zerah. The story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38 is an interlude in a longer

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[19] Nancy de Chazal, "The Women in Jesus' Family Tree," in *Theology* 97 (1994), pp. 413–419.

[20] Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (London, 2000), p. 19. In addition to the women, the genealogies mention the brothers of Judah, Zerah (the brother of Perez), Uriah, and the brothers of Jechoniah. The genealogy also provides the detail that David is king and mentions the deportation to Babylon.

[21] Indeed, Stefan Alkier has suggested, in an unpublished paper presented at the Society of New Testament Studies meeting in Durham, August 7, 2002, that "the history that the genealogy narrates is, from a human perspective, not foreseeable. It is full of surprises. That is what, for example, the stories of the women in the genealogy connote. Or look at Jacob: he is not the first-born son, but he gets the rights of the first-born son and therefore he becomes part of the genealogy of the messiah. The genealogy as a whole . . . is a story in which God is the most important actor, with lots of complications, sins and surprises."

[22] A good case can be made that sinners are included in the genealogy to show how God's plan for human history moves forward in spite of human failure. But if this motif is present, it is not limited to the four (or five) women mentioned. Certainly Judah and his sons are portrayed as sinful in several ways. David, in addition to the adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, has arranged for the death of Uriah. The list need not be extended. If the narrator wishes to show that sinners were included in Jesus' genealogy, both men and women who fit this category are to be found in the list that he presents.

narrative about Joseph. Although this story was included because several important themes are addressed (intermarriage with Canaanites, the territorial expansion of the tribe of Judah, etc.), we will limit our discussion to the way in which Tamar is presented in the story.[23] The tale is a familiar one. Judah has moved into the region of the Shephelah and taken a Canaanite wife. She bore him three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. When he had grown to adulthood, Er was married to Tamar, but because of his wickedness the Lord put him to death before children were born to them. In keeping with the provisions of Deut. 25:5–10, Judah instructs Onan to provide offspring for his brother. Onan, however, is unfaithful with respect to this obligation and, like his elder brother, is put to death by the Lord. Judah, fearing for the life of his third son, withholds him from Tamar. Tamar, therefore, is presented as a woman whom the men around her have wronged and who takes the initiative to obtain justice for herself. The reader would not necessarily interpret her behavior as sinful when she disguises herself and sits at the entrance to Enaim, the village to which Judah is traveling.[24] Indeed, while several themes appear in this narrative, one of the major emphases is surely the

[23] A number of interesting questions arise as one examines these stories about women. Did women narrators create any of these stories? Did the stories once circulate primarily, if not exclusively, among women? Have the themes and interests of women been suppressed as these have been taken up into a largely patriarchal body of literature? Fortunately others have addressed many of these issues, for they lie beyond the scope of this essay, the purpose of which is to look carefully at the way in which Matthew actively portrays women in the gospel and the way in which readers of that gospel would have understood them. See, for example, Carolyn Osiek's comments in "The Women at the Tomb: What Are They Doing There?" in Levine and Blickenstaff, *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, p. 215, and the discussion of Ruth in Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (London, 2000), pp. 3–4.

[24] Note that the narrative does not explicitly indicate that Tamar deliberately presented herself as a prostitute but rather states that Judah, seeing her, *thought* that she was a prostitute. She had done no more than to cease wearing a widow's garments (garments that she was asked to wear until Shelah had grown to manhood, which he had done) and to sit in the gate at Enaim. The narrative does not explain why she might legitimately assume that Judah would be on the lookout for a sexual encounter with a prostitute, although it is mentioned that his wife had died and that the period of mourning had ended (he was comforted or had consoled himself). This suggests that the author did not envision Tamar's actions as sinful when writing this story, although the reader could legitimately infer that she has been deceitful, taking care to conceal her identity with a veil. Should the reader also conclude that it was quite natural, ordinary, and even acceptable for Judah to seek a liaison with a prostitute?

way in which Tamar takes the initiative and acts decisively to take control of her own situation, in the process also ensuring that the requirements of levirate marriage are observed. The author makes that point clearly when Judah acknowledges that "she is more righteous than I" (Gen. 38:26). Matthew's readers might well remember her not as a sinner but as a righteous woman concerned with faithful observance of the law.

The next woman named is Rahab, the mother of Boaz.[25] Although little is said about Rahab in the Hebrew Bible (she appears only in Josh. 2:1–20 and 6:22–25), she occupies a more prominent place in later Jewish and Christian tradition. She is mentioned at least four times in the Babylonian Talmud (Taanit 5, Megillah 14–15, Sotah 34, and Zebahim 116) and more than twenty-five times in the Midrash. She is portrayed as one of the four most beautiful women in the world, the wife of Joshua, and the woman from whom at least eight prophets and priests have descended. She is frequently presented as a proselyte and a woman with a strong faith in God. In Christian tradition she appears as a woman of faith (Heb. 11:31) and a woman of good works (James 2:25). It may well be that Matthew's readers were familiar with such traditions about Rahab (which found expression in these later documents) and would have had them in mind when they read her name in the genealogy.

Again we have a familiar story, although the scene that concerns us here begins somewhat abruptly. We are not told how or why the Israelite spies came to Rahab's house. As the scene develops, though, Rahab becomes a central figure. Like Tamar, she takes control of her own destiny. When the king of Jericho hears that Israelite spies have entered the city, Rahab springs into action to hide them and

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[25] Raymond E. Brown has provided strong evidence to refute Jerome D. Quinn's claim that the Rahab of Matthew's genealogy is not Rahab who hid the spies at Jericho but is, rather, an insignificant woman mentioned only here in the Bible. See Raymond E. Brown, "Rahab in Mt 1,5 Probably Is Rahab of Jericho," in *Biblica* 63, 1 (1982), pp. 79–80, written in response to Jerome D. Quinn, "Is Rahab in Mt 1,5 Rahab of Jericho?" in *Biblica* 62, 2 (1981), pp. 225–228. Brown's arguments are reinforced by Yair Zakowitch's earlier demonstration that in the Jewish midrashic tradition, parallels are drawn between Rahab and Ruth, Tamar and Ruth, and Tamar and Rahab. Zakowitch concludes that the author of the Matthean genealogy was familiar with the midrash. Yair Zakowitch, "Rahab als Mutter des Boaz in der Jesus-Genealogie (Matth. 1:5)," in *Novum Testamentum* 17, 1 (1975), pp. 1–5.

to mislead the king's men as to their whereabouts.[26] Rahab, on her own initiative, comes to the rooftop to make, in a lengthy speech, her own confession (2:11) and to seek mercy for herself and her family when Jericho falls to the Israelites (2:12–13). Furthermore, it is Rahab who provides the spies with a means of escape from the city and instructs them on where to go and what to do when they leave. Only then, prior to their departure, do the spies clarify the terms of the agreement they have entered into. There is no further mention of Rahab until 6:22–25, where the narrator tells the readers that the Israelites honored their agreement with Rahab. Again we have a portrait of a woman who takes the initiative and acts decisively at a critical moment, Israel's first incursion into the promised land. Later traditions view her as a proselyte[27] and honor her for her faith and her deeds, which assisted Israel to secure its first foothold in the promised land.

The third woman named in the genealogy is Ruth. Modern readers struggle with the message and meaning of the book that bears her name. The book is dated as early as the tenth century B.C.E. and as late as the postexilic period. Gender issues are complex and among those heatedly debated.[28] Matthew and his readers, however, would have been unaware of most of the issues that have engaged modern scholars. It seems likely that Ruth is mentioned because Matthew's genealogy reflects 1 Chronicles 2 and Ruth 4, both texts with which the author and his readers would have been familiar. Furthermore, the association of Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth in the midrash may reflect an earlier association of these women. What images might the mention of Ruth have evoked? First, like Rahab

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[26] Indeed, as Amy-Jill Levine points out, the king of Jericho, familiar with the same information known to Rahab seeks to capture the spies rather than to receive them. Rahab, then, demonstrates faith and trust in God whereas the more powerful and prominent male does not see God's hand at work in the coming siege of Jericho.

[27] This is explicit in such passages at B. Zeb. 116, although it may be qualified by passages such as Num. Rabbah III.2.

[28] In addition to the *many* books and articles on the book of Ruth (e.g., E.F. Campbell, *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* [Anchor Bible, 7; Garden City, 1975], which is frequently cited), the reader is directed to Amy-Jill Levine, "Ruth," in Newsom and Ringe, *The Women's Bible Commentary*, pp. 78–84, and Phyllis Trible, "Ruth, Book of," in David Noel Freedman, et al., eds., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, 1992), vol. 5, pp. 842–847, for a discussion of some of these issues.

(and perhaps like Tamar), she would have been seen as a proselyte[29] who, at her own initiative, abandoned her own people to become an Israelite, this in spite of her mother-in-law's discouragement about doing so (Ruth 1:8–18).[30] Second, she would have been remembered for her place in the Davidic dynasty. Finally, she would have been remembered as a righteous woman who had an important place in Israel's sacred history.[31]

Breaking the pattern in which women are referred to by name, Matthew identifies Bathsheba as "the wife of Uriah." Davies and Allison argue that the expression "'the wife of Uriah,' is better suited than the simple 'Bathsheba' for calling attention to Gentiles in Jesus' family tree;"[32] however, many scholars consider Bathsheba and Tamar to be Hebrew women.[33] It is only the recollection that Uriah was identified as a Hittite in 2 Sam. 11–12 (Matthew does *not* explicitly identify Uriah as a Hittite, which one might expect if the point were to call attention to Gentiles in Jesus' family tree) that leads to this conclusion. Bathsheba would be remembered first in connection with her adulterous relationship with David. Some have suggested (on the basis of the active verb "she came to him," 11:4) that Bathsheba came to David on her own initiative. It is difficult, however, to see a significant difference between her decision to respond to David's messengers and that of Uriah, who is also summoned by the king

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[29] She is explicitly identified as a proselyte in Gen. Rabbah 87:7. The text, in part, reads: "Who would have expected that a child should be born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age? Who would have expected that Jacob, who crossed the Jordan with but his staff, should increase and become wealthy? Who would have expected that Joseph should become a king after undergoing all these misfortunes? Who would have expected that Moses, after being thrown into the Nile, should become what he did become? Who would have expected Ruth, a proselyte, to attain to the sovereignty over Israel? Who would have expected David to become king until the end of all generations? Who would have expected Jehoiakin to be liberated from prison? Who would have expected Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to come out unscathed from the fire? Who would have expected that the Holy One, blessed be He, would deliver Israel in the days of Haman? Who would have expected those in exile to achieve fame and renown? Who would have expected the Holy One, blessed be He, to raise up the fallen tabernacle of David. . . ."

[30] Like the other women mentioned, she acts to determine her own destiny.

[31] Indeed in the Num. Rabbah 5:11 and 21:20, as well as Ecc. Rabbah 5:13 (where she is mentioned in association with Rahab), Ruth is explicitly called a "righteous woman."

[32] Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 174.

[33] See Amy-Jill Levine, "Matthew," in Newsom and Ringe, *The Women's Bible Commentary*, p. 253.

and who similarly "came to him" (11:7). She may, however, be more than a passive victim of the king's lust. Bathsheba is considerably more active in the subsequent episode (1 Kgs. 1–2), in which she persuades the aging David to name Solomon as his successor. Although Nathan urges her to go to David, it is clear that David has previously promised Bathsheba that Solomon would succeed him as king.[34]

Gale Yee finds support for an alternate understanding of this episode, namely that "David and Bathsheba are co-conspirators in a political scheme to marry."[35] As in other marriages, David weds a woman from an influential family who will help to advance his career or ensure his power. In this view, Bathsheba is no longer seen as a passive and innocent victim but as a willing partner in a conspiracy in which she arranges for her son to become king after David. Bathsheba is certainly a key figure in the political intrigue that brings Solomon to the throne. She virtually ensures the death of his rival Adonijah when she relays his request for permission to marry Abishag, since this could be understood as another attempt by Adonijah to secure the throne for himself. In short, Bathsheba would be remembered not only for her adulterous relationship with David but as a proactive woman who was instrumental in bringing Solomon, God's chosen successor to David, to the throne.[36] Like the other women who are named in the genealogy, she has an active and significant role at an important moment in Israel's salvation history.

Since Matthew traces Jesus' ancestry through a patriarchal line, it is not surprising that the genealogy ends with "Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ." It is unusual in a document where women are more often identified by their relationship to men than men are by their relationship to women that Joseph is first introduced as the "husband of Mary." She, however,

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[34] Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake, 1994) has argued that in these stories Bathsheba is merely an agent necessary to the plot and not a full-fledged character in her own right. But her role is not quite so passive.

[35] Gale Yee, "Bathsheba," in Freedman, et al., eds., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1, pp. 627–628. See also Randall C. Bailey, *David in Love and War: The Pursuit of Power in 2 Samuel 10–12* (Sheffield, 1990), and Jon D. Levenson and Baruch Halpern, "The Political Import of David's Marriages," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99, 4 (1980), pp. 507–518.

[36] Readers of Matthew would also have been immediately aware that Solomon was not only God's chosen successor to David but also the man who built the Temple and brought Israel to her most glorious moment.

is identified by her relationship to "Jesus . . . who is called Christ." As we have seen above, scholars have frequently looked for common characteristics that would connect Mary with the four women mentioned earlier in the genealogy. The most convincing of these emphasize either the irregular, even scandalous, nature of the union of these women with their partners or their important roles at critical moments in Israel's salvation history. These are certainly elements in the portrait of Mary with which readers of Matthew would have been well acquainted; however, given the fact that the narrative then focuses on Joseph, it is interesting to ask whether he shares common characteristics with the men mentioned earlier. Since Joseph is described as a "just man" who does not wish to expose Mary to embarrassment, he is more akin to the spies who treat Rahab honestly (honoring their agreement with her) or Boaz (who, in various ways, looks after Ruth) than he is to Judah (who does not treat Tamar fairly) or David (who hardly acts with integrity in his adultery with Bathsheba or his treatment of Uriah). A strong case can be made for the suggestion that such comparisons represent a social ideal in which the status of the traditionally powerful and prestigious (patriarchs, kings, the wealthy) is contrasted with the virtues of the traditionally powerless (ordinary soldiers, common landowners, artisans, slaves, women, and children).[37]

The Body of the Gospel: Matthew 3:1–25:46

Tony Saldarini appropriately titled the essay he wrote for *A Feminist Companion to Matthew* "Absent Women in Matthew's Households." Although he limited himself to chapters 18–20 of Matthew as "a test case for the treatment of women and for its author's lack of specific interest in them as members of the community,"[38] the phrase "absent women" applies more broadly to the body of the Gospel of Matthew. Indeed, between Matt. 3:1 and 25:46 there are only twenty-five passages in which women are explicitly mentioned (see the appendix at the end of this essay). More revealing is the fact that twenty-one of

[37] Cf. Anthony J. Saldarini, "Absent Women in Matthew's Households," in Levine and Blickenstaff, *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, pp. 157–170. See also Levine, *The Social and Ethical Dimensions of Matthean Social History*.

[38] Saldarini, "Absent Women in Matthew's Households," p. 158.

these are what I would call "incidental" references to women, passages in which women are mentioned by way of illustration or example or in which the mention of them is a part of the general context of a pericope that does not focus on them as participants.[39] These texts may well reveal a patriarchal perspective shared by Matthew and his readers but they do not tell us much, if anything, about how women are portrayed in those instances where they become significant characters in the narrative. Only four of the twenty-five passages present women as significant characters in an event recorded in the gospel.

Although a good deal could be said about each of these texts, I would include the following in my list of "incidental" references to women in Matthew:

- 5:28–32—In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus refers to women (and wives) in the context of his teaching on adultery (and divorce).
- 8:14–15—In a series of healing stories (8:1–17), Matthew mentions Peter's mother-in-law who is healed by Jesus and who then rises to serve Jesus and his disciples.
- 10:34–39—In the famous text "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. . . ." conflict involving both male and female family members is mentioned.
- 11:11—This verse reads: "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." This is truly an incidental reference to women.
- 12:42—In one of the rare instances in which a woman is identified more specifically, we have a passing reference, by way of illustration, to the Queen of Sheba: "The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here."
- 12:46–50—In commenting on the nature of true discipleship Jesus mentions his family: "While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. But he replied to the man who told him, 'Who is my

[39] One of these, the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1–13), may present the reader with more than an incidental reference and will, therefore, be considered more fully in the discussion below.

mother, and who are my brothers?' And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother.'"

- 13:33—In a very short parable (one verse) the kingdom of heaven is compared to a woman preparing bread for the oven.
- 13:55–56—When Jesus comes to his own region (πατρίδα), people are astonished and ask, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?"
- 14:21—At the conclusion of the story of the feeding of the five thousand there is another genuinely incidental reference to women, ". . . and those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children."
- 15:4–5—In a story of conflict with the scribes and Pharisees Jesus refers to the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and mother."
- 15:38—At the conclusion of the story of the feeding of the four thousand there is an incidental reference to women, nearly identical to the one in 14:21, ". . . those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children."
- 18:25—In the Parable of the Talents the man who owed the king a great debt, which he could not pay, was about to be sold, "with his wife and children and all that he had."
- 19:3–9—In this section Matthew presents Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce. While there is, of necessity, frequent mention of women (the context requires it) and while the text may provide a good deal of information about the status of women in the ancient world, and in Matthew's community in particular, once again women are mentioned as examples in a dispute with the Sadducees over divorce rather than presented as active characters in the narrative.
- 19:19—In response to the person who approaches Jesus to ask, "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" Jesus advises him to "Keep the commandments." When the man asks, "Which?" Jesus cites several of the Ten Commandments including, "Honor your father and mother."
- 19:29—In a reference to the end time, when the Kingdom of Heaven is established, Jesus says, ". . . every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or

lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life."

- 21:5—The word "daughter" is used in a quotation of Zechariah 9:9.
- 21:31–32—In a dialogue with the chief priests and elders (which takes place in the temple in Jerusalem), Jesus twice mentions harlots in association with tax collectors. This may be another example of Matthew's egalitarian social ideal but is not a narrative in which women are portrayed as significant characters in the story. Rather the mention is an incidental one, indicative more of the social status than the gender of the harlots (although these two characteristics are, of course, related).
- 22:23–33—In this hypothetical story of a woman who was married, sequentially, to seven brothers, the character of the woman serves merely as an example in a debate about life after death.
- 24:19—In comments about the eschatological events to come, Jesus makes a passing reference to women: ". . . alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days!"
- 24:41—In a series of warnings exhorting watchfulness because one cannot know when the end will come, there is a passing reference to women: "Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left."

25:1–13—A good deal has been written about the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. More than any of the passages above, this parable presents women, if not as significant characters, then at least as significant examples in an extended narrative. The parable appears in Matthew's eschatological discourse found in chaps. 24 and 25 of the gospel. The structure of this section is interesting. The discourse opens with predictions of the nearness of the moment when God's kingdom will be established. The discourse continues with the caution that no one knows the moment when the end will come followed by a description of several "signs" that will precede the final event. Warnings to be prepared for this unknown moment come next and the discourse concludes with four parables that describe the inclusion of those who understand these teachings, i.e., those who are prepared and respond faithfully and the condemnation of those who do not.

Several verses present the message, or moral, of this discourse with particular clarity. Thus 24:13 announces, "he who endures to the end will be saved." 24:36 clearly articulates the element of uncertainty

by stating "of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." 24:42 repeats this message and adds a warning, "Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." Finally, 24:44 gives guidance to the faithful, "Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." Four parables conclude the discourse, providing examples of faithful and unfaithful responses to Jesus' message: (1) the Parable of the Two Servants, one of whom is wise and faithful, the other wicked (and unfaithful), (2) the Parable of the Ten Virgins (which we will discuss below), (3) the Parable of the Talents, and (4) the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (which stresses how, at the final judgment, the faithful will be welcomed into the kingdom and the wicked sent into everlasting punishment).[40]

It is interesting to note that the discourse indicates quite clearly that both men and women are to be prepared for the end time and both are called upon to respond faithfully. The parallel in verses 24:40 and 41 cannot be missed. "Two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left." Similarly, in the parables, traditional activities of both men and women serve as examples of faithful and unfaithful responses to Jesus' teaching. The Parable of the Ten Virgins assumes the reader's familiarity with the customs and traditions associated with marriages, especially the role of the women who serve as attendants. Although some scholars have attempted to interpret the parable allegorically,[41] it seems to me that such attempts fail—and for several reasons.[42] It is important to note that there is no significant difference between the wise and foolish virgins other than their state of preparedness for the unexpected moment when the bridegroom arrives. Here, like the men in the other parables, women serve as exemplars of faithful or unfaithful behavior; they are models of faithful or unfaithful discipleship. This is strong evidence in sup-

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[40] Few interpreters have appreciated the close relationship of this parable to the theme of faithful discipleship. An illuminating exposition of this parable can be found in Lamar Cope, "Matthew xxv.31–46, 'The Sheep and the Goats' Reinterpreted," in *Novum Testamentum* 11 (1969), pp. 32–44.

[41] See Joachim Jeremias, *Rediscovering the Parables* (New York, 1966), p. 39, and T.W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus: As Recorded in the Gospels according to St. Matthew and St. Luke, Arranged with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, 1979), p. 244.

[42] For further comments, see Levine's comments in *The Social and Ethical Dimensions of Matthean Social History*, pp. 229–230.

port of the view (sometimes debated) that women are to be included as disciples of Jesus, however, although there may be more than an incidental reference to women here, their function in the parable remains illustrative rather than active. The active characters in the eschatological discourse are Jesus and the disciples who join him on the Mount of Olives (24:1–3), which may or may not include women. The ten virgins in this parable remain examples, albeit in an extended narrative.

There are, however, four passages in the body of the gospel where women *do* appear as significant characters in the narrative. These are most important for understanding how Matthew portrays women in those rare instances where they do, if briefly, occupy center stage in the story.

9:18–26—The story of the ruler whose daughter has died brackets the story of the woman with a hemorrhage. In the broader context, these two stories introduce a series of four stories in which Jesus heals the sick (in one case restoring the person to life). The section concludes with the charge that Jesus casts out demons by the prince of demons and a summary statement that "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity" (9:35). Throughout this section none of those who come to Jesus doubt that he can do what they desire—if he will. It could, therefore, be argued, as with the parable of the ten virgins, that both the ruler and the woman with a hemorrhage are simply examples of faith exemplified by those who are not among the followers of Jesus, perhaps in contrast with some of those who are (cf. 8:26).[43] While this is a reasonable interpretation of all four stories,[44] there is more than this in these two related narratives. Elaine Wainwright observes that

> the reader is taken by surprise at the beginning of the story [of the ruler whose daughter has died] by the extraordinary nature of the ruler's request. It goes far beyond that of any of the other miracles. It is a request to Jesus to come and lay his hands on a child who has already died.[45] The request is even more extraordinary when one

[43] Indeed, it is this expression of faith that makes possible the miracles that follow.

[44] It is certainly true of the ruler, whose daughter is mentioned only incidentally. Furthermore, this morale is explicitly stated in the story of the healing of the two blind men when Jesus asks them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" and they reply, "Yes, Lord."

[45] Other interpreters observe that the child must have been dead for some time,

> realizes that the child is not a son, an heir needed for the continuation of the patriarchal family line, but rather a daughter, a young unmarried girl.[46]

Although 9:24 introduces an element of ambiguity into the story ("He said, 'Depart; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him."), the main point is clear. The ruler's faith has made possible the miracle that he sought.[47] Furthermore, it is significant that the person healed is a female who would have been marginalized, both by her age and her gender, in first century society. This would be consistent with a social ideal in which the status of the traditionally powerful and prestigious stands in sharp contrast with the virtues of the traditionally powerless. It would also place the father's[48] appeal in an unexpected context.

The story of the woman with a hemorrhage is a little more complex. In this story the woman takes the initiative (surely with some risk to herself) in order to make physical contact with Jesus, confident that by such contact she will be made well.[49] A number of what, for the purpose of this essay, may be considered peripheral but not insignificant details have attracted the attention of exegetes. Thus, for example, Wainwright observes that "the woman, because of the inferior status in which society has placed her, is afraid to approach Jesus directly but comes up to him from behind."[50] Filson and others have suggested that the woman's behavior borders on the superstitious.[51] It has often been noted that contact with a corpse or blood would

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since the mourners have already assembled: "And when Jesus came to the ruler's house, and saw the flute players, and the crowd making a tumult;" Matt. 9:23.

[46] Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, p. 87.

[47] Davies and Allen remark that the ruler comes with "complete confidence" that Jesus can do what he asks, see Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. 2, p. 125.

[48] He is, admittedly, a person with status and power.

[49] Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, p. 88, observes that the woman "is given no name nor is she encountered by the readers in terms of her human environment [family and social class]. She encounters Jesus in the public arena outside the confines of the patriarchal household." In short, she is a woman who is independently looking after her own well-being, perhaps when others have not done so.

[50] Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, p. 89.

[51] Floyd V. Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (San Francisco, 1960), p. 122.

render a person ritually unclean. While this is true, and highlights a motif that Matthew's readers would surely have recognized, Davies and Allison are probably correct when they suggest that "the woman with an issue is presented in a wholly positive light. The subject of her uncleanness is not mentioned or alluded to. Her touch does not effect indignation."[52] Her faith, like that of the ruler whose daughter was healed, is the central point of the narrative. This faith stands in sharp contrast with the mocking unbelief of those who laugh at Jesus in 9:24 and the disciples' lack of faith in 8:26. Her behavior, including the initiative that she shows in seeking a cure for her illness, thus models a faithful response to Jesus' presence and 9:22 makes this explicit, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well."

14:3–12—Herodias and her daughter (Salome) appear on the stage of Matthew's narrative only briefly. Wainwright argues that in Matthew Herodias is "merely a voice behind the scene" and notes that in the Matthean version, unlike in Mark, it is Herod rather than Herodias who desires the death of John the Baptist. She concludes that "the Matthean redaction sought to minimize without eliminating the role of Herodias because it ran contrary to the theme of women's response to Jesus" (i.e., their acceptance of Jesus and their inclusion in the Kingdom of God).[53] This is a convincing assessment of the Matthean narrative; however it must acknowledged that Herodias *does* play a key role in the death of John. Like other women in Matthew, Herodias takes the initiative. She is proactive. Unlike the Markan story, in which Salome comes to her mother to enquire what she should ask of Herod, Matthew portrays Herodias as "prompting" or "inducing" (προβιβασθεῖσα) her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. In this respect the role of Herodias is *not* minimized; she is portrayed as acting to achieve her own ends, i.e., doing what she understood to be in her own best interests by eliminating this troublesome critic of her position.

Nevertheless, Filson goes too far when he asserts, "Herodias achieved what Herod was too weak to do; the no doubt immodest and provocative dance of her daughter (Salome) before the drunken Herod and

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[52] Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. 2, p. 128. They observe further that "instead of uncleanness passing from the woman to Jesus, healing power flows from Jesus to the woman," p. 130.

[53] Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 250–251.

his guests was part of her plan."[54] While this imaginative interpretation became popular among later interpreters of the gospel, nothing in either Matthew or Mark suggests that Herod and his guests were drunk or that Salome's dance was immodest, provocative, or erotic. In an interesting article, David Flusser rejects such a view. Describing a coin with a portrait of Salome, minted in 56 or 57 C.E., he suggests that, contrary to popular perception, she was a normal, moral person, probably about twelve years of age at the time of her infamous dance. While the role of Herodias in the salvation history Matthew relates may not be entirely positive, neither is she portrayed as the villain of the story. Rather, she is a woman who acts decisively and her actions, albeit unintentionally and unbeknown to her, advance the salvation history that Matthew relates.

15:21–28—In this section the reader's attention is focused on an episode that takes place in Gentile territory, "the region of Tyre and Sidon." The narrative is important in Matthew's presentation of salvation history because it marks the extension[55] of Jesus' healing ministry, and therefore the Kingdom of God, to Gentiles.[56] In this story Matthew once again portrays a woman as a model of faithful discipleship (although she does not become a disciple). Continuing the theatrical metaphor adopted above, it is interesting to note that the Canaanite woman is the first woman to have a significant role in the drama, to occupy center stage for more than a moment. Indeed, except for Salome's request for the head of John the Baptist on a platter (14:8), she is the first woman with a "speaking part." Wainwright has observed that in this story the dialogue between Jesus and the woman seems to be more significant than the miracle.[57] At the outset, two main characters are introduced, Jesus and the Canaanite woman. The woman addresses Jesus as "Son of David," clearly a messianic title in this context, and shows no doubt whatsoever that Jesus is capable of exorcising the demon that afflicts her daughter. To suggest that this woman takes initiative or that she is proactive

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[54] Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, p. 169.

[55] This is not the first extension of Jesus' healing power to Gentiles (see 8:5–13), but it is the first located in Gentile territory.

[56] Extensive discussions of this pericope can be found in Levine, *The Social and Ethical Dimensions of Matthean Social History*, pp. 131–164, and in Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 102–118 and 217–247.

[57] Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, p. 102.

would be an understatement, to say the least. Not only does she approach Jesus (like the woman with a hemorrhage with considerable risk to herself); she is persistent in her appeal for his help. This portrayal of the woman as a proactive person who has complete trust in Jesus' ability to cast out the demon is consistent with the way in which Matthew portrays women elsewhere.

The dialogue itself is interesting in several respects. It opens when a Canaanite woman, clearly a Gentile, appeals to Jesus for her daughter, who is severely afflicted by demon possession. Although she addresses him as both "Lord" and "Son of David" (which, together with the phrase "have mercy upon me," surely reflects the liturgical language of the early church) her appeal is met with stony silence.[58] At this point the disciples intrude themselves into the dialogue, asking Jesus to "send her away." Filson suggests that this request is ambiguous. "Do the disciples ask Jesus to send her away without help, or to do what she asks and then send her home?"[59] In either case they seem to reject the idea that she might become a disciple. Jesus answers them (in words that the woman is surely intended to hear), "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and in his reply we begin to see the way in which this passage contributes to Matthew's unfolding narrative of salvation history. Amy-Jill Levine's discussion of this pericope is especially helpful.[60] She observes that while both the centurion (8:5–13) and the Canaanite woman (the only two Gentiles mentioned in healing narratives) are presented in an entirely positive light, both healings were at a distance. Jesus does not enter a Gentile home and neither of those individuals becomes a disciple. Levine argues that in the Matthean narrative Jesus distances himself from the Gentile mission in keeping with an emphasis on the *temporal* priority of the mission to the

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[58] J. Martin Scott has raised the question of whether, in this story, Jesus is presented as deliberately rude to the petitioner and if so why this might be. He suggests that, in a clever reversal of roles, Matthew has portrayed the Canaanite woman as humble (as Jesus is normally portrayed), while Jesus is portrayed as abruptly dismissive of the woman. He argues that in this case Jesus is "converted" by an "outsider," expanding his understanding of the mission of God, and of discipleship, from an exclusive to an inclusive one. J. Martin Scott, "Matthew 15:21–28: A Test-Case for Jesus' Manners," in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 63 (1996), pp. 21–24.

[59] Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, p. 180.

[60] The comments that follow are (I trust without distortion) based upon the analysis that she presents in *The Social and Ethical Dimensions of Matthean Social History*, pp. 131–164.

Jews; it is *first* to the Jews and *then* to the Gentiles. Jesus' reply to the disciples, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," emphasizes this point. The remark intensifies his earlier silence. But the woman will not be silenced or sent away. Rather she renews her appeal, again in words that echo liturgical language, "Lord, help me."[61] This time Jesus does respond, but with words that include an ethnic insult. Levine comments:

> The association of gentiles with dogs, puppies[62] or not, in Mt 15:26 is an ethnic insult. Its presence is initially surprising, since the redactor has repeatedly indicated that the word will go out to the gentiles and many among the nations will receive it. . . . The woman notes [in her reply] that both the people at the apex of society, the masters, and those on the lowest rung, the Canaanites or "dogs" share the same food.[63]

Jesus' reply affirms her faith. The miracle that she asked for is granted. Again, Levine's comments are insightful:

> Ultimately, the woman is able to demonstrate her faith not by arguing against the insult to her ethnic group, but by indicating that both the gentile dogs and the Jewish children are under the same authority. In Mk 7:29, the woman simply outwits Jesus (διὰ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον); in Matthew, she indicates her faith and her conformity to the heavenly plan of salvation history. She is able to obtain a miracle because she accepts her marginal position as a gentile.[64]

Similarly, Wainwright concludes that the story of the Canaanite woman:

> highlights the initiative of a woman who crosses both ethnic and gender boundaries, courageously maintaining her stance in the face of a three-fold opposition and thereby influencing the direction of the Jesus story. She becomes the "foremother" of all gentile Christians and she stands as the foremost example of faith in the narrative at the climax of the section whose focus is response to Jesus.

Once again we have a story in which a woman takes the initiative and, while pursuing her own best interests (in this case the health of her daughter), exhibits the characteristics of faithful discipleship

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[61] Her form of address also employs the language of discipleship.

[62] Levine notes that the word used here is *κυναρίος*, a diminutive that refers, more precisely, to young puppies than to dogs.

[63] Levine, *The Social and Ethical Dimensions of Matthean Social History*, pp. 150–151.

[64] Ibid., p. 151.

and plays an important role in salvation history.[65] She is strikingly different from the disciples who would send her away,[66] and her perseverance convinces Jesus to extend the kingdom to Gentiles without delay.

20:20–23—In this passage Matthew again introduces a woman who occupies center stage for only a moment. The mother of the sons of Zebedee (who is not mentioned by name but rather is identified by her relationship to her sons) kneels before Jesus and asks that her sons be given preferential treatment when Jesus comes to power in the kingdom of God. Although Jesus later responds that it is not his prerogative to grant places of honor in the kingdom, the mother of James and John clearly presumes that he can do so. For her, the question is not whether Jesus *can* do this but whether he *will*. Thus, like other women in Matthew's gospel, she takes the initiative, confident in her own mind about who Jesus is and what he is able to do. Most interpreters who comment on this passage focus on the fact that in Mark 10:35ff. it is James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who make this request for themselves, apparently also assuming that Jesus can grant the request if he will. The generally accepted view is that "Matthew puts the onus for making this request on the mother of the sons of Zebedee because, unlike Mark, he is concerned for the honor of her sons."[67] Saldarini provides a more substantive discussion of this story than is found in most standard commentaries. After examining the one other passage in which she is mentioned (27:53–55), he writes in conclusion:

> What then does the mother of the sons of Zebedee symbolize? She, along with the other women, had followed Jesus in Galilee and from Galilee to Jerusalem. When she asks Jesus to give her sons power (20.22), they are all in "the region of Judea beyond the Jordan." She has followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem and is in a substantial

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[65] Gail O'Day shares this view, suggesting that this story of staunch and vigorous faith is a model for Matthew's readers, who learn from the Canaanite woman a powerful lesson in how strong and enduring faith can overcome serious obstacles. "Surprised by Faith: Jesus and the Canaanite Woman," in *Listening* 24, 3 (1989), pp. 290–301.

[66] Cf. Mark C. Thompson, "Matthew 15:21–18," in *Interpretation* 33, 3 (1981), pp. 279–284.

[67] Sherman E. Johnson, "The Gospel according to St. Matthew: Introduction and Exegesis," in *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, 1951), vol. VII, p. 494. See also Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. 3, p. 87, where three variations on this theme are explored.

> sense a disciple. But like many women in the Gospels, she has no name. She and the other women function as a counter-group of disciples ironically contrasted to the male disciples who appear throughout the Gospels. The men abandon Jesus and flee in fear (26.56, 69–75), but the women stay with Jesus until his death and visit his tomb afterwards (27.53–55; 28.1–10). They quietly do what the prominent disciples should have done. Matthew sharpens this contrast through the partially identified, but unnamed, mother of the sons of Zebedee. Jesus had challenged her and her sons to drink the cup which he had to drink (20.22); they did not, but strikingly, she, the very one who made the inappropriate request for power for her sons, did in the end drink the cup by standing with Jesus at his execution. She responded to Jesus' teaching in sharp contrast to her sons and the rest of the twelve, who did not.[68]

Like other women in this gospel, the mother of the sons of Zebedee exemplifies faithful discipleship when she proactively, even if inappropriately,[69] seeks preferential treatment for her sons.

In the Narratives of the Passion and Resurrection

On four occasions in the Passion narrative, women make brief but significant appearances.

26:6–13—At first glance this story about a woman who anoints Jesus at Bethany seems straightforward. A woman, taking the initiative,[70] comes to Jesus not as a supplicant but as an actor in the

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[68] Anthony J. Saldarini, "Absent Women in Matthew's Households," p. 169. For an alternative view, see Emily Cheney, "The Mother of the Sons of Zebedee (Matthew 27:56)," in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 68 (1997), pp. 13–21. Cheney calls attention to the absence of the mother of the sons of Zebedee in 27:61 and 28:1 and concludes that her absence reinforces the view that disciples must leave their households and be loyal to their new family. Unfortunately, the disciples' absence when Jesus is crucified, while the women are present, renders this alternative problematic. The absence of the male disciples is hardly an example of their new loyalty.

[69] Even if the request is inappropriate, the portrayal of the mother of the sons of Zebedee is far more positive than negative as Saldarini's comments show. The reader would certainly have had a sympathetic understanding of her request. In fact, the indignation of the other disciples calls forth a fairly lengthy response from Jesus.

[70] Elaine Wainwright suggests that a progression can be observed in the way women approach Jesus. Peter's mother-in-law "does not even dare to ask anything of Jesus; the woman with the hemorrhage fearfully approaches him from behind merely to touch his garment; the Canaanite woman openly approaches with a request and enters into dialogue with Jesus; and now an unnamed woman not only

scene that unfolds. She anoints his head with a very expensive ointment, after which the disciples become irritated or angry (ἀγανακτέω) and object, saying that the ointment might better have been sold and the money given to the poor. Jesus tells the disciples that, on the contrary, the woman has done a good thing. She has prepared him for burial. He adds that wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her. Clearly the disciples fail to understand what has happened and once again a woman, one of those marginalized in Jesus' contemporary society, does what faithful disciples might have been expected to do, to honor their master.

The narrative is, however, a little more complicated than this. In a detailed analysis of the pericope,[71] Wainwright notes that the language used in describing this scene is not the typical language of anointing. After examining both the Septuagint and rabbinic texts she finds that when this particular ointment (μύρον) is used, and a part of the body is mentioned, it is always the head. In fact she finds only one instance in which μύρον is associated with burial (2 Chr. 16:14) and in that instance it refers to placing spices on the bier rather than pouring oil or ointment on a corpse. Her conclusion is that pouring μύρον on a person's head was a sign of honor or, in special circumstances, of consecration. Michael Ball, after examining the Christological significance of the title "Christ" ("anointed one"), observes that the only person who anoints Jesus in the gospels is the woman at Bethany.[72] Similarly, Wainwright concludes that the woman's action is another example of messianic acclaim, much like the acclamation of the crowds when Jesus enters Jerusalem.

The disciples' anger (or "indignation" as some translators render the word) might well be related to the fact that a woman has taken on what is traditionally a man's prerogative or role. In response to

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approaches Jesus but offers him the honorable gesture of anointing his head" (*Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, p. 126).

[71] Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, pp. 124–137. The interested reader will find Wainwright's complete analysis very informative.

[72] Michael Ball, "The Anointed One," in *Expository Times* 112, 4 (2001), pp. 125–126. Ball also argues that since the woman is a person of low social status, the title "Christ" must be understood, not as a title of exaltation but rather one that emphasizes Jesus' reversal of the present social order. Nevertheless, it seems to me that in anointing Jesus as she does, the woman at Bethany intends to honor him on the eve of his crucifixion.

the disciples' criticism, Jesus asks, "Why do you trouble the woman?" and then comments, ". . . she has done a good deed for me." Good deeds are important but it is rare in Matthew that good deeds are directed towards Jesus. Four instances come to mind: the angels minister to him after the temptation (4:11); Peter's mother-in-law serves him (8:15); the women who followed him from Galilee were ministering to him (27:55); and Joseph of Arimathea arranges for his proper burial (27:57–60). In sharp contrast to the woman's good deed, the disciples seem completely oblivious to the significance of this moment in Jesus' life. On the eve of his crucifixion they focus on what is secondary rather than what is primary: "For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me" (26:11). Wainwright concludes, "The story of a woman at the beginning of the passion narrative is a story of female power, a power which recognizes suffering and reaches out courageously to bring the touch of mercy and compassion to the one suffering. . . . Female gender therefore symbolizes faithful discipleship at this point in the narrative."[73]

26:69–71—The mention of several persons (two of them explicitly women) who recognize Peter as a disciple of Jesus is part of a larger narrative that sets Peter's threefold denial of Jesus in the broader context of his betrayal, arrest, and trial (26:33–75). Thus the women mentioned in verses 69 and 71 have very small roles indeed. These two young women (παιδίσκη . . . ἄλλη) and the otherwise unidentified bystanders of verse 73 (οἱ ἑστῶτες.—a term that might include women as well as men) do little more than provide the occasion for Peter to deny Jesus. And yet in a very real sense they say what Peter himself ought to have said. They speak what they know about Jesus and, although they are not disciples, they exemplify the behavior of faithful disciples. They are willing to say publicly what Peter is unwilling to say, namely that he is a disciple. Surely Matthew's readers would recall 10:32–33 ("every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven") as they read these verses.

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[73] Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, p. 136. Wainwright goes on to argue that in the hands of the final redactor the woman loses her voice in the narrative. "Her prophetic action is interpreted by the male voice of Jesus . . . and she is excluded from among the group called 'disciples' because of its patriarchal construct."

27:19—Like Caesar's wife Calpurnia, who tried to keep her husband from leaving the house on the day of his assassination because, in a dream, she had seen his body streaming with blood,[74] Pilate's wife acts on her own initiative (and, perhaps, at some risk to herself) to warn the governor, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream." Neither the New Testament nor the extra canonical documents associated with the New Testament provide any significant information about Pilate's wife. Although Florence Gillman suggests that she may have been more a more significant figure to people of her own time than this paucity of information might suggest, we know little of how Matthew's readers might have thought of her.[75] Davies and Allison dismiss the mention of Pilate's wife as a "fictional interlude without parallel."[76] Even if this is accurate, the comment is not very helpful, for surely Matthew had a reason for including this vignette about Pilate's wife in the narrative. While it may be impossible to know in detail what Matthew intended, or how his readers envisioned Pilate's wife, Levine proposes a well-reasoned and convincing possibility. Pilate's "wife…breaks with social convention and interrupts the governor 'while he was sitting on the judgment seat' with her warning (27:19). That she is a woman and therefore marginal to the Gospel's Roman population—all of whom were military men—is not accidental."[77] Like the centurion (and those with him) at the cross who, at the moment of Jesus' death, confesses, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (27:54), Pilate's wife identifies Jesus as a righteous man. She makes an affirmation that would be expected of a disciple, although clearly she is not a disciple. As Levine notes, "Again, the marginal and mobile manifest faith; Pilate [the one with power] just sits there."[78]

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[74] Appian, *Civil Wars*, 2.115.

[75] Florence Morgan Gillman, "The Wife of Pilate (Matthew 27:19)," in *Louvain Studies* 17, 2/3 (1992), pp. 152–165.

[76] Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. 3, p. 587. In their exegesis they suggest that in the biblical tradition God does not speak directly to pagan rulers. In response to the question that naturally follows, why, then, does God address Pilate's wife in a dream. They present two possibilities, (1) since pagan temples often had female dream interpreters, the choice of Pilate's wife reflected the view that women were skilled in the interpretation of dreams; and (2) that it reflects a literary motif in which the foolish husband rejects the counsel of the wise wife—as Caesar did when he ignored Calpurnia's dream.

[77] Levine, *The Social and Ethical Dimensions of Matthean Social History*, p. 264.

[78] Ibid.

27:55–61—This pericope is the first passage that *explicitly* includes women among the followers of Jesus. Nevertheless, as we have seen above, women, and others who would have been marginalized in Matthew's Christian communities, surprisingly serve as models of faithful discipleship or in other ways exemplify behavior that would be expected of disciples. Indeed their conduct often stands in sharp contrast with that of the more prominent disciples and once again it is they, rather than any of Jesus' inner circle of disciples, who are present at his death. Fearful, the prominent disciples have fled or otherwise abandoned Jesus (26:56). To be sure, Peter follows, "at a distance . . . to see the end" (26:58), but ultimately he betrays his master. When Jesus dies, only the women who have followed him from Galilee remain.[79]

It is striking, because it is so unusual for Matthew to do so, that three of these women are explicitly identified and two mentioned by name. Johnson may well be correct when he suggests that "Matthew may believe that the *women* are guarantors of the tradition. They had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him."[80] Except for the explicit reference to men found there, this expression is very similar to the criterion used for the selection of someone to replace Judas in the circle of the twelve. It must be "one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us" (Acts 1:21–22).

In the broader context, two men, the centurion and Joseph of Arimathea (an otherwise unknown disciple of Jesus), also exemplify faithful conduct. The centurion confesses Jesus to be the Son of God and Joseph arranges for his proper burial. At the end, when Jesus has been placed in the tomb and the guard has been posted, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph are once again mentioned by name as present. Filson explains their presence by noting that the women "can stand unmolested where the disciples if present would have met with hate and mistreatment from hostile Jews."[81] Not only does this statement misrepresent Jewish

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[79] Here the language, αἵτινες ἠκολούθησαν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἀπὸ Γαλιλαίας διακονοῦσαι, suggests that they, and probably others, were followers of Jesus, i.e., disciples, from the time of his ministry in Galilee.

[80] Johnson, "The Gospel according to St. Matthew: Introduction and Exegesis," p. 611.

[81] Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, p. 298.

involvement in the crucifixion of Jesus but it also misses the point of the women's presence. Even if is correct that women could be present with an impunity that the male disciples did not enjoy (which I consider unlikely), this is not Matthew's point. As we have seen above, women are often portrayed in situations where they take significant risks. In these situations what they do is what ought to be done. That is true here as well. As I have argued elsewhere, the women who watch at the tomb are doing what the prominent disciples ought to be doing. In keeping with the practices described in the Talmud (Sem. 8:1) they are present to confirm Jesus' death or to prevent the premature burial of a person who is still alive. In fact, the women are not portrayed as engaged in the traditional rituals of mourning expected of women[82] but rather fulfill roles that would more often be performed by men—even if not exclusively so. Wainwright tells us that Kathleen Corley,

> in a very detailed study of women's association with death and lamentation in Greek, Roman, and Jewish literature, suggests that the portrayal of the women at the cross does not necessarily fit the stereotypical gender role given to women in such situations. They are not said to mourn and lament as would have been expected but assume the silent role of male mourners. She demonstrates, however, that the women's presence pointed to their discipleship, and even though their ritual laments were cast in male terms silencing their mourning, they indeed honor Jesus, the suffering righteous one, by being present at his death.[83]

28:1–10—Although a good deal has been written since I published my first essay on Matt. 28:1–10, I remain confident that my interpretation, especially as modified for inclusion in *A Feminist Companion to Matthew*, presents an accurate understanding of the way in which Matthew and his readers would have envisioned this scene. The women who visit the tomb are doing what faithful disciples should

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[82] Rick Strelan's argument that the women are pictured as mourning in the presence of the entombed Jesus is unconvincing. He writes, "they perform a ritual, sitting on the ground to symbolize their association and identification with the dead." But Matthew does not say that the women are sitting *on the ground*, merely that they are sitting opposite the tomb. There is no other mention of or allusion to mourning rituals. See his "To Sit Is to Mourn: The Women at the Tomb (Matt. 27:61)," in *Colloquium: Australian and New Zealand Theological Review* 31, 1 (1999), pp. 31–45.

[83] Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, p. 109, referring to Kathleen Corley, "He Was Buried, On the Third Day He Was Raised: Women and the Crucifixion and Burial of Jesus," unpublished paper presented to the Jesus Seminar, Fall, 1995.

do. It is the third day and they come for the final inspection, to confirm that Jesus is really dead. It is significant that these women express no doubts, either when the angel announces that Jesus has been raised or when Jesus himself greets them. In fact, the opposite is true. Immediately upon seeing Jesus they worship him.

Conclusion

What conclusions can legitimately be drawn from the analyses above? We have seen that although women are far more often absent than present in Matthew's gospel and while they are seldom mentioned by name, when they do appear they are, with the possible exception of Herodias and Salome, portrayed in a positive light. Furthermore, without exception, these women (except for those mentioned only incidentally) are all proactive. They take the initiative in the situations described and when they do so none of them is plagued with doubt. All are confident that what they desire—or what God or Jesus can do—is possible. It has been suggested too that the women are often contrasted with the more prominent disciples. Indeed, even the women mentioned in the genealogy fare well when compared with the men who appear in the same narratives.[84] When faced with danger or with things that are hard to believe or accept, if one were to ask, "What are faithful disciples to do?" there is an answer and an example in the behavior of these women who, for a brief moment, occupy center stage. Whether or not this is related to their conscious intention, their actions are important in the unfolding story of salvation. Are they models of faithful discipleship? Yes, I think that, for the most part, they are.[85]

A word of caution is appropriate here. Although Matthew usually portrays women in a very positive light, even contrasting them with the more prominent men who do not behave as well, the author of the gospel of Matthew is not a feminist. Saldarini is right when he

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[84] In a book worth reading, Ilana Pardes, *Countertraditions in the Bible: A Feminist Approach* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 99, suggests that "the women of the Bible usually serve as foils against which the deeds of the fathers are presented. . . .".

[85] While this essay focuses on the way in which women are portrayed in Matthew, it is important to recognize—and acknowledge—that there are also men whose conduct exemplifies a faithful response to God or the characteristics of faithful discipleship.

observes that while "Matthew does not exclude or attack women . . . he does not reimagine their place in society either."[86] After reaching my own conclusions about how Matthew portrays women on those few occasions when they occupy, if only briefly, center stage in a narrative, I read Amy-Jill Levine's comments about the relevance of such conclusions for contemporary readers. Although there are differences, the way she and I read these stories is very similar. Referring specifically to the women in Jesus' genealogy, but making comments that apply more broadly, she writes:

> The feminist implications of this interpretation are bittersweet. The first gospel presents women as exemplars of active faith, suggests that categories of sex as well as of race are made irrelevant by the Christ event, and even can be read as celebrating a woman's prerogative to make a sexual advance. However the domestication of these women's sexuality through its incorporation within a structure that subordinates their individual needs to the fulfillment of divine purpose reveals the narrative's androcentric perspective. Further, that the four women were forced to use sex as a tool either for economic existence (Rahab; Ruth), for political safety (Bathsheba), or for a reason to exist (Tamar) undercuts rather than underscores notions of egalitarianism. In all five cases, too, the women's unconventional activities receive an initially negative assessment: even Joseph is scandalized by Mary. These activities are not fully reassessed as positive; rather in each case the end is seen as justifying the means. Finally, they are certainly not examples that should or can be repeated. Ultimately, these women were forced to use their bodies in order to write themselves into history. They are to be lauded for surviving, but they cannot be viewed as having achieved a break in patriarchal attitudes. Indeed, because the history into which they have written themselves is one of patriarchy, they have perpetuated rather than undermined structures of social inequity. Such feminist-hermeneutical observations are not inconsistent with Matthew's transcending of gender roles as well as ethnic distinctions by the more general thematic concern for socioeconomic, religious, and political egalitarianism. The gospel does offer hints of an egalitarianism coupled with the abolition of patriarchy, but the ideal world of the *Basileia* of Heaven is, for the first gospel, still culturally determined.[87]

With that caveat in mind, we find throughout the first gospel portraits of women as models of faithful discipleship, a discovery that may well surprise modern readers and cause them to look anew at

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[86] Saldarini, "Absent Women in Matthew's Households," p. 170.
[87] Levine, *The Social and Ethical Dimensions of Matthean Social History*, pp. 87–88.

gender[88] in our religious history and traditions. Although with respect to specific details readers may not find examples that can (or should be) repeated, the question "what will a faithful response entail?" may well be a question that the author of the first gospel posed for his readers and one that modern readers might want to ask themselves as well.

Appendix

The following is intended as a complete index of passages in which women are mentioned in the gospel of Matthew. I accept responsibility for the omission of any passage that should have been included.

1:3–6	1:16–25	2:11–14	2:18–22
5:28–32	8:14–15	9:18–26	10:34–39
11:11	12:42	12:46–50	13:33
13:55–56	14:3–12	14:21	15:4–5
15:21–28	15:38	18:25	19:3–9
19:19	19:29	20:20–23	21:5
21:31–32	22:23–33	24:19	24:41
25:1–13	26:6–13	26:69–71	27:19
27:55–61	28:1–10		

[88] We can include race, ethnicity, social class, and other structures that create or perpetuate inequity, although this essay focuses on gender issues.

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS

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I. *Problem*

Tony Saldarini's work has done much to illuminate both early Christianity and the Jewish soil out of which it grew. A study of the relation of Jesus to John the Baptist, who was such an important bridge figure between the two faiths, would therefore seem to be an appropriate subject for an essay dedicated to Tony's memory.

In the first volume of my Anchor Bible commentary on Mark, I said this about John's prophecy of ὁ ἰσχυρότερος ("the stronger one") in 1:7:

> It is questionable that this saying of John originally had reference to Jesus. It only gains such a reference by the Markan juxtaposition with 1:9–11, and Matt. 11:2–6//Luke 7:18–23 depicts John pondering the possibility of Jesus' messiahship, but by no means convinced of it. Josephus, moreover, draws no line from John to Jesus, even though he mentions both men . . . In texts from the early Christian era we hear of people who had undergone John's baptism but were not Christians (Acts 19:3; cf. 18:25) and of a non-Christian Baptist sect that continued to exist for several centuries after its founder's death (Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* 1.54, 60 . . .).[1]

I went on to consider the two main alternatives to the thesis that John's "stronger one" was Jesus, namely, that he was God or that he was the unknown, coming messiah. After half a page of argument, I ended up tipping my scholarly hat to the latter theory: John was speaking of the messiah, but he did not identify that figure with Jesus.

It is embarrassing to have to rethink so quickly a statement that was published only a couple of years ago, although it was written

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[1] J. Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible, 27; New York, 2000), p. 151. The Mandaeans, whose religious literature goes back to the eighth century C.E., still revere John the Baptist and disparage Jesus; see C.H.H. Scobie, *John the Baptist* (London, 1964), pp. 23–31.

several years before that. But that is what I have found myself doing of late. The source of my discomfort is a passage I recently came to in my commentary. I probably should have seen this passage coming; and in fact I *did* see it coming, but I was reassured by a quick glance at scholarly exegesis that it did not pose a substantial problem for my reading of ὁ ἰσχυρότερος in 1:7. The passage is the controversy over Jesus' authority in Mark 11:27–33.

I now find this passage unsettling for my previous exegesis of 1:7, because, while it has a claim to historicity,[2] it seems to presuppose that John's support for Jesus was well known, even among Jesus' opponents. Consider the line of thought in this controversy story. The Jewish leaders (chief priests, scribes, and elders) challenge Jesus to state by what authority he is doing "these things" (11:27–28), apparently a reference to his demonstration in the Temple (11:15–19), although his triumphal entry into Jerusalem may be included as well (11:1–11; cf. Luke 19:39–40).[3] Jesus replies with a counter-question:

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[2] The substantial historicity of Mark 11:27–33 is acknowledged by most interpreters; see J.P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus Vol. 2: Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (New York, 1994), pp. 166–167 and 223–224, n. 223, for references. Even R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York, 1963), p. 20, recognizes 11:28–30 as "a genuine Palestinian apophthegm." Palestinian provenance is consistent with the many Semitisms (e.g., synthetic parallelism in 11:28; "from heaven," in 11:30–31; "answered . . . saying" in 11:33), the rabbinic form of the counter-question, and the familiarity with John the Baptist's ministry. Admittedly, Bultmann is uncertain whether these features reflect the early Palestinian church or the historical Jesus, but the indirection and modesty of Jesus' self-assertion favor the latter. Jesus implies that his authority, like John's, is ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, but he neither overtly maintains his superiority to John nor makes an exalted claim for himself. As J.-G. Mudiso Mbâ Mundla, *Jesus und die Führer Israels. Studien zu den sog. Jerusalemer Streitgesprächen* (Münster, 1984), pp. 27–29 puts it: "Von der späteren Christologie ist hier in der Tat keine Spur zu entdecken." Jesus' invocation of the authority of another human being, moreover, runs counter to the tendency of the later tradition to present him as one who needs no human witnesses (cf. for example, John 5:34, 41). Furthermore, Meier, *Marginal Jew*, p. 167, points out that John 2:18 seems to be an independent witness that Jesus was questioned about his authority soon after the Temple cleansing. Finally, while the historicity of our passage might be questioned in light of its claim of insight into the private conversation of Jesus' opponents (11:31–32), the conversation might easily have been reconstructed from their refusal to answer. H. Alford, *The Greek Testament with a Critically Revised Text, a Digest of Various Readings, Marginal References to Verbal and Idiomatic Usage, Prolegomena, and a Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago, 1958), p. 213 (on Matt. 21:26), suggests a more ingenious though less plausible solution to this last problem: "The intelligence of it may have been originally derived from Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea," who were members of the Sanhedrin.

[3] It is possible, however, that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and his demonstration

was John the Baptist's authority divine or merely human (11:29–30)? This question places the leaders in a quandary: They are reluctant to deny John's authority, because he is popular with the people, but neither do they wish to affirm it, because, they fear, Jesus will reply, "Why did you not believe him?" (11:31–32). They therefore decline to answer, saying, "We do not know;" Jesus, in turn, refuses to answer their original question to him.

Now, it seems to me that Jesus' anticipated retort—"Why did you not believe him?"—makes sense only on the assumption that people knew that John had in some way supported Jesus. This is in fact the understanding implied in the Acts 19:4 paraphrase of the Lukan parallel (Luke 20:5): "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is Jesus" (RSV).[4] And it is also the way in which the overwhelming majority of subsequent commentators have taken Mark 11:31 and its parallels.[5] It is interesting to watch the mental gymnastics of those who embrace other positions. Bultmann and others, for example, assert that the force of Jesus' counter-question about John's authority is that Jesus, like John, derives his authority from heaven.[6] Bultmann has to admit, however, that this reading does not cohere with the retort anticipated by Jesus' opponents should they acknowledge John's authority: "Why did you not believe him?" (11:31). The retort seems to imply a direct relationship between John and Jesus rather than a parallel relationship of each with God. Bultmann's solution to the problem—that 11:31 is a later addition to the pericope—has

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in the Temple were temporally separated; the former may have occurred at Sukkot rather than at Passover. Cf. C.W.F. Smith, "No Time for Figs," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 79 (1960), p. 319.

[4] The Greek, however, is more complicated: λέγων εἰς τὸν ἐρχόμενον μετ' αὐτὸν ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν. As C.K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Edinburgh, 1994–1998), vol. 2, p. 897, points out, the last five words may be read either as "the Coming One—that is, of course, as you, being Christians though unbaptized know, Jesus" or as "the Coming One, who, I now inform you disciples of John, is to be identified with Jesus, to whom you should now, in accordance with your teacher's word, transfer your loyalty."

[5] See for example Cornelius à Lapide, *The Great Commentary 2: S. Matthew's Gospel—Chaps. X. to XXI* (London, 1889), p. 424 (on Matt. 21:24); J. Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids, 1999) on Matt. 21:25; J. Wesley, *Notes on the Bible* (2001) on Matt. 21:24; Alford, *Testament*, p. 212 (on Matt. 21:25). Of modern commentators, see R.H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, 1993), p. 669.

[6] Bultmann, *History*, p. 20.

nothing to commend it except that it gets him out of the difficulty created by his own exegesis.

Similarly unconvincing is Meier, who asserts that the implied linkage is Jesus' continuation of John's practice of baptizing (cf. John 3:22; 4:1); accepting John's baptism, therefore, means accepting Jesus' as well.[7] But Mark 11:27–33 makes no specific reference to Jesus' baptismal practices, and "the baptism of John" in 11:30 may be a shorthand way of referring to the Baptist's whole ministry (cf. Acts 1:22).[8] Meier's reconstruction, moreover, succeeds no better than Bultmann's as an exegesis of the exact Markan wording—"Why did you not believe him?"—which seems to refer to John's message rather than his ritual practice.

Another possibility is that "Why did you not believe him?" is merely an ad hominem remark reflecting the well-known fact that the Jewish authorities had by-and-large rejected John's ministry.[9] This interpretation garners some support from Matt. 11:18//Luke 7:33, in which Jesus excoriates "this generation" for accusing John of demonic possession, and Matt. 21:32, in which he denounces the Jewish leaders: "For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him" (οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε αὐτῷ; cf. Luke 7:29–30).[10] The major problem with this exegesis is that it still does not link Jesus' retort closely enough with the question that began the whole controversy, namely, the issue of Jesus' own authority.[11] What difference does it make to the question at hand whether or not the leaders accept John's authority? How could their acceptance or rejection of John have any significant implications for the issue of *Jesus'* credentials, unless John somehow endorsed the latter?[12]

Related to the previous interpretation is the suggestion that Jesus

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[7] Meier, *Marginal Jew*, pp. 163–167.

[8] See Cornelius à Lapide, *Great Commentary*, p. 424 (on Matt. 11:24); J.A. Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (Stuttgart and London, 1866), p. 385 (on Matt. 11:25); Alford, *Testament*, p. 213 (on Matt. 11:25); V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, 1981), p. 270.

[9] Cf., W. Schmithals, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Gütersloh and Würzburg, 1979), vol. 2, p. 509, who paraphrases: "Warum habt ihr euch dann nicht von ihm taufen lassen?"

[10] Cf., R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (Freiburg, 1976), vol. 2, p. 211.

[11] A minor problem is that the Synoptic tradition is not univocal about the rejection of John by the Jewish leaders; see Matt. 3:7, in which "many of the Pharisees and Sadducees" come to John for baptism.

[12] J.D.M. Derrett, "Questioning Jesus' Authority (Mark 11:27–33)," in *DRev* 116 (1998), p. 258, notes that opinions about John do not automatically transfer to Jesus.

is deliberately evading giving an intelligible answer to his opponents' question.[13] It may be wondered, however, whether a deliberate evasion would have been an effective rhetorical strategy; whether Jesus' interlocutors, who were people of authority, would have let such transparent circumvention of their question pass unchallenged; and whether the story would have been remembered and preserved unless it were regarded as a convincing riposte to the question actually raised, i.e., the one about Jesus' authority.[14] Derrett responds that "intellectual objections to [Jesus'] proceedings are rarely met directly" in the Jesus tradition, but he then goes on to cite three instances in which they are (Mark 2:18–20; 7:26–29; John 9:40–41),[15] and he in fact provides no examples in which the Jesus of the Gospels gives an answer that does not in some way meet the question.[16]

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[13] See Derrett, "Questioning." For Derrett, Jesus was alluding to his resurrection as the event that would establish his authority, but he did not expect his hearers to catch the allusion. Nothing in the context, however, suggests an allusion to the resurrection—which of course accords with Derrett's theory that Jesus did not intend his response to be comprehended. But why choose *this* incomprehensible explanation over other possible ones? All cats are gray in the dark.

[14] Cf., Cornelius à Lapide, *Great Commentary*, p. 424 (on Matt. 21:24): "Christ . . . proposes another question, on the solution of which depended the answer to the question proposed by the scribes. Thus—'You do not believe me when I say that I have received power from God, believe then John the Baptist who bore witness to me, that I have been sent by God to do these things'" (trans. updated). Similarly Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke* on Matt. 21:25: "In short, he had pointed out Christ with the finger, and had declared him to be the only Son of God. From what source then do the scribes mean that the new authority of Christ should be proved, since it had been fully attested by the preaching of John? We now see that Christ employed no cunning stratagem in order to escape, but fully and perfectly answered the question which had been proposed."

[15] Derrett, "Questioning," p. 266. The cases in which Jesus declines to enter into argument, which Derrett cites (Matt. 26:63a; 27:13–14), are not true parallels; a refusal to answer is not the same thing as an evasive response.

[16] A survey of the controversy stories in the Synoptic Gospels reveals that Jesus always does respond in a more-or-less comprehensible manner to the question asked, although sometimes he responds indirectly. He is even presented as responding to an unasked question or challenge in Mark 2:7–10 pars.; Luke 8:39–48; 11:17–23. In Mark 8:11–12 pars. Jesus refuses to perform a sign when challenged to do so, but he does not refrain from responding to the challenge. Only in the Fourth Gospel does he occasionally respond in a way that his interlocutors could not possibly understand, for example in the allusion to his own resurrection in John 2:19–22 ("Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"). But this allusion is unlikely to be historical; it seems rather to be a way of reinterpreting Jesus' saying about the destruction of the Temple so as to present him in a less fanatical light and to make his prophecy of Temple destruction and rebuilding into one that was actually fulfilled.

It seems to me, therefore, that the most cogent interpretation of 11:31, the one that makes the most sense of "Why did you not believe him?" in its narrative context, is that it is a reference to a general belief that John had acknowledged Jesus as his successor, "the stronger one."[17] It seems unlikely, moreover, that this feature of the narrative is a total invention of Mark or the Christians from whom he got the story, since John's acknowledgement of Jesus is not the main point of the narrative but an assumption upon which it is based, and the tale would not have had much persuasive power unless this assumption were known to be true by the narrative's audience. It now seems historically likely to me, therefore—contrary to what I wrote in volume 1 of my commentary—that the Baptist "bore witness" to Jesus, to use the terminology of the Fourth Gospel (John 1:7, 19–34; 3:25–30; 5:31–35).[18]

But this conclusion itself confronts a major difficulty, namely the passage referred to in the quotation from my commentary, the Q pericope Matt. 11:2–6//Luke 7:18–23. If John was known to have acknowledged Jesus' authority, why does Q depict him as being in doubt as to whether or not Jesus is "the coming one"? This problem cannot be evaded by the hypothesis that John eventually overcame his doubt and publicized his respect for Jesus, at least not if the Q setting for John's question is accurate, since the question is posed not by a John in medias res but by John in prison toward the end of his life.[19] Nor can the whole problem of the dissonance

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[17] C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (London and Philadelphia, 1990), p. 694, asserts without argument that John's support for Jesus cannot have been a matter of public knowledge. Why not?

[18] I leave to one side Matt. 3:13–15 and John 1:29–36; 3:25–30, which provide possible further evidence that John believed in and testified about Jesus. The Matthean passage has an obvious apologetic purpose, but the Johannine material may well contain historical elements; see C.H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 251–287. I disagree with Dodd, however, that the Johannine Baptist's denial of Elijan status is among these historical elements; see below.

If the Baptist did publicly support Jesus, why did some of his followers abstain from following suit, as noted in the quotation from my commentary at the beginning of this study? First, the Baptist movement was already well-established before Jesus appeared on the scene, and some streams of that movement may have taken root far from Palestine before Jesus rose to prominence. Second, as I will argue below, the Baptist's support for Jesus was initially of a limited and equivocal character.

[19] According to Bultmann, *History*, pp. 23–24, the setting is artificial, but U. Luz, *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, 2001), pp. 130–131, counters forcefully that the text (with the possible exception of the last verse) gives the impression of unity. See Meier, *Marginal Jew*, pp. 131–137, 198–204, for a more detailed defense

with Mark 11:27–33 be swept under the rug by asserting that the Q saying is a creation of the later church. As Luz points out, it is difficult to find a convincing *Sitz im Leben* in the church for the creation of a narrative about a doubting John the Baptist, since elsewhere his testimony to Jesus is strongly emphasized.[20] Both Matt. 11:2–6//Luke 7:18–23 and Mark 11:27–33, therefore, have a strong claim to authenticity, yet they seem to contradict each other. To apply a rabbinic formula about reconciling scriptural contradictions to texts for which the rabbis would never have dreamed of employing it, "How can these two passages both be upheld?"[21]

Again, it is interesting to see what different interpreters have made of the tension between the Q pericope, with its doubting Baptist, and the rest of the gospel witness, with its supportive Baptist. The problem has been felt since the early church.[22] Gregory the Great, for example, in his *Homilies on the Gospels* (6.1), writes:

> We must inquire how John, who is a prophet and more than a prophet [Matt. 11:9//Luke 7:26], who made known the Lord when he came to be baptized, saying, "Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" [John 1:29]—when he was afterwards cast into prison, should send his disciples to ask, "Are you he that is to come, or do we look for another?" Did he not know him whom he had pointed out to others; or was he uncertain whether this was he, whom by foretelling, by baptizing, and by making known, he had proclaimed to be he?[23]

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of the historicity of the pericope (cf. n. 89 on the access of ancient Mediterranean prisoners to friends and relatives).

[20] Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, pp. 131–132. Cf. G. Theissen and A. Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (London, 1998), p. 205: "The doubting character of the question, Jesus' indirect answer and the diplomatic warning clad in a beatitude . . ., together with the fact that no positive reaction is reported on the part of John, fit the historical situation presupposed better than the post-Easter proclamation of the church." Cf. Meier, *Marginal Jew*, pp. 130–137.

[21] See, for example, Exod. Rabbah 48:1; Num. Rabbah 4:12, 20. The reconciliation process usually involved positing one of the passages as the fundamental teaching, then showing how the other could be reconciled with it; see J. Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville and Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 100–101.

[22] Luther's attempt to minimize it cannot hide how large it loomed for others: "Most of what I can find written about this gospel deals with the question of whether St. John did not know that Jesus is the rightful Christ; but that is an unnecessary question, and it is of no great consequence" (E. Mühlhaupt, *D. Martin Luthers Evangelien-Auslegung* [Göttingen, 1964–73], vol. 2, p. 372; cited in Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, p. 133).

[23] As cited in Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels Collected*

In the continuation of the passage Gregory, who here follows Origen (*Homilies on 1 Kgs.* 28.3–25) and Jerome (*Commentary on Matthew* 11:3), answers his own question by asserting that John's inquiry was contextual: facing his own death, he was asking Jesus whether or not he was the one who would go to the underworld and preach to the dead, whose ranks John would soon join.[24] Perhaps aware of the implausibility of this exegesis, Jerome also offers another interpretation, which goes back to Origen (fr. 220.2 = GCS Origenes 12.165) and Chrysostom (*Homilies on Matthew* 36.2): John was not asking on his own behalf, but for the benefit of his disciples, who would thereby be given the opportunity to observe Christ's miracles and become convinced themselves (*Commentary on Matthew* 11:1–2). His doubt, therefore, was not real but fictive; it had a pedagogical purpose. But this exegesis, which became the dominant one in the pre-modern church,[25] is problematic because John's question is occasioned not by a discussion with his disciples about Jesus' status, as the pedagogical reading would seem to require, but by his hearing about τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ("the works of Christ").[26] In fact, the real discussants are not John and his disciples but John and Jesus, with John's disciples merely acting as intermediaries, as is shown by the wording of Matt. 11:3 ("And he [John] said to him [Jesus]")[27] and of Matt. 11:4//Luke 7:22 ("Go and say to John"). The pedagogical explanation of John's question, then, is fictive in more ways than one.

Another approach is to treat John's doubt as genuine rather than fictive, but to regard it as a late development in his spiritual biog-

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Out of the Works of the Fathers (Oxford, 1842), vol. 1, p. 404, though I have updated the translation.

[24] Jerome relates this exegesis to John's reference to a *future* coming; he does not ask, "Are you the one who *has come?*" but "Are you the one who *is to come?*" On this "descent to hell" interpretation, see D. Sheerin, "St. John the Baptist in the Lower World," in *Vigiliae Christianae* 30 (1976), pp. 1–22.

[25] Cf. J. Dupont, "L'Ambassade de Jean-Baptiste (Matthieu 11,2–6; Luc 7,18–23)," in *Norwegian Review of Theology* 83 (1961), p. 807, n. 8. I follow Dupont's critique closely in the rest of this paragraph.

[26] Although Luke 7:18 does not contain this phrase, the words *πάντων τούτων* ("all these things") convey the same impression: John's question is based on Jesus' miracles (cf. Luke 7:1–17).

[27] The same impression is conveyed by Luke 7:19: ἔπεμψεν πρὸς τὸν κύριον λέγων . . . ("he sent to the Lord, saying . . ."). Dupont, "L'Ambassade," p. 807, points out that Augustine, in furthering the "doubt" interpretation, finds it necessary to change the wording of Matt. 11:3 *ait illi* ("he said to him") to a repeated *Ite, dicite illi* ("You go, you say to him"): *Sermones de Scriptura* 66:4 (PL 38.432).

raphy: in prison he experienced a crisis of faith and began to doubt the messianic identification that he had previously made. Only Tertullian among ancient exegetes is bold enough to advocate this explanation (*Against Marcion* 4.18),[28] but it has become popular in modern, psychologically oriented times, especially among Protestant interpreters.[29] And it must be admitted that these exegetical psychologists may actually have grasped the way in which Matthew and Luke understand the Q narrative, and that their reading does less violence to that story than does the "fictive doubt" interpretation. It is still, however, belied by the fact that John's question is occasioned by hearing about τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ("the works of Christ"), that is, his miracles—hardly the sort of thing to trigger a sudden onslaught of doubt. Rather, as D. Strauss observes, the impression one gains from the Q narrative on its own is that the imprisoned John, galvanized by the reports of Jesus' miracles, is for the first time entertaining the thought that Jesus might be ὁ ἐρχόμενος ("the one who is to come").[30]

II. *Solution*

I would like to propose a different strategy for reconciling the Q saying, which suggests that the Baptist was not convinced of Jesus' messiahship, with Mark 11:27–33, which suggests that he acknowledged and supported Jesus' authority. I would postulate that John's support was of an intermediate kind: he did indeed affirm Jesus' ministry and even recognized Jesus as his superior, but he did not acknowledge him as the messiah. There was therefore a difference in his mind between ὁ ἰσχυρότερος ("the stronger one"), whose identity,

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[28] "It was necessary that the portion of the Holy Spirit which, in the form of the prophetic gift, had been through John preparing the ways of the Lord, should now depart from John, and return back again of course to the Lord, as to its all-embracing original. Therefore John, being now an ordinary person, and only one of the many, was offended indeed as a man."

[29] Cf. Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, p. 133, nn. 30–32, citing Olshausen, Meyer, Lightfoot, Zahn, and Paulus; cf. also A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids, 1971; orig. 1883), vol. 1, pp. 666–669. As Luz notes, "Knabenhauer [a Roman Catholic commentator] announces, not without pride, that in his time 'practically all' Protestants believed that John doubted Jesus' messiahship, while the Catholics attempted to remove from him any shadow of doubt."

[30] D.F. Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (Philadelphia, 1972 [orig. 1840]), pp. 219–222.

he came to understand, was Jesus, and ὁ ἐρχόμενος ("the coming one"),[31] whose identity John did not yet know. For the gospel writers, to be sure, ὁ ἐρχόμενος and ὁ ἰσχυρότερος are the same person, namely Jesus.[32] But I would argue that originally, in the lives of the historical Jesus and the historical John, these were two separate designations with two separate history-of-religions backgrounds. This hypothesis coheres with a suggestion made thirty years ago by Raymond Brown: an early stage of Christological reflection identified John the Baptist with the OT prophet Elijah and Jesus with Elijah's successor Elisha.[33] I would go a step further: John the Baptist identified himself with Elijah, and Jesus with Elisha.

The evidence that the Baptist thought of himself as a new Elijah, or Elijah returned from the dead,[34] is circumstantial but compelling. H. Stegemann has made the strongest case for this hypothesis,[35]

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[31] On ὁ ἐρχόμενος as a messianic title, see H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (München, 1924–1961), vol. 1, pp. 849, 876 and J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (Philadelphia, 1966), pp. 256–260, who assert that a messianic understanding of Ps. 118:26 ("Blessed is the one who comes . . .") was already present in the Judaism of Jesus' time. To be sure, the Jewish texts cited by Jeremias (B. Pes. 118a; Pesiqta Rab. 31:6; Midrash on Psalms, etc.) are later than the NT period and prove only that the Hallel psalms were read *eschatologically*, not that they were read *messianically*. But the NT passages that use Ps. 118:26 (Mark 11:9//Matt. 21:9//Luke 19:38//John 12:13 and Matt. 23:39 = Luke 13:35) assume rather than argue for a messianic interpretation, and other NT and early Christian passages (Mark 12:10; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:7; *Barn.* 6:4; *Acts of Peter* 24) reveal a widespread tendency to read Psalm 118 christologically. Cf. Meier, *Marginal Jew*, p. 199, n. 90, who notes the observation of Fitzmyer and Witherington that "certain key 'messianic' texts in the OT and Qumran speak of the Davidic king or anointed one as 'coming:' so Zech. 9:9 ('Behold, your king comes to you'); 1QS 9:1 ('. . . until there come the Anointed Ones of Aaron and Israel'), 4QPBless 3 ('. . . until there comes the Anointed One of justice, the sprout of David')." Meier also notes, however, that "in an eschatological context, almost everything and anyone is said to 'come,' including days," so he is unwilling to see "the coming one" as a specifically messianic title.

[32] Matthew 3:11 conjoins the attributive participle ἐρχόμενος with the adjective ἰσχυρότερος (ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστιν; cf. ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος in John 1:27, though without reference to ὁ ἰσχυρότερος).

[33] R.E. Brown, "Jesus and Elisha," in *Perspective* 12 (1971), pp. 85–104. Later secondary literature on Jesus as a new Elisha in the NT includes D.G. Bostock, "Jesus as the New Elisha," in *Expository Times* 92 (1980), pp. 39–41 (Bostock does not seem to know Brown's article); T.L. Brodie, "Jesus as the New Elisha: Cracking the Code," in *Expository Times* 93 (1981), pp. 39–42; T.L. Brodie, "Luke-Acts as an Imitation and Emulation of the Elijah-Elisha Narrative," in *New Views on Luke and Acts* (Collegeville, 1990), pp. 78–85.

[34] Both are possibilities. On the former, see Luke 1:17: "He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah." On the latter, see below, n. 37.

[35] H. Stegemann, *Die Essener, Qumran, Johannes der Täufer und Jesus: ein Sachbuch*

pointing to the similarity between John's clothing in Mark 1:6 and Elijah's in 2 Kgs. 1:8,[36] the location of John's ministry in the same area from which Elijah, according to tradition, was taken up to heaven (2 Kgs. 2:1–18),[37] and the echoes in John's teaching of Malachi 3–4, which deals with "the messenger of the covenant," i.e., Elijah.[38] The Baptist of the gospels, moreover, like Elijah (1 Kgs. 19:1–3), was a prophet (Matt. 11:9//Luke 7:26) who earned the hostility of a Jewish ruler's wife because he upbraided him for violating the law of Moses (Mark 6:17–19; cf. 1 Kgs. 18:17–18; cf. Sir. 48:6).[39] And,

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(Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna, 1993), pp. 298–301. See also the careful argumentation of M. Öhler, "The Expectation of Elijah and the Presence of the Kingdom of God," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999), pp. 470–473.

[36] Mark 1:6: καὶ ἦν ὁ Ἰωάννης ἐνδεδυμένος τρίχας καμήλου καὶ ζώνην δερματίνην περὶ τὴν ὀσφὺν αὐτοῦ . . . ("and John was wearing camel's hairs and a leather belt about his waist"). 2 Kgs. 1:8: ἀνὴρ δασὺς καὶ ζώνην δερματίνην περιεζωσμένος τὴν ὀσφὺν αὐτοῦ ("a hairy man and a leather belt about his waist"). As Theissen and Merz, *Jesus*, p. 206, n. 18, note, however, "John's clothing is sometimes identified as merely the usual clothing of those who live in the wilderness or as a prophet's garb, without any special reference to Elijah." See Zech. 13:4, which mentions the "hairy mantle" of the prophet, and cf. Meier, *Marginal Jew*, pp. 46–48. But even Meier, who denies the Elijah typology, has to admit the closeness between the Mark 1:6 and 2 Kgs. 1:8 (see p. 90, n. 134). The similarity consists not only in the parallel vocabulary in the second part but also in the overall structure: reference to hairiness + καί + "a leather belt about his waist." The lack of an *exact* parallel in the first part may actually support the historicity of John's "Elijah complex"; if he was not particularly hairy in his natural state, the garment of camel's hair may have been a prop for advancing his Elijan claims. Cf. Öhler, "Expectation," p. 470, who points out that "a cloak plays a significant role in the Elisha stories" (1 Kgs. 9:19; 2 Kgs. 2:8, 14).

[37] See especially John 1:28; 10:40 in comparison with 2 Kgs. 2:8. The idea, then, would be that Elijah has reappeared in the earthly world at the spot where he disappeared into the heavenly one; cf. J. Murphy-O'Connor, "John the Baptist and Jesus: History and Hypotheses," in *New Testament Studies* 36 (1990), p. 360, n. 7; J.A. Trumbower, "The Role of Malachi in the Career of John the Baptist," in C.A. Evans and W. Stegner, eds., *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel* (Sheffield, 1994), p. 37, n. 1; Öhler, "Expectation," p. 472.

[38] These echoes include the motifs of judgment by fire (Mal. 3:2; 4:1; cf. Matt. 3:11–12//Luke 3:16–17), repentance (Mal. 3:7; 4:5; cf. Mark 1:4//Matt. 3:2; Matt. 3:8//Luke 3:8), and the burning of chaff (Mal. 4:1; cf. Matt. 3:12//Luke 3:17). Theissen and Merz, *Jesus*, p. 206, n. 18, think these allusions "are present, but not very specific (the individual elements also occur elsewhere in the prophets)." But the fact that they all occur *together* in Mal. 3–4 makes Stegemann's case more compelling than Theissen and Merz allow. As Öhler, "Expectation," pp. 471–472, points out, moreover, "Malachi's words are the only ones in the OT comparing the judgment of Israel to winnowing and burning the chaff." See the next note on the possible relevance of Mal. 2:15 for the career of the Baptist, and cf. Trumbower, "The Role of Malachi in the Career of John the Baptist."

[39] As Öhler, "Expectation," p. 472, points out, Elijah was sometimes connected

like the Baptist as described by Josephus (*Ant.* 18.18–19),[40] Elijah is depicted in the Old Testament and Jewish traditions as a "troubler of Israel" who was (rightly) perceived by the ruler to be a threat to his regime.[41]

But if John thought of himself as Elijah,[42] it makes sense that he

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with Phinehas (see below, n. 41), and because of this connection he was expected to "clean up every illegal marriage." This expectation creates another linkage with the book of Malachi, which, as we have just seen, appears to have been important to the Baptist. Mal. 2:15 warns, "Let no one deal treacherously against the wife of his youth!"

[40] "And when others [namely, ordinary Jews] gathered together [around John]—for their excitement reached fever pitch as they listened to [his] words—Herod began to fear that John's powerful ability to persuade people might lead to some sort of revolt, for they seemed likely to do whatever he counseled. So [Herod] decided to do away with John by a preemptive strike, before he sparked a revolt. Herod considered this a better [course of action] than to wait until the situation changed and [then] to regret [this delay] when he was engulfed by a crisis. And so, because of Herod's suspicion, John was sent in chains to Machaerus, the mountain fortress previously mentioned; there he was killed. But the Jews were of the opinion that the army was destroyed to avenge John, God wishing to inflict harm on Herod" (trans. from Meier, *Marginal Jew*, p. 20).

[41] See for example 1 Kgs. 18:17 (the "troubler of Israel" passage), 18:40 (Elijah's slaughter of the prophets of Baal), 19:15–17 (his anointment of a new king to replace Ahab and his involvement in Syrian politics), 21:17–26 (his curse on the line of Ahab). As L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Elisha," in *Novum Testamentum* 36 (1994), pp. 1–28, esp. pp. 2–3, points out, Josephus tends to de-emphasize Elijah in favor of Elisha because of such "Zealotic" features: "The fact that Josephus' presumed contemporary Pseudo-Philo, in his *Biblical Antiquities* (48:1–2), identifies Elijah with Phinehas, the biblical zealot who took the law into his own hands (Num. 25:7–8) and slew the Israelite Zimri who was having relations with a Midianite woman, would hardly endear him to Josephus, inasmuch as Elijah thereby becomes the prototype of all later zealots, including, we may presume, the revolutionaries of Josephus' own day." Feldman notes that Pirqe R. Eliezer 47 attests the same identification of Elijah with Phinehas. Cf. Öhler, "Expectation," p. 462, n. 3, who also cites Tg. Yer. I Exod. 6:18 and Tg. Yer. I Num. 25:12 and offers a detailed defense of the antiquity of the identification.

[42] Brown, "Jesus and Elisha," p. 100, n. 4, questions that John claimed the Elijah role for himself, basing his skepticism on (1) John 1:21a, in which John denies that he is Elijah, (2) Mark 6:14–15 and 8:28, in which a distinction is made between the Baptist and Elijah, and (3) Matt. 17:10–13, in which Jesus identifies the Baptist with Elijah, thereby implying that that identification has not previously been made. With regard to (1), the Baptist's denial of Elijan identity is part of a general Johannine tendency to withhold eschatological titles from him (cf. John 1:20, 21b; cf. 1:8a), perhaps in view of competition between Christians and followers of the Baptist (see John 1:8a; 3:22–23; 4:1–2; cf. R.T. Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel* [Philadelphia, 1988], p. 17; M. de Jonge, "John the Baptist and Elijah in the Fourth Gospel," in R.T. Fortna and B.R. Gaventa, eds., *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John* [Nashville, 1990], pp. 299–308; Öhler, "Expectation," pp. 469–70). It is also possible that the Fourth Gospel denies the Elijah title to John because Elijah was a miracle-worker, whereas John 10:31

might have thought of his successor, Jesus, as Elijah's successor, Elisha. One of the two biblical scenes in which Elijah and Elisha are conjoined is 2 Kgs. 2, in which Elijah is taken up to heaven and Elisha inherits his mantle both literally and figuratively.[43] Before Elijah is taken up, however, he bids Elisha to request from him anything he wants; Elisha replies without hesitation that he desires a double portion of Elijah's spirit.[44] Elijah answers that Elisha has asked something difficult, but that if he sees Elijah being taken up, his request will be granted. He does, and it is; after Elijah's assumption, Elisha immediately picks up Elijah's mantle and accomplishes the Joshua-like miracle of dividing the Jordan and passing through on dry land.[45] He goes on to perform a series of other miraculous signs, and Jewish traditions interpret this ministry of miracle as a fulfillment of his request to receive a double portion of Elijah's spirit.[46]

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explicitly emphasizes that "John did no miracle" (see D.M. Smith, *Johannine Christianity: Essays on Its Setting, Sources, and Theology* [Columbia, 1984], pp. 74–75). See also J.L. Martyn, *The Gospel of John in Christian History: Essays for Interpreters* (New York, 1978), pp. 9–54, according to whom the source of John 1:19–51 identified Jesus as Elijah, the Prophet-like-Moses, and the Messiah. All of this contra Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, pp. 265–266, who thinks that John 1:21a preserves a historical tradition. With regard to (2), the popular opinions communicated in Mark 6:14–15 and 8:28 need not have been those of the Baptist himself, and eschatological expectations are notoriously fluid. Moreover, the different expectations do not necessarily exclude each other; Elijah, for example, was one of the prophets. As for (3), Matt. 17:13 is only making explicit what is implied in Mark 9:13; the rhetorical power of the latter verse rests on the assumption that readers do not need to have the John = Elijah equation spelled out for them. Matthew, however, often spells out what is implicit in Mark.

[43] The other scene is 1 Kgs. 19:19–21, in which Elijah calls Elisha to follow him.

[44] According to Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait," p. 44, Josephus considered this request to be too peremptory, and therefore elided it (*Ant.* 9.28).

[45] This is interesting, because Joshua himself is a successor figure, standing in relation to Moses as Elisha does to Elijah; cf. C. Schäfer-Lichtenberger, "'Josua' und 'Elischa'—eine biblische Argumentation zur Begründung der Autorität und Legitimität des Nachfolgers," in *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 101 (1989), pp. 198–222. Jesus' name ישוע, incidentally, is a form of Joshua (יהושע); moreover, it was popularly etymologized from the root ישע = "to save" (cf. Matt. 1:21), which would have brought its significance close that of the name of Elisha אלישע, which means "God saves;" cf. F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Oxford, 1907), p. 46. Both because of its link with Joshua's name and because of its link to Elisha's, therefore, Jesus' name itself could have suggested to John that Jesus would be his successor.

[46] See Sir. 48:12 (Syr): "When Elijah was enveloped in the whirlwind, Elisha was filled with his spirit; twice as many signs he wrought, and marvels with every utterance of his mouth" (P.W. Skehan and A.A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes Introduction and Commentary* [New York, 1987], pp. 530, 532,

Several features here suggest the traditions about Jesus and John. First and foremost, Elisha's reception of a double portion of Elijah's spirit is consonant with John's designation of Jesus as "the stronger one." This is especially so because, as Brown points out, "the difference between the Baptist and Jesus is phrased in terms of Jesus' baptizing *with the spirit* (Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 1:5)."[47] Moreover, one of the main distinctions between Jesus' ministry and that of John is that Jesus was known for performing miracles, whereas John was not[48]—a difference that corresponds to the traditional Jewish interpretation of the "double portion" passage as a reference to Elisha's greater miracle-working power.[49]

Like many charismatic founder figures in the history of religions, then, John was concerned to designate a successor, whom he was happy to acknowledge would outstrip him: the great work must continue after his passing, and please God that it might even increase![50] But acknowledging Jesus as a second Elisha does not necessarily place him in a fixed eschatological role; in contrast to Elijah, there is no

534). Cf. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1909–1938), vol. 4, p. 239, and vol. 6, pp. 343–344, n. 2, who cites B. San. 47a and B. Hul. 7b, in which 2 Kgs. 2:9 is interpreted as a reference to Elisha's resurrection of two dead people—the son of the Shunamite woman (2 Kgs. 4) and Naaman (2 Kgs. 5), whose leprosy was equivalent to death—to Elijah's one. In later sources, Elisha performs sixteen miracles to Elijah's eight (*Baraita of 32 Middot*, No. 1; David Kimhi on 2 Kgs. 2:14; cf. Ginzberg, ibid., and "Elisha," in *Encyclopedia Judaica CD-ROM Edition* [1997]).

[47] Brown, "Jesus and Elisha," p. 101, n. 13.

[48] Cf. John 10:41: "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true" (RSV). Meier, *Marginal Jew*, pp. 132–133, 171, 199–200, n. 92, 225, n. 239, notes that this Johannine contrast is supported by Josephus, whose account of the Baptist (*Ant.* 18.116–119) mentions no miracles, whereas one of the first descriptions applied to Jesus is παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής ("a doer of startling deeds" *Ant.* 18.63). Meier observes that this description is similar to that applied to Elisha: θαυμαστὰ γὰρ καὶ παράδοξα διὰ τῆς προφητείας ἐπεδείξατο ἔργα: ("for through his prophetic power he performed astounding and startling deeds;" *Ant.* 9.182), and adds: "As far as I can see, the only two passages in the whole of Josephus' works where a person is said to perform *paradoxa erga* are the descriptions of Elisha and Jesus."

[49] Another corresponding difference between the two pairs is that Elijah and John are solitary figures whereas Elisha and Jesus are surrounded by followers and move among the people; see Brown, "Jesus and Elisha," p. 89.

[50] On precursor and successor movements, see D.C. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet* (Minneapolis, 1998), pp. 93–94 (#18). A fascinating example not mentioned by Allison is that of Elijah Muhammed and his heir-apparent, Malcolm X. Eventually tension between the two became so great that Elijah may have ordered Malcolm's death; see M. Gardell, *Countdown to Armageddon: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam* (London, 1996), passim.

evidence that the return of Elisha was expected before the end.[51] Indeed, in comparison with Elijah, Elisha is a relatively minor figure in Second-Temple Jewish and early Christian traditions.[52] There would still be a gap, therefore, between regarding Jesus as a second Elisha (= "the stronger one") and regarding him as the Messiah (= "the coming one").[53]

But that gap might be bridged under the proper circumstances. This is especially true because, in a famous Old Testament passage, God enjoins Elijah to anoint not only Elisha as his prophetic successor but also Jehu as king over Israel and Hazael as king over Syria (1 Kgs. 19:15–16). This passage may be part of the reason that traditions eventually developed that Elijah would precede and even anoint that royal figure, the messiah.[54] The Baptist, therefore,

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[51] This is probably because Elisha's death is reported in the OT (2 Kgs. 13:20) whereas Elijah's is not (instead, he is taken up to heaven while still alive: 2 Kgs. 2:11–12); see Brown, "Jesus and Elisha," p. 88, and J.E. Taylor, *The Immerser: John the Baptist Within Second Temple Judaism* (Grand Rapids, 1997), p. 287.

[52] See Brown, "Jesus and Elisha," p. 101, n. 14: "Elisha never gained the popularity in Jewish thought that Elijah acquired. Outside of the Elisha cycle in 1–2 Kings, there is no other reference to this prophet in the Protocanonical Books of the OT, and only one reference in the Deuterocanonical Books (the Apocrypha), i.e., Sir. 48:13–15. In the NT there is only one reference to him by name (Luke 4:27). In the paintings of the Dura-Europos synagogue Elisha is depicted almost exclusively as an assistant to Elijah." Cf. Brown, "Jesus and Elisha," n. 11, on the infrequency of patristic references to Elisha compared with the abundance of references to Elijah. It is noteworthy that the index to J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, 1983) contains about thirty references to Elijah but none to Elisha. One exception to this tendency to downplay Elisha is Josephus; Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait," argues that Josephus goes out of his way to increase Elisha's importance and lessen Elijah's, partly because he is frightened of certain zealotic elements in the Elijah image, such as his murder of foreign priests (cf. above, n. 41). But in order to increase the relative importance of Elisha, Josephus has to alter elements of the biblical tradition that suggest his subservience to Elijah; he omits, for example, the degrading picture of Elisha pouring water on Elijah's hands (2 Kgs. 3:11; cf. *Ant.* 9.33).

[53] John's term for Jesus in Matt. 3:11//John 1:27, ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ("the one coming after me"), can be interpreted as "my disciple;" the sense, then, would be, "My disciple has outstripped me," an acknowledgement of Jesus' superiority. But others might see John's chronological priority to Jesus, which is similar to Elijah's chronological priority to Elisha, as an indication of John's superiority to Jesus. Scobie, *John the Baptist*, pp. 196–197, interprets John 1:15, 30 and perhaps Matt. 3:11//John 1:27; Matt. 11:11b//Luke 7:28b as a polemic against this argument from precedence.

[54] Sirach 48:8 confirms that Elijah's anointing of kings was remembered by Jews in the Second Temple period: "You . . . anointed kings to inflict retribution, and prophets to succeed you." On Elijah's coming before the Messiah see below, n. 61.

may initially have thought that God had cast Jesus to play the role of Elisha to his Elijah, but he may finally have begun to wonder whether God had instead intended Jesus for a more important, royal role.[55]

There is no absolute disjunction between the two roles; indeed, in the Judaism of Jesus' time, the image of the messiah sometimes began to resemble that of Elisha in certain ways. A recently-published Qumran fragment, 4Q521, describes God's anointed one, or messiah,[56] as, or in close conjunction with, a figure who liberates captives, restores sight to the blind, heals the wounded, revives the dead, and brings good news to the poor—a conflation of allusions to Psalm 146, Is. 35:5–6, and 61:1.[57] Jesus' answer to the Baptist in Matt. 11:4–5//Luke 7:22 fuses these same two Isaian passages,[58] as a glance

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On his anointing of the Messiah, see Justin, *Dial.* 49, and cf. A.S. van der Woude, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumrân* (Assen, 1957), p. 55.

[55] Although Jehu is condemned in the Bible for allowing the golden calves to remain in Bethel and Dan (2 Kgs. 10:29, 31), he is also praised for wiping out the house of the wicked Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kgs. 10:30). The rabbinic attitude toward him, therefore, is ambivalent, and it is possible that he became a model for a certain type of militant messianic hope. But even the anti-revolutionary Josephus glosses over his defects; see L.H. Feldman, *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 352–362.

[56] I assume that the figure described is the Davidic messiah, not an eschatological prophet modeled on Elijah, as argued by J.J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York, 1995), pp. 116–122. The description in the first line of heaven and earth obeying him is too lofty to support Collins's thesis, but it is reminiscent of the worldwide rulership attributed to the Davidic king in passages such as Psalm 2; cf. M.O. Wise and J.D. Tabor, "The Messiah at Qumran," in *Biblical Archaeology Review* 18 (November–December 1992), p. 60. Part of the job description of the figure in 4Q521, moreover, involves freeing captives, (מתיר אסורים, a term drawn from Ps. 146:7), the sort of task usually reserved for a king or other military leader. In contrast, the anointed prophet of Is. 61:1 only *proclaims* the release of captives; cf. 11QMelchizedek 2:6. Also, the overlap with the Q passage is itself evidence that 4Q521 is a reference to the Davidic messiah, since the Q passage is about Jesus' messianic identity. See also the parallel to Matt. 28:18, in which Jesus, who in Matthew is above all a Davidic figure (Matt. 1:1, 20; 9:27; 12:3, 23, etc.) is given "all authority in heaven and on earth." On the figure in 4Q521 as the Davidic Messiah, see, besides Tabor and Wise, É. Puech, "Une apocalypse messianique (4Q521)," in *Revue de Qumran* 15 (1992), pp. 475–522. For another theory, see K.-W. Niebuhr, "Die Werke des eschatologischen Freuboten. 4Q521 und die Jesusüberlieferung," in C.M. Tuckett, ed., *The Scriptures in the Gospels* (1997), pp. 637–646.

[57] See D.C. Allison, *The Intertextual Jesus: Scripture in Q* (Valley Forge, 2000), pp. 111–1112.

[58] See J.D. Tabor and M.O. Wise, "4Q521 'On Resurrection' and the Synoptic Gospel Tradition: A Preliminary Study," in *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 10 (1992), pp. 159–160.

at the accompanying chart makes clear. Remarkably, however, both Q and 4Q521 add to this catena of Isaian allusions a reference to raising the dead. The Q passage and 4Q521, therefore, seem to reflect a common stream of messianic expectation. This additional resurrection motif and the cleansing-of-lepers motif, which is added in Q, are also, however, present in the Elisha traditions.[59] Elisha, moreover, also heals blindness, though this feature is found in Isaiah 35 as well.[60] All of this suggests that in the time of Jesus there was a certain fluidity between the figure of the Davidic messiah (who, according to a common interpretation of Mal. 4:5 would be preceded by the eschatological Elijah)[61] and that of Elisha (who had been preceded by the historical Elijah).[62] This does not mean that the two roles were always identical; for many people, it would still be a discrete step from Jesus as the prophet-like-Elisha to Jesus as the Davidic messiah,[63] and that is why the support for Jesus implied

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[59] Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, pp. 121 and 133, n. 104. Elijah too, to be sure, raises a dead person (1 Kgs. 17:17–24), but he does not heal a leper.

[60] Elisha's healing of blindness and his resurrection of the dead are also highlighted in a later rabbinic passage, Pesiqta deRab Kahana 9:4, which sees these acts as a paradigm for the eschaton: "All that the Holy One will do in the time-to-come, He has already anticipated and done in part by the hand of the righteous in this world. The Holy One says: I shall quicken the dead. He has already done so by the hand of Elijah, by the hand of Elisha, by the hand of Ezekiel. . . . The Holy One says: I will open the eyes of the blind. Has he not already done so—'The Lord opened the eyes of the young man' [through Elisha] (2 Kgs. 6:17)?" (trans. from W.G. Braude and I.J. Kapstein, *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana. R. Kahana's Compilation of Discourses for Sabbaths and Feast Days* [London, 1975]). This passage is cited by E. Puech, *Qumrân grotte 4 xviii. Textes hébreux (4Q521–4Q528, 4Q576–4Q579)* (Oxford, 1998), p. 16, in his discussion of 4Q521.

[61] According to Mal. 4:5, Elijah would come before the end. Apparently by the first century, however, this expectation was reinterpreted as a coming before the *messiah;* see Mark 9:11 and cf. Marcus, *Way*, p. 110.

[62] Luke at least seems to be aware of the Elishan typology at work here, since the Q pericope we have been dealing with, Luke 7:18–23, immediately follows the raising of the widow's son in Nain, a passage reminiscent of both an Elijan story (1 Kgs. 17:17–24) and an Elishan one (2 Kgs. 4:32–37); cf. I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter and Grand Rapids, 1978), p. 283. Moreover, the Lukan Jesus makes direct reference to Elisha's healing of Naaman (2 Kgs. 5) in the other passage in which he claims to fulfill Is. 61:1–2, namely Luke 4:18–19, 27; cf. Tabor and Wise, "4Q521," p. 160.

[63] The relation between the prophet-like-Elisha and the messiah is comparable to the relation between the prophet-like-Moses and the messiah: sometimes the two images merge (see, e.g., Acts 3:20–23), but sometimes they are identifiably separate (see, e.g., 1QS 9:10–11; John 1:20–21). A person identified with the prophet-like-Moses, therefore, might be a candidate but not a shoo-in for the messiah post. On

by "Why did you not believe him?" falls short of an endorsement of him as "the coming one."[64]

Isaiah	*Matt 11:5//Luke 7:22 = Q*	*4Q521*	*Elisha traditions*
eyes of blind opened (35:5a)	blind receive sight	giving sight to blind (8b)	Elisha causes blindness and heals it (2 Kings 6:18, 20)
lame leaps like hart (35:6a)	lame walk		
	lepers are cleansed		Elisha heals Naaman of leprosy and turns Gehazi into a leper (2 Kings 5)
ears of deaf unstopped (35:5b)	deaf hear		
	dead raised	and will make the dead live (12b)	Elisha raises son of Shunamite woman from death (2 Kings 4:18–37)
to bring good news to poor (61:1a)	poor have good news preached to them	will proclaim good news to the poor (12c)	

the prophet-like-Moses in Jewish and Christian expectation, see H.M. Teeple, *The Mosaic Eschatological Prophet* (Philadelphia, 1957); J.L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (2d ed.; Nashville, 1979 (orig. 1968)), pp. 104–111; W.A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (Leiden, 1967), passim; D.C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 73–90.

[64] One difference between the two figures may have been that the Davidic messiah was more strongly associated with succoring the poor, an association that coheres with the climactic end-position in Q 7:22 of πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται ("the poor have the good news proclaimed to them"). To be sure, Ginzberg, *Legends*, vol. 4, p. 240, states that in Jewish tradition Elisha too becomes a helper of the destitute: "Like his teacher [Elijah], Elisha was always ready to help the poor and needy." This statement, however, seems to be Ginzberg's editorializing, not an exegesis of the rabbinic texts that he cites. On the Davidic messiah's association with the poor, see Is. 11:1–5, in which the coming Davidic king is praised for his "spirit of counsel and strength" and described as "judg[ing] the poor with justice, and decid[ing] aright for the land's afflicted." A Qumran text, 11QMelch 2:15–24, conflates the messenger of good news from Is. 52:7, the anointed messenger who

To cite again the rabbinic formula: How, then, can both Mark 11:32 and Matt. 11:3//Luke 7:19 be upheld? In this way: by positing that John the Baptist did indeed believe in Jesus early on—but as the Elisha to John's Elijah rather than as the messiah. Only later, in prison near the end of his life, and facing the end of his Elijah-like career, did John begin to wonder whether it might be his destiny to forerun a figure who was not just prophetic but also Davidic. Perhaps the mighty works performed by Jesus could be interpreted in another way—as τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Moved by some such intuition, John sent messengers to Jesus to pose a question that articulated both his dawning hope and his remaining doubt: "Are you the one who is to come—or are we waiting for another?"

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comforts the afflicted from Is. 61:1–3, and the anointed prince from Dan. 9:25–26 and refers to this composite figure as "the anointed one of the Spirit" (משיח הרוח). Contrary to M. de Jonge and A.S. van der Woude, "11Q Melchizedek and the New Testament," in *New Testament Studies* 12 (1965–1966), pp. 306–307, who are followed by Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, p. 205, this figure is probably not just an anointed *prophet* but an anointed *ruler*. It is true, as de Jonge and van der Woude point out, that CD 2:12 uses משוחי קדשו for anointed prophets (cf. CD 6:1 and 1QM 11:7). But 11QMelch melds the prophet figures from Isaiah with an apparent reference to the anointed prince from Dan. 9:25–26; see F. García Martínez, E.J.C. Tigchelaar, and A. van der Woude, *Qumran Cave 11. II. 11Q2–18, 11Q20–31* (Oxford, 1998), p. 232, on l. 18.

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DECEPTION, AMBIGUITY, AND REVELATION: MATTHEW'S JUDGMENTAL SCENES IN SOCIAL-SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE

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Things are seldom what they seem,
Skim milk masquerades as cream

(H.M.S. Pinafore)

With deep sadness I dedicate this article to the memory of Anthony Saldarini. Both products of the same doctoral program, we shared many interests that helped keep us in friendly and scholarly contact. Both of us early on became students of the social sciences, especially in the Catholic Biblical Association; and Tony always impressed me as a man who did not suffer from "hardening of the categories." We both came to share an interest in the Gospel of Matthew. Distinctive of Tony's contribution to Matthean studies was the use of social science modeling, such as conflict theory, deviance and labeling theory, the sociology of groups, social identity theory, and kinship, which gave such a fresh taste to the interpretation of the gospel.[1] In an earlier study, he laid out a sociological model of stratification and brought much clarity by means of it to the study of Second Temple groups, such as Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees.[2] This article, I hope, honors Anthony Saldarini both in its attention to Matthew and its use of the social-science model of secrecy. What better way to honor Anthony than to utilize new methods of interpreting a classic document.

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[1] Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago, 1994).

[2] Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society. A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington, 1988).

1. *Introduction, Hypothesis, Models*

Matthew's gospel contains numerous instances of deception, lying, secrecy, hypocrisy, and ambiguity, which are the focus of this study. Yet we examine them not as isolated semantic phenomena but as part of a common and expected social strategy found in Israelite,[3] Christian,[4] and Greco-Roman[5] literatures. To this end we employ materials from cultural anthropology that interpret such phenomena, in particular the sociology of secrecy[6] and symbolic cosmologies.[7] With these lenses we are able to observe how our data operate as part of a common, expected social strategy.

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[3] J.J.M. Roberts, "Does God Lie? Divine Deceit as a Theological Problem in Israelite Prophetic Literature," in *Congress Volume Vetus Testamentum Supplement* 40 (Leiden, 1988); R.A. Freund, "Lying and Deception in the Biblical and Post-Biblical Judaic Tradition," in *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 5 (1991), pp. 45–61; Toni Craven, "Women Who Lied for the Truth," in Douglas Knight and Peter Paris, eds., *Justice and the Holy. Essays in Honor of Walter Harrelson* (Atlanta, 1989), pp. 35–49; P.J. Williams, "Lying Spirits Sent by God? The Case of Micaiah's Prophecy," in Paul Helm and Carl Trueman, eds., *The Trustworthiness of God. Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, 2002), pp. 58–66.

[4] John J. Pilch "Lying and Deceit in the Letters to the Seven Churches: Perspectives from Cultural Anthropology," in *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 22 (1992), pp. 126–34 and "Secrecy in the Mediterranean World: An Anthropological Perspective," in *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 24 (1994), pp. 151–157; Jerome H. Neyrey, "The Sociology of Secrecy and the Fourth Gospel," in Fernando Segovia, ed., *What is John? Volume II. Literary and Social Readings of the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta, 1998), pp. 79–109; Peter Marshall, "The Character of the Flatterer," in his *Enmity at Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (Tübingen, 1987), pp. 70–90; Mark D. Given, *Paul's True Rhetoric. Ambiguity, Cunning and Deception in Greece and Rome* (Harrisburg, 2001).

[5] Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* (Chicago, 1978); Adele J. Haft, "Odysseus, Idomeneus and Meriones: The Cretan Lies of Odyssey 13–19," in *Classical Journal* 79 (1983), pp. 289–306; W.J. Verdenius, "Gorgias' Doctrine of Deception," in G.B. Kerford, ed., *The Sophists and Their Legacy* (Wiesbaden, 1981), pp. 116–128; Jean-Pierre Vernant, "Ambiguity and Reversal: On the Enigmatic Structure of *Oedipus Rex*," in J.-P. Vernant and Pierre Vidal Naquet, eds., *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (New York, 1988), pp. 113–140; P. Walcot, "Odysseus and the Art of Lying," in *Ancient Society* 8 (1977), pp. 1–19; Donald Lateiner, "Deceptions and Delusions in Herodotus," in *Classical Antiquity* 9 (1990), pp. 230–246; Jon Hesk, *Deception and Democracy in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 2000); and Loyal D. Rue, *By the Grace of Guile: The Role of Deception in Natural History and Human Affairs* (Oxford, 1994).

[6] S.K. Tefft, *Secrecy: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York, 1980); Jerome H. Neyrey, "The Sociology of Secrecy and the Fourth Gospel," pp. 80–87.

[7] Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World. Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville, 2001), pp. 161–187; Jerome H. Neyrey, "The Idea of Purity in Mark's Gospel," in *Semeia* 35 (1986), pp. 91–128; "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts: 'They Turn the World Upside Down,'" in his *The Social World of Luke-Acts* (Peabody, 1991), pp. 271–304.

We take this inquiry one step further by examining how Matthew's understanding of divine judgment must be first and foremost an "apocalypse," that is, an act of pulling back the veil on all deception, lying, secrecy, hypocrisy, and ambiguity. Thus God can finally render a just judgment that separates the good from the bad and the wise from the foolish. Then God can remedy the chronic injustice of a deceptive world in which evil succeeds while good fares poorly. Since justice consists of a revelation, God's unveiling of deception, etc., entails a shock and surprise when mortals, both bad and good, find the world not as they thought it to be. And so we give special attention to the three parables in Matthew 25 as illustrative of the hypothesis we are arguing about the unveiling of deceit, secrecy, and ambiguity. Thus this study takes its readers through several stages: (1) data on deception, lying, secrecy, hypocrisy and ambiguity; (2) secrecy as a common social strategy; (3) the cosmology of a world filled with deception; and finally (4) interpretation of the parables in Matthew 25.

2. *Data Describing a Deceitful, Secret, Hypocritical, Ambiguous World*

Our claim that Matthew's world is rife with lying, deception, hypocrisy, secrecy and ambiguity includes the following data, which are based on a study of the semantic word field of ambiguity, lying, and deception.[8] Of the many items available, we list only those relevant to the argument of this study

1. deception (*apatê*): Matt. 13:22; to deceive (*planô*): Matt. 18:12, 13; 22:29; 24:4, 5, 11, 24; deception (*planê*): Matt. 27:64
2. hypocrisy (*hypokrisis*): Matt. 23:28; hypocrite (*hypokritês*): Matt. 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 15:7; 22:18; 23:13, 14, 15; 24:51
3. lying (*pseudomai*): Matt. 5:11; to bear false witness (*pseudomartyreô*): Matt. 19:18; false testimony (*pseudomartyria*): Matt. 15:19; 26:59; a false witness (*pseudomartys*): Matt. 26:60; false prophet (*pseudoprophêtês*): Matt. 7:15; 24:11, 24; false Christ (*pseudochristos*): Matt. 24:24
4. secret (*kryptos*: Matt. 6:4, 6; 10:26; secret (*kryphaios*): Matt. 6:18;

[8] Michael Darton, *Modern Concordance to the New Testament* (Garden City, 1976), pp. 107–110; Johannes P. and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York, 1988), pp. 388–445.

to hide/make secret (*kryptô*): Matt. 5:14; 11:25; 13:35, 44; 25:18, 25

5. to appear, seem (*dokeô*): Matt. 3:9; 17:25; 18:12; 21:28; 22:17, 42; 26:66
6. to reveal *apokalyptô*): Matt. 10:26; 11:25, 27; 16:17

Matthew also narrates scenes where deception, lying, secrecy, hypocrisy and ambiguity occur, even though the semantic terms just noted are not used. Taking note of these data should increase our appreciation of how secrecy and deception phenomena permeate this narrative world.

2.1 *Deception*

Even Jesus mandates deception.[9] For example, he commands those who fast: "Anoint your head and wash your face, *that your fasting may not be seen by men* but by your Father who is in secret" (6:17–18). In regard to alms, Jesus ordered, "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (6:3). All acts of piety must be done "in secret" (6:4, 6, 18). To outsiders, then, the disciples of Jesus will appear to be non-observers of traditional piety and thus deceive them.

Characters in the narrative regularly practice deception. To all appearances, Pharisees and Sadducees come to John at the Jordan for purification. But John perceives deceit in them, and exposes their hidden evil: "You brood of vipers . . ." (3:7–10). Deception constitutes the latent peril in Jesus' temptations by the Devil. Outwardly what is suggested to Jesus seems reasonable and good, but therein lies the snare. Evil is disguised as good. Jesus' prophetic role enables him to unveil this hidden evil, and so avoid ruin (4:1–13). Moreover, people regularly ask Jesus questions, not seeking information from him but "to trap" him (16:1; 19:3; 22:18)—a deception meant to harm; others flatter him: "Teacher, we know that you are true, and teach the way of God truthfully, and care for no man" (22:16). Finally, Judas Iscariot seemed to be a loyal disciple yet was secretly plotting with Jesus' enemies for his death, a deception he maintains up to the Passover meal when Jesus unveiled his fraud (26:21–23).

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[9] See Jerome H. Neyrey, "Deception," in *Bible Social Values and Their Meaning. A Handbook* (Peabody, 1993), pp. 38–42.

2.2 *Lying*

Matthew narrates scenes in which lies are told, even if the words such as *psed-* and *plan-* do not occur. For example, Herod tells the Magi to follow the star and report back to him, "That I too may come and worship him" (2:8). This king, who was "troubled" when he first learned of "the king of the Jews" (2:2), lies to the Magi; for he really seeks to find and kill this newborn rival (2:16–18). After Jesus' death the religious elite describe him as "that deceiver" (*planos*) who falsely predicted his vindication (27:63). With Pilate's approval they post a guard to prevent Jesus' "lie" from being realized by the theft of his body (27:62–65). Yet this guard sees sights at his tomb which acclaim the truth of Jesus' prediction (28:4) and tell them to their superiors (28:11). In the end, the guards are bribed to tells a lie of their own, namely, that Jesus' disciples came and stole his body (28:12–15).[10]

2.3 *Hypocrisy*

Like deception, hypocrisy refers to the mismatch of exterior behavior and internal states.[11] Hypocrites are people who practice piety, not that God may be honored, but that others might notice (6:2, 5, 16). Hypocrisy describes those who find the smallest speck in another's eye, but are blinded themselves (7:5), who wash the outside of cups, but not the inside (23:25–26). Pretending to make proselytes, they bind them with burdens so they cannot find God (23:15). Matthew describes Jesus as adept in penetrating this duplicity and deception.[12]

2.4 *Secrecy*

Jesus instructs his disciples to absent themselves from the public arena where typical villagers perform public acts of piety. Ostensibly Jesus' disciples will then appear non-observant, perhaps even neglectful of

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[10] Henry J. Cadbury, "Rebuttal, A Submerged Motive in the Gospels," in R.P. Casey and Silva Lake, eds., *Quantulacumque, Studies in Honor of Kirsopp Lake* (London, 1937), pp. 106–108.

[11] Ulrich Wilckens, "*hypokritês*," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 9, pp. 559–71; David E. Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23* (Leiden, 1979), pp. 96–123; Ivor W.J. Oakley, "'Hypocrisy' in Matthew," in *Irish Biblical Studies* 7 (1985), pp. 118–137.

[12] Paul Minear, "False Prophecy and Hypocrisy in the Gospel of Matthew," in J. Gnilka, ed., *Neues Testament und Kirche* (Freiburg, 1974), pp. 76–93.

God and scornful of piety. Yet in fact they are not, for they are instructed to give alms *in secret*, to pray *in secret*, and to fast *in secret* (6:1–18). This is not a secrecy which hides valuables from the envious gaze of onlookers or protects family matters from village gossips and nosy parkers. This secrecy is calculated to create a false impression.

Earlier Jesus told his disciples that they must be visible as a city on a hillside. Their good deeds should be manifest for all the world to see (5:14–16). Nevertheless they are later commanded to "secrecy" (6:1–18). Jesus himself strives to keep secret his powers (8:4) and his identity (16:20).[13] He appears not to practice what he preaches. His strategy in telling parables is to reveal the secrets to the few insiders, while keeping them from the many outsiders: "To you it is given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (13:11). Even God keeps secrets: "Thou has hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will" (11:25–26). Clearly, then, it is acceptable for God to withhold information and to keep secrets, just as it is for Jesus and his disciples to act secretly.

2.5 *Ambiguity*

Although Matthew never uses the word "ambiguous/ambiguity," things are seldom what they seem: one cannot tell a man by the clothes he wears (Matt. 23:5). External actions do not serve as reliable indicators of internal states. And so, most situations and persons are often fundamentally ambiguous. For example, the Gospel begins with Joseph learning that his espoused wife, Mary, is pregnant with a child not his. Outwardly, the scene bespeaks sexual immorality to Joseph, but an angel assures him that in truth Mary has conceived by the power of God's spirit (1:20–21). Things are not what they seem. Jesus himself appears as the most ambiguous figure in the Gospel. Matthew reports positive interpretations of him: Son of God (3:17; 17:5; 27:54), Son of David (9:27; 15:22), Christ (16:16), and prophet (21:11). He does mighty works (11:2–5), teaches Torah (5:3–7:27), and attends the synagogue (4:23; 9:35; 12:9). Yet in the perception of some, his actions do not correspond to his claim as God's anointed agent. They perceive him as a deceiving sinner

[13] Heikki Räisänen, *The "Messianic Secret" in Mark* (Edinburgh, 1990).

who breaks the Sabbath (12:1–8), eats with tax collectors and sinners (9:9–13), disregards purity rituals (15:1–20), and profanes the Temple of God (21:12–14). Observant Israelites do not do such things! Which version is correct? and how can we know?[14] Indeed the very gospel itself is testimony to Matthew's attempt to remove that ambiguity by proclaiming Jesus' prominence. But he does so in the face of formidable alternative interpretation by the Jerusalem and Temple elites.

One should not ignore the ambiguity contained in many of Jesus' statements. His evaluation system turns social perceptions upside down: those who are shamed, reviled, dispossessed, etc. he acclaimed "blessed" or honored.[15] Life is gained by losing it (16:25), and greatness, by being least and servant (20:26–27). The normal categories of experience, then, are painfully ambiguous: last is first, low is high, empty is full, and losing is saving.

2.6 *Say One Thing, Do Another*

Finally, the Gospel contains many stories about people who say one thing and do another.[16] The parable in 21:28–32 tells of a father who asks his two sons to go and work in his vineyard. One said "Yes!" and did not go, while the other said "No!" but went. From a cultural reading of the passage, the one who said "No!" publicly insulted his father, bringing shame on him; yet the story ironically implies that he is the better son. Ostensibly he shamed his father, but in the end honored him by his obedience. Appearances, then, are fundamentally misleading. People say one thing and do another.

What, then, is the world of Matthew like? The evangelist describes a place of profound deception, lying, hypocrisy, secrecy and ambiguity. Speech does not match deeds; people say one thing, but do another. Externals provides no safe indicator of internal states. Persons and events regularly outwardly appear either good or bad, but in fact are otherwise. Yet ambiguity is too kind a term for the world Matthew describes. *All characters in this narrative expect to be lied to and deceived. They, too, practice secrecy and deception.* All regularly hide from

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[14] Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, *Calling Jesus Names. The Social Value of Labels in Matthew* (Sonoma, 1988), pp. 81–88, 118–130.

[15] K.C. Hanson, "How Honorable! How Shameful! A Cultural Analysis of Matthew's Makarisms and Reproaches," in *Semeia* 68 (1994), pp. 81–112.

[16] Neyrey, "Equivocation," in J.J. Pilch and B.J. Malina, eds., *Bible Social Values and Their Meaning. A Handbook.* (Peabody, 1993), pp. 59–63.

others their true thoughts, authentic deeds, knowledge and piety. They are alert to masked compliments, feigned requests for information, flattery and the like. Moreover, they are formally warned to expect false prophets, false Christs, and false apostles. False testimony is often given. But as we said earlier, we err if we take these data as isolated phenomena; for they constitute part of a common and expected social strategy. Matthew's world is a cosmos where all characters both deceive others and expect in turn to be deceived.

3. *Secrecy: A Common Social Strategy, Even in Matthew*

3.1 *The Sociology of Secrecy*

Dvornick examined records from Egypt, Assyria-Babylon-Persia, Greece, Rome and Byzantium in light of governmental secrecy and intelligence services, on the basis of which he then described the formidable secrecy system in antiquity.[17] Besides international espionage and spying, scholars too have undertaken the systematic analysis of "secrecy," beginning with Georg Simmel's publication of "The Secret and the Secret Society."[18] Simmel's work has been newly reexamined by sociologists who study this phenomenon in cross-cultural perspective.[19] Even some biblical scholars have begun to tap into this material for the purposes of biblical interpretation.[20] The secrecy model, then, has been profitably used to interpret New Testament documents.

3.2 *Secrecy Defined*

Tefft defines secrecy as "the mandatory or voluntary, but calculated, concealment of information, activities, or relationships."[21] Thus, secrecy

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[17] Francis Dvornick, *The Origins of Intelligence Services*: *the Ancient Near East, Persia, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, the Arab Muslim Empires, the Mogol Empire, China, Moscow* (New Brunswick, 1974).

[18] Georg Simmel, "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies," in *American Journal of Sociology* 11 (1906), pp. 441–498; reprinted in Kurt H. Wolff, ed., *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (Glencoe, 1950), pp. 305–376.

[19] L.E. Hazelrigg, "Reexamination of Simmel's *The Secret and the Secret Society*: Nine Propositions," in *Social Forces* 47 (1969), pp. 326–330, and David Frizby, ed., *Georg Simmel: Critical Assessments*. 3 volumes. (London, 1994).

[20] See note 4 above.

[21] Tefft, "Secrecy as a Social and Political Process," *Secrecy: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, pp. 320–321.

is a formal, conscious and deliberate concealment of information. Secrets, moreover, are "a social resource (or adaptive strategy) used by individuals, groups, and organizations to attain certain ends."[22] As a strategy, secrecy may be employed *aggressively* against rivals or *defensively* against attackers.[23] Secrecy enables certain types of associations to avoid political persecution or destruction while it allows other groups to maintain an exclusive monopoly on esoteric knowledge.

3.3 *The Secrecy Process*

According to Tefft, secrecy as an adaptive device contains five interrelated processes: 1. *security* (control of information), 2. *entrusted disclosure*, 3. *espionage*, 4. *evaluation of spying*, and 5. *post-hoc security measures*. He notes that all peoples engage in some form of secrecy or information control.[24] Kees Bolle, too, made the same claim: "Not only is there no religion without secrecy, but there is no human existence without it."[25] Families do not want their squabbles, embarrassments, plans, strategies, private interactions or finances discussed outside their houses,[26] nor do groups, organizations and governments. All practice some form of information control, whether they base it on the right to privacy, the nature of interpersonal relations or the politics of business and government. All engage in some form of "security," that is, information control, and hence secrecy.

Within families or organizations, certain people are privy to what is withheld from others. In fact, *who* knows *what* may serve as an index of status or ranking within a group. Not everybody knows all things. Thus secrets are entrusted to some, but not others, who may or may not know that secrets are withheld from them. Governments use a sliding scale of increasing degrees of classified information, such as "secret," "top secret," and "for your eyes only." Thus there tends to be an inner circle which is "in the know."

Then arises some sort of "security system" in terms of who can or should be entrusted with secrets. It is a known fact that group members who develop bonds of mutual loyalty pose less security risk

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[22] Ibid., p. 35.
[23] Ibid., p. 36.
[24] Ibid., p. 39.
[25] K.W. Bolle, ed., *Secrecy in Religions* (Leiden, 1987), p. 1.
[26] Juliet du Boulay, "Lies, mockery and family integrity," in J.G. Peristiany, ed., *Mediterranean Family Structures* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 391–396.

than those of low morale. Nevertheless, groups tend to develop security systems to secure their secrets simply because not all group members can be counted on to have highly developed bonds of mutual loyalty. Such systems can include a number of steps in securing its secrets, such as: 1) required loyalty tests for old and new members, 2) total obedience to the group at the expense of other ties, 3) gradual revelation of secrets to members, and 4) imposition of strict norms of silence.

Secrets invite snooping, espionage and disclosure, which is due in part to fear that secrets may be used to harm others (i.e., a planned coup) or to shut others out from certain benefits (i.e., technological formulae; discoveries). Thus people deem it a matter of vital self interest to know what others are up to. Whatever the reasons, outsiders tend invariably to engage in some form of espionage to learn the secrets of others.

By "espionage" is meant "acquisition of information held secret by another group or individual."[27] Spying, whether done by persons or technology, entails a body of people who watch, scrutinize, lie in wait, trap, trick, etc. others so as to learn their secrets. They may investigate records, interrogate associates, plant informers and spies, and so forth. If successful in gaining access to controlled information, an evaluation process must take place. Is the new information of any value? is it a cover? a false lead? "Leaks" of information may be intentional to distract those engaged in espionage from more vital secrets or to lull them into thinking that they have cracked the secret.

If individuals, groups, or governments learn that their secrecy has been breached, they are likely to engage in a post-hoc program to identify the spy, plug the leak, bury the secret deeper, etc. New loyalty tests may be demanded. But the "secrecy process" is hardly over, for with the renewed interest in keeping secrets, those who control information invite a new round of espionage and evaluation, which may result, if successful, in new post-hoc programs to shore up security. And so the cycle repeats itself again and again and again.

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[27] Tefft, op. cit., p. 333.

3.4 *Extra-Group and Intra-Group Secrecy*

Sociologists distinguish two types of secrecy. *Manifest* secrecy describes the formal, overt actions of certain groups to hide ceremonies, rites, information, and the like from the curious and perhaps dangerous eyes of others. In contrast, *latent* secrecy is practiced by groups as the additional and unintended consequences of certain structural arrangements, such as covering up unintended actions. We focus on the specific functions of *manifest* secrecy, also distinguishing extra-group secrecy from intra-group secrecy.[28]

Extra-group secrecy may be practiced for aggressive or defensive purposes. *Aggressive* secrecy describes actions and strategy used by secret groups to organize political rebellion or provide secret leadership for revolutionary organizations. Moreover, groups subject to coercion deal with their antagonists by hiding information or resources as a way of neutralizing superior power. Alternately, groups often employ *defensive* secrecy strategy to protect themselves. Alienated groups, which are embattled minorities within a larger hostile society, use secrecy to escape persecution or destruction.[29]

Intra-group secrecy can be employed for a variety of purposes.[30] It may prove significant for group formation, in that some groups form for the overt purpose of engaging in covert actions, such as secret societies. Likewise, secrecy both sets up and then maintains group boundaries. Those "in the know" distinguish themselves from those "*not* in the know." This is called the "superiority syndrome" and the process of guarding this distinction contributes to group cohesiveness. Internal secrecy within groups, whereby only select members know certain information, serves to control access to rank, status and political power. "Elders" or "experts" regularly maintain their special position within groups by monopolizing esoteric information even from other insiders, thus buttressing their own power and status within the group.[31]

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[28] Elisabeth Brandt, "On Secrecy and the Control of Knowledge," in S.K. Tefft, ed., *Secrecy: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York, 1980), pp. 125–127.
[29] Tefft, "Secrecy as a Social and Political Process," p. 131.
[30] Ibid., pp. 51–53.
[31] Brandt, "On Secrecy and the Control of Knowledge," pp. 130–134.

3.5 *Matthew and the Sociology of Secrecy*

In our survey of Matthew's data, we observe that both Jesus and his enemies formally and intentionally conceal information and relationships. Jesus commands his disciples to perform their pious actions "in secret," whereas others hide their hostility through flattery or other means of deception. We find, moreover, frequent references to *manifest* secrecy, that is, the "formal and overt function of certain societies . . . to hide ceremonies, rites, information and the like" from outsiders. John Pilch has argued that this is one of the chief functions of the so-called "messianic secret."[32]

Matthew contains both extra-group and intra-group secrecy. While extra-group secrecy can have both offensive and defensive purposes, Matthew basically describes the defensive one. As noted above, the "messianic secret" serves to deflect the attention of Jesus' rivals, thus lessening the conflict.

Matthean Terminology	Sociological Interpretation
1. Deception, deceive	– aggressive strategy: to harm another by hiding the evil offered (4:1–13; 24:4, 5)
2. Hypocrisy, hypocrite	– defensive strategy: to conceal weakness or evil behind a facade of goodness (23:13, 14, 15, 28)
3. Lying, lie	– aggressive strategy: to mislead others, to trick and harm them (19:18; 24:11, 24; 26:59)
4. Secrecy, secret	– defensive strategy: to confuse one's opponents as to intent and behavior (6:4, 6, 18; messianic secret) – aggressive strategy: to expose one's opponent's secrets (10:26) and to strengthen inner group with superior knowledge (11:25; 13:11, 34–35)
5. Appearances, appear	– defensive strategy: like hypocrisy, to hide evil or falsehood by display of good (3:9; 4:1–12)

[32] Pilch, "Secrecy in the Mediterranean World: An Anthropological Perspective," pp. 151–157.

Table (*cont.*)

Matthean Terminology	Sociological Interpretation
6. Ambiguity	– aggressive strategy: to claim some benefit by external display of good actions (23:5) – defensive strategy: to eradicate external markers of shame or weakness (1:19–26)
7. Say one thing, do another	– defensive strategy: to avoid criticism by false words which appear correct but which hide shameful behavior (7:21–23; 21:28–32)

As noted above, there are steps in the secrecy process, which likewise help to interpret Matthew's data. 1. *Control of Information.* Some of Jesus' speech is addressed to the crowds, but most of it is directed only to his disciples (5:1ff.; 10:1ff.; 13:10–17; 24:3ff.)—thus control of information regularly occurs. 2. *Entrusted disclosure.* Jesus discloses important information only to the disciples, not to the crowds. For example, they are the unique, chosen ones who receive God's revelation, not the people outside (11:25–27); they are privy to the secret meanings of Jesus' parables, while the rest go without this revelation (13:11–17, 34–35). Only to Peter, James and John is given the appearance of Moses and Elijah and the theophany on the mountain (17:1–8). To Peter alone is given unique revelation about Jesus (16:17), as well as private explanation of Jesus' teaching (15:15), and instructions of halakhic practices (17:24–27).[33] 3. *Espionage.* Jesus' opponents constantly question his disciples to learn about Jesus' actions: why does he eat with tax collectors (9:10–13)? why he does not fast (9:14–17)? why does he violate the Sabbath (12:1–8)? does he pay the temple tax (17:24–27)? By their challenging questions, they seek to discredit him (21:15–17).[34] They demand signs to "test him" and discredit him (16:1–4). Matthew does not report on their evaluation of their espionage.

[33] On the widespread attestation of the uniqueness of Peter's revelations, see Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude* (New York, 1993), pp. 163–164 and 171–172.

[34] On questions as hostile weapons in the history of the chreia, see Jerome H. Neyrey, "Questions, Chreiai, and Challenges to Honor. The Interface of Rhetoric and Culture in Mark's Gospel," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 60 (1998), pp. 658–666, 671–678.

Who knows *what* and *when*? Elizabeth Brandt's study of the Taos Pueblo provides an insight into the function of secrecy within hierarchical groups.[35] Information is restricted even within close-knit groups; not all people know everything. Thus we can plot out status and role within such a group: *who* knows something serves as an index of group status. Those in the group who are "*not* in the know" represent persons of low status, who are not well integrated into the social networks within a village. They contrast with the few elites in the group, who are privy to the group's secrets, and who stand atop the status hierarchy in the group and control it in virtue of their monopoly of esoteric information. Between these two extremes we can observe a diversity of individuals in terms of the kinds of knowledge they possess.[36] In Matthew, God of course knows all things; to a lesser degree, God's authorized agent, Jesus (24:36). Within the circle of disciples, 1) Peter has the most knowledge and revelation, which warrants his role as "rock on which I will build my church," then 2) the select disciples with Jesus at the Transfiguration, and finally 3) all the disciples.

What do Peter and the disciples know? They have heavenly revelation of Jesus as "Son of God" (16:17), as well as unique knowledge about God-Father and the Son (11:27). They know secrets hidden from the wise (11:25), as well as "secrets of the kingdom of heaven" (13:11). Not only did they hear Jesus' five speeches, they learned his distinctive teachings about Sabbath observance, temple taxes, and the like. Matthew, then, informs us that Jesus makes entrusted disclosure of the most valuable information to his disciples and especially to Peter.

The sociology of secrecy provides a useful model which accommodates Matthew's data, not miscellaneous items but elements that constitute a common, meaningful social pattern. 1. The sociology of secrecy accurately interprets how Jesus himself constantly practices forms of secrecy, even as he engages in entrusted disclosure of his secrets to his disciples. 2. As a defensive strategy, it shows that both Jesus and his hypocritical adversaries practice the conscious defensive strategy of keeping secrets, either to protect themselves or to fend off shameful exposure. 3. And as an offensive strategy, it inter-

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[35] Brandt, "On Secrecy and the Control of Knowledge," pp. 125–134.

[36] Ibid., p. 133; Hazelrigg, "Reexamination of Simmel's *The Secret and the Secret Society*: Nine Propositions," p. 324.

prets attempts by Jesus' adversaries to learn his secrets, to test his public behavior, so as to unmask him as a "deceiver." His opponents then engaged in espionage to learn his identity and his teaching. 4. If knowledge is related to status and role, God knows all and Jesus knows almost all; nor is God ever fooled. And Jesus has elevated his disciples above the crowds by unique disclosures to them, and Peter above the rest by special revelations and information entrusted to him. 5. The sociology of secrecy, while a modern model, is truly cross-cultural and trans-temporal; as noted earlier "secrecy" was a pronounced element in the governments and in private life in antiquity.

But if secrecy is a pervasive, common social strategy, does it matter in the world of early Christianity if social and even heavenly rewards are given unjustly to deceivers and hypocrites? Does it matter if some deceivers are evil figures who seek to harm, enslave and destroy other persons? Underlying the contextualization of secrecy in Matthew's world are issues of ethical chaos, sorcery accusations, crisis in theodicy, etc. We now ask of the symbolic universe reflected by Matthew and his audience how the system of secrecy fits in it, and how Matthew solves the crises in such as system.

4. *The Symbolic Universe of An Ambiguous, Deceptive World*

Culture is a social construction. Peoples invest meaning in the elements of their worlds. But what meanings, and to what are they given? Anthropologists provide us with a model for asking these questions, in which they focus on key, regular topics in all cultures which are the object of interpretation, such as the following: 1. *purity* (is the world ordered or not? how is it ordered?), 2. *rites* (what boundaries exist, how crossed or maintained?), 3. the *human person* (group-oriented or individualistic?), 4. *body* (is it a symbol of unity or a stage of deception?), 5. *sin* (is it rule breaking or pollution?), 6. *God and cosmic order*, (who's in charge?) and 7. *suffering and misfortune* (is suffering just or unjust?). We focus on these seven standard topics and ask what meanings they have in the culture of Matthew and his audience.

We have a reliable model for sketching the symbolic universe of Matthew in the work of Mary Douglas,[37] its application to second-temple

[37] Mary T. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1996); *Natural Symbols* (New York, 1982).

Judaism by Neusner,[38] the synthesizing of Douglas' materials and its systematic use for interpreting New Testament materials by Malina,[39] Malina and Neyrey,[40] and Neyrey.[41] Attitudes to the seven topics vary, depending on group's status and social location in ancient society. While we focus on the interpretation of the cosmos by non-elites in Matthew's world (the right column), the following chart allows us compare and contrast their world with that of Temple elites.

Aristocrats and Temple Elite	Non-Elites: Peasants, Artisans, Untouchables
1. *Purity*: strong concern to classify all things in terms of clean/unclean; clear rites for purification; purity rules define and maintain social structures.	1. *Purity*: strong concern for purity; but interior of social & physical body is attacked; rites for purification prove ineffective.
2. *Rites*: fixed rites which express the internal classification system of the group; permanent sacred space.	2. *Rites*: fixed rites which focus on group boundaries; rites aim to expel deviants from group; fluid sacred space.
3. *Personal Identity*: focus on internalizing clear social roles; individual subservient to but not in conflict with society; group-oriented personality.	3. *Personal Identity*: focus on group membership, not in internalization of roles, which are confused; distinction between appearance and internal states; group-oriented personality.
4. *Body*: tightly controlled, but a symbol of life.	4. *Body*: controlled but under attack; invaders have penetrated bodily boundaries.

[38] Jacob Neusner, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden, 1973); "The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism," in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43 (1975), pp. 15–26; "History and Purity in First-Century Judaism," in *History of Religions* 18 (1978), pp. 1–17; "Map Without Territory: Mishnah's System of Sacrifices and Sanctuary," in *History of Religions* 19 (1979), pp. 103–127; *Purity in Rabbinic Judaism: A Systematic Account: The Sources, Media, Effects and Removal of Uncleanness* (Atlanta, 1994).

[39] Bruce J. Malina, *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta, 1986), pp. 1–27; *New Testament World. Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 161–197.

[40] Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, *Calling Jesus Names*, pp. 3–32.

[41] Jerome H. Neyrey, "The Idea of Purity in Mark's Gospel," pp. 91–128; "Bewitched in Galatia: Paul and Cultural Anthropology," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50 (1988), pp. 72–100; "The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts," pp. 276–294; *Paul, In Other Words. A Cultural Reading of His Letters* (Louisville, 1990), pp. 21–55.

Table (*cont.*)

Aristocrats and Temple Elite	Non-Elites: Peasants, Artisans, Untouchables
5. *Sin*: breaking of formal rules; focus on behavior rather than internal states of being; individual responsible for sin or deviance.	5. *Sin*: a matter of pollution; sin equals corruption or disease from the social system; internal states more important than external behavior.
6. *Cosmology*: anthropomorphic, non-dualistic; universe is just and reasonable; personal causality.	6. *Cosmology*: anthropomorphic and dualistic; war between forces of good and evil; universe is not just.
7. *Suffering and Misfortune*: the result of automatic punishment for violation of formal rules; part of a divine "economy."	7. *Suffering and Misfortune*: unjust; not automatic punishment; attributable to malevolent forces.

4.1 *Purity: Order, System, Classification*

Temple elites perceive the cosmos as a very orderly and exactly classified system.[42] According to the priestly version of creation in Genesis 1, God "separated" wet from dry, dark from light, earth from sky and water, so God established a system of classifications, not only of places and things, but also of time and persons. This priestly vision was embodied in the Jerusalem Temple, where all persons, places, times and things were elaborately classified. Because judgments of holiness and evil in Matthew are based on this system, we do well to examine more closely the system represented by the Temple. It admits of very precise degrees both of holiness and uncleanness. *Place*: As regards holiness, we find, for example, in Mishnah Tractate Kelim a classification of space which moves from the farthest borders of Israel (not holy), to its cities, to Jerusalem, the Temple mount, the temple and the Holy of Holies (1.6–9).[43] *Persons*: Persons, too, can be classified; for example, we find in Tosefta Tractate Megillah a list of those who may hear the scroll of Esther;

[42] Jacob Neusner, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism*; Michael Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (Cambridge, 1985).

[43] Neyrey, "The Idea of Purity in Mark's Gospel," pp. 94–95.

beginning with Priests and Levites and concluding with bastards, eunuchs and those with damaged genitals (2.7). As Malina has shown, the list ascribes different degrees of holiness to persons which correlates space with status: the most holy, i.e., the Temple functionaries, stand closest, while those least holy or defective in some way stand furthest, i.e., those who are defective in lineage and/or generative powers.[44] This system makes detailed decisions about skin disease (Lev. 13–14), bodily discharges (Lev. 15); animals for sacrifice (Lev. 16), marriage partners (Lev. 18), and the physical bodies of the priests (21:17–21). Even pollution can be classified, as we find in Danby's excerpt from Eliyahu Rabbah concerning the "fathers of uncleanness."[45] Thus, in the ideal orderly world, the rule makers in 2nd temple Israel could map persons, places, times and things, and thus bring systematic clarity and order to the world. On this basis they evaluated Jesus.

But from a non-elite perspective, the system is not at all clear and the classifications articulated in the Temple do not match the experience of the population called "the little tradition." For example, far removed from the Temple, the prophet John preaches "repentance" (3:2); people confess their sins, are ritually washed and so achieve purification (3:6). Some, however, claim that he is not a prophet, but has a demon (11:18; see 21:25–27). According to the Temple system, John is at least ambiguous if not deceptively evil. Matthew, moreover, presents numerous instances of concern for holiness and purity in the work of Jesus, which differ from the system represented by the Temple. Jesus teaches a reformed Torah (5:21–46), with more concern for interior states than exterior performance; he commands people to be "perfect as your heavenly father is perfect" (5:46), but a "perfection" not based on the temple's classification system and purity concerns. Pharisees, according to Matthew, frequently challenge him (9:11, 14; 12:2; 15:2), making plain these different understandings of holiness. These controversies dramatize different and conflicting symbolic universes; both cannot be right and so are at odds with each other.

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[44] Malina, *New Testament World. Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 173–176.
[45] Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 800–804.

4.2 *Continued Threats; Ineffective Ritual*

Labeling should function to remove ambiguity from the world; for, as a ritual action, labeling attempts to purify the ambiguous cosmos by drawing clear boundaries and distinctions. Alas, this labeling process does not always work. Pharisees, although they publicly profess total separation from evil and zeal for Torah, are judged by Jesus to be deceivers who hide their corruption from view. Thus he likens them to whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear clean but inwardly are filled with "all uncleanness" (23:27). They teach Torah, but Jesus accuses them of insinuating a poisonous doctrine ("brood of vipers," 12:34; 23:33) and a corrupting teaching ("leaven," 16:6). Their evil is doubly compounded because it is masked as good. But Jesus says that while they honor God with their lips, their heart is far from God (15:8). Yet it is unclear how successful his "hypocrite" label was. Even among the disciples of Jesus (the few, the elect, and the chosen), we learn that some say "Lord, Lord," but do not do the will of God (7:21–23). False prophets and false Christs will come to lead even the elect astray (24:24). The desired classification system remains perilously threatened from without and within. The community of Matthew frequently hears certain outsiders labeled as "hypocrites" (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5). The ritual act of labeling is intended to introduce clarity into an ambiguous and deceptive situation.

4.3 *Ethical Secrets: Heart, Motives, Desires*

Although Matthew and other NT writers describe a divine judgment based on one's deeds (Matt. 12:37; Rom. 2:6–11), these same writings state that a person's deeds may be deceitful attempts to mask an evil heart. Deeds, then, are ambiguous and may even by deceptive. One cannot tell a book by its cover. In this context, we find a corresponding emphasis on the "heart" as opposed to the hands and feet or on the motive for action as well as the act itself, or on the difference between external actions and internal states.[46]

In several of the "antitheses" in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reforms the Torah to include correct internal states as well externally correct behavior. God proscribes not just avoidance of murder

[46] Neyrey, "Bewitched in Galatia: Paul and Cultural Anthropology," pp. 84–87.

(exterior), but also of anger and hate (interior) (5:21–22); not just absence of adultery (exterior), but also lust in the heart (interior) (5:27–27). Hence holiness consists in agreement between deeds and desires, which precludes hypocrisy and deception. Jesus knows when the lips say one thing, but the heart another (15:8), when people speak one thing, but do another (21:28–31). But we are always suspicious of people for their heart, motive, and desire may be veiled by deceiving actions and words. Actions and words, then, are ambiguous or deceptive unreliable indices of holiness, for they may be practiced to deceive others.

4.4 *A Cosmic War of Personified Figures*

The world of Matthew and his characters is peopled with personified cosmic figures. On one side we locate God and the angelic messengers whom God sends to aid, inform, gather, and protect the elect (1:20; 2:13, 19). They also serve as agents in God's final judgment, separating the good from the wicked (13:41, 49; 16:27; 18:10; 24:31). Yet Matthew tells of a world of devils and evil spirits, who wage war on God's people, tempting them with evil disguised under the appearance of good (4:1–13), making them ill (4:24; 17:15), sowing evil in their midst (13:39), and enslaving them. A quick list of these personified evil spirits would include:

Beelzebul:	10:25; 12:24, 27
demons:	7:22; 8:16, 28, 33; 9:32–34; 10:8; 11:18; 12:22, 24, 27–28; etc.
the moon:	4:24; 17:15
unclean spirits:	10:1; 12:43, 45
Satan:	4:10
sons of the evil one:	13:28, 38–39.[47]

The world, then, is fully peopled with cosmic figures both good and evil, who are at war.

One may ask if Matthew perceives any relationship between these cosmic evil figures and the "hypocrites," the false prophets, and the false Christs described above? Some people associate Jesus, John the Baptizer and even the disciples of Jesus with demons: 1. Jesus is

[47] Malina and Neyrey, *Calling Jesus Names*, pp. 3–5.

Beelzebul's agent (12:24), 2. John too: "He has a demon" (11:18), likewise 3. the disciples: "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household" (10:25). Some people, then, who are "outsiders" to Jesus' circle, link him and his disciples with agents of cosmic evil powers who war on God's holy people (10:25). On the other hand, Jesus is wont to label others as demon possessed (12:43–45; 23:15). The cosmic war of evil spirits, therefore, is being waged on earth by their agents and proxies. The frightening thing, however, is the difficulty of identifying the enemy. Evil masquerades as good; appearances are fundamentally deceiving; hypocrisy abounds.

4.5 *Unjust Suffering and Undeserved Success: Flaws in a Moral Universe*

Ancient Israel boasted to the Gentile world of the excellence of its laws (Josephus, *Ag. Apion* 2.146), especially it ideal notion of justice rendered according to a *lex talionis*. As you sow, so shall you reap (Gal. 6:7; see 2 Cor. 9:6). Ideally God rewarded the pious (Matt. 6:4, 6, 18), a reward proportional to their deeds (Matt. 16:27; see 12:36), and requited the wicked.

But Matthew and audience do not experience a world functioning justly: the good do *not* prosper, and the wicked are *not* put to shame. Jesus, faithful agent of God, meets rejection and death. So did all the prophets (Matt. 5:12; 23:29–27). The disciples of Jesus can expect unjust suffering (Matt. 5:3, 4, 6, 10; 10:16–23, 34–39). In short, the universe appears fundamentally confused and unjust. The crisis is further compounded by the uncertainty which surrounds the norms for a just judgment. As we noted above, people such as the Pharisees perform external actions which are "observant"; but these external actions are not reliable indicators of the heart, which may be filled with "all uncleanness . . . hypocrisy and iniquity" (23:28). Thus, people may enjoy public honor because of their observance, an unjust judgment. Correspondingly, in the eyes of others Jesus and his disciples do *not* keep Torah; no wonder that according to this norm they experience criticism, challenge, and cross. Thus, if the norms for assessing holiness are themselves ambiguous, then the judgment based on these will be unjust.

What, then, does this model of the symbolic universe of Matthew contribute to our reading of deception, lying, secrecy, hypocrisy and ambiguity? Just this: Matthew's world is painfully filled with these

phenomena, and in a way which is much more terrifying and consequential than the sociology of secrecy described. 1. It is a world threatened with chaos because the dominant classification system is inadequate: nothing seems reliable or trustworthy. 2. Moreover, it is besieged by evil attackers who defy boundaries and aggressively seek to destroy what is within the group or individuals; purification rituals fail to identify and expel them. 3. Furthermore, evil masquerades as good; a person's deeds no longer serve as a reliable index of holiness. This disguise functions to make the attacker pass unnoticed. 4. Mirroring this earthly conflict is the cosmic perception that Satan and his minions are at war with God, which explains why evil attacks good on earth. 5. As a result, suffering seems unjust; the wicked prosper and the righteous are not rewarded. This is truly a scary cosmos, where deception and harm are universal; but worst of all is the sense of the collapse of a moral universe.

In light of Matthew's symbolic universe, what strategies are necessary and desirable for dealing with a deceiving and ambiguous world? Matthew envisions a theodicy, that is, a vision of God's just judgment in which God will definitively and surprisingly act vis-à-vis this deceitful, lying, secret, hypocritical and ambiguous cosmos. This judgment scenario will contain these recurring elements: 1. a *revelation* which clarifies ambiguity, uncovers lies, exposes deception and manifests hidden secrets, 2. a *surprise* or *shock*, as the truth is finally known and recompense is rendered, 3. a *just judgment* which reverses fates and awards rewards or punishments on the basis of the truth, and 4. a person with both *omniscience* (to penetrate disguises and read hearts) and *omnipotence* (to administer true justice finally). What does this look like in the narrative?

5. *The Parables of Judgment in Matthew 25*

Matthew gathered three parables and put them together, locating them at the climactic end of Jesus' last discourse. Clearly he intended them to be heard as a unit, sharing repetitive rhetorical structure and recurring motifs.[48] All formally deal with issues of deception,

[48] W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh, 1988), vol. 3, pp. 377, 394; Jan Lambrecht, "The Parousia Discourse. Composition and Content in Mt., XXIV–XXV," in M. Didier, ed., *L'Évangile selon Matthieu. Rédaction et théologie* (Leuven, 1972), pp. 308–342.

lying, secrecy, hypocrisy and ambiguity. And so, to interpret them correctly, we bring to our reading what we know of the social and anthropological materials about secrecy and deception.

5.1 *Matthew 25:1–13*

The evangelist tells of ten maidservants in a nobleman's house. By telling us that five are wise and five foolish, the author invests the story with a serious moral perspective. Some maids will enter with the bridegroom and be rewarded in his household as loyal and true servants, while others will find the door shut and the bridegroom dismissive of them: "I do not know you" (25:12; see 7:21–23). The stakes, then, are very high.

The parable contains a strong element of ambiguity, secrecy, and deception. *Ambiguity*: while all have lamps, five have oil, but five do not. Neither the maids among themselves nor the audience can distinguish at this point who is wise and who is foolish. All appear the same, and we cannot penetrate appearances to know who has oil and who does not. *Secrecy*: the time of the bridegroom's return is hidden from them (and us), a secret no one can know. Vital information is withheld from all. Yet all are expected to act as if they knew; reward and punishment follow upon acting as if one knew this secret. *Deception*: the foolish maids are actually practicing a deception. For so important an event as the master's marriage, all maids *must* have oil in their lamps. Some are indeed prepared, but others pretend readiness. If all goes well, that is, if the bridegroom comes quickly, the unpreparedness of the five foolish maids will escape detection. They shall have successfully deceived the groom and entered his household under pretense. The wicked will fare the same as the good, the foolish the same as the wise. Thus they shall have successfully hidden their fault and been fraudulently rewarded. And up to a certain point, their ruse succeeds.

Because the bridegroom is delayed, the ten maids slumber and sleep. Karl Donfried has argued that this "sleep" means death;[49] if so, then in life the deception by the foolish maids went undetected and unpunished. But all maids awaken at midnight from death to

[49] Karl P. Donfried, "The Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1–13) as a Summary of Matthean Theology," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974), p. 426.

face a moment of reckoning. The time of deception is over and secrets will be revealed.

This parable does not describe the bridegroom personally unveiling secrets; after all, his narrative role is that of bridegroom, not judge. But his coming occasions revelations nonetheless. The foolish maids are exposed for what they are: culpably unprepared (see 24:44, 48–51), while the wise are shown to be prudently prepared (24:45–47). As the parable continues, a "judgment" takes place in the characteristic Matthean form of a separation. The foolish, who leave the house in search of oil, return to find themselves locked outside. Their appeal to the bridegroom ("Lord, Lord") mocks their earlier attempt to deceive this same lord. In contrast, the wise and prepared maids accompanied the groom into the house. Thus in the end, deception and masquerade are unveiled. The fates of wise and foolish servants are *not* the same. The good are finally separated from the wicked, as wheat from chaff. Furthermore, just rewards and punishments are finally meted out. This parable, then, illustrates the type of judgment scenario we have been describing, where (1) ambiguity and deceit are finally unveiled; (2) the just and the wicked are finally separated; (3) each is accorded her proper recompense, and (4) the unveiling brings surprise and shock.

5.2 *Matthew 25:14–30*

The parable of the pounds begins with notice about an absentee landlord, a common feature of gospel parables (Matt. 21:33–36; 24:45–47; Luke 16:1–8). The landlord entrusts three servants with substantial but differing amounts of wealth, who then treat the landlord's wealth differently. Two trade with it and double their initial investment, while the third buries it. Since parables function in terms of binary opposites,[50] both strategies for dealing with the master's wealth cannot be correct. One strategy will prove to be honorable and deserving of reward, and the other shameful and deserving of punishment. But which? In these details, the parable resembles that of the wise/foolish maidservants in 25:1–13: (1) a master, either "delayed" or absent; (2) servants with duties, either "prepared" with oil or clever with the master's wealth; (3) the return of the princi-

[50] John Dominic Crossan, *Finding is the First Act: Trove Folktales and Jesus' Treasure Parable* (Philadelphia, 1979), pp. 17–35.

pal figure; (4) a judgment, which separates the good from the wicked; and (5) a strong element of ambiguity and shock. Which strategy will work?

Along with the preceding (25:1–3) and subsequent (25:31–46) parables, this too is about judgment, rewards and punishments. Upon the landlord's mysterious return, he demands an audit or accounting; moreover, in the New Testament, the end-time judgment is often cast in terms of "rendering an account" for one's behavior:

1. *synarai logon*: Matt. 18:23–24; 25:19
2. *apodôsousin logon*: Matt. 12:36; 16:27; 18:25; 20:8
3. *dôsei logon*: Rom. 14:12
4. *apodôsei kata ta erga*: Rom. 2:6
   [see also 2 Cor. 5:10; 11:15; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 4:5]

Hence, Matthew narrates a ritual event when accounts are audited, which serves as a metaphor for divine judgment; then just recompense is rendered. Audits occasionally expose fraud and deceit (Luke 16:1–2); but when the accounts are balanced, justice prevails.

Rohrbaugh's study of this parable contributes much fresh critical information for its interpretation, for which reason we summarize his evidence and argument.[51] First, he presents the appropriate economic background for peasant life, in particular the perception of "limited good" whereby all goods in the cosmos are fixed in size and volume. For someone to become richer, others must lose. Those becoming richer, then, would be thought of by peasants as thieves ("Every rich person is either a thief or the heir of a thief," Jerome, *In Hieremiam*, II,V,2; *CCL* LXXIV 61). Second, he cites M.I. Finley's remark that the legal interest rate in the Greco-Roman world was 12%.[52] Third, using Plutarch's treatise *On the Love of Wealth*, he describes ancient attitudes about the wealthy who are generally portrayed as greedy: "I go on amassing and pursuing new wealth, wrangling with my servants, my farmers, my debtors" (*Love of Wealth* 525). Finally, the wealthy are notorious for "interrogation of servants, inspection of ledgers, the casting up of accounts with stewards and debtors" (*Love of Wealth* 526). Rohrbaugh draws the cultural conclusion

[51] Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "A Peasant Reading of the Parable of the Talents: A Text of Terror?" in *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 23 (1990), pp. 32–39.
[52] M.I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley, 1973), p. 54.

that the master of our parable is himself very wealthy and the first two servants are rapidly becoming so. The only way for this is happen in a limited good world is for others to lose the wealth that these persons gain.[53] In peasants' eyes, then, the master and his servants cannot be upright and honorable persons, on the contrary. Second, since the wealth gained by the two servants vastly out measures what legal rates of interest would provide, one suspects, then, that it is ill-gotten gain. Third, if the behavior of the master and his two servants reflects the actions of the greedy rich, in contrast the third servant obeyed the law and did the honorable thing (Josephus, *Ant.* 4.285–87; *StrB.* 1.970). Traditional norms demand that we condemn the master and the first two servants, but praise the third one. Yet, just the opposite happens. The universe is thrown into chaos by the reward of the wicked and the punishment of the good. Is secrecy an issue? Ambiguity? Deceit?

As regards *secrecy* in the story, on the one hand, one major secret is kept from all three servants, namely, the time of the master's return. As with the ten maids, all should act as though they knew this secret. And in fact all three servants did something in anticipation of the audit. This secret of the master's return, then, plays no role in the story. Far from being misled by this secret, all of the servants can be said to "watch," as good servants do. Moreover, all three servants know very important information, namely, the character of the master. Even the third servant confesses that he *knew* the measure of his master, "a hard man." The master, then, accuses him of failing to act on this knowledge: "*You knew* that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed" (v. 26). Since no secret is withheld from the servants, *secrecy* plays no part here; alternately, all know the vital *knowledge* for playing the game.

But the story is filled with *ambiguity*, which Rohrbaugh cleverly points out. In the peasant world of Jesus, the action of the third servant who hid the master's wealth *appears* to be the right thing to do.[54] Conservative peasant hearers would approve the traditional

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[53] For a detailed study of "limited good" in the ancient world, see Jerome H. Neyrey, "Limited Good," in *Biblical Social Values*, pp. 122–127, and Jerome H. Neyrey and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "'He must increase, I must decrease' (John 3:30): Cultural and Social Interpretation," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 63 (2001), pp. 464–483.

[54] Rohrbaugh, "A Peasant Reading of the Parable of the Talents: A Text of Terror?" pp. 37–38.

response of this man who continued to do what had always been done. On the other hand, the servants who traded wildly with the master's wealth *appear* to have been risking his wealth, and thus putting it and the master's honor in jeopardy. Moreover, their actions *appear* to be evil, for doubling investments such as these servants did would mean theft or fraudulent dealings in peasant eyes, Israelite usury law forbade lending money at levels that could earn interest of 500% and 200%. Thus, at first glance, the two servants *appear* to be reckless thieves, while the third *appears* to have acted correctly according to peasant norms. But, as is typically the case, *appearances are deceiving*: things are seldom what they seem.

In peasants' eyes, ambiguity clouds all of the story's persons and their actions. Were a master thief rewarding his thieving servants, there would be no ambiguity. But when the third servant is despoiled and dismissed, then ambiguity descends like a fog. And if this parable is supposed to comment on the final judgment, then the moral universe of peasant hearers is turned upside down. A confused and frightening world it is when the landlord praises the apparently wicked actions of the first two servants: "Well done, good and faithful servant(s); you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master" (25:21, 23; recall how an absentee landlord in Luke 16:8 praises his wicked servant for his cleverness in preparing for the audit of the master's affairs). The master shocks us again by shaming the servant who did the apparently correct action: "You wicked and slothful servant . . . take the talent from him . . . cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness" (25:26, 28, 30). The landlord reveals nothing so much as a universe utterly ambiguous and unjust. Wicked servants are richly rewarded, whereas the conservative, correct servant is dispossessed and "cast out." This is not right! Or is it? The ambiguity is painful and expensive.

What can Matthew be doing by presenting a parable of ambiguous and unjust judgment in the middle of two other parables of just judgment? He hopes to place this story alongside other parables of Jesus which also contain an ambiguous, even deceptive element. Often the "kingdom of heaven" and the "kingdom of God" contain an element that at first glance contradicts what we know of heaven's God. For example, the kingdom of God is like leaven, which in Israelite and Greco-Roman cultures means "corruption" of some sort (13:33; see 1 Cor. 5:6–8; Gal. 5:9); yes, the kingdom of the holy God is like uncleanness. This kingdom is like a man who found a

treasure, hid it and bought the field (13:44), which in Judean law was wrong.[55] So doing evil pays! The same kingdom is like a merchant in search of fine pearls (13:45–46), which we just learned characterizes such a person as one of the "greedy rich." The kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed which a man sowed in his field (13:31–32); but fields must be sown with only one kind of seed (Deut. 22:9). Uncleanness results when seeds and stuff and animals are mixed. In parables, then, God and God's kingdom are regularly presented as shockingly opposite the customs and purity arrangements of Israel.[56] It would seem, then, that ambiguity is a regular element of Matthew's parables. But by placing the parable of the pounds between that of the ten maids and the sheep and the goats, Matthew would presumably be suggesting an unambiguous message.

What, then, might be the exhortation contained in the parable of the pounds? 1. The "hard" measure of the master suggests that God, God's agent, and the gospel are all turning our world upside down. They are not withholding any secrets from anyone, but demanding shocking changes and very hard choices. 2. The crisis of the audit lies in the ambiguity of what is the right response to this knowledge. Ordinarily, custom and Scripture would dictate what is right behavior, thus removing ambiguity and protecting peasant lives from chaos. The cosmos would then be just, because God's will is clear and God is just in his recompense. But now God's ways require action which in the eyes of others appears wrong, sinful, and shameful (i.e., discipleship). 3. But a final element needs to be considered: one's actions must match one's thoughts. It is not just those who say "Lord, Lord," who are Jesus' disciples, but those who do the will of his father (7:21–23). The third servant knew the vital information about his master, but his actions did not reflect it; he knew the master was a "hard man," but did not act to please him.[57] 4. Finally, like many other sayings in Matthew, the parable of the pounds reflects a reversal of popular expectations, as the following list indicate:

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[55] John Dominic Crossan, "Hidden Treasure Parables in Late Antiquity," in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 1976, pp. 359–379; *Finding is the First Act: Trove Folktales and Jesus' Treasure Parable.*

[56] John Dominic Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (New York, 1973), pp. 26–36.

[57] Steve Mason, "Pharisaic Dominance before 70 C.E. and the Gospels' Hypocrisy Charge (Matt. 23:2–3)," in *Harvard Theological Review* 83 (1990), pp. 380–381.

1. last is first/first is last (Matt. 19:30; 20:16; Mark 9:35; 10:31; Luke 13:30)
2. smallest is greatest/greatest is smallest (Matt. 13:32; Mark 4:32; see Luke 7:28)
3. dishonored is honored/honored is shamed (Matt. 5:3–15; Luke 6:20–26)
4. humbled is exalted/exalted is humbled (Matt. 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14)
5. losing is saving/saving is losing (Matt. 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; 17:33)
6. children are knowledgeable/wise do not know (Matt. 11:25)
7. low is high/high is low (Luke 14:9, 10)

To this we add what we learned about parables above: wicked is good (i.e., hidden treasure, pearl) and uncleanness is heavenly (i.e., leaven). All of these call for hearers to act contrary to local expectations in their hearing of the gospel. It may be in the eyes of some that this "gospel" is indeed unclean like leaven or like two kinds of seeds in a field. Nevertheless in responding to it they willingly choose death, dishonor, and loss of all (Matt. 5:11–12). But in the eyes of most this response will seem like unfaithfulness and wickedness. Yet, according to the parable action is called for, but not the conservative good behavior peasant neighbors would expect.

5.3 *Matthew 25:31–46*

The third parable describes another judgment scene. The Son of Man comes in his glory and sits on his throne (25:31). Before him are not maidservants or estate stewards but "all the nations" who are judged according to a surprising and shocking judgment by which the blessed are separated from the wicked. Thus, the scene unfolds as a forensic process: a judge, a norm of judgment, trial, verdict, and rewards and punishments.[58] Yet for all of its clarity, the parable also presumes a world of disguise, secrecy, surprise/shock, and finally revelation, items generally overlooked by scholars.

Appropriately, the Judge first addresses those at his "right hand" and judges them favorably: "Come, blessed of my Father, inherit

[58] Davies and Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 3, p. 419.

the kingdom." Then he reveals his norm of judgment: "For, I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, etc." (vv. 35–36). They are amazed at the judge's remarks, because they confess to *not* recognizing him when they acted: "Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink?" (vv. 37–39). Then the Judge *reveals the secret of secrets* to them, namely, his *disguised* presence in their midst: "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (25:40). Thus in a world where they could not penetrate the Judge's disguise, they nevertheless are revealed to have acted correctly. Their surprise rests in the delight of finding an unexpected treasure and an unanticipated reward. Despite the Judge's disguise, they did the right thing by their neighbors, although by peasant standards such liberal generosity might be thought foolishness. Judgment here is a revelation which pulls back the veil over the disguise of Jesus and the apparent foolishness of feeding and clothing non-kin; it issues in a surprising reward for those who acted "foolishly."

When the Judge addresses the goats on his left, he condemns them: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." His judgment rests on the same norm whereby he rewarded the sheep on his right: "For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink . . ." (vv. 42–43). Like the first group, they are shocked at this judgment, and beg for clarification: "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or in prison and did not minister to you?" (v. 44). The Judge reveals the same secret of his disguise to them: "As you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." (v. 45). Like the blessed in vv. 34–40, they too lived in an ambiguous world; they too confess to *not* seeing him and *not* recognizing the disguised Lord. Thus, they too did *not* penetrate the secrecy around them. One might even argue that by peasant standards they acted "wisely" by *not* squandering the family's meager resources on non-family members. Yet the Judge reveals that this calculation was wrong and culpable.

Ambiguity clouds the norm of judgment here, just as it did in the preceding parable of the pounds. How can anyone refuse basic charity to someone in need? But in a world of limited good, where one's honorable obligation lies in a type of generalized reciprocity to one's family (after all, "charity begins at home"), the generous behavior

of a "good Samaritan" may not appear honorable at all.[59] One should not take the children's bread and throw it to dogs (15:26). And if one does not recognize in a beggar a kinship bond, is the reservation of whatever food and clothing are available for one's recognized kin so fundamentally evil? In peasant eyes, no. Correspondingly, those who act liberally with the meager resources of their kinship group to benefit outsiders would not by any means be judged wise or prudent. Thus *ambiguity* confronts all the narrative characters. Is "wise" really "foolish"? And "foolish" "wise"?

Pivotal to the judgment here and in the preceding parable is a *revelation* of *secrets*, the *unmasking* of *disguise*, and the *clarification* of *ambiguity*. Things were not what they seemed, but only the Lord who reads hearts can remove all the veils and make known what was hidden. Both good and bad are surprised, for neither knew the secret of secrets in their world: a disguised Lord. Yet according to the Gospel's narrative logic, these participants have been warned that they live in a world of unknowable secrets. Of the greatest secret, the day of the Son of Man, "no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, (nor the Son), but the Father only" (24:36; see Mark 13:33, 35). Hence, they are all commanded to "watch": "Watch, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming" (24:42). It is only those who are "ready" who will enter (25:10) or survive a revealing judgment (24:44). The Lord makes no apology for secrets, disguise and ambiguity; the world remains frightfully insecure and unpredictable, as he said. And readiness and watching constitute the appropriate strategy.

In summary, judgment in Matthew's world has to do with an *apokalypsis*, the unveiling of things hidden. Despite what Jesus says, it is no easy matter to read either the signs of the weather or the signs of the time (16:1–3). There are major *secrets* in the lives of the people of the narrative and the parables; some things cannot be known. In a world filled with *ambiguity*, who is wise and who is foolish? who is kin and who is not? what is right and what is wrong? People are *disguised* and go unrecognized, even by the most astute. Others practice *deception*, appearing dutiful while unprepared, hoping to escape detection and shame. Hence people experience *surprise and*

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[59] Douglas E. Oakman, "Was Jesus a Peasant? Implications for Reading the Samaritan Story (Luke 10:30–35)," in *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 22 1992), pp. 117–124.

shock: surprise that they acted correctly or shock to learn that traditional wisdom no longer applies. But all need to be told by another whether they were acting correctly; another reveals to them secrets hidden from them or by them. The essential act of judgment becomes revelation.

6. *Summary, Conclusions, and Further Questions*

1. Indeed, Matthew's world is filled with deceit, secrecy, lying, hypocrisy, and ambiguity. These phenomena span the narrative from womb to tomb. Moreover, they are not isolated phenomena, but belong to a recognizable cultural pattern of information management common in the ancient world.

2. As regards the social-science model of secrecy, this study serves to confirm its utility for the ancient world both in surfacing discrete data and in integrating them into a common social strategy.

3. The parables in 24:45–25:46 enjoy not only unity of literary motifs and common patterns, but also of secrecy and revelation. In fact, the shock and surprise which is alleged as characteristic of gospel parables is precisely the unveiling of secrets and the clarifying of ambiguities. *All the personae in the parables practice some form of deception, secrecy or ambiguity*.

4. The cultural model of ancient cosmologies provides us with a larger framework in which to assess ambiguity, deception, secrecy and revelation. It helps us to uncover the judgment scenes in Matthew's parables where revelation by bridegroom, landlord or king pulls back the veil on disguise, deception, secrecy and ambiguity. Now God can render a just judgment, for the mysteries are dispelled and true purity and holiness can be distinguished from its counterfeit.

5. Although we did not pursue one idea from the sociology of secrecy, it would seem that Brandt's remark about who knows what and its relationship to social hierarchy is well worth pursuing With this set of lenses, one might consider again what 4 Ezra says about the esoteric character of various biblical books: "Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people" (14:45–46).

ANTIOCH'S AFTERSHOCKS: REREADING GALATIANS AND MATTHEW AFTER SALDARINI

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It is not uncommon to see a kind of negative linkage between the Pauline Epistle to the Galatians and the Gospel according to Matthew. The evangelist Matthew, like the author of the Epistle of James, takes a dim view of what would appear to be the Pauline gospel of grace, at least as he (mis?)understands it, while Galatians appears to warn readers away, in the direst possible terms, from heeding a "legalistic" gospel such as Matthew preaches. For Matthew, anyone who sees Jesus as having come to abolish the Torah, while not strictly speaking damned, is nonetheless relegated to the outskirts of heaven; for Galatians, anyone who heeds the Torah gospel is anathematized. But I suspect there is an unsuspected, or forgotten, connection between the two writings. They do not represent just specimens of opposing tendencies. My guess is that both stem from a conflict described in Galatians, that between Paul on the one hand and Peter, Barnabas, and the delegates of James the Just on the other. Galatians has been generated by subsequent developments in the same chain of events, as the letter itself makes clear, while Matthew, stemming from the Antiochene community,[1] bears the scars of that conflict and its aftermath. Those scars take the form of textual oddities and enigmas that make little sense on any other reading.

Parallel Paraclete

Anthony J. Saldarini understood the importance of applying the lens of peasant anthropology to the New Testament, especially the dynamics

[1] As many scholars think, though Saldarini was not among them. See his *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington, 1988), p. 173.

of honor/shame and patron/client relationships. Some of the most fascinating pages of his work are those in which he expounds this material. It is interesting to apply these categories to Galatians, to the apologetics and polemics of Paul. When we do, we see afresh how difficult it is to distinguish between Paul's gospel, his office, and his ego. "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel" (1:6). Precisely whom have the fickle Galatians deserted? Who was it who had called them in Christ's grace? Perhaps the ambiguity is intentional, for we may read it as if it referred to God or the Spirit of God calling them in some prevenient sense (cf., Gal. 5:8), or we may detect a reference to the Apostle himself! And since we are not sure (nor would the original recipients have been) which is intended, we cannot help feeling that the two options blend together. To desert Paul is to abandon the call of God unto salvation. Of course, in Paul's mind it is the truth of his gospel that is prior and solely important. He is lucky to have been named herald and custodian of this gospel; it is not "true" simply because it is his. And yet it is not so easy to untangle the question of relative loyalties here. It seems not unnatural to invoke the honor/shame dialectic and to see Paul threatened by the embarrassment of having his missionary converts wooed away from him by rival religious "sheep-stealers." Not only does the implication that he himself is a false teacher smart, but he has been cuckolded by his rivals. He means to win back the esteem and affections of those who are rightly his. This is surely a matter of personal and professional honor for Paul, easily as much as it is a question of dangerous soteriological heresy for the Galatians.

When Paul protests his originality, his independence from any human agency (later, as we read, from the Jerusalem apostles and Pillars) in Gal. 1:1, 11, 16–17, he is trying again to stanch the hemorrhaging of his honor, his apostolic prestige, by denying that he is a client of human patrons, indebted to anyone like Peter or James or Ananias of Damascus (Acts 9:10–19). There is no mortal who stands ahead of Paul in line as a broker of the true gospel to him. He does not stand in a position analogous to that in which the Galatians stand relative to him. He is not a bishop, the successor to apostles; he is an apostle. He himself is the one and only human broker of Christ and his benefits as far as the Galatians are concerned. Paul is thus placing himself in just the same position as the Beloved Disciple in the Gospel of John, who is in the very bosom

of Christ as Christ is in the bosom of the Father (compare John 13:23–26 with John 1:18). If one wants to know something of God, one must apply through the Son; if one wants to question the Son, one must do so through the Beloved Disciple, who is thus no doubt *himself* intended as the object of the Johannine predictions of the Paraclete who would come to elucidate all that Jesus had left obscure (16:12–15). The Galatians are Paul's clientele: they owe him no less than the gospel of Christ and the salvation of their souls. He is their mediator before God. If it is through Christ that we have access to God's grace (Rom. 5:2), it is no less through Paul that they have access to the grace of Christ. Paul stands at the door and gives the nod to those who may enter (as in John 18:16: "It's okay: he's with me."). And he will not easily lose that great honor. Thus his urgency.

Paul reminds (1:9) the Galatians of his prior warning (either in Gal. 1:8 or previously, in person), that they should accord no one else the open-minded hearing they once gave him, even should Gabriel, Uriel, or Moroni announce glad tidings of great joy to them. This seems intended as hyperbole, but it is interesting that it amounts to Paul trying to keep the Galatians dependent upon him for revelation and salvation. He himself received his gospel by direct divine revelation, not from any human preaching; and this is just what he wants to make sure the Galatians do not do! They must not imagine themselves to be visited by angels bringing a new gospel, *as he was*. The Galatians must be kept at one remove from God/Christ, in line behind Paul. Paul is equally concerned that they not switch loyalties, becoming clients of another, and that they not rid themselves of the need for a broker like Paul or his rivals.

As a piece of apologetics or religious epistemology, all this is pure zero-sum tautology. "Paul's gospel is true because it is Paul's gospel, and no counter-evidence could be equal to that." It comes down to loyalty to Paul, something due from clients to their patron. If the teachers who followed him to Galatia and undermined his teaching convinced the Galatians that Paul's word was not to be trusted, how is a mere counter-assertion supposed to prove anything? It is nothing but an appeal to loyalty. Obviously, there is more to it than that: Paul fears the gospel they now embrace is counterfeit and will not avail for their salvation. But what grounds does he offer the Galatians as proof that this is so? Of course, he will soon get around to allegories of Sarah and Hagar, gnostic claims that the Torah was given by angels, not by God, the difference between slave and son,

the faith of the pre-Torah Abraham, etc. But right up front, where he sets the tone, it sounds like a question of whom they are going to believe. This becomes even clearer in passages like Rom. 15:17–20, where it is purely and simply a matter of getting due credit for his own pioneer work, and not someone else's, a forthrightness he can only hope his colleagues and rivals will reciprocate by not working his side of the street.

Behind Closed Doors

Just as Paul pretends to renounce rhetoric as he begins to pour it on (1 Cor. 2:1–5), a common rhetorical move, so does he in Gal. 1:10, 14 make to repudiate any concern with human approbation (cf. Luke 6:26, "Woe to you when all speak well of you, for so their fathers lionized the false prophets.") even while currying it. He had once earned the esteem of his peers by exceeding their zeal for Jewish tradition, but he had renounced all that by advocating Jesus Christ, so odious a task in the eyes of most (1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Cor. 2:14–16) that he could not possibly have chosen it if his goal was to curry human favor. And yet he cared very much what fellow Christians thought of him: he had simply switched peer-groups. For it seems that some years before, Paul was disturbed by exactly the sort of revelation he tells the Galatians to give no heed to should they hear it: one putting into question the truth of his version of Christianity. A revelation prompted him to go and submit his doctrine to the senior apostles for their approval (or disapproval) "lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain" (Gal. 2:1–2). Since, apparently, others have brought up this fact, to his detriment, Paul must admit it, even though the report shows him to have done exactly what he has denied: by acceding to the right of the Jerusalem apostles to judge his gospel, he has placed them in a position between himself and God or Christ. For suppose the Pillars had shaken their heads (as Peter does in the Clementine *Recognitions*) and rejected his gospel, what would that have implied about the initial experience in which "God had revealed his Son in/to me" (Gal. 1:16)? It would have revealed it as a bogus revelation such as Paul fears the Galatians may have succumbed to, angelic voices and all. Paul, then, was willing to entertain doubts about his message such as he categorically forbids the Galatians.

Paul does what he can to take the edge off this admission that he was after all subordinate to the Jerusalem apostles, pointing out that they did not finally reject his gospel but merely told him to make sure he worked only his side of the street, not theirs, by restricting himself to the Gentile Mission. The only condition they ventured to impose upon him was a revealing one, though Paul does his best to minimize its importance. He had to "remember" the "Poor," the Ebionite faithful, the Jerusalem Christians (Gal. 2:10). He had to take up offerings (tribute) for them among the potentially much more numerous Gentile believers. Clearly what they have established here is a pecking order, a ranking, whereby, as Rom. 15:25–27 puts it, explaining the rationale for the Collection, "I am going to Jerusalem with aid for the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem; they were pleased to do it, *and indeed they are in debt to them, for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings.*" The Gentile parishioners of Paul, then, are rightly clients of the Jerusalem apostles, and it was the goal of this poor-tax to remind them of it. Paul makes the same case for congregational support of apostles in 1 Cor. 9:3–14 as well as here in Galatians (6:6). It is the same way worldwide: the disciple (chela) is the client of the master (guru), who is his patron. The teacher is sharing goods of incomparably superior worth, and it is small return for the disciple(s) to see to the material needs of the master (e.g., Luke 8:1–3), though of course, not being pure spirit, he needs them to do it!

Paul says he had explained his gospel (much as we read it in Romans?) *in private* before those who were of great reputation. On the one hand, he obviously sought by this means to avoid being publicly shamed should their decision go against him. The Jerusalem leaders must have agreed to this as a concession to Paul. It would, in effect, mean emulating Joseph, who, "being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to put her away quietly" (Matt. 1:19). On the other hand, it was this elite leadership group whose opinion mattered the most: if they thumbed his gospel/apostolate down, Paul could not have hoped to overrule their clout and appeal directly to the masses. A similar situation occurs in Acts 21:17–24, where Paul appears before James and his fellow elders, they agree on a two-track gospel for Jews and Gentiles, and James warns Paul that James' followers are not so ecumenically tolerant as he, so that

Paul had best adopt an elaborate pantomime to create the appearance of his own Torah-piety.

In light of what happened subsequently at Antioch, we may wonder why James and the other Pillars did not just condemn Paul's law-free gospel in this private meeting? Plainly, at least James must not have accepted it. One may guess that it was again a question of clout. If Paul must respect the clientele of the Pillars, so must they have recognized that he carried considerable clout of his own. In view of his missionary successes, he had created his own constituency, without which we may be sure he would have been taken with as little seriousness as Simon Magus or Elymas. The Pillars must not have wanted to alienate these considerable believers by publicly repudiating their patron, Paul. Better to accept them into the fold and thus gain a kind of Godfather status such as is described in Rom. 15:25–27. Having won a measure of clout within Paul's clientele, they could proceed quietly to win his clients away from him, as in Antioch and Galatia. Paul had given them such a toehold as the price of the added clout he received by means of their offered "right hand of fellowship" (Gal. 2:9).

But Then Face to Face

The unresolved instabilities inevitably came to light once Peter/Cephas visited the multiethnic Antioch congregation of Paul and Barnabas. In the interest of ecumenical unity, Peter and his Jerusalem companions set aside kosher rules in order to sit and eat with the ritually unclean Gentile converts, a daring posture adopted by Paul and urged on them. But when a second wave of delegates from Jerusalem, from James himself, appeared, it became evident that they would not accept this arrangement. Peter and Barnabas and the rest of the Hellenistic Jews who had been willing to mix with Gentiles at table suddenly clutched their skirts and removed themselves to the kosher section, hoping to avoid scandalizing James' men, yet at the cost of publicly humiliating the Gentiles. From having done them the distinct honor of eating with them, the Jerusalem dignitaries suddenly went to the opposite extreme of demoting the Gentiles to "least in the kingdom of heaven" in one fell swoop. This Paul could not brook, so he gave Peter a draught of his own medicine. Whereas he had been given private audience with Peter, James, and the rest in Jerusalem, Paul now publicly rebuked Peter. He upbraided Peter

"to his face" (Gal. 2:11), "before them all" (2:14), bringing shame upon him in a scene recalling Mark 8:33.

Scholars debate the outcome of the dispute: did the majority of the church side with Paul or with the exotic celebrity of Peter and James? One might expect the church simply to have split, Gentiles following Paul, Jews following Barnabas (we do not hear that he returned to Paul's side, not here, anyway), Peter, and James. But what would this have meant? Since we may picture the "Antiochene church" to have consisted of various house church groups, and these individually may have been largely Gentile or largely Jewish, birds of a feather flocking together, perhaps all that happened was a chilling of relations between small cells. And some or many or most Paulinist Antiochenes may have been won over to the Torah, as in Galatia. But who knows? Perhaps even these tensions eased once none of the "big guns" was any longer actually on the scene. Perhaps with their departures for other missionary endeavors the apostles took with them the same tensions they had invoked by their troublous presence.

In any case, the same pattern must have continued to repeat itself throughout the Pauline churches, as Galatians and Philippians amply attest. Paul had to fight to retain his clientele against the encroachments of those who followed him and urged circumcision on his converts.

The Gospel of the Antiochenes

Many scholars have nominated Antioch as the most probable point of origin for the Gospel of Matthew. It seems a natural identification, as the gospel presupposes a community which is heavy with Jewish concerns, enriched by the presence of learned Jewish-Christian scribes, and simultaneously busy about the mission to the Gentiles. It is written in Greek and by someone with a facility in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. This would all fit very well with Antioch, a major city, a major center of early Christianity, a hub of the Gentile Mission, and with a mixed Jewish and Gentile population with a history of disputation over food-laws and Torah-observance. As Saldarini correctly pointed out, there is nothing in the way of direct evidence to prove this guess correct,[2] but then we may ask, what would constitute

[2] Ibid. Saldarini does, however, allow the Gospel of Matthew to stem from Syria;

evidence? Patristic ascriptions? Where they do exist, these are notoriously unreliable. I should say that considerations such as those just adduced constitute pretty good evidence, at least better than for any other suggestion, including more recent locations of the gospel in Galilee. But perhaps the proof of the pudding (though there can be no definitive demonstration) is how productive the paradigm of Antiochene provenance might be for understanding otherwise peculiar features of Matthew.

I envision a scenario in which the Antiochene church (or group of churches) remained in communication but also in tension or division over the question of apostolic authority, some lining up behind the memory of Paul (i.e., preserving his doctrine and ascribing authority to his claimed successors), others lining up behind the name of Peter/Cephas, and still others behind James, whose position was perceived as more stringent than Peter's. For we must not forget there is in Galatians as much of a Peter-James polarity as there is a Peter-Paul dualism. Paul, after all, does not publicly excoriate James' delegates; he knows what to expect from them. (And he says what he thinks of *them* in Gal. 2:4.) It is only Peter's position that seems to him hypocritical or inconsistent. Note that in his tirade of Gal. 2:15–21 he has nothing at all to say of Peter's actions belying his avowed beliefs, but rather of a logical inconsistency between his presumed view of the atonement and his practical application of it. It is a question of theology and ritual. Peter is said (Gal. 2:15–16; Acts 15:11) to share with Paul the confidence that legal observance saves neither Jew nor Gentile; only faith in Christ does that. We have no reason to think James shared this opinion. Whoever wrote the Epistle of James certainly did not picture the Just One sharing it (James 2:20–26). We might, I suggest, paraphrase 1 Corinthians 1:12 and describe the Antiochene situation pretty well: "Each one of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of James,' or 'I am of Cephas.'" At least the Corinthian (proposed) parallel shows the suggested situation is a plausible one.

Further, I imagine that our Gospel of Matthew bears the marks of all three Antiochene parties, having passed through the hands of each. As scribes from any one of the factions read and taught from

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he just won't narrow it down to Antioch. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago, 1994), p. 26.

the text, each would have modified it in accord with the views of his sect, not necessarily expunging the others, as the general scribal practice seems to have been to "correct" the text by adding statements pointing in the opposite direction, not simply removing the offending texts. (Just removing the offending texts would have been even worse cheating: one could hardly hope to win a debate that way. Adding text, on the other hand, would be more in the nature of "spinning" the texts one found distasteful.)[3]

Anthony Saldarini expressed skepticism about the assertion in Acts 15:5 that some Pharisees had joined the Jesus movement: "The Pharisees were a political interest group with a program for living Judaism and any interpretation of Christianity, no matter how Jewish, would have found itself in conflict with them."[4] But such an opinion seems surprising and gratuitous for Saldarini, whose *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* goes to such lengths to minimize the supposed gulf between Judaism and Christianity, which he rightly says cannot yet even have been regarded as two separate religions.[5] Saldarini ought to be the last to rule out Luke's note about Jesus-Pharisees. It seems to me, that, following Benjamin W. Bacon and Jack T. Sanders,[6] we may suspect that much or all of the gospel

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[3] I am aware Saldarini did not favor ideas of Matthew's preserving fossil views he did not himself accept, or of his grudgingly throwing a bone here and there to mollify this or that stubborn faction in his community (*Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 203). He preferred to see the gospel as a consistent whole and, as I see it, to harmonize anomalous material to that end. He disliked imagining Matthew as "derivative and inconsistent" (ibid.), but what if it is?

[4] Ibid., p. 186. Saldarini thought he had dislodged Neusner's estimate of the Pharisees as a once-influential political party that had, by the time of Jesus, retired to the life of a pietistic conventicle (Jacob Neusner, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (New York, 2nd ed., 1979). They were still quite political, Saldarini maintained, in Jesus' time. But no evidence or argument he offers (in *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society*) seems to do much to alter Neusner's picture of things. Saldarini's reasoning seems to be largely deductive. Since in those days, in that society, there was no sharp difference between the categories of religion and politics, the Pharisees' concerns cannot have been only religious. Second, since he places the Pharisees among the retainer class, and theoretically this class is supposed to have a political role, then the Pharisees must have, too. But these considerations strike me as rather ghostly. Saldarini seems to imagine gospel-era Pharisees as having political concerns but as being stymied in doing anything about them. This may well be so, but then how different is this from Neusner's results? What would have been left to such a formerly activistic group once pushed from politics to piety?

[5] Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 18–26.

[6] Benjamin W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York, 1930), Appended Note IX,

polemic against "the Pharisees" was aimed at Christian Pharisees (as anachronistic as that term would have been for them). This is to reverse, yet without rejecting, Saldarini's insight that Matthew's gospel is presenting us with an intra-Jewish conflict, not a Christian-versus-Jewish conflict. That is still true, but since Christianity and Judaism had not definitively split yet, we may consistently view Matthew as preserving at the same time an intra-Christian, that is, an intra-Jewish-Christian debate. Matthew presupposes that Judaism and Christianity are struggling together in a common womb, not yet having emerged as distinct religions. And in that process of evolution (if we may switch metaphors), there were various intermediate states. Matthew attests, by my count, three of them: Jamesian Christian Pharisaism, Petrine grace-nomism, and Pauline grace-antinomianism. All three are represented in the gospel, some of them caricatured, some faithfully expressed, often clashing with one another in any case.

Right off the bat, this mixed character of the Matthean gospel would account for an otherwise very strange fact: that of Matthew's use of the Gospel of Mark in the first place. Given a number of the sentiments espoused in Mark (e.g., Jesus' declaring all foods clean, Mark 7:19b), how can Matthew have done other than cast it out as a "sin of the margin," a spurious apocryphon?[7] But if the Paulinist party in Antioch had embraced this gospel, which is obviously very compatible with Paulinism, if not directly or indirectly a product of it,[8] then we may well imagine that the Petrinist response would have

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"The Leaven of the Pharisees," pp. 511–517; Jack T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia, 1987), pp. 101–112.

[7] F.F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1974), p. 60. The Greek ευαγγελιον was punningly rendered as Hebrew *awen-gillayon* or *awon-gillayon*, "falsehood of the scroll," "perversion of the scroll," or "sin of the margin."

[8] Many of Mark's emphases are compatible with Pauline religious praxis, e.g., the rejection of kosher laws, but Mark derives Christian praxis from sayings of Jesus, where Paul derives them from the implicit significance of Jesus' death on the cross. This is a development of Paulinism, which knew of no earthly teaching career of a historical Jesus, applying Pauline insights to the emergent tradition of Jesus-sayings and episodes. To formulate Paulinist principles into maxims and put them into the mouth of Jesus is simply of a piece with the general historicization of the Jesus figure in the late first and early second centuries. So the trend is not Pauline, but Paulinist, second- or third-generation Paulinism. Mark's gospel "is that of a teacher who has caught the essence of Paul's thought yet expressed it by use of language and terminology to which Paul had no access (the Jesus-tradition) and did so in

been to embrace and sanitize this text as far as possible, at least so as to refute those who appealed to it for Pauline belief and practice. A completely different gospel would have removed any common ground even for debate. This was the same procedure adopted by the Ecclesiastical Redactor of the Fourth Gospel,[9] as well as that of the nascent catholic church to the pre-Marcionite Ur-Lukas,[10] not to mention the "Pastoralizing" redaction of the Pauline Corpus.[11] Thus the "scribes discipled unto the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 13:52) whom Saldarini rightly sees as so prominent in the Matthean community would have been bringing new treasures not only out of the Jewish Scriptures, but out of Mark, too.

There Must Be Heresies

It will be useful to compare the implied positions of the Antiochene factions as implied in the community's use of Mark, in Matthew's redaction of Mark and Q, and in other additional Matthean materials which seem to stem from the competing factions themselves. Perhaps the most obvious issue at stake is the authority of the apostles. Mark notoriously presents the disciples of Jesus in a derogatory light, especially Peter. The twelve misunderstand Jesus at every turn, at length abandoning, denying, and betraying him to his enemies.[12] Jesus cannot seem to put a stop to their ghoulish bickering over power and office, planning for the days after his death, already, so to speak, casting lots for his mantle (Mark 9:30–34; 10:32–35ff.).[13]

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order to compensate for what he believed to be a serious distortion of his master's thought as apostle par excellence" (Ralph P. Martin, *Mark: Evangelist and Theologian*. Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives (Grand Rapids, 1973), p. 161). Cf. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 21, "Mark has moved in the same direction as the Pauline communities, to a very selective observance of Jewish law based on its compatibility with the life and teachings of Jesus."

[9] Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, 1971), pp. 219–220.

[10] John Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament: An Essay in the Early History of the Canon* (Chicago, 1942), chapter IV, "Marcion's 'Gospel' and the Gospel of Luke," pp. 77–113.

[11] Winsome Munro, *Authority in Paul and Peter: The Identification of a Pastoral Stratum in the Pauline Corpus and I Peter* (New York, 1983).

[12] Theodore J. Weeden, *Mark-Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia, 1971).

[13] Albert Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God: The Secret of Jesus' Messiahship and Passion* (New York, 1964), pp. 78–79, 124–125.

Peter is both rebuked as Satan (Mark 8:33) and shown committing apostasy under only mild persecution (Mark 14:66–71; cf. 8:38). This is pretty much as damning a picture of Peter as can be imagined. He is hardly better than Judas Iscariot. Of course, it is not especially likely to be historical in character, just a slanderous smear from a rival camp, like those which made of Jesus an alcoholic and John the Baptizer a demoniac (Matt. 11:18–19//Luke 7:33–34)! Nor is Mark particularly enamored of the Heirs, the relatives of Jesus, including the Pillar James, given Mark 3:21, where the whole bunch of them arrive to kidnap and deprogram Jesus, whom they consider to be a ranting lunatic. Some holy family! Nor are the apostolic women (Mary Magdalene and her sisters) treated any better, as Mark has them play the role of Jonah, pointedly defying the angelic command to tell the disciples of Jesus' resurrection (Mark 16:8). He has thus eliminated from consideration three major leadership factions in early Christianity. Mark 9:38–41, the story of the lone wolf exorcist, a Markan creation on the basis of Num. 11:26–30, implies that Mark wants the reader to recognize the authority of some remaining apostle who did not travel with Jesus and the twelve but nonetheless ministers in his name. Now who might that be? Those in Antioch who proudly exclaimed (as their counterparts in Corinth did) "I am of Paul" would have felt right at home using Mark.

But those who thought Paul had overreached himself in rebuking Peter, Jesus' chief lieutenant, would no doubt have chafed at such ill-treatment of Peter in Mark's gospel, despite the usefulness of many other aspects of Mark. Thus, in the Matthean rewrite, we have a systematic rehabilitation of both Peter and the other ten (consigning the Iscariot to the hell he had crawled out of—Matt. 27:3–10). They understand the parables (Matt. 13:51), where they did not in Mark (Mark 4:13). In Mark they were left dumbfounded at Jesus walking on the sea (Mark 6:52), while in Matthew they know to worship him (14:33). Mark (10:35–37) has James and John try to get first dibs on the seats of honor beside Jesus at his inaugural ball, but in Matthew (20:20), it is the prying Mrs. Zebedee who embarrasses her sons with the outrageous request. Matthew at least counterbalances the dismissal of Peter as the Great Satan (Mark 8:33) with the blessing on Peter's receptivity to God's revelation which proves him worthy to receive the ultimate legal and disciplinary authority among the disciples and to become the foundation rock of the church (Matt. 16:17–19), as God chose Abraham for the foundation rock (*petra*) of

the earth.[14] But probably Arlo J. Nau's insight ought to be taken to its logical conclusion:[15] originally Matthew must have omitted Mark's Satan-rebuke, too, just as Luke did. Originally, again taking Nau[16] one step further in the same direction, Matthew also may have had Peter walk on water beside Jesus without sinking, the point being to show how alike Jesus and his vicar on earth are. Matthew as we now read it evidences a striking pattern of enhancing Peter's reputation with one hand and denigrating it with the other. If Peter is blessed as the unique recipient of God's revelation, he is again stigmatized as Satan. If he is placed alongside Jesus on the water (Matthew 14:28–30 seems by itself to imply a successful trip to join Jesus: "Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus."), his little faith causes him to sink like the "rock" he supposedly is (Matt. 16:30–32, which reads like an afterthought). If he is given apparently unique plenipotentiary authority in binding and loosing (Matt. 16:19), soon this authority is distributed among the other disciples (Matt. 18:18), if not the whole church. It surely looks as if there has been a stage of redaction between our Mark and our Matthew. The missing link would be a Peter-boosting rehabilitation of that apostle, undoing some of the damage Mark had done to his reputation. And the canonical Matthew represents a later stage in which Pauline or Jamesian Antiochenes had adjusted the picture of Peter back downward. (And Matthew has omitted Mark's note that Jesus' relatives thought him mad. No surprise there, if advocates of "those from James" still had a foothold in Antioch.)

As for Paul, whose policy of a shared table incarnated a doctrine whereby Torah regulations should no longer separate Jew from Gentile, it is certainly he who is in view in Matthew's redaction of the Q passage on the perpetuity of the law. Matthew has added: "Do not think I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. I came not to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matt. 5:17). There is no thought here of inimical rumors floated about Jesus by his contemporaries, tarring him as a lawbreaker; the language of what Jesus "came" to accomplish, as if annulling the Torah were his divine

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[14] *Yelamdenu* quoted by the Yalkut, *Num.*, par. 766, in Solomon Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York, 1910), p. 59.

[15] Arlo J. Nau, *Peter in Matthew: Discipleship, Diplomacy, and Dispraise* (Collegeville, 1992), pp. 108–114.

[16] Ibid., pp. 101–102.

mission, shows that we are dealing with a rival *Christian* conception of what Jesus came to achieve. It takes direct aim at Pauline doctrine such as we find in Rom. 10:4, "Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified." Paul himself (as well as anyone who preaches his law-free gospel) is the obvious target in the rest of the Matthean redaction: "Therefore, whoever relaxes the least of these commandments *and teaches others to do likewise* shall be ranked the least in the kingdom of heaven, while anyone who does them and teaches them shall be ranked as great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19). Here is the Petrinist and/or Jamesian estimate of Pauline Christianity, and it was necessary to make the point because there were Paulinists in the audience, at Antioch. Paul and his colleagues are the target again in Matt. 7:22–23, where the Pauline "signs of a true apostle . . . signs and wonders and mighty works" (2 Cor. 12:12) are sneeringly rejected on account of their accompanying "lawlessness." Here is Matthew's counterblast to the Markan story of the lone-wolf exorcist.

The Higher Righteousness

Fasting was a cherished part of Jewish piety. Mark 2:18, 21–22 (the similes of the patches and wineskins) stem from a left-wing Paulinism such as we glimpse in Rom. 14:5–8. The new creation in Christ, which has transformed all things, has swept aside the superannuated charade of fasting. But one can see already an encroachment of "nascent catholicism"[17] in Mark 2:19–20, where it suddenly seems that the suspension of fasting among Christians is only temporary, to be restored after the death of Jesus to commemorate that event. Receiving the Markan tradition in this compromised form, Matthew has no problem with it, since it does at least respect fasting. But his own (more Jewish) view is a bit different, a difference he does not bother papering over. For Matthew, it is assumed that Christians do fast and did already in the time of Jesus: "When you fast . . ." (Matt. 6:16, 17).

I ascribe the whole section Matt. 5:17–6:23 (at least) to the faction of James, as well as the gospel's additions to the Q woes on

[17] Ernst Käsemann, "Paul and Early Catholicism," in Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia, 1979), pp. 236–251.

the Pharisees in chapter 23, and especially Matt. 23:2–3, "The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do, for they preach but do not practice." This is the voice of "mimetic discipleship."[18] The factional leadership of the Jamesians in Antioch seeks to emulate and finally to replace the Yavneh leadership. It envisions its own sanhedrins (Matt. 5:22; 18:15–17) to replace that at Yavneh. And as those sages were said to have excommunicated Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, the Jamesian Sanhedrin wanted the same right (Matt. 18:17). The privilege of halakhic binding and loosing they coveted gave them the luxury of building their own fence around the Torah (Matt. 5:21–48), but on the whole they wanted to imitate their highly-esteemed rivals, hence they endorsed the halakhic traditions of Yavneh (Matt. 23:2–3). But if their rivals are thus satisfactory as guides to righteous observance and behavior, are not Matthean/Jamesian scribes superfluous? What is the need for them? Why are they better than their rivals? The latter must fall short in some respect (that is, other than occupying the position the Jamesian/Matthean scribes would *like* to occupy!). All that remains to attack them for is inferred hypocrisy. They teach the right thing but don't practice it, except as an empty formality (Matt. 6:1–2, 5, 7, 16; 23:5–7). It is simple in principle to have one's righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees: actually carry out their teachings, which they, miserable charlatans, fail to do! Thus the blistering but gratuitous charges of hypocrisy and pretense (Matt. 23:27a, 28, 29a).

We can sense also the "anxiety of influence"[19] on the part of the James faction when it comes to the niceties and minutiae of vows (Matt. 5:34b–36; 23:16–22). James 5:12 shows that such concerns were at least located in the Jamesian trajectory. But beyond this, we must recognize a parallel between these Matthean texts and the intra-Synoptic haggling over whether the wandering missioners may carry a staff, a bag, sandals, etc. (Mark 6:8–9; Matt. 10:9–10; Luke 9:3), all attempts to distinguish Christian itinerants from their twins, the Cynic apostles. Here, too, the two parties (Jamesian scribes and

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[18] Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore, 1979), pp. 145–146.

[19] See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) or the concise discussion of the idea in J.A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (Baltimore, 3rd ed., 1992), p. 357 (under the entry for "Freudian criticism/psychoanalytic criticism").

Yavneh rabbis) are so close that the microscope focuses on what tiny differences may be found. In this way, the Jamesians seek both to emulate the group they want to replace and to exaggerate the supposed differences between them. The two desires may be logically contradictory, but both stem from the same psycho-dynamics.

It is to be doubted whether the Jamesian faction began with such strict halakhic scruples. My guess is that they became more rigorous as a function of their increasing desire to ape and then to supplant the Yavneh leadership. They strove more and more to become like their model on the way to (hopefully) replacing it. What about their less rigorous past? It is irresistible to wonder whether, in the urgings to fast, pray, and give *secretly*, one discerns a kind of analogy to the Messianic Secret, the suggestion being that, whereas these Jewish Christians had the reputation for not fasting, etc., it was in reality undeserved, since they actually *had* fasted, prayed and given alms, but no one knew it!

Another hint that the Sermon on the Mount material discussed here ought to be ascribed to the James faction in Antioch, rather than the (also-Jewish) Petrine faction is the jibe against Gentile glossolalic prayer in Matt. 6:7, "In praying, do not say *bata* as the Gentiles do; they seem to think they have a better chance of being heard the longer they rattle on." Peter, however, was associated with the practice of glossolalia, always in connection with the Gentile Mission (Acts 2:4–11; 10:44–46). The chilly attitude toward the Gentile Christians implied here reflects the grudging reluctance with which the Jamesian faction had finally embraced the Gentile Mission (see below), if only to try to undo some of the damage they perceived Paul to have done.

Circumcising Mark

Mark 7:19b is Mark's own capper summing up the plain sense of the preceding material, which obviates the need for dietary laws (and related ablution laws) by replacing ritual considerations with moral ones, as if the two were incompatible. No material substance can render the eater unclean merely by passing through the mouth, because the only "uncleanness" God recognizes is that which results from inner thoughts and urges externalizing themselves as sinful words and deeds. Paulinists in Antioch would have said *amen* and

reached for a ham sandwich. After all, had not their master said, "The kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace, and spiritual ecstasy" (Rom. 14:17)? Again, Matthew would presumably have relished crossing out the whole pericope, but his task was to mitigate the errors of the Paulinists, and this he could do best by leaving their favorite text intact so far as he could, but disarming it. So, almost unobtrusively, Matthew trims away only Mark 7:19b, "Thus he declared all foods clean." This leaves Matthew the open door of explaining how the argument up to this point in the passage need not eventuate in Mark's conclusion. Mark was entitled to draw one inference from the pericope; Matthew must be allowed to draw another. What that was, we don't know. Suffice it to say it did not involve erasing *kashruth*.[20]

Mark had nothing to say about tithing, but at least he did not declare it null and void, so no Antiochene Christians would have faced a problem at that point. But I suspect Q gave them trouble. The saying "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin [Luke: every herb], and have neglected [Luke: justice and the love of God] the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith. These latter are what you ought to have done, without neglecting the others" (Matt. 23:23–24/Luke 11:42). Marcion's text lacked "without neglecting the others," which sounds like a pedantic correction, hobbling the force of the main saying. My guess is that Marcion preserved the Lukan original, and that we owe to Matthean redaction the afterthought that it was not so bad to have taken the trouble to tithe herbs. (Later scribes then assimilated Luke to Matthew.) Thus, on behalf of the Petrine faction in Antioch, Matthew domesticates a Pauline-sounding rejection of halakhic niceties.

Traversing Land and Sea

Closely associated with the issue of kosher laws in the early church was that of the Gentile Mission. In Acts 10 and 11, Peter's (fictive)

[20] Matthew is similarly tight-lipped when he "corrects" Mark's picture of the baptism, which implied Jesus had come to John to have his sins forgiven. Matthew has John reassure the reader that Jesus had no need of baptismal remission. Then why *was* he there? Ah . . . to fulfill all righteousness, whatever that means. All that is important is that it does *not* mean repenting.

pioneering of the Gentile Mission is controversial not because anyone jealously begrudged the poor Gentiles the chance to be saved, but rather because of the compromise of ritual purity standards necessitated for Jewish (Christian) apostles traveling among Gentiles. They must sooner or later accept the hospitality of well-wishers and converts: "Eat whatever they set before you" (Luke 10:8). Thus the outrage of the Jerusalem elders, once they call Peter to account for evangelizing Cornelius: "Why did you go to the uncircumcised—and *eat* with them?" (Acts 11:3). Thus the connection between Peter's vision in which God orders him to slaughter and eat unclean animals (Acts 10:10–16) and his invitation to visit Cornelius. He had to be disabused of his distaste for non-kosher food before he could undertake the Gentile Mission with its implied bacon breakfasts.

The Cornelius story clearly attests the presence in the early Jewish Christian movement of a faction which was unwilling to missionize Gentiles because of the ritual compromises it would entail. Such an anti-missionary stance is preserved in Matt. 10:5–6, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It is obvious, however, that the Antiochene Jewish Christians were already quite familiar with the Gentile Mission from their former sponsorship of Paul and Barnabas as well as the presence in their own community of converted Gentiles. This was precisely where the trouble had arisen (as Galatians 2 tells us) in the first place, over the very issue of table fellowship and kosher laws on the mission field. They eventually decided to solve the problem of Jewish-Gentile Christian coexistence by following the example of Peter in Antioch: "you Judaize the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:14). That is the final policy of the Matthean community as attested in the Great Commission passage: the missioners must go into all nations (i.e., among the Gentiles), baptizing them as Christians who will observe all the teaching ascribed to Jesus in Matthew's gospel, the keynote of which, Matt. 5:17–19, requires observance of every least commandment of the Torah. This is the very gospel embraced by the Galatians at the behest of nomistic missioners who followed Paul into the church after he left. And this is exactly the betrayal Paul complains of so bitterly in Galatians: after promising to leave the Gentiles to him and his Torah-free gospel, the Jerusalem authorities have sent their delegates ("men from James") into his churches to Judaize them after all. Paul called such a mission, such a gospel, false and damnable (Gal. 1:9).

It may be that Paulinist elements in Antioch inserted their own condemnation of such a mission in Matt. 23:15, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you crisscross land and sea to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice the hell-spawn you yourselves are!" Why? Because "You are cut off from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

Similarly, Matt. 21:43, "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it," seems to me best explained as a Paulinist scribal "correction," representing the same sort of Gentile triumphalism and supercessionism we find condemned in Rom. 11:17–32 and advocated in 1 Thes. 2:14–16. Saldarini tried mightily to make *ethnei* in Matt. 21:43 mean something, anything, other than "nation,"[21] but his efforts strike me as being as desperate and implausible as the old fundamentalist attempts to make *genea* in Mark 13:30 mean something other than "generation." And yet Saldarini had a point: the intention of the parable in Matthew surely seems to be to take away the rule of Israel from their corrupt leaders. It would seem most natural for the vineyard to be given to another leadership group within Judaism, namely the Matthean/Jamesian scribes, not to the Gentile nations. And perhaps it did so read originally, but Pauline interests in Antioch have altered the text.

The presence within the Antiochene church of both pro- and anti-Pauline sentiments would account for another oddity: the fact that 1 Corinthians and Matthew share the basics of a judicial system, the germ of ecclesiastical courts and of excommunication. 1 Cor. 5:1–5; 6:1–6 paints a picture strikingly similar to that in Matt. 18:15–20. In both we read that any Christian brother with a gripe against another should keep the dirty linen private and not expose it in a public court. If they cannot reach some suitable settlement, they ought to appear before a church body to argue their cases and accept the verdict rendered by fellow believers. But anyone who defies such a ruling must be cut off from the community of faith. It is natural to suppose that this system existed in Antioch, where they followed Jewish precedent: "When three establish a court, the Shekhinah is with them" (B. Ber., 6a). "Think not that you [judges] are alone; I

[21] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 59–63.

am sitting with you" (Midrash Tehillim 82:1).[22] From there Paul exported it to his churches in Europe, hence the occurrence of the same system in 1 Corinthians and Matthew. But in the time since the Peter-Paul split in Antioch, the two systems/protocols have evolved a bit differently. The authority of the church, embodying the presence of the Risen Christ, has concretized in Matthew's Antioch into the unique binding-and-loosing authority of Peter's successors, while in the Pauline sphere of influence it is Paul's spirit and power which continues among them, long after his martyrdom, whenever they gather in council. Paul has come near to replacing Jesus in their esteem, a natural development, once people who agree on primary matters begin to dispute over secondary ones. The secondary then becomes primary, while the commonly held is taken increasingly for granted.

We have found that tensions over the Pauline gospel and mission exploded in Antioch, introducing or exacerbating divisions in that Jewish-Christian community, and that these developments eventually gave rise to the writing of two important New Testament documents, the Epistle to the Galatians and the Gospel according to Matthew. With the use of ideas and perspectives important to the work of Anthony J. Saldarini, we have been able to interpret certain of the events described in Galatians in a rather new way, while proposing a new accounting for the conflicting voices we hear in Matthew. They seem perhaps to stem from rival redactional interests affecting the text of the gospel as copies passed from one faction to another, perhaps as individual scribes switched loyalties and carried their copies with them. Though such textual "corruption" by way of redactional cross-fertilization originated with a divided community (in Antioch), it wouldn't be surprising if the resultant patchwork version of Matthew eventually served as a kind of "compromise document" furnishing the platform for the "catholicizng" rapprochement long ago posited by F.C. Baur between Jewish and Paulinist types of Christianity. It is all admittedly speculative, but such is the manner of all scribes trained for the kingdom of heaven; it is how they manage to bring forth new treasures from the old treasuries. How else?

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[22] Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, p. 229.

METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE TAX COLLECTORS IN THE GOSPELS

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Anthony Saldarini consistently turned his scholarly attention to some of the most difficult and important debates about earliest Christianity and its relation to the Judaism of its day. One such investigation was his attempt to illuminate the Pharisees, so central for our knowledge of both Judaism and Christianity, and yet still a group that barely emerges from the shadows of our sources.[1] Many scholars have contributed to our understanding of the class level of the Pharisees, but Saldarini carried it through more consistently than most, especially in the use of comparative sociological theory. Specifically, he applied the sociological categories proposed by Gerhard Lenski to what we know of Jewish groups in the first century C.E.[2] Lenski proposed that agrarian societies such as the Roman Empire can be analyzed in terms of nine functional classes. The upper classes are composed of king, governing class, retainer class, merchant class, and priestly class. The lower classes are composed of the peasant class, the artisan class, the unclean or degraded class, and the expendable class. The Pharisees are assigned by Saldarini to the retainer class. The retainers were, in his words, "mostly townspeople who served the needs of the governing class as soldiers, educators, religious functionaries, entertainers, and skilled artisans."[3] The class categories

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[1] *Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington, 1988).

[2] G. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York, 1966), pp. 214–296; the comments below come especially from pp. 241–244.

[3] Saldarini, *Pharisees*, pp. 37–38. Some overlap among Pharisees, *haberim*, sages, and rabbis is often assumed by scholars. As a result, evidence of the class level of all these designations is sometimes treated together. The Mishnah seems to depict rabbis who are agricultural landowners; see Jacob Neusner, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (2nd ed.; Atlanta, 1988), pp. 166, 235; Hayim Lapin, *Early Rabbinic Civil Law and the Social History of Roman Galilee: A Study of Mishnaic Tractate Baba Mesi a'* (Atlanta, 1995), pp. 232–235; Shaye J.D. Cohen, "The Place of the Rabbi in Jewish Society of the Second Century," in Lee Levine, ed., *The Galilee in Late Antiquity* (New York, 1992), pp. 169–171. However, the situation of the Pharisees might have

are not derived from the orders of society that were recognized by the Romans themselves, such as senators, equestrians, slaves, and so on; rather, Lenski based his class descriptions upon the power and function of groups in agrarian societies, using comparisons of a number of cultures. For example, Lenski considers highly placed slaves to be members of the retainer class, because they function in that way, even though they occupy the lowest of the Roman orders. The discrepancy between Lenski's categories and the Roman orders of society, however, does not to my mind invalidate the former; it simply highlights the multiple facets of social location.

While recognizing that there is still much room for discussion of Lenski's and Saldarini's findings, I would here like to assume some of their results and to ask whether the character of the Pharisees can be used to illuminate also the references in the early Gospel traditions to the tax collectors, or more accurately, toll collectors,[4] who are often contrasted with the Pharisees. When we look at the earliest Gospel traditions, for example, especially those that are likely pre-70 C.E., we find that the *rhetorical* use of "Pharisees" must be addressed in addition to Saldarini's sociological recovery of the historical Pharisees and that the rhetorical use of Pharisees often mirrors the equally rhetorical use of "toll collectors."[5]

There are a host of difficulties and surprises the researcher encounters in exploring the early Gospel traditions about both Pharisees and toll collectors. First, regarding Pharisees, this term does not

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changed after 70 C.E. from urban retainers to rural landowners. For the view that the Pharisees "represented primarily the middle and lower classes," see Lawrence H. Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Hoboken, 1991), p. 105. The argument of Louis Finkelstein (*The Pharisees: The Sociological Background of Their Faith* [3rd ed.; Philadelphia, 1962]) that the Pharisees were urban artisans is not as popular as it once was.

[4] The large-scale tax farmer was called a *demosiones* (Hebrew: *gabbay*), while the local collector of duties and indirect taxes, that is, a toll collector, was a *telones* (Hebrew: *mokes*). Fritz Herrenbrück (*Jesus und die Zöllner* [Tübingen, 1990], esp. pp. 103, 225–227) argues that that the latter was not technically a toll collector but a local subcontractor who collected both the tolls and taxes of the Roman-ruled kingdoms, but the distinction is not crucial for our purposes.

[5] In addition to historical studies such as Saldarini's that try to reconstruct the actual role of Pharisees in ancient Judaism, other studies are more literary or rhetorical in character, and try to establish, for instance, what Mark's or Matthew's attitude toward the Pharisees was. A good example of this latter approach is Elizabeth Struthers Malbon "The Jewish Leaders in the Gospel of Mark: A Literary Study of Marcan Characterization," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989), pp. 259–281.

appear as often as one might expect in the earliest Christian texts. If we take the new reconstruction of the sayings source Q from the International Q Project[6] as a basis of judging that text, we find that Pharisees occur in only one passage (see below). In Mark there are only six passages that treat the Pharisees, and in Paul's letters, only one.[7] Further, the territory of the Pharisees in the Synoptic Gospels is limited to Galilee,[8] and the Pharisees are never mentioned in Mark in the trial and passion narrative (Mark 14–16), nor are Pharisees mentioned when there is any suggestion of a threat to Jesus' life, except once (Mark 3:1–6, retained in Matt. 12:9–14, but not in Luke 6:6–11). Rather, Pharisees are associated with opposition to Jesus, but not with his arrest or crucifixion. The chief priests are reserved for that role, often mentioned with some other group, but never with the Pharisees. It is also interesting that in Mark debates with scribes concern theological issues, while debates with Pharisees concern halakhic issues that would relate to boundary formation.

Just as there are several surprises concerning Pharisees in the early synoptic tradition, there are surprises concerning toll collectors as well. First, there are only a few references to them also in the early texts. Toll collectors appear in only two Q passages and in only one Markan passage. Interestingly, Matthew and Luke both increase the number of references to nine times and eleven times respectively, but no other New Testament text mentions toll collectors.[9] Second, just as Pharisees are nearly absent from Paul's letters, toll collectors do not appear at all in Paul or in John. As important as they are often considered to be in the early synoptic tradition, they are wholly

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[6] James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann, and John S. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Critical Edition of Q* (Minneapolis and Leuven, 2000). I have followed their reconstructed Greek text of Q, but have used my own English translation. Scholars may disagree with some of the conclusions of this edition, but it provides a recognized basis for discussion.

[7] Paul—who had been a Pharisee!—had little interest in the category as a way of registering opponents. To be sure, later texts contain more references. Matthew contains thirty references, Luke-Acts thirty-six, and John twenty. These texts, in very different ways, clearly reflect a situation after the destruction of the temple when the conflict between Christians and Pharisees is treated quite differently.

[8] This is in contrast to Josephus, who almost always places them in Jerusalem. See Saldarini, *Pharisees*, pp. 151–152; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, 2000), pp. 264–265.

[9] Wm. O. Walker, "Jesus and the Tax Collectors," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97 (1978), pp. 221–238. Among early Christian texts, cf. only Justin, *Apology* 1.15.10; Origen, *Against Celsus*, 1.62, 2.46, and Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 5.8.28.

unimportant for the Johannine and Pauline literature, both disputed and undisputed.

I will here first examine references to toll collectors in the early Gospel traditions and compare them at points to references to Pharisees. Some of these passages will be abbreviated for discussion.

First Group of Texts: Toll Collectors Not Contrasted with Others

> Q 6:32 (Q numberings are based on Luke)
> If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the toll collectors do the same?
>
> Matt. 18:17
> If the member refuses to listen (to private correction), tell it to the congregation; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the congregation, let such a person be to you as a gentile and a toll collector.

Presumed here is the negative valuation of toll collectors as self-interested and unscrupulous, without any suggestion at this point that Christians may challenge this generally held assumption.[10] These passages indicate that the negative view of toll collectors, found in many pagan and Jewish authors, was often taken over by the early Christians as well.

> Luke 3:12–14 (from Luke's special source L?)[11]
> Even toll collectors came to be baptized and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you."

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[10] Matthew's case is more negative and leaves less room for irony; it is also likely redactional (and therefore later); see W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (3 vols; Edinburgh, 1988–1997), *ad loc*. The many passages that reflect the negative views of pagan and Jewish authors on tax collectors and toll collectors need not be rehearsed here; see Otto Michel, "*Telones*," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 8, pp. 88–105.

[11] See Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke* (2 vols.; Garden City, 1981–1985). *ad loc*. for this and the following Lukan passages. Although for the sake of discussion I consider this and other passages as deriving from Luke's source L, I am reminded by Andrew McGowan that Luke appears to have a redactional tendency to render the toll collectors more positively than do the other Gospels (cf. Luke 6:32 to Matt. 5:46, and Luke 17:3 to Matt. 18:15–18). It is possible that an L-to-Luke shift can be discerned in the accommodation of toll collectors. In addition to Andrew McGowan, I would also like to thank Joan Branham, Albert Harrill, and Jonathan Klawans for providing valuable reactions to my theses.

This passage assumes that toll collectors were included in the early Christian community, but also reflects the safeguards that were imposed by Roman law on tax collectors and toll collectors from the first century B.C.E. on.[12]

Second Group of Texts: Toll Collectors Contrasted with Others

> Luke 19:2–10 (from L?)
> There was a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief toll collector and was wealthy. . . . Jesus said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and say, "He has become a guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus said to the Lord, "Half of my possessions I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone, I will repay it four times over." Then Jesus said, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Humanity came to seek out and to save the lost."

As the story now stands, Jesus' association with a toll collector elicits a critical reaction from "all who saw it." This creates something of a contrast, but not as sharp a contrast as that found in the texts below.

> Q 7:31–34
> To what shall I compare this generation, and what is it like? It is like children sitting in the marketplace who say to the others, "We played the flute for you, but you did not dance; we wailed, but you did not cry." For John came, neither eating nor drinking, and you say, "He has a demon!" The Son of Humanity came, eating and drinking, and you say, "Look! A man who is a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of toll collectors and sinners!"

Here the charge that Jesus associated with toll collectors and sinners is taken up more sharply. Although one might hold that it is only entertained as a calumny from opponents—somewhat akin to the charge that Jesus heals through the power of demons—still, the association is not refuted or avoided; it is affirmed. The text in its context would seem to say that Jesus did not fast and engage in ascetic practices in the way that John the Baptist did (nor in the way that the Pharisees did), and that he did not avoid associating with "toll

[12] See, e.g., Cicero, *Ad Quint. Frat.* 1.1.32–35.

collectors and sinners." The parallelism with the charge that Jesus was a glutton and a drunkard might imply that associating with toll collectors and sinners is viewed as an exaggeration, but perhaps not far from the truth. The parallelism also has another implication: Jesus' lack of proper boundaries for eating and drinking is related to his lack of proper boundaries between himself and others. As Mary Douglas would remind us, the definition of the boundaries of the human body mirrors the definition of the boundaries of the group.[13]

> Mark 2:14–17
> As Jesus was walking along, he saw Levi sitting at the tollhouse, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. And as he reclined at dinner in Levi's house, many toll collectors and sinners were also reclining with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many such who followed him. When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and toll collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with toll collectors and sinners?" Jesus heard this and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

Jesus' call of Levi establishes a toll collector as one of Jesus' followers, but this leads immediately to a more pointed narrative. In the next verses Jesus reclines at table with Levi, and it is noted that "many toll collectors and sinners were also reclining with Jesus." Indeed, it is said that "there were many such who followed him." Here it almost seems as if his following *consists* of toll collectors and sinners. Rudolf Bultmann judged, probably correctly, that the saying at the end circulated independently, and that the narrative is an ideal scene that was created to provide a context.[14]

> Luke 18:9–14 (from L?)
> Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a toll collector. The Pharisee prayed, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people—thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this toll collector. I fast twice a week, I give a tenth of my income." The

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[13] Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York, 1970), pp. 65–81; see also idem, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1966), pp. 114–139.

[14] Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York, 1963), p. 18. On the structure of the passage, see especially Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8* (Anchor Bible, 27; New York, 2000), p. 229.

> toll collector, however, would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

Like Mark 2:13–17, this passage probably arose as an ideal scene created to provide a vivid context for the final saying. This wisdom saying is paralleled in Greco-Roman and Jewish culture and so is not uniquely "Christian."[15] The text does affirm the value of the toll collector, but in a state of repentance that would resonate even with Pharisees,[16] and only as an example of an extreme and ironic case. Perhaps the thrust of the text, however, from the Christian point of view is that Christianity is welcoming to humble but repentant people who would still be excluded from full fellowship with Pharisees. One wonders whether the Christian movement, in some part based on forgiveness of sins in anticipation of eschatological judgment, has created a myth of origins in which "sinners" are included who are being scorned by the more scrupulous Pharisees.[17] Forgiveness of sins is interpreted as the forgiveness of sinners. In this regard we note also the following passage.

> Matt. 21:31
> Truly, I tell you, the toll collectors and prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you (i.e., chief priests and elders). For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the toll collectors and the prostitutes believed him.

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[15] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, Chilo 2; B. Erub. 13b.

[16] E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 203–204 is technically correct that the Pharisees would not have objected to the repentance of toll collectors and sinners, but that is a separate question of verisimilitude. We are concerned here with rhetorical function and boundary formation. The Pharisees and Christians clashed on purity laws, tithes, and "other 'boundary mechanisms' for maintaining the integrity of God's people;" so Saldarini, *Pharisees*, p. 136; cf. Pp. 150–152, 214. See also Neusner, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (New York, 1979), chap. 4, and idem, "First Cleanse the Inside: The 'Halakhic' Background of a Controversy-saying," in *New Testament Studies* 22 (1976), pp. 486–495.

[17] Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 207–208, and Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral*, p. 222, but note also Bruce Chilton's disagreement with Sanders on this point ("Jesus and the Repentance of E.P. Sanders," in *Tyndale Bulletin* 39 [1988], pp. 1–18). I use the term "myth of origins" here as a description of the Christian movement's self-understanding; what the precise dynamic was with actual sinners we shall never know.

This second group of passages creates a strong contrast between the toll collectors and Jewish groups, and constitutes a core group of texts for interpreting the role of the toll collectors in first-century Judaism and Christianity. The number of passages where toll collectors appear in the early traditions is not large, but there is an interesting distribution across a number of early synoptic traditions. The prejudice *against* toll collectors is sometimes reflected in the Gospels (Matt. 5:46, 18:17), although another perspective seems to be that toll collectors are—shockingly—accepted by Jesus in table fellowship.

The situation before us, then, can be summarized in this way: although the toll collectors were condemned often in Greco-Roman society and in Judaism as unscrupulous, they are depicted as being warmly accepted by Jesus and his disciples. They are often contrasted with the Pharisees, and Pharisees are in these and other passages often contrasted with Jesus' disciples (see Q 11:42, 39b; Mark 7:1–15). Several recent approaches to the identity of the toll collectors and the explanation for this surprising situation can be enumerated: 1) The toll collectors were quislings of Rome, hated by the prouder and more "nationalistic" Pharisees, or were spurned by the Pharisees for their religious laxity, even though Jesus allowed them to be invited into fellowship.[18] 2) The toll collectors in contact with Jesus' movement were not wealthy, but were actually lowly and marginalized workers or even slaves.[19] 3) Toll collectors were not in real-

[18] Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 180–182, 188–194; John R. Donahue "Tax Collectors and Sinners: An Attempt at Identification," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 33 (1971), pp. 39–61; Hyam Maccoby, *Early Rabbinic Writings* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 131–132; Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teachings of Jesus* (London, 1967), pp. 93, 103; and Stephen Westerholm, *Jesus and Scribal Authority* (Lund, 1978), p. 71. Herrenbrück, *Jesus und die Zöllner*, would see the *telonai* as local subcontractors in the tax systems of the individual kingdoms and not directly of the Romans, but otherwise agrees (pp. 103, 234, 286–289).

[19] Luise Schottroff and Wolfgang Stegemann, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor* (Maryknoll, 1986), pp. 7–15; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (2nd ed.; London, 1995), pp. 126–128. One of the difficulties of analysis is this: are toll collectors to be grouped with "sinners and harlots" as Schüssler Fiorenza does, even though these three never occur together in early Christian texts, or are they to be contrasted with Pharisees, as many other scholars do, even though they do not always appear contrasted? We are perhaps in danger here of creating a canon of texts that defines the issue. Also, note that the role of "slaves" is more ambiguous than might at first appear. At Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.308 it is clear that the tax collectors are slaves, but they are highly placed slaves sent by Herod himself. The wealth and power at the disposal of such

ity an important part of the picture at all. They were introduced into the narratives as ideal foils for the Pharisees, who were themselves foils for the Christians.[20] In the first of these three alternatives there is no class basis seen in the distinction between Pharisees and toll collectors, but only religious or perhaps social status; in the second the distinction is entirely based on class considerations, and in the third, one party is said to be symbolic only and to disappear in reality.

Resolution of this question is complicated by the fact that the Mishnah and Tosefta, like the New Testament, contain only a handful of passages that treat the toll collectors, and various Hebrew words are used. These texts are also very ambiguous on the reasons for the negative valuation of the toll collectors. I am convinced, however, by the argument of Jonathan Klawans and others that the toll collectors, like a number of other groups, are deemed *untrustworthy*; by their moral lapses as dishonest gougers, they demonstrate that they cannot be trusted where purity (and other matters, such as witnessing) are concerned.[21] The argument that toll collectors were viewed as Roman quislings is plausible enough, but does not seem to be reflected in the early sources. In support of Klawans's suggestion, I would also point out another relevant prejudice against toll collectors: in the process of assessing belongings, they touch everything.[22]

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highly placed slaves could be enormous; cf. *Antiquities* 12.203–8 (even though the wings of this "haughty" slave are ultimately clipped). It is for this reason that Lenski argues (*Power and Privilege*, p. 243) that a slave acting for a wealthy master can sometimes be considered a member of the retainer class. Also, although the Roman *societates publicanorum* would have typically owned slaves, this corporate system was evidently not operative in first-century C.E. Judea as it had been in the first century B.C.E.; so Michel, "Telones," p. 96.

[20] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (San Francisco, 1987), pp. 212–222; David A. Neale, *None But the Sinners: Religious Categories in the Gospel of Luke* (Sheffield, 1991), pp. 133–134 (cf. pp. 60, 66); Walker, "Jesus and the Tax Collectors;" and Loveday Alexander, rev. of Herrenbrück, *Jesus und die Zöllner*, in *Journal of Theological Studies* 44 (1993), pp. 235–237.

[21] Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford, 2000), p. 109; see also Saul Lieberman, "The Discipline in the So-Called Dead Sea Manual of Discipline," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 71 (1952), pp. 199–206. The most important early rabbinic texts are M. Hag. 3:6; M. Ned. 3:4; M. B.Q. 10:1, 2; M. Toh. 7:6; and T. Dem. 2:17, 3:4; cf. also later sources: B. San. 25b, B. Bek. 30b–31a, ARNA 41. Note that M. Kel. 15:4 and M. San. 3:3 do not use the words *mokes* or *gabbay*, even though these texts are often used in the discussion of rabbinic attitudes toward toll collectors.

[22] Cf. Plutarch, *Moralia* 508 E, Plautus, *Trinummus* 794, Terence, *Phormio* 150, M. Toh. 7:6, M. Hag. 3:6, and M. B.Q.10:1, 2, 10.

The toll collectors would have been alienated from Pharisaic piety by a number of factors. The threat of contact with impurity is often mentioned by scholars, or the Pharisaic condemnation of the toll collectors' dubious business practices. But on the material level, we should also note two often over-looked factors: 1) Pharisees and toll collectors are agents of (or advocates for) quite different and perhaps even *alternative* tax systems, one the traditional Jewish temple tax system of tithes, the other the Roman-imposed tax system. Although it might be argued that these two systems converged at the top in terms of how they were administered or who benefited,[23] there was clearly a distinction made by subordinate groups in the pyramid, and the competing nature of these two systems would have escaped no one. 2) The Pharisees were likely from the retainer class, while the toll collectors were from the merchant class.[24] Lenski emphasizes what any student of aristocracy would naturally assume: classes tied to control of land, even as retainers, would claim a dignity and status over against those who scrap for their income as entrepreneurs.[25]

Many argue, however, that since the Pharisees were a small segment of Jewish society, their perspectives would not be in any sense normative or even very influential, but this ignores at least two pos-

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[23] Otto Michel, "*Telones*," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 8, pp. 97, 100; Donahue, "Tax Collectors," pp. 44–45.

[24] While Saldarini (*Pharisees*, pp. 41–42) is probably correct in assigning the *tax* collectors to the retainer class, the *toll* collectors are more likely to be of the merchant class. That the toll collectors are recruited from the merchant class is a perspective that would seem to be shared by most analyses of their origin and function. The only debate is over their economic status *within* the merchant class. It should be noted that the view of M.I. Finley (*The Ancient Economy* [2nd ed.; Berkeley and London, 1985]) that there was little significant empire-wide market economy in the Roman Empire of this period has been questioned by a number of recent studies; see David J. Mattingly and John Salmon, *Economies beyond Agriculture in the Classical World* (London and New York, 2001); Peter Temin, "A Market Economy in the Early Roman Empire," in *Journal of Roman Studies* 91 (2001), pp. 169–181; and Keith Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 B.C.–A.D. 400)," in *Journal of Roman Studies* 70 (1980), pp. 101–125.

[25] Cf. the interesting observations of J. Albert Harrill, "The Vice of Slave Dealers in Greco-Roman Society: The Use of a Topos in 1 Timothy 1:10," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999), pp. 97–122. It appears that the common view of slave dealers as unscrupulous does not arise because they were engaged in what *we* would think of as a grotesque and immoral profession, but because they were, like the toll collectors, members of the merchant class and were involved in the unsavory role of entrepreneurship. As Harrill notes (p. 116), "the speech of slave sellers is untrustworthy because greed motivates them to lie." See also Herrenbrück *Jesus und die Zöllner*, pp. 292–293.

sibilities. First, as Josephus suggests, Pharisees may have had influence far beyond their numbers.[26] One might compare in American history the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which in the early decades of the twentieth century was enormously influential even before women won the right to vote, or the National Rifle Association, which though minuscule in numbers wields political influence in American society. Second, the sharp difference of opinion between Pharisees and Jesus' followers was not a struggle for the *center* of Judean or Galilean society; it might have been confined to a partisan spat on the margins of society. Fringe groups often spill more venom in denouncing each other than in denouncing the center, and often focus on the issues peculiar to only one social boundary. Regardless of the role of Pharisees in Jewish society—which was probably limited in numbers but measurable in influence—the early Christians perceived their own growing edge to be fracturing from society, as marked and bounded by Judaism's most well respected renewal movement.

Theses concerning the Investigation of Toll Collectors in the Early Gospel Traditions

Although Pharisees and toll collectors appear only a few times in the early Gospel tradition, they are both very pointed signifiers of group boundaries for the Christians. Just as a few passages in the Gospels are analyzed microscopically to ascertain the relationship of the Christians to the Pharisees and toll collectors, so also a scant few passages from the Mishnah and Tosefta are generally used—and overburdened!—in trying to sort out the identity of the toll collectors. While recognizing the uncertainties that still apply to the investigation of these groups, I would propose the following theses as steps on the way to a more accurate understanding:

1. In the first century C.E. the Pharisees were likely a renewal movement that acquired prestige and exercised political influence as a result. Their public honor and distinctiveness, even in dress, is

[26] Josephus may at times overestimate their importance in Judean society, as Saldarini argued (*Pharisees*, p. 79), and at one point even states that there were only six thousand Pharisees (*Antiquities* 17.42). Still, the sum of his statements would indicate an influential group.

recorded both by Josephus and the Gospels.[27] They are regarded as a respected and powerful group by Josephus, and Paul's statement at Phil. 3:5 presumes this as well. Tithing, which was the banner-practice of the Pharisees, was a tax on produce for the Temple, and as a result Pharisees would have played an important supportive role for the temple economy. They were members of the retainer class before 70 C.E., and may have lost this particular niche with the reshaping of Jewish life that followed the Jewish War. However, the Mishnah indicates that they became (or continued to be) landowners and householders, but now away from the major urban areas, in the smaller cities and towns.

2. Toll collectors—but not necessarily the tax collectors—were of the merchant class and as such reflected a wider range of economic levels than did members of the retainer class. Prejudice against them was considerable. They were viewed from above as members of an unsavory but necessary profession, and had to "mix with money" directly rather than live from the revenue of temple or land. From the Pharisees' point of view, they were subject to ritual impurity, worked for an unhallowed tax system (tolls in money for the Romans rather than tithes in produce for the temple), and were viewed as unscrupulous. More to the point, as a result of their livelihood they were untrustworthy in regard to tithing, ritual purity, and serving as legal witnesses.

3. Toll collectors in some cases may have been poor or slaves, but they were not generally so, and were not "known" as being poor or slaves; that was not their stigma. The Gospels do not treat them as poor or slaves, and neither do the Mishnah or Tosefta. But all

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[27] Cohen, "The Place of the Rabbi," p. 168. It is often assumed that the group described in rabbinic literature as *haberim* were virtually the same as the Pharisees in the first century, and although some scholars balk at this assumption, many others argue that there seems to be a large degree of overlap. When Sanders says (*Jesus and Judaism*, p. 188), "All that we hear about the Pharisees from people who were actually Pharisees before 70 is that the party was defined by its zeal for the knowledge of the law, belief in the resurrection, and acceptance of the tradition of the elders," he is ignoring the fact that the evidence concerning the Pharisees in the Gospels accords perfectly with what we know about the *haberim*. See also Sanders, *Jewish Law*, pp. 152–166, but more positively about the identification, Saldarini, *Pharisees*, pp. 216–220; Klawans, *Impurity*, pp. 108–109; Hannah Harrington, *The Biblical Foundations of the Impurity Systems of the Qumran Sectaries and the Rabbis* (Atlanta, 1993), pp. 267–281; Sean Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian: 323 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.* (South Bend, 1980), pp. 307–310, 322.

this does not imply that there was *no* class basis to the disdain. Rather, the class distinction between Pharisees and toll collectors is that between retainer class and merchant class, and the latter covers a broad range of economic levels. We are dealing with the interrelation of at least three scales: class, status and wealth.

4. The status of toll collectors in Galilee might have changed during the first century for economic reasons, as their livelihood was directly tied to taxation. The extent to which economic activity in the Roman Empire resulted in growth in non-agricultural economies is debated, but it was probably significant. Certainly, the massive building programs of Antipas at Sepphoris and Tiberias would have created labor projects that gave rise to a boom, even though the new cities also absorbed resources from the rural areas.[28] In the process, the role of toll collectors in the Roman tax system might have increased over the first century as the building projects created new urban economies, at the same time that resentment to toll collectors might have also increased.

5. One way of describing the difference between the Pharisees and Christians is to apply Douglas' scales of grid and group.[29] Pharisees were high grid/strong group, while the passages reflected in Q and Mark reflect low grid/weak group. This is not historical explanation, but merely a means of tagging and describing various groups. A more ambitious attempt at historical explanation, however, might utilize theories of social deviance.[30] Jesus' followers were likely condemned by Pharisees and those like them as deviants. This deviant community came to affirm its deviance, much as members of the Society of Friends willingly took on the negative appellation "Quakers," those called hippies in the 1960s referred to themselves as "freaks," or members of the gay and lesbian community today sometimes

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[28] William E. Arnal, *Jesus and the Village Scribes: Galilean Conflicts and the Setting of Q* (Minneapolis, 2001), pp. 134–155, esp. 148–150.

[29] Douglas, *Natural Symbols*. Jack Sanders's critique of the way Douglas's method concerning grid and group is applied to New Testament texts (*Schismatics, Sectarians, Dissidents, Deviants: The First One Hundred Years of Jewish-Christian Relations* [Valley Forge, 1993], pp. 100–114) raises very interesting issues, but he is unnecessarily negative about its applicability.

[30] Sanders, *Schismatics*, pp. 129–151; Michael N. Ebertz, *Das Charisma des Gekreuzigten: Zur Soziologie der Jesusbewegung* (Tübingen, 1987), pp. 185–187, 245–249; Helmut Mödritzer, *Stigma und Charisma im Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt: Zur Soziologie des Urchristentums* (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1994), pp. 133–144.

refer to themselves as "queer." In deviance theory this is called self-stigmatization. The early Christians transmitted a historical memory of a boundary-less community, using what from the Pharisaic point of view would be the most flagrant examples they could think of—toll collectors, sinners, and prostitutes.

6. That this process might have been treated retrospectively by Christians in creating a myth of their own origins is also suggested by a later text, *Barnabas*. At 4.2 the text says, "Let us not allow ourselves the freedom to associate with sinners and wicked people, lest we become like them." No eating with sinners here! And yet at 5.9 the author reconstructs Christian origins thus: "When Jesus selected his own apostles who were to proclaim his Gospel, he chose men who were iniquitous beyond all measure of sin, in order to show that he came not to call the righteous but sinners." The polarizing of the two stages and the extreme sinfulness ascribed to the initial stage serve to give a mythological foundation to the boundary *between* Christians and sinners at the later stage.

7. The fact that this process occurred on a rhetorical level, however, does not imply that it could not have occurred on the historical level as well. That is, the early Christian community may well have included toll collectors and sinners, but the characterization of the community in that way is rhetorical. This does not rule out the reconstruction of the sociology of the community based on the passages analyzed here, but it does require a more complex hermeneutic and a broader comparison of texts.

8. A parallel history to the construction of a less boundaried Christianity would have to be written which takes into account the boundaried Christianity reflected in, for example, Revelation, Matthew, the non-Pauline insertion at 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1, the "weak" in 1 Corinthians, and *Didache* 3.1 (See also *Barnabas* 4.2 above.)[31] These groups within early Christianity are low grid/strong group, as opposed to the low grid/weak group passages found in Q and Mark.

9. If Klawans' distinction between ritual purity and moral purity in Jewish sectarianism holds up—that is, that Jewish groups differed

[31] As a good beginning in this direction, see L. William Countryman, *Dirt, Greed, and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and Their Implications for Today* (Philadelphia, 1988), pp. 101–104, 123, 133–138; and Gören Forkman, *The Limits of the Religious Community: Expulsion from the Religious Community within the Qumran Sect, within Rabbinic Judaism, and within Primitive Christianity* (Lund, 1972), pp. 115–215.

in the extent to which they focused religious discourse on ritual purity or on moral purity—then the sayings concerning toll collectors can be taken as prime examples of passages that sharpen the points of comparison and widen this chasm.[32]

10. There is little indication in early rabbinic literature that tax collectors or toll collectors were despised as Roman collaborators or quislings, although this is often presumed by scholars as a postulate of the negative view of them. However, a more convincing postulate is that of Klawans, who avers that the rabbis thought that the toll collector, as a result of his moral depravity and his meddlesome, careless contact with others, was untrustworthy to be in the close company of *haberim*.

11. Seeing the division between Pharisees and toll collectors as 1) a moral/theological division (Sanders, Herrenbrück), 2) a division based on class (Schottroff/Stegemann, Schüssler Fiorenza), or 3) a rhetorical balancing of contrasted symbolic figures (Horsley, Alexander, Neale) appears at first to entail mutually exclusive possibilities, but that is not necessarily the case. It is possible that all three explanations figure into this complex picture. A division based on religious observance (number one) does not rule out a class difference (number two), and neither rules out the possibility that the scenario is an ideal scene created to sharpen Christians' self-understanding vis-à-vis Pharisees (number three). These explanations do become mutually exclusive, however, if, for example, one argues that the toll collectors were rarely poor (Herrenbrück), or rarely well off (Schottroff/Stegemann), but as I indicated above, I find either of these extremes unlikely.

These theses will not resolve all the problems surrounding a sociological description of toll collectors in the first century, but may

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[32] It is interesting to note that in Q 11:42, 39 the issues associated with the Pharisees are precisely those associated with the *haberim* in *m. Demai*: tithing and purity. This passage also illustrates Klawans's thesis perfectly, in that Jesus is distancing himself from the ritual purity issue of the Pharisees, and emphasizing instead the moral purity issue, "robbery and dissipation." See also Neusner, "First Cleanse." If Neusner, (*The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* [Leiden, 1973], p. 108), Jacob Milgrom (*Leviticus 1–16* [New York, 1991], p. 37), and David P. Wright ("The Spectrum of Priestly Impurity," in Gary A. Anderson and Saul M. Olyan, eds., *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* [Sheffield, 1991], pp. 150–181) are correct, however, that moral "defilement" is only a metaphor based on the real sense of ritual defilement, then the distinction I am imposing would still hold. Nevertheless, the Gospel evidence here supports Klawans.

prove helpful in orienting the discussion. Although they may highlight methodological reservations about some of the scholarly discussion so far, I am not pessimistic about progress being made in this area. However, the relationship between sociological and rhetorical analysis will have to come into play. The nature of our texts may illustrate a phenomenon that I have elsewhere called the "morphology of values," based on the analogy of morphology in folklore studies.[33] The social realities described in a text may not be as definite and tangible as they at first seem; they may actually be ephemeral. What is definite and tangible, ironically, is the interrelationship of value-assertions. What is valued "up" and what is valued "down" sometimes emerge as the theme of a text, and when this occurs, it can be seen as a constant amid the more ephemeral particularities.

I would like to conclude by noting that, while my interest in the Pharisees was partly fed by Tony Saldarini's book on that subject, my interest in the toll collectors was first piqued when I was introduced to deviance theory at a presentation he made to a colloquium of Boston-area New Testament faculty about fifteen years ago.[34] My theses in many places are in dialogue with his thoughtful, creative scholarship.

[33] Wills, *The Jewish Novel in the Ancient World* (Ithaca and London, 1995), pp. 209–210. Compare the analogous argument in Wayne Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972), pp. 44–72.

[34] The gist of the lecture was later published as "The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict," in *Social History of the Matthean Community*, ed. David Balch (Minneapolis, 1991), pp. 38–61.

JUDAISM BEFORE 70

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THE PHARISEES AND THE MISHNAIC DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE BEFORE 70 C.E.

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The problem of the historical Pharisees, so central in Anthony Saldarini's work, leads us to a narrow body of primary sources, Josephus, the Gospels, and the Rabbinic literature. Among these, the Rabbinic sources should be central. Besides presenting the greatest volume of statements attributed to and stories about Pharisees, the Rabbinic literature may represent our closest connection to this group, archiving, as it does, laws and statements of Pharisaic origin and preserving them within a literature created by a movement that appears to have been an outgrowth of Pharisaic interests and perspectives.

In the following I examine this understanding of the value of the Rabbinic literature as a source for the historical Pharisees. Two questions must be considered. The first concerns the extent to which the Rabbinic literature indeed preserves actual laws and ideas that derive from Pharisaic authorities. To what extent do Mishnaic statements ascribed to the period in which the Temple stood in fact derive from that time? Once this question is answered and we have identified Mishnaic statements and laws that appear authentic in the mouths of Pharisaic authorities, we turn to the question of the extent to which these early materials stand at the foundation of later developments within Mishnaic law. To what extent does the Mishnah emerge from—take up and develop—legal interests and theories that originated with Pharisees in the period in which the Temple still stood? Did later rabbis take up and develop the Pharisaic program or did they work out their own concerns and perspectives on the law, quite independent of any Pharisaic rules and ideas they might have preserved?

To answer these questions, I analyze all of the materials in the Mishnaic Division of Agriculture attributed to authorities who lived before 70 C.E.[1] Insofar as the Pharisees are understood to have had

[1] This material reviews the findings regarding the law of agriculture in the period

a particular interest in tithing and table fellowship, this seems a particularly likely area of the law in which to find a significant Pharisaic foundation. Even so, the results of this study are strikingly negative as far as both of our questions are concerned. The first part of this study shows that little of the material in the Division of Agriculture assigned to Pharisaic authorities, in particular the Houses of Hillel and Shammai, seems authentic in the mouths of those individuals. The problem is that much of what is attributed here to authorities who lived before 70 parallels or depends upon ideas ascribed elsewhere to much later authorities. This means that we have solid reasons to argue that those materials in fact are late and only pseudepigraphically credited by the Mishnah's editors to the early period.

Our second question, too, yields a negative answer. We find that laws and sayings that, with some degree of reliability, may be said to derive from the period before 70 play only a small role in the later development of the law of agriculture. These sayings, all of which appear in the mouths of the Houses of Hillel and Shammai, are episodic and fragmentary. Seen as a whole they do not mark the inception of the discussions that, in the periods of Yavneh and Usha, led to the creation of the Mishnaic *system* of agriculture, a system that focuses narrowly upon the questions of 1) how food takes on the status of an agricultural offering, 2) how it is to be handled by common Israelites prior to being handed over to its assigned recipients, priests and Levites, and 3) how it loses its status as an agricultural offering, so that it might be disposed of as any other common food. Examined individually, none of the facts presented by authorities who lived while the Temple stood constitutes the underlying proposition upon which a tractate of the Mishnah is based or that a tractate's later authorities worked fully to expose. In the Division of Agriculture, the role of authorities who flourished before 70 thus is in two different respects minor. First is the simple fact that these individuals contribute very little to the law. In their names we find only a few, in all but one case trivial, statements. Second and much more important, the few comments that these authorities do provide neither encapsulate Mishnah's system as it develops in

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before 70 fully examined in my *Mishnah's Division of Agriculture: A History and Theology of Seder Zeraim* (Chico, 1985). That study covers as well the unfolding of the Division of Agriculture's law in the periods of Yavneh and Usha.

later periods nor even enter that system as important components. In all, then, from the Mishnah, the earliest source of Rabbinic Judaism, we can know very little about the state of Pharisaic law or practice while the Temple stood.

In order fully to support these conclusions, in the following I examine in detail all of the Mishnaic Division of Agriculture's materials assigned to authorities known to have been active prior to the destruction of the Temple. We thus turn to the Mishnah's own evidence for the long centuries in which the Temple stood and in which priests and Levites, the designated recipients of the agricultural gifts discussed in the Mishnah, had concrete authority. The evidence, as I already have stated, is disappointing. Examining the logical development of the law from generation to generation, we find that much of what is assigned to the earliest period depends upon and develops ideas stated and discussed by much later authorities. In such circumstances, the law cannot be authentic in the mouths of the earlier authorities but must, rather, have been assigned to them pseudepigraphically. Only in cases in which laws assigned to early authorities stand at the foundation of a developing stream of legal thinking can we conclude with some confidence that these laws are in fact earlier than that which is credited to later rabbis.

I. *The Mishnaic Law of Agriculture before 70: The Sources*

A. *Tractate Peah before 70*

Deut. 24:19 states that a sheaf a farmer forgets in the field becomes the property of the poor. The Houses of Hillel and Shammai (M. Pe. 6:l–3, 6:5) dispute whether or not this law applies to a sheaf that the farmer might later remember. The question of the conditions under which we are to judge a sheaf "forgotten" has no implications for later developments in the tractate's law.

M. Pe. 2:5–6 takes up an issue left open at Usha, concerning the designation of Peah in cases in which fields are planted in separate areas with two types of seed or in which a single crop is harvested at two different times. The precedent involving the early authorities Simeon of Mispah, Gamaliel the Elder, and Nahum the Scribe reflects a legal ideology found at Usha but not Yavneh, concerning the affect upon the implementation of the law of a householder's own attitudes and perceptions. Despite the attribution to early authorities and the

Mishnah's claim that we deal here with a law given to Moses at Sinai, it appears to be a late creation.

The Houses' dispute at M. Pe. 3:1 similarly does not to appear to be early. The issue of how Peah is designated for grain growing in distinct plots of olive trees is raised in exactly the same terms in Ushan times (M. Pe. 3:4). The issue assigned to the Houses at M. Pe. 7:6, by contrast, may be early. The Shammaites hold that produce of the fourth year of a vineyard's growth is not comparable to produce in the status of second tithe; it therefore is not subject to the added fifth (M. M.S. 4:3) or removal (M. M.S. 5:6) but is subject to the restrictions of the separated grape and defective cluster. The Hillelites by contrast hold that it is like produce in the status of second tithe and so is not subject to the restrictions of the separated grape and defective cluster. The prohibitions listed here are all scriptural and the only other reference to this issue is at T. M.S. 5:17, where Ushans dispute the meaning of the view of the House of Shammai. So while the issue was certainly known by Ushan times, it is unclear whether or not it goes back to the historical Houses.

B. *Tractate Demai before 70*

One central idea of Tractate Demai goes back to the period before 70. This is the Shammaites' statement (M. Dem. 3:1C–H) that people must prevent others from transgressing, for instance, by giving untithed produce as charity only to individuals they know will tithe it. By Ushan times this idea develops into the pervasive law that one must tithe all produce that leaves his possession. The Shammaites' view is not the same as the central problematic of the tractate, for, contrary to later authorities, the Shammaites hold that people indeed *may* give away untithed food, so long as they believe the recipient will tithe. Still, the Shammaites' perspective provides the tractate's underlying ethical proposition, that people are responsible to prevent others from transgressing.

One other dispute appears in the name of the Houses, concerning whether or not spiced oil that is to be "consumed" through use as an unguent must be tithed, as it would be were it to be consumed as a food (M. Dem. 1:3G–I). This question is a subtle clarification of an issue discussed in Ushan times (M. Dem. 1:1 and 1:3E–F), and, indeed, it received additional treatment solely at Usha

(see Simeon b. Eleazar, T. Dem. 1:27, and Nathan, T. Dem. 127), but is unknown at Yavneh. The dispute appears, therefore, to date from Ushan times.[2]

C. *Tractate Kilaim before 70*

In a number of disputes, the Houses argue the definition of a vineyard subject to Scripture's prohibition against planting together diverse kinds of produce (M. Kil. 4:1–3, 5, 6:1). These disputes concern the number and configuration of vines that comprise a vineyard and the area of tillage deemed integral to that vineyard, such that it may not be planted with a different kind. The Houses thus attest to the period before 70 two of the central conceptions of this tractate as a whole, that of the "field" that is of sufficient size to be treated as autonomous of surrounding land and that of the area of tillage, meaning, the quantity of land that must separate vines from other types of plants. As Mandelbaum notes,[3] the Houses thus stand "very near the beginning of the Mishnah's law of diverse kinds."

At M. Kil. 2:6, the Houses dispute the minimum width that allows a strip of land to be deemed an autonomous field. T. Kil. 2:1, in a discussion involving Ushans, anonymously states the opinions given here in the names of the Houses. Whether or not this issue in fact goes back to the historical Houses therefore is impossible to verify.

D. *Tractate Shebiit before 70*

At M. Sheb. 4:2A–H, the Houses agree to an anonymous rule that a farmer may not benefit from forbidden field labor, e.g., by planting in the year after the Sabbatical a field in which prohibited field work was carried out during the Sabbatical year. At issue is produce that grows in that field during the Sabbatical year itself. The Shammaites forbid such produce for consumption, since it benefited from the illicit activity. But the Hillelites permit its consumption, presumably because its growth was only partially the result of the prohibited field work. Recurring in the Yavnean period (M. Sheb. 9:9), the discussion may be authentic to the period before 70.

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[2] This same point is made by Jacob Neusner, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago, 1981), p. 287.

[3] Irving Mandelbaum, cited in Neusner, *Judaism*, p. 288.

Similar perspectives of the Houses appear at M. Sheb. 4:2I–K. The Shammaites say that if a field's owner gives away Sabbatical year produce as a gift—which it is not his right to do—the recipient may not consume that food, for it was tainted by the farmer's improper actions. But, as at M. Sheb. 4:2A–H, the House of Hillel hold that the produce is not affected by what is done with it. It may therefore be eaten. Judah appears here, saying that the positions of the Houses have been reversed (see M. Ed. 5:1). The issue is taken up as well at Yavneh (M. Sheb. 9:9) and is not subject to Ushan consideration. There is no reason to discount its authenticity in the period before 70.

The Houses agree on the basic principle that one may not destroy fruit that is growing in the seventh year, since this produce belongs to all Israelites and is to be gathered and used as their food (M. Sheb. 4:10A–C). The issue is one of fact: when do we deem a tree to have borne fruit, so that, during the Sabbatical year, it may no longer be cut down? The theory agreed upon by the Houses is assumed throughout this tractate and therefore may be authentic to the period before 70.

How, during the Sabbatical year, should one carry out permitted activity that may appear to onlookers to be forbidden (thinning out olives, M. Sheb. 4:4, or digging up arum of the sixth year, M. Sheb. 5:4)? Following their view attested elsewhere, that one should not lead others to transgress, the Shammaites want the farmer to work in an usual manner. Onlookers thus will realize that he is engaged in a permitted activity and will not be drawn themselves to do something impermissible. The Hillelites do not share the Shammaites' concern in general and so allow the farmer to work in his usual manner. Similar issues remain under dispute at Yavneh (M. Sheb. 4:6), and the matter appears to have been resolved finally by Ushans (M. Sheb. 2:2–5, 4:5). It therefore seems authentically to originate in the period before 70.[4]

Again, at M. Sheb. 5:8 the Houses dispute whether or not a person is responsible to prevent another from transgressing. The Shammaites as usual state that one is, such that he may not sell an animal or tools that could be used to transgress the prohibitions of the Sabbatical year. The Hillelites disagree, holding that so long as there

[4] Cf., my treatment of M. Sheb. 4:4 in *Mishnah's Division of Agriculture*, pp. 154–155.

is no conclusive evidence that the buyer will use the purchase to transgress, the seller need not scruple. The Shammaite position is repeated as normative, M. Sheb. 5:6, 7, and, we recall, this same view is a basic datum of the Yavnean and Ushan strata of Tractate Demai.

Hillel instituted a legal fiction designed to circumvent the Scriptural remission of debts that occurs in the Sabbatical year (M. Sheb. 10:3–4). The prozbul-document assigns a private debt to a court, which may collect the debt even after the start of the seventh year. This basic idea of the prozbul is taken up and developed in the periods of Yavneh and Usha.

Other materials assigned to the Houses appear to derive from later periods in the development of the law. M. Sheb. 1:1 assumes that field work must cease in the sixth year of the Sabbatical cycle and has the Houses dispute the specific point. But the underlying premise, that work must cease in the sixth year, is still disputed both at Yavneh (M. Sheb. 1:4I–K) and Usha (M. Sheb. 2:1, where the Hillelite opinion of M. Sheb. 1:1 is given in the name of Simeon). This lends considerable doubt regarding the authenticity of the attributions to the Houses.[5] During the Sabbatical year, produce is supposed to be left available to all people. It therefore may not be sold in a normal business transaction, by a standard measure of volume, weight, or quantity (M. Sheb. 8:3). The Houses dispute whether or not this prohibition applies to sales by the "bunch," with the Hillelites permitting if this is not the normal way in which the particular produce is sold. The dispute depends upon the Ushan material at M. Sheb. 7:3–4 and is reminiscent of the clearly Ushan rule at M. Ter. 1:7. It therefore does not appear to be authentic to the period before 70.

E. *Tractate Terumot before 70*

The Houses of Hillel and Shammai (M. Ter. 4:3) hold that the quantity of heave-offering to be separated from a batch of produce depends upon the temperament of the food's owner. As in the case of any charitable contribution, certain people are expected to be more generous than others. While this issue is basic to all consideration of the separation of heave-offering, it plays little role in the

[5] See Leonard Gordon in Neusner, *Judaism*, pp. 289–290.

development of the specific laws of this tractate. Later authorities accept as normative the quantity indicated by the Hillelites as average, one fiftieth of the crop. At the same time, later rabbis legislate that the actual separation must be carried out through an estimation, not an exact measurement, of the quantity of produce being taken as heave-offering. The Houses' discussion, while it may be authentic to the period before 70, has little weight in later deliberations.

Other materials assigned to the Houses do not appear to derive from the period before 70. At M. Ter. 1:4, the Houses dispute the validity of the separation of heave-offering from one type of produce on behalf of produce of a different type. The issue appears to derive from the Ushan period, when we find general interest in the homogeneity of produce from which heave-offering is separated (see, e.g., T. Ter. 4:1b–4; see also T. Ter. 3:14, 6, and 25, where Ushans cite Houses disputes in which the Hillelites appear in agreement with anonymously stated laws). At M. Ter. 5:4, the Houses dispute and debate an issue of law secondary to and dependent upon the laws of neutralization, which state that insignificant quantities of heave-offering mixed with unconsecrated produce can be ignored and the entire batch consumed by a non-priest. Since the very idea of neutralization emerges at Yavneh, M. Ter. 4:7 and 5:2–3, and this same problem is rehearsed by Eliezer and sages (M. Ter. 5:4), this dispute does not appear to be authentic to the period before 70.

F. *Tractate Maaserot before 70*

The tractate's one dispute attributed to the period before 70, M. Ma. 4:2, appears to be pseudepigraphic, for it depends upon the Ushan idea that once produce is designated for a meal it must be tithed (M. Ma. 4:3). The specific problem addressed by the Houses is a subtle development of that idea, concerning whether or not the intention to use produce in a meal has a generalized effect upon all of the available produce or whether it applies to the specified meal alone. The view attributed to the Hillelites is the same as that assigned to the Ushan Judah, and the Yavnean ruling on this issue (M. Ma. 4:3) seems totally unaware of the discussion assigned to the Houses.[6]

[6] See Martin Jaffee in Neusner, *Judaism*, pp. 293–296.

G. *Tractate Maaser Sheni before 70*

The Houses argue a major point of the tractate, M. M.S. 2:7, 8A–C, and 9F–H, concerning whether coins used in the purchase of second tithe are individually sanctified with the holy status of that offering or whether they simply represent the value of the consecrated produce. The Hillelites take the latter view: the coins hold the value of the second tithe they were used to redeem but they are not themselves consecrated. Therefore, if second-tithe and regular coins are mixed together, the householder may simply collect a value in coins equal to the second tithe-money that was lost. He need not worry about whether or not he has the original coins. This view, rejected by the House of Shammai, dominates throughout the tractate (M. M.S. 2:5, 8D–E, 9I–L).

The Houses argue whether or not produce that can be used either as food for humans or as animal fodder is to be treated as an edible, so that it is subject to the rules of uncleanness and the separation of tithes (M. M.S. 2:3B–D, 4F–J). Later authorities hold that, if known, the owner's intention regarding use of the produce determines its status. Other issues attributed to the Houses that do not play roles in the unfolding of the Mishnah's law cannot be firmly verified to the period before 70. The Houses dispute whether or not produce of the fourth year of growth of a vineyard is in all respects comparable to second tithe (M. M.S. 5:3) and whether or not agricultural gifts that have been cooked are subject to removal (M. M.S. 5:6H–J). A list of ordinances attributed to Yohanan the High Priest (M. M.S. 5:15) does not concern matters referred to elsewhere in the Mishnah, such that its origin in Second Temple times cannot be evaluated through an analysis of the logical unfolding of the law.[7]

While assigned to the Houses, M. M.S. 3:6 and 3:9 surely contain late material. The Houses dispute tertiary refinements of a rule first discussed at Usha (M. M.S. 3:5, 3:6A–B), which prohibits taking out of Jerusalem second tithe produce that already has been brought into the Holy City. The Houses dispute the treatment of second tithe separated from produce that, before it was subject to tithes at all, was transported through Jerusalem (M. M.S. 3:6) and of second tithe produce that, once in Jerusalem, is rendered unclean.

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[7] Cf., Aharon Oppenheimer, *The Am Ha-Aretz* (Leiden, 1977), pp. 34–35, and Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York, 1950), pp. 139–143.

These same issues are further refined in Ushan and post-Ushan discussions (M. M.S. 3:6G–L, T. M.S. 2:16).

The Shammaites hold that, in the case of a shed that intersects the wall of Jerusalem, only the part of the shed that is physically within the walls is deemed to be within the city (M. M.S. 3:7). The issue is independent of the Ushan materials with which it is found, so that its provenance cannot be firmly established.[8]

At M. M.S. 4:8, the Houses dispute the amount of money in the status of second tithe that the farmer may disregard and leave behind in Jerusalem, not having used it to purchase food to be eaten in place of the original second tithe. The underlying idea, that commodities the Israelite does not deem worthy of attention lose their status as tithe, is familiar from the Ushan stratum of Tractate Terumot, from which period the present dispute presumably derives as well.

At M. M.S. 5:3, the House of Hillel holds that produce from a vineyard in its fourth year of growth is comparable to produce in the status of, and so subject to the same restrictions as, second tithe. The Shammaites disagree. The only other reference to the issue of this pericope is at T. M.S. 5:17, where Rabbi and Simeon b. Gamaliel dispute the meaning of the Shammaites' opinion.

The House of Shammai holds that cooked food in the status of an agricultural offering is treated as though it already has been removed. It does not need to be distributed to its usual recipient. The idea that cooking negates food's status as an agricultural offering does not appear elsewhere

M. M.S. 5:7 contains a Houses' dispute concerning the rule for removal after the destruction of the Temple. The Shammaites have the same view as the Ushan Yose, M. M.S. 5:2, that second tithe that cannot be taken to Jerusalem should be redeemed. Recognizing that redeeming the produce does not solve the problem, the Hillelites allow the farmer to remove it from his possession either in the form of coins or food. Parallel to M. M.S. 5:2 and coupling the Shammaites with Yose, this dispute appears to be an Ushan creation.

M. M.S. 5:15 states that Yohanan the High Priest did away with the confession that accompanied the removal of tithes in the farmer' possession. The rest of the Mishnah's discussion assumes that the

[8] Cf., Peter Haas, in Neusner, *Judaism*, pp. 297–298, who holds that the issue is still alive at Usha and so holds the Houses' dispute in fact to be late.

confession is to be recited. The issue is discussed as well at M. M.S. 5:10, which ignores the statement here.[9]

H. *Tractate Hallah before 70*

The one dispute attributed to the Houses shows evidence of being a late creation (M. Hal. 1:6A–F). The issue concerns whether or not the batter used to make certain types of dumplings is subject to dough offering. The dispute assumes the Yavnean or post-Yavnean notion that all grains prepared like bread-dough are subject to this offering, regardless of the purpose to which the dough ultimately will be put (see M. Hal. 1:5, 7, and 6G–I).[10] This being the case, there is no evidence that work on the topic of dough offering began before Yavnean times.

I. *Tractate Orlah before 70*

The one dispute attributed to the Houses makes use of ideas known, in Tractate Terumot, to derive from the period of Usha. These concern whether or not forbidden produce that leavens or flavors permitted produce renders that permitted produce forbidden for consumption (M. Or. 2:4–7). In light of its dependence upon late ideas, the dispute cannot be authentic to the early period.

J. *Tractate Bikkurim before 70*

The tractate contains no materials assigned to authorities who lived before 70.

II. *The Mishnaic Division of Agriculture before 70: The State of the Law*

Based on an analysis of the logical unfolding of the law, the preceding evaluation establishes which materials of the Division of Agriculture may in fact be authentic to the period before 70. In the following, those ideas that appear authentically early are arranged according to the five principal themes found in the Division of Agriculture as a whole, 1) the production of crops under conditions

[9] See Haas, op. cit., p. 298.
[10] See Abraham Havivi in Jacob Neusner, op. cit., p. 299.

of holiness, 2) conditions under which produce becomes subject to sanctification as an agricultural offering, 3) the process of designating produce to be an agricultural offering, 4) the care and handling of agricultural offerings, and 5) eating food under conditions of holiness. We shall see that, under two of these themes, authorities from before 70 provide no contribution at all. In two other categories, the Houses argue matters of definition, left open by Scripture and for the most part rejected in later Mishnaic authorities' development of these topics. Only in one instance might a Houses' dispute presage an issue of importance later on. In this case, the position of the House of Hillel, that holiness pertains to a batch of second tithe as a whole but not to specific coins within that batch, may stand behind the conception of holiness developed in Yavnean times. With this one exception, the results of this second part of our study of the Mishnaic Division of Agriculture are largely negative. Examined as a whole, materials that derive from the period before 70 do not represent a stratum of the Mishnah's law at all. They are too episodic to be seen in themselves as comprising a system of agricultural practices, and even viewed simply as a corpus of facts they are negligible, in all but one possible case having no significance in the later development of the law.

1. *Producing Crops under Conditions of Holiness*

In order to produce crops under conditions of holiness, the Israelite must be careful not to sow together within a single field or vineyard different species of produce or plants. This much is known from Lev. 19:19 and Deut. 22:9–41. In the period before 70, the Houses clarify Scripture's rule. They define exactly what constitutes a vineyard subject to the biblical restrictions, delineate the area surrounding the vines that is deemed integral to the vineyard, and determine the conditions under which, because of the great amount of empty space found within the vineyard, a second kind may be planted there (M. Kil.4:1–3, 5, 6:1). To the extent that Yavneans continue along this same line of questioning, the Houses materials do engender continued discussion concerning the growing of crops under conditions of holiness. Still, the Houses repertoire of definitions does not provide the notions, distinctive to the Mishnah, that account for later principal rulings on this theme and that lead to the development of Tractate Kilaim as a whole. Indeed, only in the Ushan period does

a distinctive Rabbinic theory of how Israelites assure that they produce their crops under conditions of holiness emerge.

The Houses dispute whether or not an individual may, in the Sabbatical year, sell tools that might be used in forbidden field work (M. Sheb. 4:2, 5:8). While not leading to important developments within Tractate Shebiit, this ethical issue is of importance in the deliberations, in Tractate Demai, of the question of how Israelites are to assure that they eat their food under proper conditions of sanctity.

2. *Conditions under which Produce Becomes Subject to Sanctification*

This theme receives no attention in the period before 70.

3. *Designating Produce to be an Agricultural Offering*

The period before 70 produces no ideas that, at Yavneh and Usha, are formed into a theory of how Israelite farmers designate produce to have the consecrated status of an agricultural offering. The only pertinent dispute, at M. Ter. 4:3, concerns the quantity of produce that the individual must separate as heave-offering. This notion, that the householder should measure out a specific quantity of produce, is explicitly rejected by later authorities, even if the amount suggested by the Hillelites as average is assumed in later materials to be the normative percentage for the offering.

4. *The Care and Handling of Holy Produce*

The House of Hillel (M. M.S. 2:7, 8, 9F–H) hold that when second tithe is redeemed with coins, the sanctified status of the tithe pertains to the batch of coins as a whole, not to the individual coins in that batch. Therefore, should the second tithe-coins be mixed with unconsecrated ones, the householder need simply separate out the correct value in money, paying no attention to which coins originally held the status of second tithe. This opinion may stand at the very root of the theory of the care and handling of holly produce that, throughout this Division, is worked out in the Yavnean stratum and greatly expanded in Ushan times. This view holds that in separating a portion of a batch of produce to be an agricultural offering, one essentially designates that portion to be holy and leaves the rest of the batch unconsecrated. In the present case, in choosing

certain coins to replace the lost offering, the householder effectively transfers to the money he sets aside the status of consecration previously dispersed, with the original coins, throughout the batch. The Hillelite view thus holds that the Israelite may designate to have the status of an agricultural offering whatever coins he desires, such that which coins previously were sanctified as second tithe is irrelevant. This perspective presents a basic proposition that could allow for the development of later authorities' overall understanding of how a portion of a batch of produce comes to be sanctified as an agricultural offering, leaving the entire rest of the batch available for common consumption.

5. *Eating Food under Conditions of Holiness*

The one verifiable Houses' dispute on this theme (M. Dem. 3:IC–H) stands in a general way behind developments that take place in the Yavnean and Ushan periods. The Shammaites' claim, that each person is responsible to prevent another from transgressing, provides an ethical consideration important to Tractate Demai, the main point of which is that people must tithe all food they give away, lest the recipient transgress by eating it untithed. This is a concern only in light of the Shammaite view, that by facilitating the other's improper actions, the produce's original owner also is culpable. This consideration does not however generate any of the tractate's specific laws. In fact, both of the Houses hold opinions contradictory to the Ushan theory that accounts for the tractate as a whole, that one must tithe all that leaves his possession.[11] By contrast, both the Shammaites and Hillelites hold that, if it is known that the recipient will tithe, the produce's original owner need not do so. Continued acceptance of that view would have entirely precluded the creation of Tractate Demai.

The other item on this theme assigned to the Houses does not appear to be authentic to the period before 70. The Shammaites (M. Dem. 6:6) hold that olives may be sold only to individuals trusted to process them in cleanness. This reflects the much later, Ushan,

[11] The basic premise that led to the creation of this tractate—that one must tithe *all* that leaves his possession—is Ushan. In the view of earlier authorities, that one normally tithes only what he is himself about to eat, the problem of doubtfully tithed produce does not arise at all.

definition of the *haber*, a person who does not sell food to anyone not trusted as regards tithes and the laws of cleanness. The Hillelite position, which holds that the individual may give away or sell olives without tithing them, is out of phase with the law of the tractate as a whole, for it demands that one tithe all produce that leaves his possession. If it is old, then it represents a notion of the tithing laws rejected by Yavnean times.[12]

III. *Conclusion*

Authorities from the period before 70 contribute little to the Division of Agriculture. The smattering of facts they provide does not present an identifiable ideology regarding the character or meaning of the agricultural laws. These facts are not even sufficient to allow practical implementation of Scripture's tithing restrictions. Nor do these facts, when viewed individually, provide the starting point for later deliberations on any of the Division of Agriculture's particular themes. Only a single opinion from the period before 70 even enters the system of agriculture in an important way, the Hillelite statement that coins in the status of second tithe are not deemed individually to be sanctified with the status of that offering. Yet even in this case, the relatively minor character of the Hillelite view must be stressed. Its importance is a function of the peculiar way Yavneans interpreted it and of the notions of sanctification that appear to have been created from it. Standing alone, the Hillelite opinion does not constitute even a basic datum of its own period, for it is under dispute by the Shammaites. In all, if we had the materials from the period before 70 alone, we could in no way predict the character of the system of agricultural laws as it develops at Yavneh and Usha. Nor could we even imagine how, during the years when the Temple stood, the Scriptural requirements to separate agricultural offerings were carried out.

This is not to claim that, prior to the completion of the Mishnaic Division of Agriculture, Scripture's tithing laws were not implemented. Historical sources from the time of Scripture itself and through the

[12] See Richard Sarason, *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Agriculture: A Study of Tractate Demai* (Leiden, 1979), p. 226.

Second Temple period make it clear that Jews tithed. The point, rather, is that, whatever tithing practices did exist in the earlier periods, so far as the evidence of the Mishnah indicates, these were not taken up by the rabbis and made components of their own legislation. The Division of Agriculture, rather, seems to be almost totally the creation of the academies at Yavneh and Usha and to contain little material that can be shown to derive from before the destruction of the Temple. Indeed, out of the division's 569 pericopae, only 40 (7%) are even attributed to authorities who lived before 70. The vast majority of these assignments, we have seen, are pseudepigraphic.

These facts are striking. For contrary to what the material we have scrutinized leads us to believe, other evidence makes clear that, during the time of the Temple, agricultural tithes were a central topic of concern. As seems clear from all other sources, the Pharisees, whom later Rabbinism claims as its forbears, comprised a table fellowship, distinguished from the rest of the people of Israel by their observance of restrictions concerning cultic cleanness and separation of tithes.

The importance, in the period before 70, of agricultural law further is shown by facts internal to the Division of Agriculture. For a wide gulf distinguishes the agricultural laws available in Scripture from the set of restrictions and practices assumed within all strata of the Mishnah's law. This corpus of assumed facts contains the very identification and definition of the distinctive set of agricultural gifts upon which the Division of Agriculture focuses. These gifts are not defined clearly in Scripture, but depend, rather, upon a rather elaborate interpretation and reconciliation of the Hebrew Bible's several tithing passages.[13] This means that, at some point prior to the inception of the discussions later redacted in the Mishnah, unidentified individuals carefully read Scripture and, on its basis, delineated a set of agricultural tithes. While clearly dependent upon Scripture's relevant rules, their work in laying out specific offerings represents a synthesis of passages that, in Scripture, derive from distinct and in part contradictory sources. This work of synthesis should not be taken for granted.

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[13] See ibid., pp. 2–10, where Sarason details the scriptural foundations for the Mishnah's tithing laws. Sarason shows how the two "broad theories of tithing" found in Scripture yield the Mishnah's unitary set of agricultural tithes and restrictions.

On the one hand it thus appears that, in the time of the Temple, certain individuals were concerned with agricultural restrictions and carried out important work in developing Scripture's injunctions. Yet, except for definitions of the offerings themselves, the Mishnah's later authorities neither preserved nor, so far as we can tell, availed themselves of any significant laws they may have inherited concerning the separation and disposition of heave-offering and tithes. These matters were worked out in full by Yavnean and Ushan authorities.

Both in its component parts and as a whole, the Division of Agriculture thus is the creation only of the time after the destruction of the Temple.

Short of denying that the Pharisees followed tithing taboos, or of assuming that, after the destruction of the Temple in 70, all knowledge of past ritual practice was lost, only one explanation appears reasonably to account for these facts. This explanation is that the Rabbinic movement itself chose not to take up the extant legislation of Pharisees or Temple priests and, in the first centuries, made little claim to continue their traditions. The reason for this choice may have been the early Rabbinic movement's own lack of power and concomitant inability to speak in the name of others who actually held authority in the Israelite community. Or it could have been the simple desire of the early rabbis themselves to develop the agricultural law along lines dictated by their particular social and religious perspectives. Only later, based upon their own growing strength, did Rabbinic authorities dare to rewrite their own history and to adopt as their ancestors the Pharisees, remembered for their political power and religious piety.

These suggested reasons for the lack of firm foundations of the Division of Agriculture in the period before 70 are, of course, only guesses. Apart from—and now, we see, even with—the Rabbinic literature, we have an imperfect knowledge of what the Pharisees represented, of the ideals they held, and of the rituals they actually performed. Our understanding of the goal—political or religious—of early Rabbinism likewise is imperfect. The significance of the absence of a Pharisaic legacy in the Division of Agriculture—the context within which we should most expect to find exactly that legacy—must therefore be narrowly defined. This absence means that later Rabbinic claims to continue the traditions and legislation of Temple times and before are a rewriting of history. This revisionist history reflects, we must assume, the desire of a maturing

Rabbinic movement to legitimate its own rather recent origins. This was accomplished by tying those origins to the group most remembered for piety and, as Josephus tells us, political control. The facts of the matter, however, appear clear. The evidence of the Division of Agriculture indicates that the Mishnah's tithing laws are a creation of rabbis living at Yavneh and primarily at Usha. Contributions to the law from individuals living while the Temple stood are few and far between, and those that are found have few important implications for the law as it later developed.

The implication of the late origins of the Division of Agriculture is that its notions of the meaning of the agricultural laws, the nature of sanctification and, through these topics, the meaning of Israelite existence after the destruction of the Temple and the failed Bar Kokhba revolt, comprise a distinctively Rabbinic statement. These ideas reflect the human situation of individuals who attempted to renew Jewish life after the destruction of the Temple. These rabbis chose to turn directly to Scripture as an independent source of authority, and not to priests or other individuals—including Pharisees—who might have preserved the actual rules and practices of the time of the Temple.[14] Unlike what later Rabbinic literature would like us to believe, the evidence internal to the Division of Agriculture proves that this division is a creation of Yavneh and Usha, not the final development of an unbroken and ongoing chain of tradition the character of which was conceived and set while the Temple stood. The implication is that, if we want to understand the specific legislation and legal ideals of the Pharisees, we must look elsewhere.

[14] See Jacob Neusner, *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Holy Things* (Leiden, 1978–1979), part VI, p. 225.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ITUREAN PRINCIPALITY ACCORDING TO JOSEPHUS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

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Anthony Saldarini recognized earlier than most the now rather obvious importance of regionalism in Palestine, Galilee, and the Levant.[1] His and numerous other studies have been extremely helpful in alerting us to the diversity of the people and factors that drove the religious, political and cultural developments of the Greek speaking east. It is an honor to be able to pay homage to such an outstanding colleague and friend and to a scholar who was so far ahead of us in many respects. Tony's command of early Christian and Rabbinic developments in the Greek east, and his awareness of the necessary confusion between these categories, and of course his blessed memory, will enliven many discussions for a long, long time.

While some scholars may still speak of Palestine, Syria, or even the Greek east as if they were coherent or unified entities, most now recognize the vital diversity and amalgam which constituted the so-called Greek east in the early empire. This insight is especially evident in the sources dating from the post-70 Flavian period. The

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[1] A.J. Saldarini, for example "The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict in the Galilee," in L. Levine, ed., *The Galilee in Late* Antiquity (New York and Jerusalem, 1992), pp. 23–38. Much of this awareness is evident in his treatment of Josephus as well in *Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducess in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington, 1988). For excellent recent examples of the same, S. Freyne, "The Geography of Restoration: Galilee-Jerusalem Relations in the Early Jewish and Christian Experience," in *New Testament Studies* 47 (2001), pp. 289–311, and his article, "The Revolt from a Regional Perspective," in A. Berlin and J.A. Overman, eds., *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology* (New York, 2002), pp. 43–56, and R. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, and People* (Valley Forge, 1995). Outside of biblical studies, others were aware of regional nuances and differences rather early in the last century. See A.H.M. Jones, "The Urbanization of Palestine," in *Journal of Roman Studies* 21 (1931), pp. 78–85, and "The Urbanization of the Iturean Principality," in *Journal of Roman Studies* 21 (1931), pp. 265–75; also E. Meyers, "Galilean Regionalism: A Reappraisal," in W.S. Green, ed., *Approaches to Ancient Judaism V. Studies in Judaism and Its Greco-Roman Context* (Atlanta, 1985), pp. 115–131.

Flavian writers, notably but not exceptionally Josephus, appear to have been sensitive or alert to so-called regionalism and the factionalism and diversity that characterized the domains of Syria, Jordan, Israel, and environs.

Here I would like to focus on an often neglected or overlooked region of the eastern Mediterranean, Iturea, and make some comparisons with the far more famous region with which it is contiguous, Galilee. An analysis of both of these regions and their treatment by ancient historians may shed more light on these small tetrarchies whose historical significance has substantially outstripped their size. While most are aware of the enormous amount of information—however contentious—he provides about the Galilee, we have tended to overlook the wealth of data Flavius Josephus provides about the small but pivotal region so closely linked to the Galilee; Iturea.

The principality of Iturea obtains the interest and attention of regional leaders as well as historians in the mid-first century B.C.E. Josephus mentions that the Hasmonean ruler Aristobulos conquered the Iturean territory in Galilee and Transjordan and converted the people to Judaism (*Ant.*13.318). At this time Iturea appears to have extended south into Upper and eastern Galilee—at least as far as lake Hulah and perhaps as far as the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. But during the period of Hasmonean expansion the loosely affiliated tribes of Iturea withdrew northward into the Biqa valley and AnteLebanon range.

During the mid-first century B.C.E., Iturea was under the control of Ptolemy, son of Mennaeus who, according to Josephus, secured the region by means of a bribe to Pompey. Pompey had destroyed certain Iturean strongholds as he made his way to Damascus in the mid-60s (*Ant.*14.40). Iturea was passed on to his son Lysanias. Cleopatra then took over the area and leased it to Zenodorus. Following Actium Augustus gave the region to Herod the Great. Upon Herod's death Iturea passed to Herod Phillip and formed part of his tetrarchy. The author of the Gospel of Luke names the Iturean Lysanius as "Tetrarch of Abila," while Philip was ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis (3:1). Iturea then became part of the realm of Herod the brother of Agrippa; following him, what was left of the Iturean principality was assumed by Agrippa II. Upon Agrippa II's death this region, including Iturea, was integrated into the larger province of Syria.[2]

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[2] G. Tate, "The Syrian Countryside in the Roman Era," in S. Alcock, ed., *The Early Roman Empire in the East* (Oxford, 1997), p. 59.

From Herod the Great on, according to Josephus, those ruling over the rather fluid Iturean region built or expanded monuments or cities. Much of this development accelerated in the post-70 C.E. period. The French Archaeological Institute of the Near East has provided detailed aerial and satellite photos that reveal cadasters and the imposition of land divisions and distribution throughout this region of southern Syria. The period of this division and appropriation of land in southern Syria dates mainly from Vespasian to Hadrian. This Roman intervention in the Syrian and Lebanese countryside does suggest the expropriation of the local peasantry and their traditional lands.[3] Based on analogous instances in Josephus we may suggest that this is in part a result of settling veterans in the region. This treatment of Syrian land, the appropriation of historically unforgiving and usually unproductive Bedouin land by Rome, along with urban development and expansion extended to Palmyra, Apamea, and Emesa, but included also the Iturean centers of Chalcis, Abila, Ulatha, and Paneas.[4]

In the period in which Josephus was writing and in which the Gospels were being written, the southern portion of Iturea, the Kingdom of Chalcis, Abila, the unidentified site of Ulatha, and Paneas—putative Caesarea Phillipi—conflated with and were at times one and the same with Galilee.[5] That is, the Northwestern portion of Trachonitis along the Golan and the southern portion of the Iturean principality on the southern slope of Mt. Hermon running into and including the northern Hulah valley is precisely that area where Iturea and Galilee conflate. The vignette recorded by Josephus in *Life* 112ff. and recently brought to our attention by Freyne captures this proximity and conflation between these two regions. At a certain time two Nobles (*MEGISTES*) came to Josephus while he was at Sepphoris, having fled Agrippa II's kingdom seeking refuge. Josephus notes they had smuggled horses, arms, and money out of the region. A debate over whether these men should be circumcised ensued at Sepphoris. Josephus prevails upon the people to "allow

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[3] Ibid., p. 61. On the appropriation of Judean land for veterans after the revolt and the relevant Josephus passages, see B. Isaac, "Judea after A.D. 70," in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 35 (1984), pp. 44–50.

[4] The parallels between Palmyra, Jerash in Jordan, and Bostra under Vespasian are noteworthy here; see G. Bowersock, "Syria under Vespasian," in *Journal of Roman Studies* 63 (1973), pp. 133–141.

[5] For example, Luke 3:1; G. Schmitt, "Zum Königreich Chalkis," in *ZDPV* 98 (1982), pp. 110–124; W. Schottroff, "Die Ituräer," in *ZDPV* 98 (1982), pp. 125–152.

everyone to worship God in accordance with his own conscience and not under constraint" (*Life* 113). These men, Josephus says, having fled to us for refuge, should not be made to change/repent/convert (*METANOIEIN*). Josephus goes on, according to the narrative, to protect the "Tiberian territory" and devote his attention to the welfare of Galilee. One has to wonder if the two events here are related. That is, would the reception of elite thieves and smugglers from Agrippa's kingdom bring more attention and heat on the region of the Galilee bordering Northeastern Galilee? The would be General had better move to protect the Tiberian territory which would be most exposed to such a threat.

Movement to and from NE Galilee and the southern portion of the Iturean principality was easy and common. And while Josephus' "*MEGISTES*" do not appear to be Jews in the before mentioned passage from *Life*, neither are they depicted as necessarily aliens or foreigners. The Sepphorites did ultimately accept them into the city and presumably the Sepphorean community, no small thanks, we are told, to Josephus' own powers of persuasion. Among other facts, the passage from *Life* 112ff. captures in the easy movement and interaction between Galilee and Iturea. The physical proximity also promoted a cultural affinity that allowed for various types of intercourse.

A similar continuity is captured in the Gospel narratives in Mark 8:27ff. and Matt. 16:13ff. concerning Caesarea Philippi/Paneas. Paneas was a significant Iturean center and city. It was in the region of Paneas or Banias that Herod the Great, according to Josephus, built a temple to Augustus. When the Iturean tetrarch Zenodorus died Caesar Augustus gave the territory over to Herod the Great. Josephus records that it was not a small land that lay between Trachonitis and Galilee. Josephus also mentions that Augustus instructed the procurators of Syria to obtain Herod's consent for all their actions (*Ant.*15.361ff.). Herod and Augustus grew ever closer. It is in this section of *Antiquities* 15 that Josephus writes the famous passage that, "there was no one after Agrippa whom Caesar held in greater esteem than Herod, while Agrippa gave Herod the first place in his friendship after Caesar." Because of this relationship, support, and patronage Herod, "when he had returned home after escorting Caesar to the sea, erected to him a very beautiful temple of white stone in the territory of Zenodorus, near the place called Paneion."[6]

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[6] The Macalester College excavations at Omrit, northern Israel, which began in

An ornate and dramatic Roman temple has been recently discovered in the region of Banias just over the Galilee-Iturea border overlooking the northern Hulah valley by a team from Macalester College. These current excavations, and the site of the newly discovered temple, are at Omrit. Omrit is located four kilometers SW of Paneas/Banias. The site is strewn with architectural fragments from the temple—Corinthian capitals, column drums, pilasters, architraves and cornices—which testify to the magnificence of the temple which stood approximately 15–18 meters high. Two separate podiums from this temple complex have been discovered to date. The Roman temple at Omrit dates precisely to this transitional period in Iturean history when the region was passing from local Iturean rulers to Augustus' post Actium patrons in the region; namely the Herodian family. The earliest phase of the temple complex is late first century B.C.E. and the second expansion phase, including the second podium, dates to the late first century C.E.

It is into this region of Iturea that Mark and Matthew's Jesus easily wanders "*en te hodo*;" or, "on the way," with his disciples. Mark and Matthew make little of Jesus venturing into Iturean territory and in fact fail even to mention it explicitly. The reader who was not intimately familiar with the Galilean terrain would not know that the group had left Galilee for Iturea on this occasion—though, as we have said, only barely.

Itureans did have their own religion or customs. Josephus makes note of this and claims that Herod remitted a third of their taxes when he took over the region for the purpose of gaining back some measure of good will because locals were angry about the "dissolution of their religion and the disappearance of their customs." The people were constantly discussing this situation on the roads and would at times become provoked and disturbed (*Ant.*15.366). Some of the locals petitioned Augustus concerning Herod's harsh rule. Augustus rejected their plea and even more strongly supported Herod. The temple in Augustus' honor is in part thanks for that support in the face of popular Iturean resistance. Iturean religion, such as it can be recovered, included the rulers serving also as high priests at

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1998 under the direction of the author, have revealed a beautiful white temple dating to the first century B.C.E. Located only four kilometers from Paneas, it is possible that this is the temple constructed by Herod to Augustus.

the same time.[7] Their religious sites are temple-centered and iconographically represent a mix of Syrian and Persian as well as Greco-Roman deities.[8] And we can assume that Jewish features of the local religion, imposed since Aristobulos and Hyrcanus, continued on through the first revolt. This may very well account for the ambivalence accorded the refugees from Iturea and Trachonitis mentioned above, who showed up at Sepphoris while Josephus was there. The traditions and "religion" of these two men were probably familiar to many Galileans, but whether this would have really passed for Judaism was another matter.

Both Josephus and Strabo depict Iturea as an unruly area known mostly for banditry. Several important urban centers of significant size were the capitals of Iturean regions, such as Chalcis, Baalbek, Paneas, Abila, and even the region of Damascus at its height. Itureans were expansionistic prior to the period of Herod. It was Ptolemaios who minted his own coins, served as the supreme Priest at the central sanctuary in Baalbek, and attempted to march against Damascus. Significantly for our purposes Ptolemaios' son Lysanias (40–36 B.C.E.) allied himself with the Parthians who occupied the region around 40 B.C.E.[9] According to Josephus he was subsequently beheaded when Mark Anthony gained control of the region. It was Mark Anthony who gave Iturea to Cleopatra as a gift (*J.W.* 1.248; 440). After Actium Augustus placed Zenodorus in charge over the region. But he proved unable to pacify the persistent Iturean bandits. This task fell to Herod the Great, at the behest of Augustus, around the year 20 B.C.E. Indeed, Josephus maintains that Herod instituted a set of laws in Iturea aimed at social control and a squelching of any resistance or *stasis*. He forbade pubic meetings or gatherings of the citizenry. Perhaps hyperbolically Josephus says people were not allowed to walk together. Herod saw to it that their movements were constantly observed. If people were caught in violation of these rules they were severely punished. Many were taken away either secretly

[7] A.H.M. Jones, "The Urbanization of the Iturean Principality," in *Journal of Roman Studies* 21 (1931), p. 265. The coins of Zenodorus boast that he is both king and high priest.

[8] M. Hartal, *Northern Golan Heights. The Archaeological Survey as Source for Local History* (Qatzrin, 1989, Hebrew) and *Settlements and Cult Sites on Mount Hermon, Israel: Iturean Culture in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (Oxford, 1993).

[9] E.A. Knauf, "Itureans," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 3, pp. 583–584.

or openly and put to death. Whether in the cities or along the open road Herod saw to it that men were spied upon. He also caused the people to take an oath of loyalty (*Ant.*15.365ff.). Ultimately Rome dealt with the resilient and resourceful Iturean bandits by forming them into a cohort that obtained considerable renown throughout the empire but apparently especially in Germania. It might have even become a military amenity to claim that you or your company were in fact of Iturean origin.[10]

Some important analogies exist here with respect to Galilee. By now we are well aware of the bandits of the Galilee and the threat they constituted, from the Roman point of view, to *Pax* and the stability of the local Roman clients and retainers. As noted above the many works of Sean Freyne and Richard Horsley along with others have together put this dimension of Galilean life in bold relief. Along with certain popular leaders these bandits appear as a prime focus of Roman policy and that of their clients in Galilee. There were important developments in the Galilee, like Iturea, with respect to the Roman road system and the expansion of trade routes. The main west-east routes leading from the coast to the major cities of Israel and beyond to Jerash, Damascus and the Euphrates were broadened and exploited during this period of Roman expansion and development in Galilee; particularly in the post-70 period.

Of course we are aware now of the tremendous growth in building in Galilee during this period. Herod distinguished himself as one of the great builders of western history during this time, while his sons in certain respects attempted to follow in his footsteps. While distinguishing archaeologically in Galilee between the Early and Middle Roman periods has become a notorious problem, there is no mistaking the unusual development in the Galilee that extends from Herod through the Flavians and on to Hadrian. Cities such as Sepphoris, Bet She'an, Banias and numerous others exhibit vigorous growth through these periods in Galilee. In a famous phrase it may be that "Vespasian founded no new cities" in Judea or Galilee, but during the Flavian period there is considerable development and expansion of the centers that were already in place. Iturea also experiences similar urban growth and expansion in precisely this very period.

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[10] Cf. Schottroff, "Die Ituräer;" apparently even after actual Itureans had long vanished! Lukan, *Bell. Civ.* 7.230,514 and *Hist. Aug. Aurelian* 11.3. Also G. Bowersock's discussion of the region in *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 50–58.

The Roman army in the Galilee did not experience one of their tougher campaigns. What was left after the battles of Jotopata and Gamla—aside of course from Jerusalem—was maintaining the peace of the cities and routing out the local rebels. The fact is this was done rather quickly and that with the troops resting and wintering for sometime in the region. Despite Josephus' literary attempts to depict the battles, especially Jotopata, as monumental, this was not the case from the Roman perspective. Josephus' role here is perhaps to demonstrate the valor and dedication of his compatriots in Judea and Galilee. That is a point to be debated. But he surely was playing a vital role in Flavian propaganda in the post-70 period which asserted that Titus had secured a victory second to none in the history of Roman military conquests. After all, that is precisely what it said on the Arch of Titus and we can reasonably expect Josephus to tow the same line.

> The Roman Senate and people dedicate this to the Emperor Titus Caesar
> Vespasian Augustus, son of the deified Vespasian, Pontifex Maximus,
> Holding the tribuniciam power for the tenth year, acclaimed imperator
> Seventeen times, consul eight times, father of his country, their princeps,
> Because with the guidance and plans of his father, and under the auspices,
> He subdued the Jewish people and destroyed the city of Jerusalem, which
> All generals, kings, and people before him had either attacked without
> Success or left entirely unassailed." (CIL VI no. 994)

Such epigraphic incredulity sets in bold relief the Flavian program concering Judea and the *limes* of the Greek east and Levant. Josephus naturally also participated in the official *commentarii Vespasian*, as he himself says.[11] Josephus' immediate goal in *War* may have been to relate the story of the revolt in the context and stressing the themes he believed to be necessary and appropriate. But, the larger Flavian context and set of concerns within which the revolt occurred and within which Josephus did his work cannot be obscured.[12] Flavian

[11] *Life* 342ff. See M. Stern, "Josephus and the Roman Empire as Reflected in the Jewish War," in L. Feldman and G. Hata, eds., *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, (Detroit, 1987), p. 71.

[12] This theme concerning Josephus and broader Flavian political issues is devel-

concerns focused on the east. Josephus' focus on both Galilee and Iturean appropriately and rather uniformily reflect the broader concerns of his patrons.

Why does the revolt loom so large in our work and in our historical reconstructions? In part it is testament both to Josephus' survival and his effectiveness. And we in the west are far more interested—for logical enough reasons—in the events and land which provoked both Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity. But these more contemporary concerns distort the main concerns of the period and the region. Even Josephus, despite his rather parochial interests, does not obscure the paramount Roman concerns. Galilee and Iturea both experience the growth and attention mentioned here because of the persistent Parthian threat that loomed large over the Euphrates in the Syrian east.

After 70, Iturea was developed considerably by Vespasian. Vespasian of course had a sophisticated knowledge of the region dating back to prior to the first Jewish revolt (Tacitus, *Hist* 1.76). He had cultivated his relationships with local political and military leaders in the east before and during the civil unrest under Nero. This was done in large part to compete with the Vitellians whose strength outside of Rome was concentrated in and around Germania. Vespasian was well aware of the importance of this region in terms of winning the civil struggle to emerge as Emperor. But, he was also, therefore, well aware of the importance of this region if he was to maintain the *Pax* following his ascension. This awareness is demonstrated even during the revolt in so far as Vespasian did not view Judea as the issue or focus of his activity in the region. Yes, Nero dispatched Vespasian to the east to subdue it. But once he arrived in the east Vespasian spent most of his time, as Suetonius said, "preparing for civil war." He left the youthful and thoroughly unaccomplished Titus in charge of the Judean problem and spent his time garnering support in Egypt, Syria and even establishing an uneasy *Philia* with the Parthian Vologaesus.[13] This reveals where Vespasian's real interest lie. His strategy clearly worked because these eastern principalities threw their collective support behind Vespasian at virtually the same time.

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oped further in J.A. Overman, "The First Revolt and Flavian Politics," in Berlin and Overman, *The First Jewish Revolt*, pp. 213–220.

[13] C. Jones, "Egypt and Judea under Vespasian," in *Historia* 46 (1997), pp. 49–53.

In the Iturean principality new road construction began. Existing cities were enlarged. Palmyra and Baalbek were expanded under Vespasian. Indeed, as Bowersock noted, the fortunes of Palmyra, Gerasa, Bostra, and Baalbek, grew together under Vespasian. Such complimentarity implies a systematic development of these cities and the surrounding area.[14] Banias also continued to develop through this period. The expansion of the Temple-complex at nearby Omrit appears to date to approximately this period also. Such a unified push and concentrated period of development betrays a broader Roman concern—accelerated under the Flavians—with respect to these regions and principalities.

Galilee and Iturea were small but important pieces in the Roman plans and concerns for the Parthians. Both Galilee and Iturea possessed a bandit problem that had to be dealt with. Both native populations exhibited less of the sedentary and urbanized life Rome seems to have been more comfortable with and purposefully encouraged. To them enhancement and development was a form of stabilization. So, both relatively minor regions experienced considerable development and building.

Vespasian especially, given his in-depth knowledge of the area, was concerned about the ramifications of the Parthians capitalizing on unrest and *stasis* in the region. And Josephus with him by necessity shared these concerns. The Parthians had so capitalized before in Iturea and south Syria while Cleopatra was in charge (*Ant.*13.419ff.) and could certainly do so again. The greatest current unrest of course was the Roman civil war that had succeeded in dragging the whole Greek East into this struggle. "The Parthians had been a constant problem for Rome," and Vespasian was acutely aware of this threat.[15] Consequently, with the aid of the experienced Statesman Ulpius Traianus, the future Emperor's father, Vespasian negotiated tentative and fragile alliances with Vologaesus the Parthian King and Tiridates the Ruler of Armenia. Multiple envoys and détente were carried out under Vespasian. The obvious principle and goal was to

[14] "Syria under Vespasian," in *JRS* 63 (1973), p. 140. The most comprehensive discussion of the development in southern Syria and the Biqa Valley, including Palmyra, Baalbek, Emesa, and others, to my knowledge is found in the work of H. Seyrig. See his collected essays in *Scripta Varia* (Brussels, 1978). See here also B. Levick, *Vespasian* (London and New York, 1999), pp. 148ff.

[15] Bowersock, ibid., p. 134.

ensure the neutrality of the Parthians and to keep them out of Syria.[16] As a result southern Syria/Iturea and parts of Galilee became an even more critical buffer state between Rome and Parthia, as observed by Pliny (*NH* 5, 88). They would remain so for sometime to come. It is important to recall that the Flavian apologist Josephus states clearly at the outset of his earliest work that he wrote this account of the war, in part, to dissuade his fellow-countrymen "from beyond the Euphrates" from joining in the Revolt (*J.W.* 1.5). Similarly, following his protracted and intimidating description of the Roman army in train from Acco-Ptolemais to Yodefat/Jotopata, Josephus admits this digression is intended to "deter others who may be tempted to revolt" (*J.W.* 3.108).

Vespasian's and Flavian concerns about the Parthian or other "eastern " threats to peace reflected in Josephus appear to have been well founded. Shortly after 70, Vespasian received a report that the King of Commagene was about to join forces with Vologaesus (*J.W.* 7.221). The Flavian concern about possible dangerous eastern alliances which could constitute a threat to stability in the region is revealed in Titus urgently seeking a meeting with the Parthian King immediately following his victory in 70. As noted above, Iturea had sided with the Parthians shortly before Herod took over the region from Augustus. This critical region would have to remain securely in Rome's camp if the *PAX* that featured so prominently in Flavian propaganda was to hold.[17] Here lies one of the main reasons the Jewish revolt garners so much attention and why the relatively obscure regions of Galilee and Iturea obtain such importance. Rome, especially under Vespasian, had to focus on and cultivate the east because of the abiding Parthian threat. That we even know of Josephus may in fact be a result of this broader and more comprehensive concern. For he was one of numerous eastern intelligentsia purposefully developed and cultivated by the Flavii to manage, understand, and guard against the threat to the east.[18] It is within this broader Roman concern that two relatively small and unimportant Middle Eastern principalities secure a place on the pages of Roman history.

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[16] E. Dabrowa, "Les Rapports entre Rome et Les Parthes sous Vespasian," in *Syria* 58 (1981), pp. 187–204.

[17] This theme—particularly with respect to Flavian building projects—is developed by R. Darwall-Smith, *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rom*e (Brussels, 1996).

[18] Levick, *Vespasian*, p. 148.

In one of the last pieces he authored Anthony Saldarini pointed out the ways in which certain Rabbinic traditions about the first Jewish revolt against Rome continued themes found in Josephus.[19] The events of 66–70 in Palestine which culminated in the temple's destruction is a lesson that should not be forgotten. Attempts by some in Galilee, the Golan, Iturea and Judea to throw off Roman interference in their local affairs lead to disaster. The revolt was ultimately a mistake that provoked untold misery and loss. The decision to try and be rid of imperial rule was misguided. Josephus' account of the War was intended to dispel illusions on the part of others in the East that resisting Rome was a realistic option. For later Rabbis that earlier judgement could serve as a metaphor and lesson where later Roman or Sassanian rule was concerned. Centuries later the regions where Christianity and Rabbinism continued to develop were still small but critical regions for the later Roman empire and Byzantium.[20] The imperial *PAX* would abide in these regions or there would be a terrible price to pay. The message about imperial Roman rule and hegemony developed by Josephus and some of his contemporaries had a very long life. The message that this small but finally crucial region was to remain loyal and stable was not lost on literate clients and religious and civic officials for generations to come. The development of this part of the East by Rome, and above all the securing of the same, resulted in the elevation of relatively obscure Iturea and Galilee to enduring prominence.

[19] A.J. Saldarini, "Good from Evil: The Rabbinic Response," in Berlin and Overman, *The First Jewish Rrevolt*, pp. 221–236.

[20] Captured particularly well in G. Fowden's, *Empire to Commonwealth: The Consequences of Monotheism in late Antiquity* (Princeton, 1993).

PESHER NAHUM AND JOSEPHUS

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Anthony Saldarini made many contributions to his field, but one that stands out in particular is *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach.* One mark of a distinguished book is that it is admired and used by scholars who represent differing viewpoints and approaches, and this is certainly true of Saldarini's volume.[1] Another sign of a major contribution is that it causes one to rethink conclusions that may have become orthodoxy in a discipline. In this paper I would like to deal with such a case that Saldarini himself discussed—a small one, to be sure, but an interesting one nevertheless. At the end of the day I come to a different conclusion than he did, but the stimulation that his questioning provided was valuable for me and has led to a clearer understanding of the sources and the conclusions that may reasonably be drawn from them. I suspect that Tony would have welcomed the debate and would have enjoyed the slight disagreement.

In Part III of *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees* ("Interpretation and Synthesis"), Saldarini devoted a chapter to "The Place of the Pharisees in Jewish Society."[2] There he emphasized the need to distinguish what the Pharisees of the Hasmonean and Herodian periods were like from the pictures of them in Rabbinic literature and the New Testament. Since scholars have often claimed that some of the Qumran texts allude to Pharisees without naming them, he also devoted a short section to what the scrolls may or may not tell us about them. Although *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees* was published in 1988 and many Qumran texts have been appeared in print in the intervening years, little that is really new has emerged on this subject.

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[1] I have surveyed some of the reviews of the book in the "Foreword" to the reissue of *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, 2001), pp. xvi–xvii.

[2] *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*, pp. 277–297 (the pagination in the original printing [Wilmington, 1988] and in the reissue is the same).

One indirect exception is 4QMMT, which has provided dramatic evidence about the sorts of legal questions that were being debated in the second century B.C.E. and has raised important issues regarding their relation to groups and positions attested in Rabbinic literature.[3]

Saldarini highlighted the level of religious strife evident in the Qumran texts that refer to the early history of the community during the careers of Jonathan and Simon "and also under Alexander Jannaeus, to whose reign the Pesher Nahum certainly refers."[4] As he noted, in Pesher Nahum there are various code names for opponents, among which is "seekers after smooth things [דורשי חלקות]." In a footnote he drew attention to several passages in the Hebrew Bible where the term חלקות is employed and wrote: "The Qumran expression may refer to those who seek modes of interpreting and living Judaism more in accord with the Hellenistic world or just in contradiction to the Qumran interpretations of the law."[5]

There is a longstanding (for Qumran studies at least) tradition among scholars of the scrolls that the "seekers after smooth things" are Pharisees and that the term חלקות is a word play on הלכות which is taken to be a second- and first-century B.C.E. Pharisaic term for their legal rulings.[6] Although the hypothesis was stated before Pesher Nahum was published, the occurrences of the expression in it are thought to provide the decisive data for the conclusion.[7] This is the orthodox hypothesis that Saldarini called into question or rather about which he urged greater caution.

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[3] The official edition is E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4 V Miq at Maa se Ha-Torah* (DJD 10; Oxford, 1994). Y. Sussmann's acclaimed essay "The History of the Halakha and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Preliminary Talmudic Observations on Miq at Maa se Ha-Torah (MMT)" occupies pp. 179–200 in the volume; the longer original form of his article appeared in *Tarbiz* 59 (1989–90), pp. 11–76.

[4] *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*, p. 278.

[5] *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*, p. 279, n. 3.

[6] See W. Brownlee, "Biblical Interpretation among the Sectaries of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *BA* 14 (1951), p. 59; J. Allegro, "Further Light on the History of the Qumran Sect," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 75 (1956), p. 92. If the pun was intended, instances of the expression *dwr y h lqwt* (with some variation such as the use of the definite article) would be the only places in the Qumran literature where *hlkwt* by implication would be used in the sense of legal positions.

[7] Allegro first published parts of Pesher Nahum in the article noted above ("Further Light on the History of the Qumran Sect," pp. 89–95); the official edition is in his Qumrân Cave 4 I (4Q158–4Q186) (DJD 5; Oxford, 1968), pp. 37–42, with plates XII–XIV.

> The identification of the "seekers after smooth things" and "Ephraim" with the Pharisees is common in the literature, but hardly certain. The eight hundred opponents crucified by Jannaeus are not called Pharisees by Josephus . . . and the opponents of Jannaeus in Josephus and the pesharim need not be identified with one of the three schools of thought listed by Josephus. The metaphoric designation 'seekers after smooth things' suggests that the Qumran community found their opponents too accommodating to changes in Jewish society, either because they twisted the meaning of the law (Is. 30:10) or allied themselves too closely with non-Jewish authorities and practices. The use of various epithets connected to 'lie' and 'falsehood' suggests that the community disagreed with its opponents on many points of interpretation and practice. Since the Qumran group had left Jerusalem, the 'seekers after smooth things' were probably still there and active in Palestinian political struggles in a way the Qumran community did not approve. The Qumran polemics against their opponents testify to the diversity and conflicts in Jewish society but not that their opponents were Pharisees.[8]

Saldarini was able to cite F.M. Cross as another scholar who did not side with those identifying the seekers as Pharisees. Cross, who worded the point more hesitantly in the early editions of his *The Ancient Library of Qumran & Modern Biblical Studies*,[9] has formulated it more definitively in the latest one. Although he too agrees that Pesher Nahum deals with events in the time of Jannaeus, he writes about the seekers: "The phrase *dwr y h lqwt* 'seekers of flattery' is a designation taken from the 'prediction' of Dan. 11.32 where it is said that 'those who act wickedly against the covenant, he (Antiochus Epiphanes) will pervert with *flattery*'. Presumably the term applies in the Qumrân texts to Jews with Hellenistic leanings, no doubt a broad category from the sectarian point of view."[10]

In the following sections I review briefly the occurrences of the epithet "seekers after smooth things," ending with the ones in Pesher Nahum. These will then be compared with Josephus's narratives about Alexander Jannaeus/Alexandra and the Pharisees. Once the evidence has been presented and assessed, a conclusion will be drawn

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[8] *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*, pp. 279–280. C. Rabin had made a similar point not long after Pesher Nahum was published ("Alexander Jannaeus and the Pharisees," in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 7 [1956], pp. 3–11), but the argument seems largely to have been ignored as most scholars were convinced by the seekers-Pharisees connection.

[9] See, for example, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, 1980), pp. 123, n. 25, 124–126.

[10] *The Ancient Library of Qumran* (3rd ed.; Minneapolis, 1995), p. 97, n. 2.

regarding whether one may identify those who seek smooth things as Pharisees.

The first word in the construct phrase *dwr y h lqwt* designates individuals who search; the searching could be studying or investigating the scriptures; the second word means "smooth," at times with a negative connotation when describing words or speech (see Prov. 26:28; Dan. 11:32).[11] The epithet could suggest not only people who are trying to flatter but also ones looking for easy interpretations, not the full and perhaps harsh meaning of a law.[12]

The epithet appears (with slight variations) in five texts found at Qumran. According to the Damascus Document, after the appearance of a "root of planting" (390 years after Nebuchadnezzar defeated the nation) and twenty years of uncertainty before the Teacher of Righteousness emerged, an opponent of the new group and its leader came on the scene. The description of him and his community provides an revealing picture of who their opponents perceived them to be:

> . . . when the Scoffer arose who shed over Israel the waters of lies. He caused them to wander in a pathless wilderness, laying low the everlasting heights, abolishing the ways of righteousness and removing the boundary with which the forefathers had marked out their inheritance, that he might call down on them the curses of His Covenant and deliver them up to the avenging sword of His covenant. For they sought smooth things and preferred illusions (Is. 30:10) and they watched for breaks (Is. 30:13) and chose the fair neck; and they justified the wicked and condemned the just, and they transgressed the Covenant and violated the Precept. They banded together against the life of the righteous (Ps. 94:21) and loathed all who walked in perfection; they pursued them with the sword and exulted in the strife of the people. And the anger of God was kindled against their congregation so that He ravaged all their multitude; and their deeds were defilement before Him. (CD 1.14–2.1)[13]

The dispute between the two sides transparently involved the law, with the author of the Damascus Document accusing the other side

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[11] For references, see DCH 3.242–43; H. Bengtsson, *What's In a Name? A Study of the Sobriquets in the Pesharim* (Uppsala, 2000), pp. 110–135.

[12] A. Baumgarten, "The Name of the Pharisees," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 (1983), p. 421, n. 42.

[13] Quotations of the Qumran texts are from G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York/London, 1997).

of breaking the covenant and misleading others to imitate their transgressions. Their quest for smooth things is just one criticism in a catalog of charges against these opponents from the early days of the Teacher's community.

The Hodayot add to the picture in two poems that have been identified as hymns of the Teacher. In 10:31–38 (Sukenik, col. 2) the poet thanks the Lord for saving him "from the zeal of lying interpreters, and from the congregation of those who seek smooth things" (10.31–32). He claims they tried to murder him and calls them "seekers of falsehood" (line 34). In the poem that begins at 12.5 (Sukenik, col. 4) he says "they, teachers of lies and seers of falsehood, have schemed against me a devilish scheme, to exchange the Law engraved on my heart by Thee for the smooth things (which they speak) to Thy People" (12.9–11). The opponents are condemned for their lying language which entailed rejecting the revealed law for something else and for trying to induce others to do likewise.

A few references to those who seek smooth things appear in broken contexts in fragmentary manuscripts; from these passages we learn little more about them. 4Q177 (Catena[a]) 2:12–13 speaks of their hostility, while 4Q163 (4QpIsa[c]) 23 ii 10–12 says they are in Jerusalem and in the context refers to the law.

We could draw several conclusions about the *dwr y h lqwt* from these references (e.g., they interpret the law in a way contrary to the scroll community, reject the Teacher's claims, teach the people), but the characteristics would be too general to allow us to identify the group behind the label. As a consequence, the references to them in the fifth text, Pesher Nahum (4Q169), have been especially valuable because some of them are much more specific. We encounter *dwr y h lqwt* first in the comment on Nah. 2:11b: "where the lion goes, and the lion's cubs, with no one to disturb them;"[14] about the passage the commentator writes: "[Interpreted, this concerns Deme]trius, king of Greece who sought, on the counsel of those who seek smooth things, to enter Jerusalem. [But God did not permit the city to be delivered] into the hands of the kings of Greece, from the time of Antiochus until the coming of the rulers of the Kittim. But then she shall be trampled under their feet" (3–4 i 2–3). With this reference to two Seleucid kings (Demetrius and Antiochus) and the likelihood

[14] Scriptural citations are from the NRSV.

that Demetrius is Demetrius III Eukerus (95–88 B.C.E.)[15] whom Alexander Jannaeus's enemies invited to invade Judea (ca. 88 B.C.E.), the first firm point in an identification of "those who seek smooth things" was available. The passage indicated that they were very active in national affairs in the early first century B.C.E. The following comment on Nah. 2:12b ("he has filled his caves with prey and his dens with torn flesh") clinched the identification for many because it also mentioned crucifixion in a similar historical context: "Interpreted, this concerns the furious young lion [who executes revenge] on those who seek smooth things and hangs men alive, . . . formerly in Israel. Because of a man hanged alive on [the], tree, He proclaims, 'Behold, I am against [you, says the Lord of Hosts']" (3–4 i 6–9). Elsewhere in the pesher *Ephraim* and *those who seek smooth things* are in apposition to each other (3–4 ii 2; see also 3–4 ii 4–5, 8–10).

The identification of the seekers as Pharisees, according to many experts, receives its strongest confirmation from a comparison of what Pesher Nahum says about them with Josephus's accounts of Alexander Jannaeus's relations with the Pharisees. As we have seen, even the opponents of the *dwr y h lqwt* = Pharisees equation (e.g., Saldarini, Cross) accept the thesis that the pesher reflects events in the time of Jannaeus, the angry young lion of the Hebrew text.[16] The point at issue is whether Josephus's versions of the story about Jannaeus and his opponents are specific enough to verify the identification of them as Pharisees.

As we turn to Josephus's story, we move into an area that experts have heavily canvassed. Scholars have not only scrutinized the passages in *War* and *Antiquities* to mine them for information about Josephus's view of the Pharisees; they have also inquired whether,

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[15] See M. Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books* (Washington, 1979), pp. 161, 173. The King Antiochus who is mentioned may be Antiochus IV (175–64; see Horgan, pp. 173–74), although Antiochus VII (138–129) is also possible, as he too could be said to have taken Jerusalem. The Kittim are the Romans in virtually all references to them in the scrolls (see T. Lim, "Kittim," in L. Schiffman and J. VanderKam, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* [New York and Oxford, 2000], pp. 469–471).

[16] For Alexander Jannaeus as כפיר החרון of the text, see Horgan, *Pesharim*, pp. 161, 175; H. Eshel, "Alexander Jannaeus," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 16–17. For a summary of the passages and arguments, see E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)* (rev. and ed. G. Vermes and F. Millar; 3 vols.; Edinburgh, 1973–87), vol. 1, pp. 224–225, n. 22.

among other things, he changed his attitude toward them in the interval between the times when he wrote the two histories. On the latter question, some have argued that his opinion of them is consistent throughout,[17] while others have detected a change from one to the other. Some of those experts who find a change toward a more positive view of the Pharisees in *Antiquities* than in *War* have interpreted it against the backdrop of circumstances in Judea at the time when Jospehus wrote and have maintained that he was commending the Pharisees (or people like them) to the Romans as the ones best suited to lead Jewish society in the post-destruction period.[18] While the present paper cannot entirely avoid such issues because they impinge on the historicity of the data in Josephus, the focus is much narrower. The issue here is simply: were the eight hundred men whom Jannaeus crucified Pharisees.

Josephus recounts the events in question in *War* and *Antiquities*; the storyline in the two is largely the same, although he provides more detail in the latter. In *War*, the relevant passages are 1.4, 3–6

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[17] Saldarini aligned himself with those who think Josephus is consistent about the Pharisees in both works, with no increasingly pro-Pharisaic stance apparent in Antiquities (*Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*, pp. 83, 85–133). See also E. Rivkin, *A Hidden Revolution: The Pharisees' Search for the Kingdom of God Within* (Nashville, 1978). For an extended argument that Josephus is consistently negative about them, see S. Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Composition-Critical Study* (Leiden, 1991).

[18] Leading exponents of this hypothesis are M. Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century" in M. Davis, ed., *Israel: Its Role in Civilization* (New York, 1956), pp. 67–81; and J. Neusner in several publications. Examples are *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (Englewood Cliffs, 1973), pp. 60–63 (specifically on our story); and "Josephus' Pharisees: A Complete Repertoire" in L. Feldman and G. Hata, eds., *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (Detroit, 1987), pp. 274–292. For a somewhat different understanding, see S. Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics* (Leiden, 1990). He finds that *Antiquities* ". . . does not consistently propagandize for the Pharisees. Yet, despite the work's sloppiness and episodic character, it clearly is propagandistic, and its tendencies can be demonstrated with certainty because much of the work can be compared with its sources" (p. 215). For him, the new leadership group supported by Josephus has much in common with the Pharisees though they are not called Pharisees; they appear to be the early rabbis (p. 216). Another angle on the issue of the Pharisees in *War* and *Antiquities* has been expressed by D. Schwartz, who thinks that "BJ reflects Josephus' attempt to portray the Pharisees, incorrectly but safely, as uninvolved in politics and certainly as uninvolved in rebellion." In Antiquities and Life, which have the same viewpoint and were written after the revolt against Rome had receded farther into the past, "Josephus was less cautious and therefore much source material, which indicated Pharisaic involvement in politics and even in rebellion, found its way into these books" ("Josephus and Nicolaus on the Pharisees," in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 14 [1983], p. 169).

(88–98) and 1.5, 2–3 (110–114); in *Antiquities* the parallel parts are 13.13, 5–13.14, 2 (372–383) and 13.15, 5–13.16, 2 (398–415). In both works the historical sequence under discussion begins with a notice that after a number of battles against external foes,[19] the Jewish populace revolted against Alexander, taking the opportunity afforded by a festival when many of them had congregated at the temple. In *Ant.* 13.13, 5 (372), where the Latin text names the holiday as the festival of tabernacles,[20] the historian fills out the sparse givens of *War* by relating the incident of the citrons with which the crowd pelted the high priest Jannaeus as he was about to officiate at the altar. Neither source names who the opponents were, other than calling them Jannaeus's own Jewish compatriots. Alexander was able to quash the uprising only through the use of his mercenary forces, an exercise that cost some six thousand Jews their lives.

After this incident, troubles continued as the ruler exhausted the nation's human and financial resources through his incessant wars.[21] The internal opposition to him must have been strong and widespread because over a six-year period more than 50,000 Jews are said to have fallen victim to him (*War* 1.4, 4 [91]; *Ant.* 13.13, 5 [376]). When Jannaeus saw that his heavyhanded approach aroused only more hatred for him, he is supposed to have tried more conciliatory tactics, though the result was the hardly what he intended: "But his change of policy and inconsistency of character only aggravated their hatred; and when he inquired what he could do to pacify them, they replied, 'Die; even death would hardly reconcile us to one guilty of your enormities.' They simultaneously appealed for aid to Demetrius, surnamed the Unready. Hopes of aggrandizement brought from him a prompt response. Demetrius arrived with an army, and the Jews joined their allies in the neighborhood of Sichem" (*War* 1.4, 4 [92]; cf. *Ant.* 13.13, 5 [376]). Again we should note that the opponents are not assigned a specific name; they are simply "the Jews."

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[19] See Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, vol. 1, pp. 220–221.

[20] R. Marcus, *Josephus VII Jewish Antiquities Books XII–XIV* (Cambridge and London, 1966), p. 413, n. d. Citations from *Antiquities* are from this volume, while those from *War* are from H. Thackeray, *Josephus II The Jewish War Books I–III* (Cambridge and London, 1976).

[21] As Schürer commented, Jannaeus "was almost continuously involved in foreign and internal wars for the most part deliberately provoked by him" (*The History of the Jewish People*, vol. 1, p. 220).

Although Demetrius defeated Jannaeus in the ensuing battle, Josephus says that his Jewish allies soon abandoned the Seleucid monarch and that Alexander, who had fled to the hills, was joined by six thousand Jews who felt sorry for him. There is no reason to think that these six thousand were the same or even some of the same soldiers who had joined Demetrius and then left him. While these circumstances induced Demetrius to leave Judea, they did not improve relations between Jannaeus and sizable parts of the Jewish population. Josephus tells of continued strife, with Alexander eventually killing large numbers of his enemies and confining the rest of them in a single city (identified differently in the two sources): "having subdued this town, he brought them up to Jerusalem as prisoners. So furious was he that his savagery went to the length of impiety. He had eight hundred of his captives crucified in the midst of the city, and their wives and children butchered before their eyes, while he looked on, drinking, with his concubines reclining beside him. Such was the consternation of the people that, on the following night, eight thousand of the hostile faction fled beyond the pale of Judaea; their exile was terminated only by Alexander's death." (*War* 1.4, 6 [97–98]; see *Ant.* 13.14, 2 [380])[22]

In *Antiquities* Josephus explains more fully why Jannaeus responded with such rage and cruelty to these opponents. In neither book does he name the foes,[23] although in *Antiquities* he says they were among the most powerful of the rebels. He does, however, associate them specifically with the invitation to and invasion by Demetrius:

> This was the revenge he took for the injuries he had suffered; but the penalty he exacted was inhuman for all that, even though he had, as was natural, gone through very great hardships in the wars he had fought against them, and had finally found himself in danger of losing both his life and his throne, for they were not satisfied to carry on the struggle by themselves but brought foreigners as well, and at last reduced him to the necessity of surrendering to the king of the Arabs the territory which he had conquered in Moab and Galaaditis

[22] On this section in *War*, see J. Neusner, *From Politics to Piety*, pp. 51–52.

[23] L.I. Levine argues that Josephus, with an eye toward his Roman readers, purposely did not identify Jannaeus's opponents as Pharisees so as not to mention them specifically in connection with rebels and people who undermine the national order ("The Political Struggle between Pharisees and Sadducees in the Hasmonean Period" in A. Oppenheimer, U. Rappaport, and M. Stern, eds., *Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period: Abraham Schalit Memorial Volume* [Jerusalem, 1980], p. 69 [Hebrew]).

> and the strongholds therein, in order that he might not aid the Jews in the war against him; and they committed countless other insulting and abusive acts against him. (*Ant.* 13.14, 2 [381–382])[24]

If our evidence ended here, we would have to agree that Josephus does not supply enough information to allow us to identify as Pharisees the eight hundred whom Alexander had crucified. They were sworn enemies of Jannaeus, with little more being said about them. From this it would also follow that we would lack sufficient warrant for saying that the seekers of smooth things in the Qumran texts are Pharisees, since the inference is largely based on identifying the eight hundred crucified men as Pharisees. But there is more in the sequel to Josephus's story.

Both *War* and *Antiquities* devote the next sections to other events in Jannaeus's reign that are not relevant to our subject; we reach the pertinent parts at the point where the narrative deals with the succession to Alexander. The account in *War* is again briefer. Here Josephus chides Alexandra, Jannaeus's wife and successor, for her excessive reliance on the Pharisees who rose to great power during her reign (1.5, 2 [110–12]). As an example of the Pharisees' authority while she ruled he mentions the case of Diogenes whom they executed. He was "a distinguished man who had been a friend of Alexander;" this man they accused "of having advised the king to crucify his eight hundred victims. They further urged Alexandra to make away with the others who had instigated Alexander to punish those men; and as she from superstitious motives always gave way, they proceeded to kill whomsoever they would. The most eminent of the citizens thus imperiled sought refuge with Aristobulus . . ." (1.5, 3 [113–114]). So in this section we have explicit testimony that Pharisees were the ones concerned to punish those who had advised Jannaeus to kill the eight hundred. This is not the same as saying the eight hundred were Pharisees, but at least the Pharisees felt some responsibility for affording them belated revenge.[25]

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[24] On this addition to the *War* account and its significance, see Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees*, pp. 247–248. He thinks the passage comes from Josephus, not a source, and that it expresses the idea that what Jannaeus "did was wrong but, to some degree, understandable in the circumstances" (p. 248).

[25] See A. Baumgarten, "Seekers after Smooth Things," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 858. E. Sanders shows from various details in the stories from the time of John Hyrcanus to that of Alexandra that the opponents of Jannaeus ". . .

Antiquities again supplements the brief account in *War*. In his later work Josephus adds a deathbed discussion between Alexander and Alexandra, during which the king urged her to allow the Pharisees greater power in her administration.[26] The issue was how she could retain the throne for herself and their children, when the nation was so hostile to him (as she pointed out). He said that she should not only capture fortresses but also "she should yield a certain amount of power to the Pharisees, for if they praised her in return for this sign of regard, they would dispose the nation favourably toward her. These men, he assured her, had so much influence with their fellow-Jews that they could injure those whom they hated and help those to whom they were friendly; for they had the complete confidence of the masses when they spoke harshly of any person, even when they did so out of envy; and he himself, he added, had come into conflict with the nation because these men had been badly treated by him" (13.15, 5 [401–402]). Here Jannaeus confesses late in life that he had mistreated the Pharisees and that his miscalculation had led to the troubles he had experienced with his own people. The Pharisees, as he understood the situation, were the cause of the revolts and unrest.

To this advice King Alexander added another interesting suggestion, one concerning the treatment of his body. "'And so,' he said, 'when you come to Jerusalem, send for their [= the Pharisees'] partisans [text: soldiers],[27] and showing them my dead body, permit them, with every sign of sincerity, to treat me as they please, whether they wish to dishonour my corpse by leaving it unburied because of the many injuries they have suffered at my hands, or in their anger wish to offer my dead body any other form of indignity'" (13.15, 5 [403]). The plan worked: Alexandra turned his body over to the

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included the Pharisees, probably as their leaders." (*Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* [London and Philadelphia, 1992], p. 382) In the same place he adds that the seekers of smooth things in Pesher Nahum are Pharisees.

[26] On the deathbed plan, see Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees*, pp. 248–254. Again he thinks the language of Jannaeus's speech is anti-Pharisaic and pro-Hasmonean and hence probably comes from Josephus, not Nicolaus of Damascus (p. 250). Or, as he puts it: "Josephus must have formulated (or freely invented) Alexander's deathbed speech." This is hardly the only way of reading the scene. Neusner writes: "The version in Antiquities of the Pharisees-in-power story is strikingly revised in favor of the Pharisees . . ." (*From Politics to Piety*, p. 60); see also his comments on p. 63).

[27] On the textual problem, see Marcus, *Josephus VII*, 431 n.a.

Pharisees (we do not read about what they did with it), and they supported her, even praising her departed husband (13.16, 1 [405–406]).

This bizarre story about Alexander's corpse is what in my opinion tips the scales in favor of identifying the eight hundred men whom Alexander Jannaeus had crucified as Pharisees. The argument goes this way: Alexander had mistreated the bodies of the crucified men; this is the most specific statement about abusing the bodies of his enemies because about all of the others we learn only of their deaths, not how they died. Now he was allowing fellow Pharisees to avenge his brutality against their colleagues by turning over his corpse to them, to be treated however they chose. The gesture seems to be a case of quid pro quo: surviving Pharisees were invited to mistreat Jannaeus's body as he had abused the bodies of the eight hundred Pharisees whom he hanged alive.

Saldarini and others have been correct to urge caution here because, as they have pointed out, Josephus never does explicitly call the eight hundred who were crucified *Pharisees*; that point has perhaps not been appreciated sufficiently in the literature. Saldarini's reminder that we should not limit our reconstructions of Jewish divisions to the three groups mentioned by Josephus is also a useful one, just as we should remember that we do not know what membership in one of the groups may have involved at this time or how loosely or precisely such terms were used.

In a case like this one, we must ask the question of historicity. Did the deathbed conversation between Jannaeus and Alexandra take place and did it contain the advice about the Pharisees, including the suggestion that she transfer his body to them? After all, Josephus says nothing about this in *War*; it appears only in *Antiquities* in which the treatment of the Pharisees may be more highly tendentious. Also, speeches, as we know, provided the ancient historian with rich opportunities for invention and even mischief.

We cannot, of course, prove that Jannaeus gave Alexandra the advice Josephus credits to him. But it is reasonable to think that something of the sort occurred because of the sequel. The Pharisees, according to both *War* and *Antiquities*, became dominant in Alexandra's regime and took energetic steps to punish those involved in crucifying the eight hundred victims. We have no proof that the king's corpse was given to the Pharisees, but their drastic switch of allegiance—from all-out opposition to Alexander to ardent support of

Alexandra—must have had some cause. If the ones who tried to avenge the eight hundred were indeed Pharisees (as the sources assert), we have some reason for thinking the eight hundred were fellow Pharisees. If the story about Alexander's body is authentic (as *Antiquities*, our only source for details about the transfer of power to Alexandra, attests), then the case becomes that much stronger.

There are other reasons for identifying the *dwr y h lqwt* in the five Qumran texts as Pharisees,[28] but the events to which Pesher Nahum alludes in passages where it uses the epithet and the implication of the account, especially in *Antiquities*, supply the most weighty data. As far as our evidence permits us to go, we have reason for thinking the eight hundred victims of crucifixion were Pharisees and that by implication *dwr y h lqwt* is a Qumran code name for Pharisees. We might like to have more data, but what we have points clearly in that direction.

[28] I have attempted to set these out in my essay, "Those Who Look for Smooth Things, Pharisees, and Oral Law," in S. Paul, R. Kraft, L. Schiffman, and W. Fields, eds., *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (Leiden and Boston, 2003), pp. 465–477. An older and very thorough treatment of the subject, with added attention to the connection between other scroll epithets and the Essenes and Sadducees, is D. Flusser, "Pharizäer, Sadduzäer und Essener im Pesher Nahum" in K. Grözinger, N. Ilg, H. Lichtenberger, G.-W. Nebe, and H. Pabst, eds., *Qumran* (Darmstadt, 1981), pp. 121–166 (a translation of his "פרושים צדוקים ואסיים בפשר נחום" in *Essays in Jewish History and Philology in Memory of Gedaliahu Alon* [Tel Aviv, 1970], pp. 133–168).

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JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY IN THE BEGINNING

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THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS AND THE SCROLLS

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Anthony Saldarini, a learned scholar of the highest integrity, did much to advance the understanding of the relationship between earliest Christianity and the Jewish matrix from which it emerged. This essay in his memory contributes to one part of that larger subject by reviewing proposals that have been made for relating the text of the Epistle to the Hebrews to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, an anonymous early Christian homily, exhorts a Christian community, beset by external opposition (10:32–34; 13:13) and perhaps losing some of its initial zeal (10:25, 39), to renewed fidelity, inspired by the fidelity of the faithful Son and High Priest, Jesus Christ (12:1–3).[1] Hebrews combines warnings of impending judgment[2] and positive exhortations[3] to endure and witness with fidelity. A vision of the "last days" (1:12), bounded on the one side by the death and exaltation of Jesus (2:9) and, on the other, by an

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[1] For detailed discussion of the text, see Harold W. Attridge, *Hebrews* (Philadelphia, 1987), with earlier bibliography. More recently, see the commentaries by Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Hebrews," in Carol Newsom and Sharon Ringe, eds., *The Women's Bible Commentary* (Louisville, 1992), pp. 364–368; Paul Ellingworth, The *Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids and Carlisle, 1993); Erich Grässer, *An die Hebräer* (Zurich and Vluyn, 1990–); idem, *Aufbruch und Verheissung: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Hebräerbrief zum 65. Geburtstag mit einer Bibliographie des Verfassers* (Berlin and New York, 1992); Harald Hegermann, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (Berlin, 1988); William L. Lane, *Hebrews* (Waco, 1991); Thomas G. Long, *Hebrews* (Louisville, 1997); Hans-Friedrich Weiss, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (Göttingen, 1991); Craig Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York, 2001).

Important recent studies on Hebrews include: Nello Casalini, *Dal simbolo alla realta: l'espiazione dall'Antica alla Nuova Alleanza secondo* Ebr 9,1–14: *una proposta esegetica* (Jerusalem, 1989); David A. DaSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Atlanta, 1995); Carlos Zesati Estrada, *Hebreos* 5,7–8: *estudio historico-esegetico* (Rome, 1990); George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-linguistic Analysis* (Leiden, 1994); Marie E. Isaacs, *Sacred Space: An Approach to the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Sheffield, 1992); Barnabas Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge, 1991); John M. Scholar, *Proleptic Priests: Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Sheffield, 1991).

[2] Heb. 2:1–4; 4:1–2; 6:4–8; 10:26–31; 12:12–17; 12:25–29.

[3] Heb. 4:11; 4:14–16; 6:9–12; 10:19–25; 11:1–12:11.

imminent day of reckoning (10:25), grounds the paraenetic program. Within that temporal frame stand the addressees, an unknown community of believers (3:1; 4:14; 6:4; 10:32) perhaps located in Rome, less likely in Jerusalem or a city of the Greek east.[4] The homilist's vision describes the reality of their situation, a reality that sustains and gives substance to their faithful hope (11:1).

The homilist builds his literary mosaic with stones taken from the Scriptures, clearly in their Greek form.[5] He knits them together with devices familiar form the rhetorical tradition,[6] both on the surface, where figures of speech such as alliteration and assonance embellish the discourse,[7] and at the level of structure, where devices such as *synkrisis* or comparison are used to organize large sections of an exercise of epideictic oratory.[8]

The resulting encomium focuses on the person and work of Christ. In a creative application of various early Christian traditions,[9] the author portrays the eternal Son (1:3), enfleshed in order to perfect[10] his human brethren (2:10–11), and exalted, in the language of Psalm 110, to heavenly glory at God's right hand (1:3).[11] The process of perfecting begins with Christ's death, understood by Hebrews to be

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[4] For discussion of the options, see Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 9–13. Lane (*Hebrews*, pp. li–lxvi) makes a vigorous argument for a Roman destination.

[5] Reliance on a Greek form of the scriptures is in general clear from the conformity of the text to the LXX. For instance at 1:7, Hebrews cites Ps. 104:4 in a form different from that found at Qumran. See Bruce, "Hebrews or Essenes," p. 219; Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 45. That Greek is the language of composition is abundantly clear from Heb. 4:3–5, where an exegetical argument, like the Rabbinic *qal wahomer*, depends on the similarity between τὴν κατάπαυσιν μου "my rest" in Ps. 95 and καὶ κατέπαυσεν ὁ θεός "and God rested" in Gen. 2:2. The association is impossible in Hebrew, where the terms are מנוחתי for "my rest" and וישבת for "and he rested."

[6] The rhetorical sophistication of Hebrews is widely recognized. For a recent comprehensive treatment, along with a novel analysis of the sources of Hebrews, see Paolo Garuti, O.P., *Alle origini dell' omiletica cristiana: La lettera agli Ebrei: Note di analysi retorica* (Jerusalem, 1995).

[7] The *incipit* is a prime example of both: *polymeros kai polytropos palai*, etc.

[8] Thus the comparisons of Christ and the angels (chaps. 1–2), Christ and Moses (chaps. 3–4), Christ and Aaron (chap. 5), Christ and Melchizedek (chap. 7).

[9] For an analysis of the traditions underlying Hebrews, see William R.G. Loader, *Sohn und Hoherpriester: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Christologie des Hebräerbriefes* (Neukirchen, 1981), and Mikeal C. Parsons, "Son and High Priest: A Study in the Christology of Hebrews," in *The Evangelical Quarterly* 60 (1988), pp. 195–216.

[10] On the theme of perfection, see David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the "Epistle to the Hebrews"* (Cambridge, 1982).

[11] Allusions to the motif of enthronement and Ps. 110:1 recur at 1:13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.

a sacrifice with two interrelated functions.[12] Foreshadowed by the rituals of Yom Kippur, it provides effective atonement for sin by cleansing consciences from guilt (9:14). At the same time, it inaugurates the "new covenant" promised by Jeremiah (8:7–13; 10:1–10). Using conceits inspired both by Jewish speculative traditions and by Platonic philosophy[13] the homilist suggests that the new covenant guarantees believers access to ultimate reality, the realm where Christ's sacrifice is truly consummated (9:23–27), the sphere where hearts are submitted in obedience to God (10:8–10). Christ's sacrifice makes possible a relationship with God (10:19), while providing the ultimate[14] model of how to live in fidelity to the divine call (12:1–3), accepting suffering, boldly proclaiming what God has done, and relying on a firm hope that the divine promises will be fulfilled.[15]

Hebrews and the History of Scrolls Research

Such, in brief, is this "word of exhortation" (13:22),[16] written in an elegant Greek style, which celebrates the work of the Messiah in

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[12] On the key themes of Hebrews 8–10, see John Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge, 1992).

[13] James W. Thompson, *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Washington, 1982), highlights the philosophical categories deployed by Hebrews, but Hebrews remains rhetoric, not philosophy. Debates about the relationship between eschatology and philosophy in the conceptual world of Hebrews appear frequently in modem scholarship. The resemblance of Hebrews to Philo, stressed by Ceslas Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (2 vols.; Paris, 1952–1953), was criticized by Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden, 1970). More recent attempts to find philosophy in Hebrews find a critical response in L.D. Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought* (Cambridge, 1990). Some of the critical acumen in these debates is misplaced. The homilist playfully exploits element from different conceptual schemes; his aims are rhetorical not analytical; his methods evocative and affective, not definitive and expository.

[14] The list of the exemplars of faith in chap. 11 provides a complex portrait of the, but the chief example is clearly Christ. On the rhetoric of this list, see Pamela Eisenbaum, *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in its Literary Context* (Atlanta, 1997).

[15] For the motif of the divine promised eschatological salvation, cf. 1:14; 4:1; 6:13–20; 11:17–22. In one of the text's complex thematic conceits, these promises are part of the "inheritance" of believers (1:14; 9:15), embedded in the "testament" (διαθήκη) that is the "covenant" (διαθήκη) inaugurated by Christ's death (9:15). His death validates the testament (9:16–17), and his position at God's right hand makes him a reliable guarantor (7:22) of its promised contents.

[16] The term may be a technical designation of a synagogue homily. Cf. Acts 13:15, where the elders of the synagogue at Perge invite Paul to deliver such an

order to inspire the faithful to remain resolute members of a covenant community. While the homily's rhetorical style seems to belong to world far different from that of the Scrolls, there are intriguing parallels.[17] The prominence given in Hebrews to the notion of the new covenant as prophesied by Jeremiah is analogous to the designation of the self-designation of the community of the *Damascus Document*. Both Hebrews and the Scrolls make much of priesthood and Temple, and both express interest in such figures as angels and Melchizedek. Stimulated by such parallels, some scholars in the early days of Scrolls research posited a substantial connection between the Scrolls and Hebrews.[18] Some even suggested a direct relationship, with Hebrews aiming to convert Essenes.[19] Kosmala's rather forced and artificial interpretation of passages that presume a Christian commitment[20] on the part of the addressees convinced few.[21] The contemporary scholarly consensus holds that the Scrolls do illuminate in a significant way aspects of the general Jewish milieu out of which Christianity, including the Greek-speaking variety evidenced in Hebrews, emerged, but that there is no direct literary dependence between this bit of Christian rhetoric and the Scrolls.[22] Most scholars would also agree that there are analogies between the community of the Scrolls and the early Christian movement, occasioned by the common sectarian situation and eschatological orientation. The consensus is largely correct, although the publication of scrolls in the last decade has added important details to the picture.

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address after the reading of the Torah in the Sabbath service. Cf. Harold W. Attridge, "New Covenant Christology in an Early Christian Homily," in *Quarterly Review* 8 (1988), pp. 89–108, and idem, "Paraenesis in a Homily (λόγος τῆς παρακλήσεως)," in *Semeia* 50 (1990), pp. 211–226.

[17] For the history of the discussion, see Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 43–66.

[18] Yigael Yadin, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 4 (1958), pp. 36–55; Celas Spicq, "L'Épître aux Hébreux: Apollos, Jean-Baptiste, les Hellénistes et Qumran," in *Revue de Qumran* 1 (195 and 59), pp. 36–55.

[19] Hans Kosmala, *Hebräer-Essneer-Christen* (Leiden, 1959).

[20] Cf., e.g., the appeals to hold on to or maintain the "confession:" Heb. 3:1; 4:14; 10:23.

[21] For critical responses to early theories of a connection, see F.F. Bruce, "'To the Hebrews' or 'To the Essenes'?" in *New Testament Studies* 9 (1962–1963), pp. 217–232, I. Coppens, "Les affinités qumrániennes de l'épître aux Hébreux," in *NRT* 84 (1962), pp. 128–241, 257–282, and Herbert Braun, *Qumran und das Neue Testament* (2 vols.; Tübingen, 1966), vol. 1, pp. 241–278; vol. 2, pp. 181–184.

[22] See the review of scholarship by Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 43–66.

Angels and the Son

After an elaborate exordium (Heb. 1:1–4), Hebrews moves to the first of several comparisons between Christ and Biblical figures. A catena of scriptural citations, primarily from the Psalms, demonstrates Christ's superiority to the angels (1:5–13). The catena is formally similar to the messianic florilegia among the Scrolls, 4QFlorilegium (4Q174) and 4QTestimonia (4Q175). The former even cites two texts that appear in Heb. 1:5: 2: Sam. 7:14 and Psalm 2.[23] Hence, it is likely that Hebrews draws on a traditional form and perhaps even a specific collection of proof-texts. Yet Hebrews has developed many inherited materials in its own way. The citations, for example, of Deut. 32:43 (LXX) in v. 6 and Ps. 103:4 (LXX) in v. 7 seem specifically related to the comparison of Christ and the angels and thus are part of the argument that Hebrew is making.

The significance of the comparison has long intrigued commentators. Attempts to construe Hebrews as a polemic against a Christology or piety that reverences angels founder on the lack of explicit polemic with these issues.[24] Such construals fail to recognize the text's rhetorical strategy. Christ is not compared to something denigrated but to something valued and revered, the high status of which redounds to his glory.[25] That Christ's exaltation made him superior to all heavenly

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[23] 4QFlor 1.7–10: "And as for what he said to David, (citation of 2 Sam. 7:11, it refers to this)," that he will obtain for them rest from all the sons of Belial, those who make them fall, to destr[oy them for their s]ins, when the come with the plans of Belial to make the s[ons of] light fall, and to plot against them wicked plans so that they are trapped by Belial in their guilty error," and (citation of 2 Sam. 7:12–14) This (refers to the) "branch of David," who will arise with the Interpreter of the law who [will rise up] in XI[on in] the last days." The text later cites Ps. 2: 1 and offers an interpretation of the nations rising against Yahweh and his anointed. It does not cite, as does Hebrews, Ps. 2:7. For a comparison of Hebrews and the text from Qumran, see Herbert W. Bateman, IV, "Two First-Century Messianic Uses of the OT: Heb. 1:5–13 and 4QFlor 1.1–19," in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 38 (1995), pp. 11–28.

[24] E.g., Thomas Manson, "The Problem of the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 32 (1949), pp. 109–134, and Robert Jewett, *Letter to Pilgrims: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York, 1981), pp. 5–13, both of whom posit a situation similar to what confronted Paul or Pseudo-Paul at Colossae. For discussion of some earlier theories, see Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews,* pp. 45–46, who notes some of the marked differences between Hebrews and the angelology of the scrolls. The designation of angels as "sons of heaven" in 1QS 4.22; 11.8; 1QH 3.22, and as "gods" in 4QDeut 32:43 and 11QMelch 10, citing Ps. 82:1, bespeaks a higher regard for angels than that of Hebrews.

[25] For treatment of the rhetoric of status in Hebrews, see David DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, 2000).

powers was, moreover, a common early Christian affirmation.[26]

While polemic is unlikely, the argument of the first chapter suggests that author and addressees shared a piety in which angels played a role. The significance of such piety, amply attested in the Scrolls, has become increasingly apparent in recent years. According to 1QSa 2.3–10, the community was to maintain purity, while admission to the assembly was denied to those "defiled in his flesh, paralyzed in his feet or in his hands, lame, blind, deaf, dumb or defiled in his flesh with a blemish." The reason for the prohibition is the presence of angels in the assembly: "He unites their assembly to the sons of the heavens in order (to form) the council of the Community and a foundation of the building of holiness to be an everlasting plantation" (1QS 11:8).[27] The community's sense that it was worshipping with the angels is in evidence in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Qserek Sirôt Olat Hashshabat),[28] which repeatedly summon the heavenly powers to worship.[29] Reflexes of the piety that describes the worship of the "holy ones," "sovereign princes," and "gods" may appear not only in the opening chapter of Hebrews, but also in its description of the eschatological reality to which its addresses are called. The heavenly Jerusalem in Heb. 12:22 is first characterized by its "myriads of angels in festive assembly." The "sacrifice of praise" that the addressees are called upon to offer (13:15) is of a piece with what the angels proclaim on high.[30]

Designations of the heavenly beings in the Scrolls in general, and particularly in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, vary, but two are worth noting. The heavenly powers include the "seven priesthoods in the wonderful sanctuary" as well as the "angels of the king in their won-

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[26] Cf. Phil. 2: 10; 1 Pet. 3:22.

[27] Cf. also 1QSa 2.8–9, "for angels of holiness are among their congregation." Angels are not only peaceful creatures; according to 1QM 7.6: "the holy angels are together with their armies."

[28] See Carol Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice; A Critical Edition* (Atlanta, 1985).

[29] 4QShirShabb[d] [4Q 403] 1.30–31; cf. 1.43; 2.18; 4Q404 frag. 4; 4Q405 frag 8. The translations throughout are, unless otherwise indicated, those of Florentino Garcia Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated; The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden and Grand Rapids, 1992).

[30] The notion of a "sacrifice of praise" is familiar to the worshippers of the Scrolls. Cf. 1QS 9.4–5: "the offering of the lips in compliance with the decree will be like the pleasant aroma of justice and the correctness of behavior will be acceptable like a freewill offering." Cf. 1QS 10.5–6.

derful residences."[31] If heavenly beings offer "sacrifices of praise" and function as priests propitiating the divine will for penitent sinners,[32] it is hardly surprising that they should be worshipping in the heavenly Tabernacle. The image, prominent in Hebrews 6:19, 8:4–5, 9:11–12, 24, and 10:20 is developed in a complex and evocative way, but it has its roots in Jewish literature of the Second Temple period.[33] Two passages from the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice illustrate the motif. 4QShirShabb[d] [4Q403] 2.7–16 portrays the activity of the angels in the heavenly inner sanctuary or *debir*:

> The spirits of the holy of holies [. . .] 8 of the holy of holies, spirits of the gods, eternal vision [. . .] 9 and the spirits of the gods, forms of forms of flames of fire around [. . .] 10 wonderful spirits. And the tabernacle of greater height, the glory of his kingdom, the *debir* [. . .] 11 And make holy the seven august holy ones. And the voice of the blessing of the chiefs of his *debir* [. . .] 12 And the voice of the blessing {is heard} is glorified when the gods hear it, and the foundations of [. . .] 13 of the blessing. And all the decorations of the *debir* hurry with wonderful hymns . . . [. . .] 14 wonder, *debir* to *debir*, with the sound of crowds of holy multitudes. And all their decorations [. . .] 15 And the chariots of his *debir* praise together, and his *cherubim* and *ofanim* bless wonderfully [. . .] 16 chiefs of the structure of the gods.

The document's fragmentary character prevents a totally clear picture from emerging, but part of the text's effect is no doubt derived

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[31] 4QShirShabb[a] [4Q403] 2.22–23; cf. 11Q17 2.5 for angels, and 4.1–5 for the priestly accouterments. The notion that angels are priests appears also in the *Songs of the Sage*: 4QShir[b] [4Q511] frag. 35, 3–4: "Among the holy ones, God makes some holy for himself like an everlasting sanctuary, and there will be purity amongst those purified. And they shall be priests, his holy people, his army and his servants, the angels of his glory." See the discussion of the text in André Caquot, "Le service des anges," in *Revue de Qumran* 13 (1988), pp. 421–429.

[32] 4QShirShabb[a] [4Q400] frag. 1, 1.16: "And they shall appease his will, in favour of those converted from sin," cited by Carol Newsom, "'He Has Established for Himself Priests:' Human and Angelic Priesthood in the Qumran Sabbath *Shirot*," in Lawrence E. Schiffman, ed., *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Sheffield, 1990), pp. 104–113, esp. 105. See also Darrell I. Pursiful, The *Cultic Motif in the Spirituality of Hebrews* (Lewiston, 1993).

[33] See Hans Bietenhard, *Die himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Spätjudentum* (Tübingen, 1951); Aelred Cody, O.S.B., *Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy in the Epistle to the Hebrews; The Achievement of Salvation in the Epistle's Perspectives* (St. Meinrad, 1960); and Craig Koester, *The Dwelling of God; The Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature and the New Testament* (Washington, 1989), esp. pp. 26–40. Apart from the Scrolls, prominent attestations of the motif are in 1 Enoch 14:10–20; 7: Levi 3:2–4; 2 Enoch 55:2; 2 Baruch 4:2–6.

from the complexity of the imagery, designed to convey a sense of the joy of those who serve in heaven's innermost sanctuary.

The second text describing a heavenly tabernacle, 4QshirShabb[f] [4Q405] frags. 20–22, 7–8, clearly displays the influence of Ezekiel 1:

> and exalt him . . . the glory in the te[nt of the God] knowledge. The cherubim lie prostrate before him, and bless when they rise. The voice of a divine silence is heard, 8 and there is the uproar of excitement when they raise their wings, the voice of a divine silence. They bless the image of the throne-chariot (which is above the vault of the cherubim 9 and they sing [the splen]dour of the shining vault (which is) beneath the seat of his glory.

Whatever the inspiration for the image of the heavenly tabernacle in Hebrews, the text relies on generic presuppositions about the "heavenly tabernacle" evidenced in these passages from the Scrolls.[34] Heaven is the "true" realm in which real worship takes place (Heb. 8:1), where the real high priest, better than any angel, consummates his atoning sacrifice (9:11–14). Yet Hebrews relies on such associations only to subvert them.[35] The true sacrifice takes place by submission to God's will in a body (Heb. 10:10); access to the real presence of God is through a curtain of flesh (Heb. 10:19).

Portraits of angelic priests serving in the heavenly Tabernacle/Temple may be relevant to the roots of Hebrews' Christology. It is remotely possible that the initial comparison between Christ and the angels forestalls an inference from the later comparison with Melchizedek that Christ is simply another priestly angel. If so, the point is subtle. Not apologetics, but the celebration of the messianic event dominates the initial comparison.

Parallels between Hebrews and the recipients of the letter of Paul or Pseudo-Paul to Colossae have often been suggested, but such

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[34] There are other allusions to the tabernacle in the Scrolls, unrelated to the notion of a heavenly tabernacle: CD 7.12–20; 4QDibHama [4Q504] frag. 2, 4.2–12. 1QH 20 (Sukenik 12).2–3 has a fragmentary reference to a "dwelling" (מצון) and a tent, either "his tent" (אהלו) or "my tent" (אהלי), which some have construed to be an allusion to a heavenly tabernacle, but too little remains to be certain. On these texts, see Koester, *Dwelling*, pp. 26–40.

[35] The playfulness of Hebrews in dealing with traditional imagery has caused consternation among commentators, particularly about how the notion of the heavenly tabernacle is to be construed. For treatment of these issues, see Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 222–224, and Koester, *Dwelling*, pp. 152–183.

suggestions usually amount to explaining *obscurum per obscurius*. Whatever the precise problem with angels at Colossae,[36] both texts emerge from contexts in which Jewish traditions about heavenly worship played a role. The scrolls provide abundant attestation of such traditions.

Messianism in the Scrolls and in Hebrews: Son and High Priest

The comparison between the Messiah and the angels in the first chapter is ultimately a way of emphasizing the exalted character of the Son, seated, in the words of Ps. 110:1, "at the right hand of the majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). The roots of this complex portrait clearly lie in Jewish traditions.[37] It was hardly unusual, therefore, that the Scrolls, which have contributed significantly to the illumination of the complex messianic expectations of the late Second Temple period,[38] should be drawn into the discussion of Hebrews.

At one level,[39] the catena of the first chapter describes the process whereby the Messiah achieves his heavenly status, with the designation "Son" (Heb. 1:5) and an eternal throne (Heb. 1:8–9). The image of exaltation and heavenly enthronement was an important way for the early Christian movement to express its conviction that Jesus had triumphed over death.[40] The Jewish roots of such notions

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[36] For some suggestions, see Harold W. Attridge, "On Becoming an Angel: Rival Baptismal Theologies at Colossae," in Lukas Bomlann, Kelly Del Tredici, and Angela Standhartinger, eds., *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays honoring Dieter Georgi* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 481–498.

[37] From the vast literature on the Christology of Hebrews, see especially William R.G. Loader, *Sohn und Hohepriester; Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Christologie des Hebräerbriefes* (Neukirchen–Vluyn, 1981) and Mathias Rissi, *Die Theologie des Hebräerbriefs; Ihre Verankerung in der Situation des Verfassers und seiner Leser* (Tübingen, 1987), pp. 45–92.

[38] In general, see Jacob Neusner, William S. Green, and E. Frerichs, eds., *Judaism and Their Messiahs* (Cambridge, 1987); James H. Charlesworth, *The Messiah* (Minneapolis, 1992); John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star; The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York, 1995).

[39] There is a tension between the affirmation of the exordium (Heb. 1:1–3), that the Son is a primordial emanation from God, the instrument of creation, and the position of the catena (Heb. 1:5–13), which stresses his exaltation. The author may have reread the catena in the light of the Christology of the exordium and then introduced elements such as the introductory comment of v. 6 to allude to the incarnation. See Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 56–58.

[40] Cf., e.g., Rom. 1:2; Phil. 2:6–11; Acts 2:29–36.

in descriptions of ascents to heaven[41] have become increasingly clear. 4Q491 frag. 11,[42] contributes to the picture. It refers to

> a throne of strength in the congregation of the gods above which none of the kings of the East shall sit (4Q491 frag. 11, 1:12)

It also contains the voice of the individual sitting on the throne:

> My glory [is incomparable] and besides me no one is exalted. . . . I reside in the heavens and there is no [. . .] . . . I am counted among the gods and my dwelling is in the holy congregation; [. . .] my desire is not according to the flesh [and] all that is precious to me is in glory [. . .] holy [pl]ace. (4Q491 frag. 11, 13–15)

The speaker boasts that no one resembles him in his glory and, apparently, in his ability to endure suffering and opposition:

> Who [. . .] sorrows like me? And who [. . .] anguish who resembles me? There is no-one. He has been taught, but there is no comparable teaching. [. . .] and who will attack me when I open [my mouth]? And who can endure the flow of my lips? And who will confront me and retain comparison with my judgement? [. . .] For I am counted among the gods, and my glory is with the sons of the king. (4Q491 frag. 11, 1,15–18).

Interpretation of the text and the identity of the speaker have been debated. Baillet originally proposed that the text's "I" was the archangel Michael. Morton Smith argued for reading the hymn as an account of a mystical ascent to heaven, associated with the kind of piety that envisions the community of worshippers involved with a heavenly liturgy.[43] John Collins notes weaknesses in Smith's reading. The text

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[41] James D. Tabor, *Things Unutterable; Paul's Ascent to Paradise in Its Greco-Roman, Judaic and Early Christian Contexts* (Lanham, 1986); John Collins "A Throne in Heavens: Apotheosis in pre-Christian Judaism," in John J. Collins and Michael Fishbane, eds., *Death, Ecstasy and Otherworldly Journeys* (Albany, 1995). For a review of the primary texts, see Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, pp. 136–153. Discussion of such encounters with the angelic world has played a role in recent discussions of the origins of Christology. See Jarl Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord; Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism* (Tübingen, 1985); idem, *The Image of the Invisible God. Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (Göttingen, 1995), and Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts; Angels, Christology and Soteriology* (Tübingen, 1997), pp. 11–17.

[42] First published in M. Baillet, *Qumrân Grotte* 4, *III (4Q482–4Q520)* (DJD 7; Oxford, 1982), pp. 26–30; translation in Garcia Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 117–119. Another copy of the text appears at 4Q471B.

[43] Morton Smith, "Two Ascended to Heaven," in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York, 1991), pp. 290–301.

does not in fact speak of the process of enthronement nor does it give a hint that the one enthroned has ascended to heaven. Collins has argued instead that the text refers to an eschatological priest and teacher seated in heavenly glory.[44] If so, the fragment would provide another interesting parallel between the messianic expectations of the Scrolls and the Christology of Hebrews. Unfortunately, the Scroll remains ambiguous and the identity of its "I" a mystery. At the very least, the text illustrates use of imagery central to the literary and theological program of Hebrews.

The Scrolls know of other eschatological figures cloaked in royal glory. Most impressive no doubt is the so-called "son of God" text, 4QAramaic Apocalypse (4Q246) which speaks of the "throne" of an "eternal king" (4Q246 1.1–2). The description of this individual and his reign evokes elements of the catena in Hebrews:

> He will be called Son of God, and they will call him son of the Most High. Like the sparks of a vision, so will their kingdom be; they will rule several years over the earth and crush everything; a people will crush another people, and a city another city. Until the people of God arises and makes everyone rest from the sword. His kingdom will be an eternal kingdom, and all his paths in truth and upright[tness]. The earth, and all the cities will pay him homage. He is a great god among the gods. He will make war with him; he will place the peoples in his hand and chase away everyone before him. His kingdom will be an eternal kingdom . . .

As in Heb. 1:5, this figure has the title royal "son." The citation of Psalm 45 (LXX 44) in Heb. 1:8 parallels several affirmations of the Qumran text. Like the scroll, it addresses its messianic figure as "God."[45] It also lauds the "righteousness" of the eschatological kingdom, and the eternity of its throne, a theme evoked by the citation of Ps. 101 in Heb. 1:10–12. The fragmentary scroll has more imagery appropriate to a warrior king than does Hebrews, where the only reference to the subjugation of enemies appears in the citation of Ps. 110 (LXX 109):1: in Heb. 1:13.

One final text, 4Q521 7, which portrays the marvels performed in the eschatological age, seats the devout "upon the throne of eternal royalty." Whether there are any messianic overtones here may be doubted.

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[44] Collins, *Scepter and Star*, pp. 147–148.

[45] For the exegetical issues of Heb. 1:8, see Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 58–59.

While the Christ of Hebrews shares characteristics of many portraits of anticipated messiahs of Jewish expectation, he is above all the High Priest of the new covenant. Here too data from the Scrolls has enriched our understanding of the traditions underlying Hebrews. Early discussion focused on the expectation of a priestly messiah of Aaron alongside a royal or Davidic messiah. The *locus classicus* is the reference in 1QS 9.9–11 to the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel. Yadin found here and in related texts the position against which Hebrews developed its distinctive affirmations about Jesus as eschatological high priest.[46] Few scholars followed such a simple path from Qumran to Hebrews.[47] Whatever the relationship between the Scrolls and Hebrews, scholars have also debated the foundation for the comparison itself, the expectations of a dual messianism at Qumran.[48] Grounds for doubt include the presence of "messianic" texts (4Q246, 4Q521, noted above) that speak of a single messiah, and the ambiguous wording of the other major witness to dual messianism, the *Damascus Document*.[49] In order to account for the evidence from the Scrolls, scholars have proposed various developmental theories, none without significant problems.[50] However the Scrolls are related, it is clear, as Collins forcefully argues,[51] that the sectarians who produced them did indeed anticipate that a priestly figure would play a leading role in the drama of the end times. His prominence is clear in the "Messianic rule" of 1QSa [1Q28] 2.12–20, where the priest must bless the banquet before the Messiah of Israel eats. Traces of a priestly messianism may also be found in fragmentary texts. Of particular interest are the intriguing fragments of the *Visions of Amran*, in literary terms a testament of Amram, son of Qahat, son of Levi,

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[46] Yadin, "Dead Sea Scrolls," p. 44.

[47] Among the few to follow Yadin's lead were F.C. Fensham, "Hebrews and Qumran," in *Neotestamentica* 5 (1971), pp. 9–21.

[48] See Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 46–48, citing L. Silberman, "The Two 'Messiahs' of the Manual of Discipline," in *VT5* (1955) 77–82; A.J.B. Higgins, "Priest and Messiah," in *VT* 3 (1953), pp. 321–326; and C.T. Fritsch, "The So-called Priestly Messiah of the Essenes," in *Jaarbericht van het vooraziatsch-Egyptisch genootschap Ex Oriente Lux* 6 (1967), pp. 242–248. More recently, Michael O. Wise and James D. Tabor, "The Messiah at Qumran," in *Biblical Archaeologist Review* (November 1992), pp. 60–65.

[49] A dual messianism was suspected before the discovery of the scrolls on the basis of CD 12.23, 14.19 and 19.10, which refer to "the messiah (sg.) of Aaron and Israel," and CD 20.1, which refers to "a messiah from Aaron and from Israel."

[50] For a review of such theories, see Collins, *Scepter and Star*, pp. 77–83.

[51] Collins, *Scepter and Star*, pp. 74–77.

which probably offers predictions about the Levitical line.[52] One fragment 4Q^{c}Amram^{e}ar [4Q547] frag. 1 speaks about the general importance of priests in this lineage:

> 5 [. . .] great upon the bronze altar [. . .] 6 [. . .] the priest will be exalted among all my sons for ever. Then [. . .] 7 [. . .] and his sons after him for all generations in tru[th] . . .]

4q^{c}Amram^{c} [4Q545], frag. 2, hints at a particularly important priestly figure:

> I will show you the mystery of his service, holy judgment [. . .] 4 holy for him will be all his descendants for all [eternal] generations [. . .] 5 the seventh of the men of His will [and he will] call and he will [. . .] 6 he will choose as eternal priest.

The even more fragmentary 4Q^{c}Armram^{a} [4Q543] frag 3, 1 apparently predicts the heavenly installation of this "eternal priest."

> You will be God, and angel of God will you be cal[led] 2 [. . .] and you will do in this land, and a judge [. . .] 3 [. . .] . . . your name for all [. . .] 4 [. . .] for eternal generations

The special priest may simply be Levi, exalted to heaven as part of his installation as priest, as in *T, Levi* 8.[53] At the very least, these texts illustrate a way of speaking about the eternality of the Levitical priesthood against which the attribution by Hebrews of an eternal priesthood to Christ (Heb. 7:11–19) makes particular sense. It is also remotely possible that the texts allude to the installation of a messianic priest or to the role of an angelic priest, but they remain too fragmentary for certainty.

Other fragmentary texts support the presence in the scrolls of an expectation of an eschatological priest alongside a Davidic warrior. 4QpIsa^{a} [4Q161], for example, after a lengthy description of Is. 11:1–5 and the Shoot of David, notes "with him will go out one of the priests of renown, holding clothes in his hand."[54]

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[52] The preliminary edition was Jozef Milik, "4Q Visions de Amram et une citation d'Origene," in *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* 79 (1972), pp. 77–97. See the treatment of part of the *Visions of ^{c}Amram* in Paul Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchiresa'* (Washington, 1981), pp. 24–36.

[53] See James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; Garden City, 1983–1985), vol. 1, p. 791.

[54] Cf. also 1QpHab 2.7–9 and 4Q285 frag. 5, 3–5, a text related to the War Scroll that prophesies the battle of the "bud of David," perhaps indicates his death,

While at least some Qumran sectarians anticipated a priestly Messiah, perhaps in reaction to the amalgamation of leadership roles by Hasmoneans such as John Hyrcanus,[55] the relationship of such expectations to Hebrews is not transparent. The distinctive features of the image of Jesus as high priest, his unique atoning self sacrifice,[56] his establishment of a new covenant, are not to be found in the allusions to an eschatological priest in the Scrolls. At the same time, the portrait in the Scrolls of the eschatological priest presiding at a festive banquet alongside a royal Messiah displays touches nowhere in evidence in Hebrews. The Scrolls and the Christian homilist no doubt have the same biblical roots (the "anointed priest" of Lev. 4:3, 3, 16; 6:15) for their messianic beliefs, but those roots have grown in different directions. The development of a priestly messianism in Hebrews may at least have been aware of claims made for the priestly line generally, and perhaps for one of its special members.[57]

The Scrolls also provide scattered evidence of other eschatological expectations. Intimations of a "prophet like Moses," based on Deut 18:18, appear in 4QTestimonia (4Q175), which cites the Pentateuchal verse.[58] This figure then is a likely candidate to be the "prophet" mentioned in the passage already cited from 1QS 9,11.[59] This combination might be relevant to the comparison in Hebrews between Jesus and Moses (Heb. 3:1–6).

The expectations in the Scrolls relative to an eschatological prophet or teacher are obscure, and, as George Brooke and John Collins[60]

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and notes that "a priest will command." One prophetic priest, of course, is the Teacher of Righteousness, at least according to 4Q171 3.14–17. On related texts, see Collins, *Scepter and Star*, p. 76.

[55] Collins, *Scepter and Star*, p. 95.

[56] The "Canticle of Michael" discussed above suggests that the enthroned figure, whether angel or priest, met opposition, but he is hardly the self-sacrificing high priest of Hebrews.

[57] The special case of Melchizedek requires separate treatment, but it is obviously related to the concerns of this segment of our enquiry.

[58] The citation appears tightly wedged between Deut. 5:28–29 and Num. 24:15–17, the oracle of Balaam referring to a star and a scepter. These are followed by Deut. 33: 8–11, introduced with the comment, "And about Levi he says." Frag. 6 of 4QFlorilegiom (4Q 174) also cites the passage from Deuteronomy, although it lacks the key verse Deut. 33:10: "They (the descendants of Levi) teach Jacob your ordinances and Israel your law."

[59] So Yadin, "The Dead Sea Scrolls," p. 54. The connection between the citation in 4Q 174 and CD 9.11 is questioned by Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 50.

[60] George Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context* (Sheffield, 1985); Collins, *Scepter and Star*, pp. 103–135.

argue, it is likely that the Scrolls expect the prophetic functions to be fulfilled by a priestly interpreter of the Law, who will "teach justice at the end of day" (CD 6,11).[61] The figure is apparently understood to be the referent of the "star" of Balaam's oracle of Num 24:15–17, a text cited in the Damascus Document (CD 7,18) and in 4QTestimonia (4Q175).

There are formal parallels with Hebrews, where Christ models fidelity (Heb. 12:2–3), and where the covenant that he inaugurates is "written on the heart" (Heb. 8:10, 10:16). Yet a direct connection seems unlikely. Hebrews does not explicitly accord prophetic status to Christ. Like other elements of the scriptures, prophets can be invoked in order to illustrate some aspect that Christ embodies in a fuller or more complete way. Thus they delivered God's word of old (1:1), in a way far inferior to the Son. Moses, as seer (11:26),[62] has prophetic characteristics that are not prominent in Hebrews. Like other prophets and judges (11:32), he is an example of the messiah's fidelity (12:1–4). If elements of a "prophetic" Christology are weak, neither is Christ explicitly said to be a teacher, and certainly not of the Law, to which Hebrews is hostile.[63] It is also interesting that Balaam's oracle, featured in the Scrolls, is nowhere in evidence in Hebrews.

The expectation of an eschatological prophet is a secondary element in the eschatology of the Scrolls. The expectation of some priestly figure or figures plays a larger role, although the focus on that expectation may have shifted during the life of the community. The complex and inventive portrait of an eschatological or heavenly priest in Hebrews uses some of the building blocks of Jewish tradition found in the Scrolls.

Melchizedek in the Scrolls and in Hebrews

The issue of the relationship between the Hebrews' construal of the significance of Jesus and the expectations of the Scrolls emerges with particular intensity around the figure of Melchizedek. Hebrews bases

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[61] See the citation of 4Q 174 above in n. 20.

[62] On the figure of Moses especially in Heb. 11:23–31, and of the midrashic traditions that may be involved here, see Mary Rose D'Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Missoula, 1979).

[63] See the disparaging remarks of Heb. 7:11–12; 8:7, 13; 10:1–4.

its portrait of the heavenly high priest on an application of Psalm 110, the first verse of which early followers of Jesus frequently used to describe his heavenly exaltation.[64] The fourth verse, designating the royal figure a "priest after the order of Melchizedek," when understood as an address to the Messiah, warrants the application of a priestly title. But that warrant carries heavy freight: the meaning of the "order of Melchizedek" (κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ).

The interpretation of the "order of Mechizedek" as a heavenly and eternal reality warrants an understanding of Jesus as a priest who did not have Levitical lineage (7:13–14) and who, moreover, was a very special kind of High Priest. This conceit then grounds the central argument of Hebrews (chaps. 8–10), that Jesus at his death performed a definitive atoning sacrifice in an eternal, and thus "heavenly," realm. Scholars have often suspected that underlying Hebrews' considerable ingenuity may be speculation on the mysterious biblical priest from Salem, whose only scriptural appearances are at Genesis 14 and Psalm 110.

The Scrolls have contributed to the debate the evidence of 11QMelchizedek, an eschatological midrash on Lev. 5:9–13 involving Melchizedek.[65] The fragmentary text attests speculation on the mysterious figure, identifying the biblical priest as one of the Elohim ("divine beings") of Ps. 82:1 and attributing to him an eschatological role. Melchizedek appears first as a liberator in the eschatological jubilee. The midrash bases its scenario upon Lev. 25:13 and Deut. 15:2 (11Qmelch 2.2–3). In fulfillment of the prophecy of Is. 61:1, Melchizedek will inaugurate this blessed time and "proclaim liberty to them, relieving them [of the debt] of all their iniquities"

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[64] On the use of the psalm in early Christianity, see David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville, 1973), and Martin Hengel, "'Setze dich zu meinem Rechten!' Die Inthronisation Christi zur Rechten Gottes und Psalm 110, 1," in Marc Philonenko, ed., *Le Trône de Dieu* (Tübingen, 1993), pp. 108–194.

[65] For the *editio princeps*, see A.S. van der Woude, "Melchisedek als himmlische Erlösergestalt in den neugefundenen eschatologischen Midraschim aus Qumran Höhle XI," in *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 14 (1965), pp. 354–373. For a thorough study of the text, see Kobelski, *Melchizedek*. See also the review of literature in Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 52–60, and in Gareth Lee Cockerill, "Melchizedek or 'King of Righteousness,'" in *EQ* 63 (1991), pp. 305–312. Martin Bodinger, "L'enigme de Melkisedeq," in *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 211 (1994), pp. 297–333, reviews the data and secondary literature on Melchizedek and argues for derivation of the figure from a Canaanite solar deity.

(11QMelch 2.6). Melchizedek also plays a priestly role,[66] effecting atonement appropriate to the Jubilee:

> And this will [happen] in the first week of the jubilee which follows the ni[ne] jubilees. And the day [of atonem]ent is the end of the tenth jubilee in which atonement will be made for all the sons of [God] and for the men of the lot of Melchizedek. (11QMelch 2.6–8)

He plays the role of judge, as described in Ps. 82:1 and Ps. 7:8–9. In that capacity, he:

> will carry out the ven[geance] of God's judgments [on this day, and they shall be freed from the hands] of Belial and from the power of all [the spirits of his lot]. To his aid (shall come) all "the gods of [justice"; he] is the one [who will prevail on this day over] all the sons of God, and he will pre[side over] this [assembly.] (11QMelch 2. 13–14).

Isaianic hues complete the portrait. As the "messenger" of Is. 52:7, he brings good news (11QMelch 2.15–18).[67] In the words of Is. 61:2–3, he is to comfort the afflicted: to do so is "to instruct them in all the ages of the worl[d]" (11QMelch 2.19). Hints of the eschatological priest and teacher encountered in 4Q491 resurface.

The surviving text concludes with another hint of Melchizedek's stature. Is. 52:7, "Saying to Zion: 'Your God rules,"' provides the basis for interpretation. The midrashist first takes "Zion" to refer to a new covenant:

> "[Zi]on" is [the congregation of all the sons of justice, those] who establish the covenant, those who avoid walking [on the pa]th of the people. (11QMelch 2.23–24).

The interpretation continues:

> "Your God" is [. . . Melchizedek, who will fr]ee [them] from the hand of Belial. (11QMelch 2.24–25).

Melchizedek is thus envisioned as a major player in the eschatological drama, combining varied strands of speculation about a salvific

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[66] It is true that Melchizedek is not explicitly designated a priest in 11QMelch. This fact has led some scholars to be hesitant about identifying him as such in this text. See Bodinger, "L'énigme," p. 326.

[67] The "messenger" is also described as "[the ano]inted of the spirit about whom Dan[iel] spoke." The text probably alludes to Dan. 9:25; see Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, p. 21.

figure. As a heavenly priest, judge and teacher, Melchizedek is associated with the eschatological reign of God envisioned as a perfect Jubilee. Whether the Melchizedek of this text is to be identified with some other eschatological figure, such as Michael, known from Qumran, is likely but remains debated.[68] Further evidence of Melchizedek as a priestly angel is found in other fragmentary texts.[69]

The treatment in Hebrews of the figure of Melchizedek displays similarities with the imagery of the Scrolls. Like Melchizedek, Christ the High Priest is enthroned among the angels, and is considered a divine being (1:5; 1:8), however that divinity is to be understood. Moreover, his followers belong to a new covenant and for them he has provided atonement. Yet other features of the midrash are absent. Hebrews does not explicitly draw upon the eschatology of the Jubilee. At most an allusion appears in the notion of sabbatical rest in Heb. 4:11.[70] Unlike the Scrolls, and the Gospels,[71] Hebrews does not involve a proclamation of Isaianic "good news." Neither does Christ as High Priest play a role as eschatological judge. Here again the contrast with early gospel traditions (Mark 13:24–27; Matt. 25:31–46) is of interest. Hebrews knows of a coming judgment, a "day" that draws nigh (Heb. 10:25), but in that final assize it is God who will exact vengeance (10:27–31), God who is the Judge (12:23). Jesus, as High Priest enthroned beside the divine majesty (1:3), serves as a defense attorney, who empathizes with the weakness of sinners (4:15–5:2), an intercessor for those who approach God (7:24), a covenantal mediator (7:22, 12:24), whose blood cries out, like that of Abel, but for mercy.[72]

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[68] Some scholars doubt the association, including Fred L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Cambridge, 1976), and Bodinger, "L'énigme," pp. 325–326. For arguments in favor of the identification, see Kobelski, *Melchizedek*, pp. 71–74, who relies particularly on 4QVisions of Amram^{b} (4Q544), discussed on pp. 26–36, but the key phrase, giving three names (according to Kobelski, Michael, Prince of Light, Melchizedek) of the angelic prince must be restored.

[69] See 4Q401 fr. 11 l 3, published in *DJD* 11 (1998) 205; and 11Q17 ii fr. 3 l. 7, in DJD 23 (1998), p. 270.

[70] On this motif see Judith Hoch Wray, *Rest as a Theological Metaphor in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of Truth: Early Christian Homiletics of Rest* (Atlanta, 1998).

[71] Cf. Matt. 11:2–5; 12:18–21; Luke 4:18–19. Cf. also 4Q52112, which includes, among the works of a messiah, his "preaching good news to the poor." See Collins, *Scepter and Star*, p. 117.

[72] The precise point of the "blood crying out" at Heb. 12:24 is debated, but the other references to the effect of Christ's blood indicate its positive, cleansing, atoning functions. Cf. Heb. 9:14; 10:22.

Most important, Hebrews is not explicitly interested in the figure of Melchizedek and makes no attempt to reduce the mystery around the figure by identifying him with another eschatological agent.[73] The studied reticence of Hebrews reflects its rhetorical goals. It aims not to explicate obscure biblical traditions but to celebrate Jesus. The Scrolls, like other witnesses to the pervasive "Melchizedek tradition," Philo,[74] *2 Enoch*,[75] and the Nag Hammadi tractate *Melchizedek*,[76] attest the interest in learned circles of antiquity generated by the obscure biblical figure. Hebrews perhaps exploits that interest in using Melchizedek as a prototype of the Messiah, but it does not resolve the mystery about the identity or history of Melchizedek itself. It goes only so far into the texts of Genesis and Psalm 110 as is necessary in order to establish a symbolic connection.

Yet the character of that connection is of some relevance to the background of the chapter. Melchizedek foreshadows Christ's eternal priesthood because of the scriptural testimony that "he lives" (Heb. 7:8). The living figure to whom scripture witnesses is likely to be an angel or exalted human being of some sort. The Scrolls afford a glimpse of speculation into the genus; Hebrews' reticence precludes identification of the specific version of Melchizedek speculation that its author probably knew.

The New Covenant and the Atoning Cult

The author of Hebrews was not unique in using the language of a "new covenant" (8:7, 13), nor in appealing to Jeremiah. He shared the language with other early Christians, such as Paul,[77] and the

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[73] For the innumerable attempts to do so, see Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition,* passim, and Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 192–195.

[74] *Congr.* 99; *Abr.* 235; *Leg all.* 3.79–82. For Philo, Melchizedek becomes an allegory of the human mind and the Logos who reveals the divine.

[75] Enoch 71–72. See F.I. Andersen, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in James H. Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; New York, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 91–100. The text contains the legend that Noah's nephew Melchizedek, miraculously conceived and born from the corpse of his mother (hence without father or mother!), was saved-from the flood to continue the line of priests begun with Seth. The child is also transported to paradise, there to remain forever.

[76] See the edition by Birger A. Pearson, "Melchizedek," in idem, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X* (Leiden, 1981), pp. 19–85.

[77] 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6, 14. At Gal. 3:15, 17, Paul makes a play similar to Heb. 9:14 on διαθήκη as covenant and testament.

Synoptic evangelists,[78] who considered themselves members of a new covenantal community. Neither were Christians alone in adopting such a stance. The Scrolls too know of a new covenant and their use offers parallels to that of the early Christians.[79]

The major references to a new covenant appear in the *Damascus Document*.[80] CD (MS A) 6. 14–21 indicates fairly clearly the function of the terminology.

> Unless they are careful to act in accordance with the exact interpretation of the law for the age of wickedness: to separate themselves from the sons of the pit; to abstain from wicked wealth which defiles, either by promise or by vow, and from the wealth of the Temple and from stealing from the poor of the people, from making their widows their spoils and from murdering orphans; to separate unclean from clean and differentiate between the holy and the common; to keep the Sabbath day according to the exact interpretation, and the festivals and the day of fasting, according to what they had discovered, those who entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus; to set apart holy portions according to their exact interpretation; for each to love his brother like himself; to strengthen the hand of the poor, the needy and the foreigner.

Members of the "new covenant in the land of Damascus," whenever and wherever it was formed, bind themselves to a life of separate holiness. In a community marked by brotherly love, these volunteers are able to pursue their exact interpretation of the Law and a detachment from things that defile. The "new covenant" is not, as for Jeremiah 31, a heartfelt renewal of fidelity to the covenant undertaking by the whole of Israel, but the designation of a sect.

It is clear from CD (MS A) 8:20 that, like the recipients of Hebrews,

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[78] The term appears only in the last supper narratives in Matthew and Mark (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24), in the parallel in Luke 22:20. In Luke 1:72; Acts 3:25; 7:8, there appear reference to God's covenant of old.

[79] Susanna Lehne, The *New Covenant In Hebrews* (Sheffield, 1990); for the absence of the idea in post-biblical Judaism, see pp. 35–42. Earlier literature includes Raymond F. Collins, "The Berith-Notion of the Cairo Damascus Document and its Comparison with the NT," in *En* 39 (1963), pp. 555–594 and C. Levin, *Die Verheissung des neuen Bundes in ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Zusammenhang ausgelegt* (Göttingen, 1985).

[80] In addition to the major references discussed here, there is mention of a covenant in several minor fragments. In the following sufficient context is lacking: 1Q304.2; 1Q36 7.2 1Q54 1.2; 1QDM 2.8; 42.2; 4Q185 3.3; 4Q497 1.5. Some texts simply refer to biblical covenants, such as the covenant with Noah (4Q370 7); or with Moses (4Q381 frag. 69, 5–8; 4Q503 frag. 3,2.13).

the members of this community understood themselves as fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah:

> This is the word which Jeremiah spoke to Baruch, son of Neriah, and Elishah to Giezi his servant. All the men who entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus. . . .[81]

Later references indicate that the sect, like so many similar movements, experienced internal discord. Those who abandoned the group stand under severe censure:

> And thus, all the men who entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus and turned and betrayed and departed from the well of living waters shall not be counted in the assembly of the people and shall not be inscribed in their [lis]ts, from the day of the session of {of him who teaches of the teacher} // of the unique Teacher until there arises the messiah of Aaron and Israel. (CD [MS B] 19.33–20.1). . . .
>
> They shall be judged according to the judgment of their companions, who turned round with insolent men, for they spoke falsehood about the holy regulations and despised the covenant {of god} and the pact which they established in the land of Damascus, which is the first covenant. And neither for them nor their families shall there be a part in the house of the law. (CD [MS B] 20.12)

Other references to the sectarian community as a new covenant appear in other scrolls, such as 1QpHab 2.3; and, as noted above, at 11 QMelch 2.23–24. They add little to the picture derived from the major references in the *Damascus Document.* One passage in the *Songs of the Sage* (4Q511 frag. 63, 3.1–4) expresses the sense of commitment to the covenant and the judgment on those who break it:

> As for me, my tongue will extol your justice
> Because you have unfastened it.
> You have placed on my lips a fount of praise
> and in my heart the secret of the start of all human actions
> and the culmination of the deeds of the perfect ones of the path,
> and the judgments of all the works that they do,
> to vindicate the just one in your faithfulness
> and pronounce the wicked guilty for his fault;
> in order to announce: Peace to all men of the covenant
> and to shout with a terrifying voice:
> Woe on all those who break it.

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[81] MS. A of the Damascus Document from the Cairo Genizah breaks off at this point. What has been designated column 9 in fact follows column 16. See Garcia Martinez, The *Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 39–40.

Several parallels with Hebrews indicate commonalities of the sectarian life. Like the scroll, the members of the Christian covenant community are "perfect,"[82] although their perfection consists not in their observance of Torah, but in the cleansing of their conscience by Christ's sacrifice (Heb. 9:14). The wish for peace on fellow covenanters is not unusual in any group based on the religion of Israel, although Heb. 12:11 offers not a blessing of Shalom, but an injunction to pursue peace with all. Finally, the terrifying voice issuing a curse on those who abandon the covenant sounds a note similar to the warnings in Hebrews, particularly to Heb. 10:29, which threatens those who consider the "blood of the covenant," i.e., Christ's sacrificial death, to be profane. In both groups the definition of the covenant community requires the imposition of firm social boundaries.

Other aspects of covenantal life according to Hebrews offer parallels to the scrolls, although most are sufficiently general to characterize any "sectarian" group that defines itself over against a larger entity. One point on which the Scrolls and Hebrews converge is an interest in the Temple cult, although from quite different points of view. For the Scrolls what transpires in the Temple, at least in the ideal or eschatological Temple, is of fundamental significance. For Hebrews, what transpires in the earthly Tabernacle, and by implication in the Temple that succeeds the tabernacle of the desert, is but a symbol of the reality that is to come, the Messiah's sacrifice (Heb. 9:9, 10:1). In this context, the *Temple Scroll* (11QTemple) merits special attention.[83]

The *Temple Scroll* describes cultic areas and processes analogous to those of Hebrews, the cover of the ark overshadowed by the Cherubim (11QTemple[a] [11Q19] 7.10–12:Heb. 9:5); the high priest who sacrifices

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[82] Cf. Heb. 10:1, 14.

[83] The relationship between the Temple Scroll and the covenanters is debated. See B.A. Levine, "The Temple Scroll: Aspects of its Historical Provenance and Literary Character," in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 232 (1978), pp. 5–23, and Lawrence Schiffman, "The Temple Scroll in Literary and Philological Perspective," in W.S. Green, ed., *Approaches to Ancient Judaism II* (Chico, 1980), pp. 143–158, Koester, *Dwelling*, p. 33; the essays in George J. Brooke, *Temple Scroll Studies: Papers Presented at the International Symposium on the Temple Scroll, Manchester, December* 1987 (Sheffield, 1989), and Dwight D. Swanson, The *Temple Scroll and the Bible: The Methodology of* 11 *QT* (Leiden, 1995). The Temple Scroll lacks most of the major polemical elements of the clearly sectarian texts and diverges from sectarian halakhah at several points. It seems likely that the text was composed outside of the community, but perhaps used by the sectarians.

for people then priests (11QTemple[a] 15.15–17; 25.16–26.7: Heb. 5:3);[84] the rituals of the smearing and sprinkling of blood (11QTemple 16.16–17; 23.11–14: Heb. 9:7, 12, 25); and a focus on the Day of Atonement (11QTemple 25.9–16). Such parallels are hardly surprising in two texts that highlight the actions of the high priest. Had the author of Hebrews known of the detailed halakhah of the Temple Scroll, he would no doubt have been as dismissive of it as he is of the "regulations of the flesh" (9:10) or the "strange and varied teachings" (13:9).[85]

The Coming Judgment

Hebrews exhorts renewed fidelity to Christ in the light of his imminent coming in judgment (10:25; 11:37; 12:25–29). To support that exhortation, it cites from Hab. 2:3–4, a text that receives extended treatment at 1QpHab 7.3–8.3.

> 3 *Blank And as for what he says: Hab. 2:2*, "So that the one who reads it may run." 4 Its interpretation concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God has disclosed 5 all the mysteries of the words of his servants, the prophets. *Hab. 2:3 "For the vision has an appointed time, it will have an end and not fail."* Blank 7 Its interpretation: the final age will be extended and go beyond all that 8 the prophets say, because the mysteries of God are wonderful. 9 *Hab. 2:3b* "Though it might delay, wait for it; it definitely has to come and will not 10 delay." Its interpretation concerns the men of truth, 11 those who observe the Law, whose hands will not desert the service 12 of truth when the final age is extended beyond them, because 13 all the ages of God will come at the right time, as he established 14 for them in the mysteries of his prudence. *Hab. 2:4* "See 15 [his soul within him] is conceited and does not give way." Its interpretation: they will double 16 [persecution] upon them [and find no mercy] at being judged. *Blank*

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[84] Cf. also 11QTemple[b] [11Q20] frag. 1 1.11–13, for a distinction between sacrifices for the high priest himself and for other priests. For the distinction between the high priest and people, cf. Lev. 9:7; 16:6–17. By the Second Temple period the distinction was applied to daily sacrifices (Exod. 29:38–42; Num. 28:3–8; Ezek. 46: 13–15). Cf. Heb. 7:27; Philo *Rer. div. her.* 174.

[85] Both passages deal with issues of kashrut. Not surprisingly the Temple Scroll has similar interests, restricting what comes into the city to pure foods and liquids (11QTemple[a] 47.3–7). Hegermann (*Der Brief an die Hebräer*, p. 175) compares the disparaging comments on kashrut regulations in Hebrews to the purity requirement for membership in the covenant community at 1QS 3.3–9; 6.13–23; 7.15–20.

> Col. VIII 1 Its interpretation concerns all observing the Law in the House of Judah, whom 2 God will free from punishment on account of their deeds and of their loyalty [אמנתם] 3 to the Teacher of Righteousness.[86]

Both Hebrews and the *pesher* call for continued fidelity, but construe its objects differently. 1QpHab insists, in view of the approaching eschatological judgment, upon fidelity to Torah and its interpretation by the Teacher of Righteousness. It is by that "faith" that the righteous will live. Hebrews, clearly using a Greek translation which makes the subject of the verb in the final clause of Hab. 2:3 not "the vision" as in the MT, but "the one who is to come,"[87] construes the prophecy to apply to Christ's second coming and urges imitation of Christ's fidelity to God in the face of persecution (12:1–2). By following his example of "faith," the members of this community can be assured they too will live.

The fact that Paul too could cite Hab. 2:4 in his arguments about faith and the Torah (Gal. 3:11; Rom. 1:17), indicates its utility for early Christians. His usage may share some of the interests of Hebrews, but addresses other issues than the need to remain faithful in the fact of opposition.[88]

In its appeal to remain faithful, Hebrews deploys both warnings of judgment and promises of the "rewards" of fidelity.[89] Among these are the intimations of the "city" prepared for the faithful (Heb. 11:10, 16; 13:14), the "heavenly Jerusalem" (12:22) inhabited by saints and angels. The Jewish roots of the image are obvious[90] and the Scrolls have added to the dossier a series of fragments describing the ideal

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[86] For treatment of the text see Maurya P. Horgan, *Pesharim Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books* (Washington, 1979).

[87] MT: כי עוד חזון למועד — LXX: διότι ἔτι ὅρασις εἰς καιρὸν
ויפח לקץ ולא יכזב — καὶ ανατελεῖ εἰς πέρας καὶ οὐκ εἰς κενόν
אם יתמהמה חכה לו — ἐὰν ὑστερήοῃ, οἰτόμεινον αὐτόν
כי בא יבא לא יאחר — ὅτι ἐρχόμενος ἥξει καὶ οὐ μὴ χρονίσῃ
For detailed discussion, see Attridge, *Hebrews*, pp. 302–303.

[88] Paul and Hebrews may be closer than once thought if revisionist views of the significance of "Christ faith" in Paul are correct. See, e.g., Arland Hultgren, "The *Pistis Christou* Formulations in Paul," in *Novum Testamentum* 22 (1980), pp. 248–263, and Richard Hayes, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, 2002).

[89] On those rewards, see Heb. 6:9–12; 10:35–36; 11: 26; 12:2.

[90] For earlier literature, see Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 374.

city.[91] Most of these fragments deal with architectural and topographical details. Hebrews, unlike Rev. 21:10–14, is uninterested in such details, whatever their potential symbolic value. The only points of contact between Hebrews and the Scrolls' descriptions of the new Jerusalem is the note that the city is where true divine worship takes place, a place where, in the language of the Scrolls, the altar is set up and priests officiate (2Q4 frag. 4; 11Q18 frags. 1–3, 11–13), where atonement takes place (2Q4 frag. 8). The sectarian vision sketched in this fragment and in the *Temple Scroll*, probably arising from dissatisfaction over the Jerusalem Temple and its leadership, attests the debate to which Hebrews, at least in part, responds. As with many other images derived from Biblical and post-Biblical Judaism, Hebrews plays with the notion of the new Jerusalem. The pointillist sketch in 12:22–24, evoking heavenly citizens, angels and martyrs, concludes with the focus on the text's real concern, the mediator of the new covenant. Evidence of concrete hopes for a restored or renewed Jerusalem are lacking, and the author cloaks the details of his eschatological expectations.[92] The imagery finally balances the images of judgment with an assurance of ready access to God through the Messiah for adherents to the new covenant.

Some Terminological Parallels

One further intriguing parallel related to the social setting of the covenant communities appears in the halakhic texts from Qumran. In its concluding exhortation (13:13), Hebrews urges its addresses to follow Jesus "outside the camp." The referent of the expression has been a matter of debate. Those who see Hebrews as urging its addressees to maintain a separate identity from the people of Israel see the "camp" as a symbol for the community of the old covenant. Those unconvinced that the major issue motivating the paraenesis of Hebrews is relationship with Israel focus on the parallel with Christ, crucified in shame outside the city. Outside the camp is that

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[91] 2Q4; 4Q554; 4Q555; 5Q515; 11Q18. See Garcia-Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, pp. 129–135.

[92] Some commentators, such as George Wesley Buchanan, *To the Hebrews* (Garden City, 1972), unconvincingly take the imagery of a new Jerusalem to indicate an expectation of such renewal.

place of social ostracism to which the addressees have been relegated by their Christian commitment (Heb. 10:32–35). The homilist here calls on them to embrace that state of marginalization.[93]

The Scrolls do not assist in resolving that debate, but do provide parallels for the expression. The most interesting is in the *Halakhic Letter* (4QMMT) 30–34:[94]

> And concerning what is written: *Lev 17:3* ["When a man slaughters within the camp"—they] 31 [slaughter] outside the camp—"a bull, or a [she]ep or a she-goat": the pl[ace of slaughter is to the north of the camp] 32 And we think that the temple [is the place of the tent of meeting, and Je]rusalem 35 is the camp; and outside the camp is [outside Jerusalem;] it is the camp of 34 their cities. Outside the ca[mp . . .] . . .

The symbolic equation of Jerusalem and the "camp" (מחוה) of the desert generation is not surprising, given the presence in the city of the Temple, the holiness of which is so important to the letter. Outside the camp/city is the realm of impurity, where lepers and the unclean must reside (4QMMT 67–69).[95] Direct dependence is unlikely, but Hebrews, in its use of the spatial metaphor for social reality, attributes the same value to the "outside'" as it does the scroll. But paradoxically, it urges its readers to accept and welcome the conventional negative judgments associated with the "outside" because, as the next verse indicates, they have a different city to which they belong.

Interpretation of Scriptures

During the course of this exploration of certain key themes within Hebrews, the parallsels between its scripturally based "word of exhortation" and the scriptural expositions of the Scrolls have surfaced on more than one occasion. Since the discovery of the Scrolls scholars have noted similarities and debated their significance.[96] The major

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[93] For the division of opinion among earlier scholars, see Attridge, *Hebrews*, p. 399. For the latter reading, see particularly DeSilva, *Perseverance*.

[94] I cite the composite text. The verses are found in 4Q394 frag. 1 2.13–18 and 4Q397 Crag. 1 1–5.

[95] From 4Q394 frag. 3 14–6; 4Q396 frag. 1 3.5–7. Note the insistence on the purity of the community, in which the angels reside at 1QS 11:8; 1QSa 2.8–9, noted above.

[96] For a review of most of the significant literature, see Hurst, *The Epistle to the*

feature that Hebrews and many of the Scrolls share is an eschatological horizon, a conviction that the readers of scripture are living in the "latter days," whose events are in some sense foreshadowed in the Biblical text.

Within that broad horizon, both Hebrews and the Scrolls evidence considerable flexibility in the appropriation and use of Scripture[97] and these brief comments can hardly do justice to the variety of methods and stances toward the sacred text in evidence in both. Yet there are characteristic tendencies indicate significant differences between the exegetical world of Qumran and that of Hebrews.

The most distinctive aspect of the interpretation of scripture in the Scrolls is the eschatological interpretation of the *Pesharim*, which treat scripture as a riddle to be solved. Texts are prophetic, each with a meaning, or *pesher*, that consists of a referent in the historical experience of the community to which the text refers.[98]

Hebrews knows that biblical texts and the institutions described in them can foreshadow things to come (Heb. 10:1). Yet the voice of Scripture speaks to the present of its hearers in a variety of ways (Heb. 1:1; 4:11). Hebrews in general tends to be more subtle and more flexible than the *Pesharim*. The homilist can probe texts in various ways, exploiting syntactical ambiguity (Heb. 2:8–9), using analytical techniques akin to the Rabbinic *gezera shawa* (Heb. 4:4–4), to achieve a hortatory application of a Psalm (4:11), investigating etymology (7:2) and logical analysis (7:7) to score apologetic or hortatory points. Hebrews can tease out the significance of certain phrases

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Hebrews, pp. 61–65. Among earlier literature of particular importance is Friederich Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger* (Regensburg, 1968). Recent studies of exegetical techniques include Martin Hengel and H. Lohr, eds., *Schriftauslegung im antiken Judentum und im Urchristentum* (Tübingen, 1994).

[97] On exegesis in the Scrolls in general, see George J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context* (Sheffield, 1985); Michael Fishbane, "Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Assen and Philadelphia, 1988), pp. 339–377; Eugene Ulrich, "The Bible in the Making: The Scriptures at Qumran," and Julio Trebolle Barrera, "The Authoritative Functions of Scriptural Works at Qumran," in Eugene Ulrich and James VanderKam, eds., *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Notre Dame, 1994), pp. 77–110; and Lawrence Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their True Meaning for Judaism and Christianity* (New York, 1994), pp. 211–222.

[98] For a useful review of the *pesharim*, see Devorah Dimant, "Qumran Sectarian Literature," in Michael E. Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudpigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (Assen/Maastricht and Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 483–550, esp. 503–514.

over the course of a lengthy exposition,[99] and use scripture as a structuring device.[100] Finally, it can be quite playful, yet at the same time quite serious, in attributing words of Psalms to Jesus (2:12–13, 10:5–7).[101] In those words the homilist hears the word of God, but those words have their status precisely because they are spoken by the Son (1:2). In its hermeneutical stance, as in all else, Hebrews reflects its complex background, combining Jewish exegetical presuppositions and techniques, devices of Greek rhetoric, and a profound commitment to the importance of Christ as the agent of God's salvific purposes.

Conclusion

More than fifty years after the discovery of the Scrolls, it is abundantly clear that they have irreversibly altered the scholarly landscape for the study of Judaism of the Second Temple period and of Christian origins. It would not be proper to generalize from Hebrews, but it does serve as a signal instance of that change. The Scrolls have not provided a single key that explains the particular character of Hebrews as an example of early Christian rhetoric, and they certainly cannot support a claim that Hebrews emerges directly from or responds directly to the sectarians in evidence among the Scrolls. The Scrolls have, however, enormously enriched the material relevant to the Jewish heritage of Hebrews. The unknown homilist who composed the text uses that heritage brilliantly, but, from the point of view of the tradition, perversely, to give expressions to a new vision of how to be faithful to the God of the covenant.

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[99] Note the recurrent use of Ps. 110: 1 or 4 at Heb. 1:13; 5:6; 6:17; 8:1; 10:12.

[100] Note the citation of Jer. 31:31–33 at 8:8–12 and 10:16–17.

[101] Although no direct connection seems likely, it is interesting to compare the *Hodayot* as expressions of the personal piety of the psalmist and the use in Hebrews of the first person in the canonical psalms to give voice to the perceived intentions of Jesus. For discussion of how that conceit functions, see Harold W. Attridge, "God in Hebrews," in A. Andrew Das and Frank J. Matera, eds., *The Forgotten God: Perspectives in Biblical Theology* (Nashville, 2002), pp. 197–209.

HOW JEWISH WAS MARK'S GOSPEL?

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Why raise this question? One reason is that it has seldom been raised, and so it deserves to be raised. Another reason is that Christian preachers and teachers persist in finding in Mark's Gospel negative stereotypes about Jews and Judaism. Of course, Mark's Gospel is a Christian Gospel that contains certain theological affirmations about Jesus that were not accepted by all Jews in the first century or subsequently. But New Testament scholars sometimes get so carried away with their enthusiasm for Mark's Gospel that they use it to make invidious comparisons between Christianity and Judaism.

That Mark's Gospel is potentially anti-Jewish and that it has been used in the service of anti-Judaism, I am ready and willing to acknowledge. But authors never have full control over how their writings are interpreted and used once they pass from their hands. In this paper I want to reflect on Mark's Gospel as "a Jewish text," one that was not anti-Jewish in intent but rather was written by a Christian Jew who thought that through his portrayal of Jesus' public ministry in Israel he was advancing the heritage of Israel.

My thesis is this: Mark's Gospel presents Jesus as fulfilling the hopes of God's people expressed in the "Old Testament," carrying on his ministry in the land of Israel around 30 C.E., in terms of christological titles intelligible only within Judaism, in the framework of Jewish eschatology, and in conflict with other Jewish movements and the Temple establishment but in sympathy with certain other Jews. The text itself, however, becomes anti-Jewish when taken out of its literary and historical contexts.

My idea for this essay took shape while writing my sections in the introduction to my commentary with John R. Donahue entitled *The Gospel of Mark* (Sacra Pagina 2; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002). That time-period corresponded to the diagnosis of Tony Saldarini's cancer and his bone-marrow transplant and convalescence in the summer and fall of 2000. And so Tony was often in my thoughts

and prayers as I developed some of the material that I have incorporated in this study. Moreover, its basic thesis is obviously indebted to the model presented in Tony's *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Mark and Judaism: The Question and the Setting

One of the principles of modern biblical interpretation is that the Gospels must be read on three historical levels: Jesus, the early church, and the Evangelist.[1] In this paper I am reading at the level of Mark the Evangelist. I am chiefly interested in how Mark portrays Jesus in his Jewish context. Another principle is that the interpreter can and should distinguish between the text of Mark's Gospel and what various readers have made out of Mark's Gospel. I am sure that one can investigate the history of the interpretation of Mark's Gospel and find many examples of anti-Judaism. But the focus here is Mark's Gospel itself, and reading Mark as Mark and by Mark.

The question of Mark and Judaism is seldom raised. There is something of a scholarly consensus that Matthew and John wrote their Gospels as Christian Jews in the context of conflicts with other Jews ("their synagogues" in Matthew, and "the Jews" in John) as all Jews faced the implications of the crisis posed by the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E.[2] There have been many studies of Luke and Judaism, but the results are puzzling. Using the same data and historical-critical methods, learned scholars have come to very different conclusions. Some regard Luke as friendly toward Jews and Judaism, while others dismiss him as the father of Christian anti-Judaism.[3]

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[1] See the "Constitution on Divine Revelation" (*Dei verbum*) § 19, in Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* (Northport, 1975), p. 761.

[2] J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism. The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis, 1990); Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago and London, 1994); J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (rev. ed.; Nashville, 1979; Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York, 1979); and Reimund Bieringer, et al., eds., *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel. Papers of the Leuven Colloquium* (Assen, 2001).

[3] Jack T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia, 1987); Robert L. Brawley,

Without necessarily identifying the Evangelist whom we call "Mark" as the "John Mark" of Jerusalem (see Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37, 39), I am impressed by the early patristic traditions about the connections of Mark's Gospel to the apostles Peter and Paul and to the Christian community at Rome around 70 C.E. The oldest and best tradition relates Mark's Gospel to a Roman community suffering persecution in wake of the effort by the emperor Nero to blame the great fire of 64 C.E. on the Christians. The content of Mark's Gospel fits well with the tradition presented by the Roman historian Tacitus in *Annales* 15.44. Tacitus describes the procedure used in arresting the Christians as follows: "First, then, the confessed members of the sect were arrested; next, on evidence furnished by them a huge multitude was convicted not so much on the count of arson as hatred of the human race." He goes on to recount the horrible punishments inflicted on them: "they were covered with wild beasts' skins and torn to death by dogs; or they were fastened on crosses, and when daylight failed were burned to serve as lamps by night."

In my view, the original audience for Mark's Gospel was the Roman Christian community made up of both Jewish and Gentile Christians. By this time (around 70 C.E.), the Gentile Christians may have predominated at Rome. And so the Evangelist felt obliged to explain certain Jewish customs and practices, most famously in 7:3–4 about washing cups and dishes as well as hands. But the Evangelist himself seems to have been a Jew. Even though he makes some mistakes about Scripture texts and precipitously concludes that Jesus declared all foods clean in Mark 7:19 (a point "corrected" by its omission in Matthew 15), he knows a good deal about Judaism and is committed to presenting Jesus within the context of first-century Palestinian Judaism. The traditions that relate Mark to Peter and to Paul also appear to assume that Mark was a Jew. And so I read Mark as a Gospel written by a Jewish Christian about Jesus the Jew for a mixed Jewish and Gentile Christian audience at Rome around 70 C.E.

Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation (Atlanta, 1987); and J. Bradley Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple, and the New Age in Luke-Acts* (Macon, 1988).

Mark's Use of the Old Testament

At many pivotal points in his story of Jesus, Mark appeals to OT texts and appears to assume that his readers know these texts and receive them as authoritative.[4] That Mark respected the Jewish Scriptures (the OT) and regarded them as authoritative is clear from Mark 1:2–3, where he uses a quotation from "Isaiah the prophet" to explain the relationship between John the Baptist ("the voice") and Jesus ("the Lord"). His failure to note that the first part of this quotation came not from Isaiah but from Exod. 23:20 and Mal. 3:1 suggests that here Mark may have had access to a collection of biblical *testimonia*, or at least that he was not as conversant with the OT as Matthew was. Matthew used only the Isaiah part in Matt. 3:3 and shifted the Exod. 23:20/Mal. 3:1 part to Matt. 11:10. Another "mistake" in Mark's use of the OT occurs at 2:26, where he says that Abiathar (rather than Ahimelech) was the priest when David demanded the bread of the presence (1 Sam. 21:1–6).

After 1:2–3 there is an impressive number of explicit OT quotations in Mark's account of Jesus' public ministry, especially from Isaiah, Psalms, and Daniel. Jesus appeals to Is. 6:9–10 ("that they look and see, but not perceive . . .") to explain why outsiders (4:12) and even his own disciples (8:18) fail to understand his preaching about God's kingdom. In his critique of the Pharisees' traditions about ritual defilement, Jesus in 7:6–7 quotes Is. 29:13: "This people honors me with their lips . . . they teach human precepts as doctrines." The crowd's acclamation of Jesus in 7:37 ("He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak") is an echo of Is. 35:5–6.

When Jesus enters Jerusalem, he is greeted in 11:9–10 with words from Ps. 118:25–26: "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." His symbolic action in "cleansing" the Temple is justified in 11:17 by an appeal to the combination of Is. 56:7 and Jer. 7:11: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations. But you have made it a cave for bandits." His parable of the wicked tenants (12:1–12) ends with a quotation of Ps. 118:22–23: "The stone that the builders rejected—this has become the cornerstone." In

[4] Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord. Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville, 1992).

12:35–37 he presents an interpretation of Ps. 110:1 ("the Lord said to my Lord") designed to show the superiority of the title "Lord" to "Messiah" and "Son of David." In the apocalyptic discourse in Mark 13, many of the major terms and concepts—the great tribulation, the abomination of desolation, the glorious Son of Man, and the resurrection of the dead—come from the book of Daniel.

One of the great themes of the Markan passion narrative is expressed by Jesus in 14:49: "Let the Scriptures be fulfilled." On the Mount of Olives Jesus quotes Zech. 13:7 ("I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered") as a prophecy that his disciples would soon desert him. At his trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus identifies himself as the glorious Son of Man with words taken from Dan. 7:13. And in chapter 15 there are enough quotations and allusions to Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 to describe Jesus as the personification of the Suffering Servant and the Suffering Righteous One (see also Wis. 1:12–20).

Mark's Theological Geography

Mark's Gospel is a narrative mainly about Jesus of Nazareth.[5] It is set in the land of Israel and follows a theological-geographical outline. In it Galilee functions as the place of the revelation of Jesus' authority (1:14–8:21), the journey from Galilee to Judea is the occasion for Jesus to teach about his identity and discipleship (8:22–10:52), and Jerusalem is the place of his rejection and death (11:1–16:8).

In the prologue (1:1–13) Mark tells the reader that John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus (thus fulfilling OT prophecies), that a voice from heaven declared Jesus to be "my beloved Son" (1:11), and that Jesus withstood testing by Satan (1:12–13). The prologue has the effect of identifying Jesus as the Son of God (1:1, 11) and placing him and his public ministry in the context of a cosmic battle with Satan.

In his first major section (1:14–8:26) Mark describes how Jesus the anointed Son of God proclaims in Galilee and environs the imminence of God's reign through his teachings and actions. At the same

[5] David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of the Gospel* (rev. ed.; Minneapolis, 1999).

time, Mark shows that Jesus encounters misunderstanding and opposition from many groups. The scene of Jesus' activity in 1:14–8:26 is Galilee and environs, which in Mark's theological geography is the place for the revelation or manifestation of Jesus as a powerful teacher and healer. The summary statement in 1:14–15 places everything that Jesus says and does in the context of his proclamation of God's kingdom: "Now is the time of fulfillment; the kingdom of God is at hand."

In 1:16–3:6 the Markan Jesus hurries about (an impression fostered by Mark's frequent uses of the adverb *euthys*, "immediately"), calls disciples, teaches, and heals people suffering from demonic possession and physical illnesses (1:16–45). In 2:1–3:6 he engages in debates with various opponents and shows wisdom and even brilliance in eluding their various traps, though in 3:6 we find the first notice of an organized plot against Jesus on the part of some Pharisees and Herodians.

In 3:7–8:21 we learn more about Jesus as a teacher and healer, and more about the misunderstanding and opposition that he encounters. As Jesus gains a popular following (3:7–12) and chooses the Twelve as his inner circle of disciples (3:13–19), he is called "mad" by family members and accused of acting out of demonic power by scribes from Jerusalem (3:20–35). With his parables of God's kingdom in 4:1–34, Jesus explains the dimensions of the mystery of God's kingdom—its presence, future fullness, and growth, along with the dispositions necessary to receive it properly.

That Jesus who is mighty in word (as his teaching shows) is also mighty in deed is illustrated by a series of miracle stories in 4:35–5:43. Here Jesus displays his power over the storm at sea (4:35–41), demons (5:1–20), and sickness and death (5:21–43). Nevertheless, in his home area Jesus meets unbelief and rejection by the townspeople (6:1–6).

To extend his mission, Jesus empowers his disciples to do what he does—preach and heal (6:7–13). The story of the death of John the Baptist in 6:14–29 anticipates the death of Jesus and reminds prospective disciples about the suffering that may befall them. As the shepherd of Israel (6:30–56), Jesus feeds the 5,000, walks upon the waters, and performs many healings. As the authoritative interpreter of the Torah (7:1–8:10), Jesus breaks down barriers between Jews and Gentiles (7:1–23), accedes to a request for healing from a Gentile woman (7:24–30), heals a man in Gentile territory (7:31–37), and feeds a crowd of 4,000 in Gentile territory (8:1–10). Nevertheless,

the Pharisees demand further "signs" (8:11–13), and with a series of harsh questions in 8:14–21 Jesus exposes his own disciples' failure to understand him.

The second major section (8:22–10:52) concerns the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. It is introduced and concluded by narratives in which blind men come to see (8:22–26 and 10:46–52). Throughout the journey from Caesarea Philippi in northern Galilee to Jerusalem, the Markan Jesus instructs his disciples (and Mark's readers) about Jesus' identity as the Son of Man who must suffer, die, and rise and about what it means to follow him. The three units each feature a passion-resurrection prediction (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34), a misunderstanding on the disciples' part (8:32–33; 9:32; 10:35–41), and further instructions by Jesus (8:34–9:1; 9:33–50; 10:42–45) along with related material in two "interludes" (9:2–29; 10:1–31). The theological climax of the journey narrative is Jesus' statement that the Son of Man came "to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45). Nevertheless, Jesus' own disciples seem obtuse to his clear teachings, and remain so throughout the passion narrative.

The third major section in Mark's narrative (11:1–16:8) takes place in Jerusalem, which in Mark's theological geography is primarily the place where Jesus is rejected. After his provocative symbolic actions in entering the city and "cleansing" the Temple (11:1–25), Jesus engages in debates with various Jewish groups (11:27–12:44). By his superior wisdom Jesus infuriates the chief priests, elders, and scribes—the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem who eventually hand him over for execution under Pontius Pilate. When asked about the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, Jesus in his farewell discourse (or, testament) in 13:1–37 moves to the cosmic level and looks forward to the coming of the Son of Man in glory as the sign of the fullness of God's kingdom.

In the events leading up to Jesus' arrest (14:1–52) Jesus remains very much in command (even though the Gethsemane episode shows that he struggles to accept death on the cross as his Father's will) in that he knows what is going to happen and is confident that the Scriptures are being fulfilled. In the trials before the Sanhedrin and Pilate (14:53–15:20), Jesus appears as Messiah/Son of God and as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. In the crucifixion narrative (15:21–41) Jesus is the embodiment of Psalm 22, the psalm of the suffering righteous person. The confession by the Roman centurion at the moment of Jesus' death ("Truly this man was the Son of

God") in 15:39 is the first recognition by a human character in Mark's Gospel (and by a Gentile no less!) about Jesus' real identity—something that Mark's readers have known since the beginning of the story (1:1, 11).

The women disciples, who are introduced only at 15:40–41, witness the death of Jesus (15:40–41) and his burial (15:47). And they discover his tomb to be empty on Easter Sunday morning (16:1–8). The explanation offered by the "young man" at the tomb is that "he has been raised" (16:6). Jesus the suffering Son of Man, who personifies the Suffering Righteous One of Psalm 22 and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, has been vindicated in his resurrection from the dead.

Names and Titles of Jesus

The christological titles that Mark applies to Jesus—Son of God, Messiah, and Son of Man—were already traditional among early Christians when Mark wrote his Gospel.[6] Nevertheless, they demanded familiarity with their OT and Jewish background if the first readers were to understand them properly, and they were used by the Evangelist to situate Jesus within a Jewish context.

(A) *Son of God (and Beloved Son)*

In the OT the title "Son of God" is applied to Israel as God's people (Hos. 11:1), the king at his coronation (Ps. 2:7), the angels (Job 38:7), and the suffering righteous person (Wis. 2:18). In Mark's Gospel "Son of God" is a very prominent title for Jesus.

Most manuscripts include this title as part of Mark 1:1: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." At Jesus' baptism (1:11) a voice from heaven proclaims: "You are my Son, the Beloved." Demons or "unclean spirits" recognize Jesus as "the Son of God" (3:11) and as the "Son of the Most High God" (5:7). At Jesus' transfiguration (9:7) a voice from heaven proclaims: "This is my Son, the Beloved." In Jesus' parable of the vineyard (12:1–12) it is hard to escape the implication that the son ("a beloved son . . .

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[6] See the survey article by J.C. Naluparayil, "Jesus of the Gospel of Mark: Present State of Research," in *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 8 (2000), pp. 191–226.

my son," 12:6) is Jesus. In claiming that only the Father knows "that day or hour" (13:32), Jesus seems to refer to himself as the Son of God.

When at the Sanhedrin trial the chief priest asks whether Jesus is "the Son of the Beloved One" (14:61), Jesus answers "I am" (14:62). And finally at the moment of Jesus' death on the cross, the Roman centurion proclaims: "Truly this man was the Son of God" (15:39). The first time that a human character (who happens to be a Gentile) in Mark's narrative recognizes Jesus' true identity is at the time of his death!

(B) *Messiah (and Son of David)*

The Hebrew word for "anointed one" is *mashia* . In the OT priests, prophets, and kings are anointed. In NT times there was no single Jewish concept of Messiah, and much depends on the context in which the term appears.

Mark employs the Greek word *Christos* ("anointed") for Hebrew *mashia* . In 1:1 Mark uses "Christ" as a surname for Jesus ("the gospel of Jesus Christ"), a practice that was already common in the Pauline epistles. In 9:41 Jesus speaks about one who bears "the name of Christ;" in 12:35–37 he relates "Christ" and "Son of David;" and in 13:21 he warns about those who might say: "Look! Here is the Messiah."

The most distinctive and theologically important Markan occurrences of *Christos* appear in the context of Jesus' suffering and death. When Peter confesses that Jesus is the Messiah/Christ in 8:29, almost immediately Jesus utters his first passion prediction: "the Son of Man must suffer many things . . ." (8:31). At the trial before the Sanhedrin, the chief priest asks Jesus: "Are you the Messiah/Christ . . .?" (14:61). And as Jesus is lifted up on the cross, the chief priests and scribes taunt him: "Let the Messiah/Christ, the King of Israel, come down . . ." (15:32).

The appearance of the title "Messiah/Christ" in the context of Jesus' suffering and death—in some of the most significant passages in the Gospel—suggests that Mark is deliberately redefining the title with reference to Jesus. Mark's point seems to be that Jesus' messiahship involves suffering, and that Jesus cannot be understood as the Messiah/Christ apart from the mystery of the cross.

Two variants of "Messiah/Christ" are "Son of David" and "King

of the Jews." The former title is used twice by Bartimaeus: "Son of David, have mercy on me!" (10:47–48). And "Son of David" appears in the controversy about the interpretation of Psalm 110:1, when Jesus asks: "How can the scribes say that the Messiah/Christ is the Son of David?" (12:35). The "King of the Jews" is the "outsider" Roman translation of "Messiah/Christ," and it occurs exclusively in chapter 15 (vv. 2, 9, 12, 18, 26).

The clearest and most important example of the so-called Markan "messianic secret" comes immediately after Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah/Christ.[7] There Mark adds in 8:30: "But he forbade them to tell anyone about him." This is the only case where the title "Messiah" applied to Jesus and the command to be silent about it are joined. What are often lumped together under the heading "messianic secret" are in fact quite disparate phenomena: the one clear case of the "messianic secret" in 8:30, the injunctions to silence in miracle stories (1:25, 34, 44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36), Jesus' private instructions for his disciples (4:10, 34; 7:17; 9:28, 31–50; 13:3), and his unsuccessful efforts at hiding from the public (6:31; 7:24; 9:30).

The best explanation is that Mark sought to redefine the term "Messiah" and other christological titles in the light of Jesus' death and resurrection, and so he put off revealing Jesus' true identity until his death (see 15:39) and his resurrection (see 9:9). This interpretation takes its lead from the one clear instance of the messianic secret in Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah and Jesus' command to be silent and his passion-resurrection prediction (8:27–33).

(C) *Son of Man*

In the OT the prophet Ezekiel is frequently addressed by God as "son of man" (*ben adam* in Hebrew) and told to prophesy (see 2:1, 3, 6, 8; 3:1, 3, etc.). In Daniel 7:13 a figure described as "one like a son of man" (*bar enash* in Aramaic) receives from the "Ancient of Days" dominion and glory and kingship. In 1 Enoch 48 the "Son of Man" is a preexistent heavenly being who passes judgment upon all human and angelic beings.

In Mark's Gospel "Son of Man" is a prominent title for Jesus. The most distinctive and theologically important uses of "Son of

[7] The classic statement is by William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (Cambridge, 1971).

Man" (*ho hyios tou anthr pou*) appear in the context of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection. This title is part of the three passion predictions (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). It occurs twice more in the conversation about Jesus' death and resurrection after the transfiguration (9:9, 12). It also appears in the pivotal declaration of Jesus toward the end of the journey narrative: "For the Son of Man came . . .to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45).

A second category of "Son of Man" sayings in Mark is akin to the "son of man" in Ezekiel. In several places Jesus uses "Son of Man" to refer to himself in his authority to forgive sins (2:10) and in his role as Lord of the Sabbath (2:28). At the Last Supper Jesus remarks that "the Son of Man goes as it is written of him" (14:21), and at his arrest he observes that "the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (14:41). In all these cases one gets the sense that more is meant than "I". There is a solemnity to these sayings and a suggestion that Jesus is a very significant "son of man/Adam."

The third category of Markan "Son of Man" sayings is more in line with Daniel 7 and 1 Enoch 48. In 8:38 Jesus warns that the Son of Man will be ashamed of him and his words "when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." The apocalyptic scenario developed in Mark 13 reaches its climax in 13:26 with the vision of "the Son of Man coming in clouds," which is a clear allusion to Dan. 7:13. At the trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus again alludes to Dan. 7:13 when he promises "you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven." In all three cases there can be little doubt that Mark identifies the glorious eschatological Son of Man as Jesus.

(D) *Other Titles*

In the Markan context, John the Baptist's preaching about "the stronger one" (1:7) functions as a title for Jesus. In 1:24 the demon being exorcised correctly identifies Jesus as "the Holy One of God." Mark does not do much with "prophet" as a title for Jesus (compare Luke–Acts). While Jesus explains his rejection at Nazareth as due to his identity as a prophet ("prophets are not without honor . . .," 6:4), elsewhere the title is reserved for Isaiah (1:2) and John the Baptist (11:32) or is cited as one of the popular (but inadequate) perceptions of Jesus (6:15; 8:28). Likewise, "Lord" (*Kyrios*) is not a prominent title for Jesus in Mark (compare Matthew). The term is generally

used as a title for God the Father of Jesus (see 11:9; 12:11; 12:29–30; 12:36–37; 13:20) as in the Greek OT. In 5:19 and 11:3 Jesus uses *Kyrios* to refer to himself, and there it may not have much theological significance ("the Master"). In the Markan context of 1:3 ("Prepare the way of the Lord"), its occurrence in Is. 40:3 is assumed to refer to Jesus. In the debate about interpreting Psalm 110:1 ("The Lord said to my Lord") in 12:35–37, the second "Lord" is taken to imply the superiority of this title to "Messiah/Christ" and "Son of David."

Mark's Eschatology

The images and concepts of Jewish eschatology permeate Mark's narrative—so much so that it has been aptly called an "apocalyptic drama."[8] The Evangelist's summary of Jesus' preaching appears in Mark 1:15: "Now is the time of fulfillment; and the kingdom of God is at hand. Reform your lives and place your faith in the good news." This summary situates Mark's story of Jesus in an eschatological context. The main topic is the kingdom of God, that moment when all creation will acknowledge the sovereignty of God and proceed according to God's original plan. While the kingdom's fullness is future, the teaching and healing activity of Jesus represent its anticipated or inaugurated dimension most dramatically. Jesus' proclamation of the future and present dimensions of God's kingdom demands an appropriate response by way of conversion and faith in the good news that Jesus brings.

The testing of Jesus by Satan (1:12–13) alerts the reader to Mark's conception of Jesus' ministry as a struggle against the cosmic forces of evil. An eschatological dualism familiar from the Dead Sea scrolls (the Prince of Light with the children of light versus the Prince of Darkness with the children of darkness; see the Qumran *Rule of the Community* 3–4) is an assumption that underlies Mark's narrative. Jesus' first public activities in 2:1–3:6—his exorcisms, healings, and debates with hostile opponents—are decisive moments in the struggle against the forces of the Evil One. The debate with the scribes in 3:20–30 makes clear that the origin of Jesus' power as a teacher

[8] Norman Perrin and Dennis C. Duling, *The New Testament: An Introduction* (2nd ed.; New York, 1982).

and healer is the Holy Spirit, and that he stands over against the one who is called Satan/Beelzebul/Prince of Demons.

The parables in 4:1–34 impart some basic teachings about the kingdom of God. It is God's kingdom to bring about; there is a contrast between its small beginnings in the present and its future fullness; something decisive is happening in Jesus' ministry; and Jesus' proclamation of God's kingdom deserves an enthusiastic and fruitful response. The power of Jesus as the herald of God's kingdom is illustrated by his deeds in 4:35–5:43 when he shows himself to be the master of those forces that in Jewish and ancient Near Eastern traditions appear to be under the dominion of Satan: the storm at sea, the demons, sickness and the suffering it brings, and death.

Having placed Jesus' ministry in the context of a cosmic and eschatological struggle against the forces of evil, Mark from chapter 6 onward pits Jesus against misunderstanding and hostility from human opponents: the people of Nazareth (6:1–6); his own disciples in 8:14–21 and throughout the journey and passion narratives; and the chief priests, elders, and scribes of Jerusalem from chapter 11 onward. In the midst of this narrative we are given in the transfiguration account (9:2–8) an insight into and an anticipation of the true nature of Jesus as the glorious Son of Man. And in Jesus' apocalyptic discourse (13:1–37) the climax of the scenario of end–time events is the manifestation of "the Son of Man coming in clouds with much power and glory" (13:26). Since these events are to take place in "this generation" (13:30)—though the precise time remains unknown (see 13:32), the appropriate religious and ethical stance is constant vigilance (13:33–37).

In Jewish theology of Jesus' time, resurrection was understood to be an eschatological event (see Dan. 12:1–3).[9] In Mark 12:18–27 Jesus stands with the Pharisees against the Sadducees, and argues that resurrection is in the Torah (Exod. 3:6, 15–16) and within the power of God. In Mark's narrative Jesus is the first example or case of resurrection. According to 16:6 the reason why Jesus' tomb was found empty was that "he is risen." In the resurrection of Jesus a decisive event in the eschatological scenario has already taken place in "this generation."

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[9] Pinchas Lapide, *The Resurrection of Jesus. A Jewish Perspective* (Minneapolis, 1983).

Conflicts with Jews and Judaism

It is customary to cite the parenthetical comment about Jewish traditions regarding ritual purity in 7:3–4 as evidence that Mark wrote for a predominantly non-Jewish audience. This may be so. But if Mark expected his first readers to understand most of his story of Jesus, he had to assume that they knew a good deal about "things Jewish" and were interested in them. He tells the story of Jesus as a Jewish teacher and healer, who gathered Jewish disciples, worked in Galilee and Judea, and died with the words of Ps. 22:1 on his lips ("My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"). Jesus' debates with various Jewish groups deal almost entirely with Jewish topics, and his positions on these matters are generally within the range of opinions represented by other first-century Jewish teachers.

While Mark's Jesus is clearly Jewish, Mark also presents his hero as superior to other Jewish teachers and healers and as possessing significance for non-Jews too (see 7:24–8:10). During his Galilean ministry Jesus engages fellow Jews in debate, and his initial success results in a plot against him by Pharisees and Herodians (3:6). During his ministry in Jerusalem, Jesus has more controversies with various Jewish groups in 11:27–12:44, and wins the envy and hostility of the chief priests, elders, and scribes there. While these Jewish officials take the initiative in getting Jesus arrested and condemned to death, it is the Roman prefect Pontius Pilate who is ultimately responsible for Jesus' execution.

From his entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of Mark 11, Jesus is critical of the Jerusalem Temple and those who are responsible for it. His action in the Temple complex in 11:15–19 is sandwiched between sections about the withered fig tree (11:12–14, 20–21). Jesus' symbolic action and his prophecy about the destruction of the Temple (see 13:2) are major issues in the trial before the Sanhedrin (14:58) and at the crucifixion (15:29). And those who plot Jesus' arrest and execution (most obviously the chief priests) stand to lose the most if Jesus' prophecies about the Temple come to pass.

So the Markan Jesus has conflicts with other Jews and Jewish groups.[10] The Markan Jesus is critical of the Jerusalem Temple and

[10] Michael Cook, *Mark's Treatment of the Jewish Leaders* (Leiden, 1982).

the Jewish leaders associated with it. But these facts hardly set Jesus outside the boundaries of Judaism in the first century. As the Dead Sea scrolls have shown abundantly, Judaism in Jesus' time was both diverse and contentious, and there was strong opposition to the Jerusalem Temple and its officials from Jews other than Jesus.

Righteous Jews Outside Jesus' Circle

A little noticed feature in Mark's narrative of Jesus is the presence of Jewish characters who do not belong to the Jesus movement and nonetheless act in ways that are regarded as exemplary or praiseworthy.

One such figure is the "strange exorcist" who casts out demons in Jesus' name but does not follow Jesus as a disciple (Mark 9:38). When apprised of this fact, the Markan Jesus takes a tolerant attitude and says: "Whoever is not against us is for us" (9:40). The episode occurs as part of the journey narrative while Jesus and his disciples are still in Galilee, and it appears that the Evangelist wants us to assume that the strange exorcist is a Jew. At least nothing suggests that he was a Gentile.

Later in the journey narrative (Mark 10:17–22), a man confronts Jesus and asks him: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (10:17). Jesus instructs him to keep the commandments and lists examples taken mainly from the Decalogue: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery . . ." (10:19). We are then told that Jesus had great personal affection for the questioner: "Jesus, looking at him, loved him" (10:21). Jesus goes on to challenge the man to sell his possessions and to join Jesus as his disciple. The man, who only at the end of the Markan episode is revealed to be rich, rejects the invitation and goes away "sad" (10:22). His attachment to his material possessions then becomes the occasion for various teachings about possessions as an obstacle to entering the kingdom of God. What gets overlooked in Mark 10:17–22 is Jesus' initial response to the effect that the rich man—surely a Jew in this context—can inherit eternal life by keeping the commandments in the Torah.

The debate about the "great commandment" in Mark 12:28–34 is not so much a controversy or conflict as it is a pleasant conversation between Jesus and a scribe. When the scribe asks "Which commandment is first of all?" (12:28), Jesus responds by quoting Deut. 6:4–5 (love God) and Lev. 19:18 (love the neighbor). The

scribe then expresses enthusiastic agreement with Jesus ("Well said, Teacher") and declares that observing the two love commandments is more important than all holocausts and sacrifices. Jesus in turn approves the wisdom of the scribe's answer and states: "You are not far from the kingdom of God" (12:34a). One gets the impression that in some contexts like Mark 10:23 and 12:34 the term "kingdom of God" is tied to Jesus and his movement but does not exhaust the possibilities of inheriting eternal life. At any rate in Mark 12:28–34 a Jewish scribe expresses enthusiastic approval of Jesus' teaching (which is, of course, an affirmation of the Torah) and is given high praise in return.

The person responsible for the burial of Jesus, according to Mark 15:43–46, is Joseph of Arimathea, surely a Jew. In Mark's narrative it appears that Joseph was not a disciple of Jesus, even though Matt. 27:57 and John 19:38 clearly identify him as one.[11] Indeed according to Mark's narrative, Joseph as a respected councilor (*bouleutés*) seems to have been a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin that sentenced Jesus to death: "All of them condemned him as deserving death" (14:64). Moreover, it is unlikely that the Roman prefect Pontius Pilate would have entrusted Jesus' corpse to someone known to be a member of his movement.

The way in which Mark describes Joseph of Arimathea and his actions after Jesus' death is best explained as due to Joseph's desire to give Jesus a decent burial before the Sabbath in accord with Deut. 21:22–23: "When someone is convicted of a crime punishable by death and is executed, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse must not remain all night upon the tree; you shall bury him that same day, for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse. You must not defile the land that the Lord your God is giving you for possession." What inspires Joseph is not so much his personal relationship to Jesus whom he barely knows but rather his devotion to fulfilling the biblical commandment to bury a fellow Jew on the day of his death. His action is reminiscent of Tobit's zeal to bury his fellow Jews in the diaspora (see Tob. 1:17–18; 2:3–4, 7–8). Mark portrays Joseph of Arimathea as yet another righteous Jew outside the circle of Jesus.

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[11] Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave. A Commentary on the Passion Narrative in the Four Gospels* (New York, 1994), pp. 1205–1241.

Conclusion

How Jewish was Mark's Gospel? The answer, of course, depends on how one defines "Jewish." On the one hand, Mark's Gospel is clearly a Christian text that makes theological claims about Jesus of Nazareth that were neither credible nor acceptable to all Jews in the first century. On the other hand, it is appropriate to describe Mark's Gospel as "a Jewish text." It was written by a Jewish Christian who thought that he was advancing the heritage of Israel. The Evangelist appealed frequently to OT texts as authoritative sources and assumed that his readers knew and respected those texts. He told the story of Jesus' public life and death in the context of Jewish history in the Land of Israel around 30 C.E. The titles that Mark applied to Jesus—Son of God, Messiah, and Son of Man—are intelligible only in the context of Judaism. His Gospel as a whole is aptly described as an apocalyptic drama whose central theme is the coming of God's kingdom and Jesus' role in it. While Mark's Jesus engages in conflicts with other Jews (Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, chiefs priests, etc.) and is critical of the Jerusalem Temple establishment, he lives and acts within the framework of first-century Palestinian Judaism. And in several cases (see 9:38–40; 10:19; 12:34; 15:43–46) Jews who do not follow Jesus are treated with tolerance and respect.

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THE LEGAL NATURE OF PAPYRUS YADIN 19 AND GALATIANS 3:15

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Over the past generation, the study of nascent Judaism and the origins of Christianity has undergone a notable development. Though Jewish sources continue to be treated by some scholars simply as background to the supposedly more important task of illustrating the Early Church, New Testament researchers today on the whole are much more methodologically conscious. The blatant and uncritical quarrying of Rabbinic literature, typified by the use of Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck's *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*,[1] about which E.P. Sanders,[2] Peter Schäfer,[3] and Geza Vermes[4] among others have complained, has given way to a more astute appreciation and use of the Jewish material. Now the best New Testament scholars themselves either walk "sure-footedly" in the Jewish sources or rely on scholarship that does not treat Judaism as "a preparation for the gospel."

Another development in the study of ancient Judaism is the increasing participation of gentile scholars. A few years ago Shaye Cohen noted that the growing number of non-Jewish scholars engaged in the field will vindicate Leopold Zunz's vision of setting Judaic Studies within the university curriculum.[5] He observed that while Jewish Studies in America can be likened to ethnic studies where the Jewish lecturer is perceived, willy nilly, as a role model for students, there will come a time when a gentile will be appointed to a chair in Judaic Studies in America.[6] Such appointments, of course, have

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[1] (Munich, 1924–), 4 volumes.

[2] *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1977), pp. 1–29.

[3] "Research into Rabbinic Literature: An Attempt to Define the Status Quaestionis," in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 37 (1986), p. 140.

[4] *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (London, 1983), chap. 6.

[5] "Gentiles and Jewish Studies," in *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 3.2 (1996), pp. 185–192.

[6] In 1998, Peter Schäfer, who is not Jewish, was appointed to Princeton University as Ronald O. Perelman Professor of Jewish Studies and Professor of Religion.

previously been made outside of the U.S.A., especially in Britain and Germany.

I first met Anthony Saldarini in the summer of 1994 when we lectured in tandem at the *Biblical Archaeology Society's Oxford Seminar*. For six days at "Teddy Hall" we engaged an enthusiastic group primarily of retired professionals on the latest in Dead Sea Scrolls discoveries, Second Temple Judaism, and the New Testament. At the time Tony was awaiting the publication of his study on the Matthean community,[7] and what impressed me was how seriously he took the Jewish context of early Christianity. Jewish sources were first and foremost read in their own right, and when comparisons were made to the New Testament they were done with rigor and without prejudice to Judaism. I recalled a memorable conversation we had about our roles as "gentile interlopers" in Jewish Studies. I had remarked that he appeared to have been accepted by American Jewish scholars as part of the guild. This was an achievement that he seemed to hold with particular satisfaction.

In this essay, I wish to take up the discussion concerning the legal nature of P(apyrus) Yadin 19 and its relevance for the understanding of the "irrevocability of the διαθήκη (often translated as 'human will')" in Gal. 3:15. Although Tony himself did not treat this specific topic during his lifetime, he did publish a popular and characteristically judicious account of Babatha's archive of which PYadin 19 forms a part.[8]

Irrevocability of the "Human Will"

Several years ago, I suggested that Paul may have had in mind a legal document like PYadin 19 when he drew on "a human example" to bolster his point that the promise God had made to Abraham was unchangeable.[9] I advanced this thesis in a chapter that discussed features of literalism in ancient Jewish and Christian sources.

Gal. 3:15 reads as follows: "Brothers, I speak according to a human example (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον): Just as no one annuls or adds to a human

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[7] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago, 1994).

[8] "Babatha's Story. Personal Archive Offers a Glimpse of Ancient Jewish Life," in *Biblical Archaeologist Review* March/April vol. 24.2 (1998), pp. 29–33, 36–37, and 72–74.

[9] *Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 55–62.

will (διαθήκην) that has been ratified, *so also here.*" The phrase "so also here" has been added to complete the sense of the comparison beginning with "just as."[10] Commentators have puzzled over this verse for some time. Evidently, Paul's phrase κατὰ ἄνθρωπον is understood in the sense of "according to a human example" and therefore the term διαθήκη is unlikely to refer to the biblical "covenant" (as in Gal. 3:17), but to a profane deed of final intention. The sense of διαθήκη as a deed or act of last will seems inescapable since succession (Gal 3:18), from promise to law, is in view in the chapter. But what form did this legal deed take?

Greek, Egyptian, and Roman human wills of the past, just as they are in the present, take effect only at the death of the testator. Heb. 9:16–17 describe the nature of a human will in the following manner: "For where a will (διαθήκη) is involved, the death of the one who made (τοῦ διαθεμένου) it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made (ὁ διαθέμενος) it is alive."

Wills are revocable. They may be altered at any time before death, allowing the testator to modify his bequest in accordance with changing circumstances and relationships. If Paul had meant by διαθήκη "an irrevocable human will," then it would have been a wholly exceptional testament for which there is no extant exemplar in the ancient world. Moreover, drawing an extraordinary example would not support, but rather detract from, his point about the inviolability of God's promise to Abraham.

In 1960, Ernst Bammel suggested that διαθήκη in Gal. 3:15 did not refer to a will, but a deed of gift of someone contemplating death, *donatio mortis causa*, which in Rabbinic literature is known as *mattenath bari* (henceforth: *mb*) or a deed of gift of the hale.[11] In contrast to *mattenath shekiv mera* (henceforth: *msm*) a deed of gift of the ill, which can be revoked should the donor recover from sickness, *mb* is definite or irrevocable.

Bammel depended upon Reuven Yaron's Oxford DPhil, which

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[10] This would require a widely followed change of accentuation of the Greek word from ὅμως ("all the same," "nevertheless," "yet") το ὁμῶς ("equally," "likewise"). See W.F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (2nd ed., Chicago, p. 569).

[11] "Gottes ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ (Gal. III.15–17) und das Jüdische Rechtsdenken," in *New Testament Studies* 6 (1960), pp. 313–319.

was revised and published in 1960 as *Gifts in Contemplation of Death*.[12] What Yaron did in that important work was to analyze how Jewish law from the beginning dealt with problems of succession that remained unresolved in biblical law. The biblical codes did not cover "'acts of last will' designed to deviate from the rules of succession."[13] Of particular importance is the lack of a biblical mechanism for expressing the wishes of the father in passing on his inheritance not to the firstborn son but to the favored son or daughter (cf. Num. 27). In the book of Deuteronomy, the rules of succession insist on the rights of the male primogeniture over against the independent wishes of the father:

> If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other disliked, and they have borne him children, both the loved and the disliked, and if the first-born son is hers that is disliked, then on the day when he assigns his possessions as an inheritance to his sons, he may not treat the son of the loved as the first-born in preference to the son of the disliked, who is the first-born, but he shall acknowledge the first-born, the son of the disliked, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the first issue of his strength; the right of the first-born is his (21:15–17).

Yaron showed that talmudic law dealt with this intestate succession in an unexpected way. Rather than restricting the Deuteronomic law to cases of polygamous marriages where there were two competing males, both "firstborn" from different mothers, as they could easily have done, the rabbis resolved questions of disposition by introducing the foreign concept of legally binding "gifts." The incorporation of this foreign element into talmudic law was gradual, moving away from biblical law by introducing distinctions between formulas and expressions appropriate for "gift" rather than "inheritance."[14]

Eventually, talmudic law distinguished two types of gifts depend-

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[12] (Oxford). See more recently Reuven Yaron, "Acts of Last Will in Jewish Law" in *Actes à Cause de Mort* (Brussels, 1992), p. 31.

[13] "Acts of Last Will," p. 30.

[14] Frederick E. Greenspahn, *When Brothers Dwell Together. The Preeminence of Younger Siblings in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 54–55, has correctly questioned Deut. 21:15–18 as evidence of primogeniture, since the Bible itself does not provide proof "that the preferred sons, whether younger or older, were given control over their fathers' households." While this may be, Yaron's point is not what the biblical passage means in its scriptural context, but how Deut. 21 was understood by talmudic legists.

ing upon the state of health of the donors. The *mb* divides the rights of the gift between the healthy giver and the receiver. A donor may transfer with immediate effect the ownership of his property, in whole or part, to the donee, but himself retain usufruct or the rights of enjoyment while he survives. The *mb* type of gift is irrevocable, guaranteed by registration with public authorities, the payment of transfer-taxes, and the use of such formulas as "to be valid and secure." The *msm* by contrast was a kind of *testamento similis*,[15] and the pledging of one's property when ill was revoked or automatically lapsed should the donor recover from his illness.

In my 1997 study, I followed this line of enquiry and suggested that διαθήκη in Paul did not mean "a human will" in the common sense of the word but a particular form of legal disposition related to the deed of gift known in Rabbinic literature as *mb*. PYadin 19, dating by Roman consular and Macedonian years to 16 April 128 C.E., involved the hypothecation of all the possessions, including a house in En-Gedi, of Judah, son of Elazar Khthousion, to his daughter Shelamzious. She is to have half of it immediately ("from today") and the other half after his death. This deed of gift was irrevocable, given that the document was registered with public authorities, included the formulas "validly and securely for all time" and "all valid and secure," and ratified by at least six witnesses who signed their names in Greek and Aramaic scripts.[16]

I suggested that the word play in Galatians 3 is similar to that of Heb. 9:11–22, where διαθήκη means both "the human will" and "the covenant:" in the same way that the "will" comes into effect at the death of the testator, so the first "covenant" was inaugurated by the blood of calves and goats (vv. 15, 18) and the new "covenant" by the blood of Christ (vv. 14, 15). The difference is that in Galatians 3, the death of the testator is not in view, because διαθήκη refers to a deed of gift and not a will.[17]

In Galatians 3 Paul likewise plays on the term, which has for him "the *double entendre* of the Abrahamic covenant (Gal. 3:17) and human

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[15] "Acts of Last Will," p. 35.

[16] For details of the argument see *Holy Scripture*, pp. 58–62.

[17] Philip Esler rightly observes, "A legal document like this would both smooth the way for Paul to introduce the notion of heirs and inheritance, yet, since it can refer to a disposition by a living donor, soften the awkwardness of the imagery." (*Galatians* [London, 1998], p. 192).

will. Just as a human διαθήκη is inviolable, so too the διαθήκη of Abraham ratified by God cannot be annulled by the law."[18]

Legal Nature of PYadin 19

In 1999, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor reviewed the debate before advocating a return to the thesis suggested in 1900 by William Ramsay, namely that the verse should be understood in the context of the Greek law of adoption.[19] Commenting on my application of PYadin 19 to Gal. 3:15, Murphy-O'Connor states:

> This document, which is ratified by at least six witnesses, is exceptional in that it is both a deed of gift and a testament. Lim tries to suggest that the irrevocability of the deed of gift carries over to the testament, and in consequence that we have here a precise parallel to the διαθήκη of Gal. 3:15. However, there is no hint in the document that such is the case. Just because they are juxtaposed does not transform a testament into a deed of gift. What Shelamzious has she holds. But she can only hope for what she is promised. If the deed of gift hypothesis has proved to be a blind alley. . . .[20]

Let me respond to these criticisms. First, in what sense is PYadin 19 "exceptional," being both a deed of gift and a testament? Murphy-O'Connor footnotes this claim with a reference to Tobit 8:20–21. In the principal edition of the text, Naphtali Lewis[21] had indeed drawn attention to this passage as a suggestive parallel: during the wedding feast Raguel swore an oath to Tobias, declaring that "all that I possess, take half at once . . . and the other half when I die will belong to you two, when my wife and I die" (8:21). In 10:10, Raguel fulfilled his promise and gave half of all his property, male and female slaves, oxen and sheep, and donkeys and camels, clothing, money and household goods, to Tobias. Nowhere does Lewis suggest that the Tobit passage proves PYadin 19 to be both a deed of gift and a testament. The point is surely that Tobit 8 and 10 attest to the "deed of gift" type of disposition found in PYadin 19.

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[18] *Holy Scripture*, p. 62.
[19] "The Irrevocable Will (Gal 3:15)," in *Revue Biblique* 106 (1999), pp. 224–235.
[20] Ibid., pp. 227–228.
[21] *The Documents from the Bar-Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters. Greek Papyri* (Jerusalem, 1989), p. 83.

Belonging to another time and place, the documents of the Jews who lived in the military colony at Yeb in Egypt during the Persian period include an exemplar of a deed of gift. Among these Elephantine documents is a "Bequest in Contemplation of Death"[22] (404 B.C.E.) executed by Anani, son of Azariah to his daughter Jehoishma.

> On the 24th of Marcheshvan, that is day 29 of Mesore, year 1 of Artaxerxes the king, then said Anani son of Azariah, a servitor to YHW the God in Elephantine the fortress, to lady Jehoishma his daughter, saying: I thought of you in my lifetime and gave (יהבת) you part (קצת) of my house which I bought for money and its value I gave. I gave it (יהבתה) to you. . . . Yours it is; you have right to it. . . . This house whose boundaries and measurements are written and whose words are written in this document—I Anani, gave it (יהבתה) to Jehoishma my daughter at my death in love. Just as she supported me while I was old of days—I was unable (to use) my hands and she supported me—also I gave (יהבת) (it) to her at my death.[23]

Sixteen years earlier, Anani had granted usufruct of the estate to his daughter, lady Jehoishma. In this document he completed a conveyance of the title of the apartment to her, a transference that is to take effect only upon his death. The use of the past tense "gave" (eight times) in the document is to reassure Jehoishma that while she will become owner only after her father's death, the transfer has been completed.[24]

Yaron believes that this document is a deed of gift.[25] What can be added is that it is similar to PYadin 19 in two important ways: 1) although the portion of the gift is not explicitly stated ("part of my house," line 3), it is evident from the document that half was given now ("half [i.e., the courtyard] of yours" פלנא דילך, line 14, "half the stairway" בפלנ דרנא, line 15) and the other half after Anani's death. 2) the validity of the document against future suits and claimants is expressed by the clause "they shall not be able to take out against you a new or old document, but it is this document which I made

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[22] This is the title given to the document known as B3.10 Kraeling 9 or B43 by Bezazel Porten et al. in *The Elephantine Papyri in English* (Leiden, 1966), pp. 237–241.

[23] The English translation of this passage and subsequent ones is by Porten, *Elephantine Papyri*, pp. 237–240. For the original texts and transcriptions in Aramaic with Hebrew see B. Porten and A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* (in Hebrew) vol. 2, Contracts (Hebrew University texts for students distributed by Eisenbrauns, 1989), pp. 86–89, foldout 21.

[24] Cf. *Elephantine Papyri*, p. 237.

[25] Yaron, "Acts of Last Will," pp. 30, 34.

for you (that) is valid." This document is witnessed by eight witnesses and sealed and endorsed.

PYadin 19 is not "exceptional." Yaron refers to another document from the Babatha Archives known as NH 7, "Bequest of Property," which has two distinctive features, namely that the deed of gift is extended to cover future acquisitions and the retention of greater powers by the donor.[26]

Murphy-O'Connor does not say how he came to view the legal nature of PYadin 19 as a mixed document of testament and gift. It is true that the PYadin is a "double document," but this only means that theoretically the same text is copied out twice across the grain, first at the bottom and then a second time at the top.[27] The top part of the papyrus sheet is folded down in horizontal strips and that part of the text becomes the inner text (*scriptura interior*) and the bottom copy becomes the outer text (*scriptura exterior*). In practice, however, the inner and outer texts often differed, the former becoming a summary of the outer text.

The inner text of PYadin 19 is badly mutilated and Lewis notes that "nothing in the outer text corresponds to these word in the inner text."[28] He reconstructs a tantalizing "διαθή[κ]ην" in line 3 of the inner text. Although the word is not preserved completely, an examination of the photographic plate shows that Lewis is likely to be correct in his restoration. If this is so, then the term διαθήκη was either originally found in the outer text, but no longer preserved, or it was used as a label to describe the document of PYadin 19. Terminologically, it is related to or cognate with verbal and nominal forms in the outer text: "Judah *willed*" (διέθετο lines 11, 15–16) and "*the testator*" (ὁ διεθετῶν line 18).[29]

Murphy-O'Connor's bald assertion that PYadin 19 is "both a deed of gift and testament" is unsupported by evidence or argumentation. The second allegation that I have tried to read the irrevocability of

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[26] Ibid., p. 45. NH 7, non vidi, has recently been published in Ada Yardeni, Baruch Levine, and Jonas Greenfield, eds., *Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters* (Jerusalem, 2002), vol. 2.

[27] Lewis, *Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period*, p. 9. Though counter intuitive, PYadin 34 evidences this procedure with the lower, outer half written and the upper, inner half left blank.

[28] *Documents from the Bar-Kokhba Period*, p. 86, notes 3–4.

[29] See my discussion, *Holy Scripture*, pp. 61–62.

the deed of gift into the testament is thereby negated. So is the third criticism that their juxtaposition does not transform a testament into a deed.

PYadin 19 is one document copied out twice that uses terminology in the outer text akin to those of the will, and it may also have been described as a διαθήκη in the summary statements of the inner text. But it is clearly not a will, since it has come into effect while the donor is still alive. It is a deed of gift and it is irrevocable.[30]

Adoption and Will in Galatians 3:15

Murphy-O'Connor's own view is overtly based upon William Ramsay's thesis that the Greek law of adoption is the context for understanding Gal. 3:15. Ramsay argued that "irrevocability was a characteristic feature of Greek law, according to which an heir outside the family must be adopted into the family; and the adoption was the Will-making."[31] Over the years, Ramsay has been criticized in a general way for his handling of corroborating material, particularly with regard to the use of a Roman legal textbook that postdates Paul by four hundred years.[32] Murphy-O'Connor takes up Ramsay's failed attempt by emphasizing the relevance of a work, entitled *Disowned*, written by Lucian of Samosata in the second century C.E.

He begins by drawing attention to three types of adoption in Greek law, *inter vivos*, testamentary, and posthumous, observing that only the former two are relevant to Gal. 3:15. The first two differed only in the time when the adoption takes place. According to Isaeus (c. 420–340 B.C.E.) adoption *inter vivos* occurred when the testator was healthy and *compos mentis*. Citing the French translation of Isaeus'

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[30] Ranon Katzoff, "An Interpretation of P.Yadin 19: A Jewish Gift after Death," in Adam Bülow-Jacobsen, ed., *Proceedings of the 20th International Congress of Papyrologists, Copenhagen, 23–29 August, 1992* (Copenhagen, 1994), pp. 562–565, argued that on the basis of Greek papyri (P.Mich V 321 [42 C.E.] and P.Ups.Frid 1 [48 C.E.]) deeds of gifts were irrevocable before 42 C.E. and revocable after that. He explained the irrevocability of PYadin 19 by the fact that once they became embedded in Jewish law, both the *diatheke*- and gift-type of disposition "were no longer affected by subsequent changes undergone by these institutions outside it" (p. 564).

[31] *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London, 1899), p. 351.

[32] Murphy-O'Connor, "Irrevocable Will," p. 228, states that "[r]arely do they attempt a refutation, and, when they do, they tend to focus, not on the data, but on how Ramsay handled his material."

Discours, Murphy-O'Connor shows that the adoption occurred when the adopter "était bien portant, il avait toute sa raison et toute son intelligence." By contrast, the testamentary form was a provision in a will and therefore the adoption took effect upon the death of the testator. Both these forms of adoption were revocable.

But, according to Murphy-O'Connor, the revocability of these two forms of adoption is theoretical. In practice "an adopted son should never be disinherited."[33] He suggests that two contrasting passages from Lucian's *Disowned* illuminate the procedure of adoption as it was practiced. In *Disowned* 9 Lucian states that natural born sons can be disinherited if they turn out to be "unworthy of their family." In contrast, Murphy-O'Connor suggests, an adopted son cannot be disowned because the father freely chose him. He tries to argue this with another passage from Lucian:

> A son who seemed to you unworthy of his lineage need never have been taken back, but one whom you have pronounced good and taken back again you will not thereafter be able to disown; for you yourself have borne witness that he does not deserve to undergo this again, and have acknowledged that he is good. It is fitting, therefore, that his reinstatement should be irrevocable and the reconciliation binding . . . Even if I were not your own son, but adopted, and you wished to disown me, I should not think you could; for what it was possible not to do at all, it is unjust to undo once it has taken place (*Disowned* 11).

The key to understanding this line of reasoning is to be found in the issue of free choice. The above refers to the case of a natural born son who is disowned and then reinstated. Once restored, this 'prodigal son' cannot be disinherited again, because the re-instatement was freely done. A further illustration of the irrevocability of the free choice is then given in 'the hypothetical' of an adoption, since "what it was possible not to do at all, it is unjust to undo once it has taken place." Murphy-O'Connor realizes that this passage in Lucian does not directly apply to the case of adoption when he added a footnote of clarification: "[e]ffectively the natural son was adopted.'[34]

After discussing another passage from Isaeus to show that adoption and inheritance were related, Murphy-O'Connor applies the

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[33] Ibid., p. 230.
[34] Ibid., p. 230, note 26.

Greek law of adoption to the interpretation of vv. 16 and 18 of Gal. 3, arguing that "the promises made to Abraham" were tantamount to a bequest of inheritance. One can infer that "Abraham was God's adopted son through this mention of 'inheritance', since he could not be his son by nature."[35] Such a view is also supported by Philo's comments on Gen. 18:17 that describes Abraham as "[h]e alone is nobly born, for he has registered God as his father, and become by adoption his only son."

Murphy-O'Connor then turns to the phrase κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω in Gal. 3:15 and argues that κατὰ ἄνθρωπον carries with it an implied comparison to κατὰ θεὸν, "according to divine revelation," and means "according to the common estimation," that is, "the 'commonsense' of fallen humanity."[36]

For Murphy-O'Connor, Gal. 3:15 should be translated as "Let me give you, friends, an example that everyone will understand. Once a person's will has been ratified, no one can set it aside or add to it." Apparently, Paul realized that the example from which he drew his illustration was based upon the popular, and imperfect, understanding of the rights of the adopted son.[37]

This view suffers from a number of problems:

1) The distinction between the theoretical revocability of testamentary adoption and its irrevocable nature in practice is based upon a strained reading of Lucian. *Disowned* 11 is not about testamentary adoption. The case refers to the restoration of a natural born son, after his rights have been revoked. There are two principles at work in this case: 1) the reinstated status of the son is irrevocable, because the father has testified to his son's rehabilitation ("you have borne witness that he does not deserve to undergo this again, and have acknowledge that he is good"); and 2) volition creates an irrevocable decision, because there was no coercion to act. The son who is disowned then freely restored by the father must not be disinherited again, because there was no compulsion to reinstate him in the first place. This principle is illustrated by a hypothetical voluntary adoption ("even if I were not your own son, but adopted, and you wished to disown me, I should not think that you could; for what it was possible not to do at all, it is unjust to undo once it has taken place").

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[35] Ibid., p. 232.
[36] Ibid., p. 234.
[37] Ibid., pp. 224–235.

It is a hypothetical case that trades on some form of adoption, not explicitly referred to as testamentary.

Murphy-O'Connor's assumption that the reinstated natural son is equivalent to an adopted son is unconvincing. The statement in *Disowned* 5 that "he annulled the disownment and made me his son once more" concerns reinstatement of a natural son, not the adoption of a son born of a different father.

2) The exact phrase κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω (with the verb) occurs in only one other place in Paul's letters, Rom. 3:5. Curiously, Murphy-O'Connor does not make use of this,[38] although it could support his rendering of the phrase as "I speak according to the common estimation." In the common estimation divine wrath brought down on Jews could be considered unjust. 1 Cor. 9:8 has a close parallel, κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ταῦτα λαλῶ, using a different verb of saying. Paul defends his and Barnabas's right to sustenance for their labor *in accordance with*, and not in contrast to, the law of Moses ("Does not the law also say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses" [followed by a citation of Deut. 25:4]). This passage contradicts the antithesis between common estimation and divine revelation. Murphy-O'Connor sees no way around this passage except to say that "[e]xceptionally in this case the common estimate is confirmed by the Law of Moses."[39] Another neglected parallel is to be found in the phrase ἀνθρώπινον λέγω in Rom. 6:19 where the unusual expression "you have become slaves in righteousness" is spoken according to human terms and because of "the weakness of the flesh." Paul is expressing the divine emancipation of man from 'slavery to sin' to 'slavery to righteousness' in terms that the gentile followers could understand. In this phrase ἀνθρώπινον is semantically equivalent to κατὰ ἄνθρωπον. In the context, it is the terminology of δοῦλα τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ('slaves in righteousness') which Paul is contrasting in human terms to 'slaves to sin'. It is hardly the common estimate to regard those belonging to righteousness as slaves.

The remaining parallels to Gal. 3:15 suggested by Murphy-O'Connor are questionable: 1 Cor. 3:3 uses the verb περιπατεῖν (lit. "to walk around with"); 1 Cor. 15:32 has the unusual combination with

[38] Ibid., p. 234. The typographical error (Rom. 3:4 instead of 3:5) does not account for its absence.

[39] Ibid., p. 234.

θηριομαχεῖν ("to fight with beasts"); and Gal. 1:1 uses the verb εἶναι ("to be"). He emphasized the last two, claiming that in 1 Cor. 15:32 Paul "adopted a popular perception of the human passions as ravening beasts" when "he was speaking κατὰ ἄνθρωπον."[40] But there is no verb of speaking in the passage; κατὰ ἄνθρωπον qualifies θηριομαχεῖν, "fighting with beast."[41]

For Gal. 1:1, Murphy-O'Connor renders the sense of κατὰ ἄνθρωπον to mean that the gospel Paul preached was not "according to the common estimation." There are, however, three main alternatives to understanding this phrase, each one including the notion of "human" and not "common:" 1) of human authority; 2) of human origin; and 3) the general idea of human.[42] "Of human origin" may have been what Paul had in mind, since there is an allusion to the reception of Torah on Sinai ("For I did not receive [παρέλαβον] it from a human source [παρὰ ἀνθρώπου], nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal. 1:12). Paul is comparing the source of his own gospel to the revelation of the law to Moses. Such a reading concurs with the overall apologetic opening chapter in which Paul meets criticisms about the source of his apostolic authority ("Paul, an apostle, not from man [ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων] nor through any man [δι' ἀνθρώπου], but through Christ Jesus and God the father." Gal. 1:1).

3) Even if it is granted, for argument's sake, that in practice an adopted son is never disinherited, what Paul says in Gal. 3:15 is that it is the διαθήκη, which Murphy-O'Connor translates as "will," once ratified that cannot be set aside or added to. The testamentary adoption (in Greek ποιητός), as he readily recognizes, is "a provision in a will."[43] What he does not explain is how a provision within it can change the nature of a will and make it irrevocable.

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[40] Ibid., pp. 234–235.

[41] C.K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London, 1968), p. 365, judiciously translates this verse as, "If it was on purely human terms I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what good does that do me?"

[42] See E.D.W. Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh, 1921), pp. 37–38, who opts for the third alternative: "it may convey simply the idea of 'human' without more exact discrimination."

[43] "Irrevocable Will," p. 229: "Since testamentary adoption was simply a provision in a will its effectiveness was entirely conditioned by the validity of the will."

Irrevocability of a Deed of Gift

How, then, would rendering διαθήκη as "a deed of gift" help our understanding of Gal. 3? As was previously mentioned succession is in view throughout the second half of the chapter (vv. 6–29) and that the translation of the term by its common meaning cannot stand, because "a will" by design is a revocable document. One has to search for another reference to διαθήκη and this, it is being suggested, is to be found in a text akin to "a deed of gift" of PYadin 19.

The two-stage process of the deed of gift, one half now, and the other half after death, helps us better understand Paul's belief that divine dispensation came first with the promises to Abraham (vv. 3–9) and his son Isaac, who is moreover identified with Christ (v. 16), and second four hundred and thirty years later with the Sinaitic covenant (v. 17). Though the revelation of the Torah on Mt. Sinai was a covenant that had been subsequently established, it did not annul the previously ratified covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17), nor did it nullify the promise that God will make the gentile righteous through Abraham (vv. 8, 9; cf. blessing of the families/nations of the earth in Gen. 12:3, 18:18, 22:18).

The analogy, however, should not be pressed beyond what Paul had intended. It would be perverse to think that Paul would have assumed that God's death preceded the second stage of the giving of the Torah. Some of the more erudite among the members of the Galatian churches may have grasped the subtext of the two-stage process, but others would have been contented to know that in v. 15 the διαθήκη referred to is irrevocable and that as such it supports Paul's argument about the inviolability of the Abrahamic promise ("the law . . . does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God," v. 17).

Put a different way, Gal. 3:15 can be read on two levels. The surface meaning makes sense so long as it is understood that διαθήκη refers to an irrevocable deed of gift. For the learned among Paul's congregations, the reference to this irrevocable deed of gift also invites a comparison between the two-stage process of the διαθήκη, half now and half later, with the giving of Abrahamic promise and law.

One can never be sure that Gal. 3:15 was originally understood in the way that has been suggested. Historical-critical exegesis does not result in certainty, just degrees of plausibility. However, the deed

of gift hypothesis does resolve the problem of reading an unprecedented irrevocable will. Three further points need to be considered. First, a complicating factor is that in Rabbinic literature, the Greek term διαθήκη was transliterated into Hebrew as דייתיקי and is likened to *msm*, the revocable type of disposition. If the reconstruction of the same term in the inner text of PYadin 19 is correct, then either the scribe who drafted the document misunderstood the legal nature of the contract in the outer text and mislabeled it or διαθήκη can have both a specific meaning of a human will and a broader reference to a disposition. Such a broader semantic range is already suggested by the Septuagint's use of the word to translate ברית, a treaty, agreement, pledge or covenant. The deed of gift hypothesis, however, does not depend upon this reconstruction, since the terminology of "willed" and "testator" are related to διαθήκη. What one has to keep distinct is the legal nature of a document from how it is formulated and described by various sources.

Second, the "deed of gift" type of disposition was widely known—in the Roman province of Arabia (cf. "but I went at once to Arabia," Gal. 1:17), Judea (cf. "then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem," Gal. 1:18), and at the military colony at Elephantine in Egypt. The provenance of the book of Tobit is debated, though it seems to have been written for Jews living in the diaspora.[44] So far as I am aware, no exemplar has turned up in the province of Galatia. These recent finds show that the disposition known as *mb* in the Rabbinic texts was not fictional nor was it a late, legal invention.[45] The recent finds are multilingual documents, written in Aramaic (with Egyptian glosses) and Greek (with Aramaic signatures), and they date between 404 B.C.E. and 128 C.E.

Finally, it is important to realize that along with Gen. 12, 15, 18, 22, Exod. 12:40, Hab. 2:4, Lev. 18:5, blocks of passages from Deuteronomy underpin Paul's argument in Gal. 3. He quotes a composite text of Deut. 27:26 and 28:58 in v. 10 ("cursed is everyone

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[44] Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* revised by Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, Martin Goodman, et al. (Edinburgh, 1986), vol. III.1, p. 233. See now the Hebrew and Aramaic texts of Tobit from Qumran, J.A. Fitzmyer, *Qumran Cave 4. XIV. Parabiblical Texts, Part 2* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 1–76.

[45] Yaron, "Acts of Last Will," p. 34: "The «gift of one in good health» (*mattenath bari*) did not have to be invented anew: it is in all respects identical with ordinary, old-established «gifts». . . ."

who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law") and Deut. 21:23 in v. 13 ("cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree"). The latter included an essential reinterpretation of the Deuteronomic law of the hanging of a corpse to the crucifixion of Jesus.[46] The rules governing intestate succession which the disposition by deed of gift was attempting to circumvent are to be found in Deuteronomy and specifically in that vital chapter 21.

I would suggest, therefore, that Gal. 3:15 should be translated as follows: "Brothers, I speak according to a human example: Just as no one annuls or adds to a deed of gift that has been ratified, *so also here*."[47]

[46] See my discussion of the development of this interpretation in the Temple Scroll and Pesher Nahum, *Holy Scripture*, pp. 164–168.

[47] Many thanks to Professor Philip Esler for comments on an earlier draft of the paper.

THE JEWISHNESS OF MATTHEW: ANOTHER LOOK

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I first met Tony Saldarini almost exactly thirty years ago, and he became a model for me in many ways. His breadth and depth of knowledge and his scholarly judgment were remarkable. But he also had other traits I admired. First, he was always intellectually honest. He had no pretenses, and ego never got in the way of his scholarship or his dealings with other scholars. Second, he was quick-witted. I always looked forward to his participation in discussions and panels because I knew that he would keep things lively. Third, he never spoke just to hear himself talk. He got to the point. Fourth, Tony was generous and encouraging to other scholars, especially younger ones, including me. Finally, He was deeply engaged in the study of late Second Temple Judaism, early Christianity, and formative and Rabbinic Judaism, all of which fascinated me. His work in these fields has contributed greatly to our knowledge and has substantially advanced mutual understanding between Jews and Christians.

In 1994, Tony published *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, a study of the relationship of Matthew's community to the Judaism of the day. The book combines three of his main scholarly interests—the history of early Christianity and formative Judaism, social-scientific methods, and relations between Jews and Christians, ancient and modern. Like many in the field today, he was acutely aware of the distortions of Judaism in ancient Christian texts and in biblical scholarship. He worked energetically to set the record straight. His book and articles on Matthew are cases in point, carefully reconsidering every aspect of Matthew that allowed it to be read in an anti-Jewish way and compellingly arguing that the gospel has been misinterpreted. Scholars have approached the text with analytical categories based on later periods, when Christianity and Judaism had become two distinct religions. But when Matthew was written, the distinction was not clear.

Saldarini shows that the passages often interpreted to indicate a hostility between Matthew's community and Judaism can more plausibly be interpreted as the efforts of a minority community, a deviant

reformist sect within Judaism, to legitimate itself and to delegitimate the leadership of the larger Jewish community.[1] Matthew considers his community to be faithful to God's will and to be in full continuity with the history of Israel and observant of Torah. Saldarini builds upon the work of Overman and Levine.[2] With Overman he shares the conviction that the gospel contains an inner-Jewish polemic, not a Christian condemnation of Judaism. Both show that the kind of polemics Matthew contains against Jewish leadership is often found in minority groups within a community or tradition. The polemic, rather than showing that Matthew's group has left Judaism, show exactly the opposite—that it remains within Judaism and that it is battling for legitimacy within that setting. Levine's study also convincingly demonstrates that Matthew contains no general condemnation of Judaism. Rather, Matthew portrays the ministry of Jesus as devoted almost entirely to Israel, while the church's mission includes both Israel and the Gentiles. She and Saldarini agree that what are often taken as criticisms of Israel as a whole are in fact criticisms of its leadership. For Levine, Matthew's critique of leaders ought to be seen as referring to Christian leaders as well as non-Christian ones.

Saldarini's book is remarkable in its scope and detail and in the care with which he argues. It is not the purpose of this article to review all that he says but rather to look at some highlights of his presentation in the light of related scholarship. Recently, Douglas Hare published an article on the Jewishness of Matthew in which he identifies Saldarini, Overman, and Levine as his "primary dialogue partners."[3] Hare opposes what he says some have described

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[1] On legitimation, see Anthony Saldarini, "The Delegitimation of Leaders in Matthew 23," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54 (1992), pp. 659–680; for deviance, see "The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict," in David Balch, ed., *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches* (Minneapolis, 1991), pp. 38–61. For years, Saldarini was a member of the task force of the Catholic Biblical Association that investigated and used social-scientific approaches to ancient Judaism and Christianity. This interest in social-scientific criticism emerges in his use of sociological and anthropological categories and models to understand Matthew.

[2] J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis, 1990); Amy-Jill Levine, *The Social and Ethnic Dimension of Matthean Salvation History* (Lewiston, 1988).

[3] Douglas Hare, "How Jewish Is the Gospel of Matthew?" in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62 (2000), pp. 264–277. Another strong voice in the debate has been that of Daniel J. Harrington, who also stresses the Jewish nature of the Matthean community (*The Gospel of Matthew* [Collegeville, 1991]). Harrington argues that Matthew's

as a "growing consensus" about Matthew, that it "was written for a Law-observant Jewish sect that admitted Gentiles to full participation only after they had converted to Judaism."[4] It is a fitting contribution to this memorial volume for us to join this conversation by considering some of Hare's arguments.

Hare's article is in four sections, corresponding to "four matters relevant to the debate:" 1) arguments from silence, 2) the Matthean community's self-identification, 3) observance of Torah, and 4) worship. This structure provides a convenient framework through which we can examine anew the Jewishness of Matthew's community. Hare's four sections fall into two main categories. The first, comprised of Hare's first three sections, deals with the community, its practice and self-concept, while the second focuses on the figure of Jesus. We begin with some broad considerations and then take up each of Hare's sections in turn, discussing them in the light of Saldarini's work and other possible arguments. We pay special attention to the issue of Matthew's conception of Jesus' status.

Hare acknowledges that Matthew's conceptual world is primarily Jewish and that his hostility toward scribes and Pharisees implies some sort of relationship with formative Judaism.[5] He sees the issue as whether Matthew's community identifies more closely with the synagogue community or with "the mixed churches of the Diaspora such as the Church of Antioch prior to the arrival of 'some from James.'" Another way to put the question, according to Hare, is whether Gentile converts would be required to become Jewish proselytes. Saldarini thinks that they were so required, as does Levine.[6]

One can infer from Galatians that the Christian community in Antioch contained both Jewish and Gentile members, that the Gentiles were not Torah-observant, and that the Jewish Christians participated in banquets in this mixed setting. The Jewish Christians sent by James took exception to this practice and persuaded the Jewish Christians in Antioch, including Peter and Barnabas, to withdraw from such gatherings. Hare seems to assume that after the Jewish

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community was "a largely Jewish-Christian community that existed still within the framework of Judaism but in tension with other Jewish groups" (p. 2) and that in Matthew's church the Torah was still in force (p. 84).

[4] Hare, "How Jewish?," p. 264.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 199; Levine, *The Social and Ethnic Dimension of Matthean Salvation History*, pp. 178–185.

and Gentile Christians of Antioch separated, at least with respect to meals, the Jewish-Christian section of the church would have appeared more like a synagogue than did the mixed community that existed before the separation. This makes sense, but it is worth noting that there is much that we do not know about how Jewish diaspora communities related to their Gentile neighbors. Indeed, there may have been a variety of ways in which they did so, depending on the specific circumstances in which they found themselves and on the particular outlooks of members of the Jewish community.[7]

Saldarini frequently insists on the complexity and diversity of late Second Temple Judaism and formative Judaism.[8] Early Judaism and early Christianity were both diverse, as were perceptions of these entities by both outsiders and insiders. Views that assume the later development of these entities into two distinct religions and of the efforts made within each tradition to establish a more normative form of each distort the earlier period.

Cohen categorizes the ways in which Gentiles could relate to a Jewish community. Gentiles might relate by

> (1) admiring some aspect of Judaism; (2) acknowledging the power of the god of the Jews or incorporating him into the pagan pantheon; (3) benefiting the Jews or being conspicuously friendly to Jews; (4) practicing some or many of the rituals of the Jews; (5) venerating the god of the Jews and denying or ignoring the pagan gods; (6) joining the Jewish community; (7) converting to Judaism and "becoming a Jew."[9]

For outsiders, any Gentile who got as far as category four of this taxonomy could be called a Jew. Philo applies the term "proselytes" even to those in category five who did not take on circumcision or perhaps many other legal commandments. But Cohen notes that although Gentiles would probably have considered these "Jews" to some degree, there is no evidence that the Jewish community did so.[10]

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[7] Although he plausibly posits an overarching unity of identity in the diaspora, John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 B.C.E.–117 B.C.E.)* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 399–400, also documents the considerable diversity found there: "The spectrum of social responses spreads all the way from total assimilation to near total isolation."

[8] For example, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 13–18.

[9] See Shaye J.D. Cohen, "Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew," in *Harvard Theological Review* 82 (1989), pp. 13–33, particularly pp. 14–15.

[10] Here Cohen disagrees with Peder Borgen, "The Early Church and the Hellenistic Synagogue," in *Studia Theologica* (1983), pp. 55–78, who thinks that Philo used an

Cohen's article reminds us that there are many ways in which Gentiles could relate to Jewish communities and that there might be a variety of ways in which Gentiles and Jews would see Gentiles who had some relationship to Judaism. This complicates the question of whether Matthew's community could still consider itself Jewish if it had Gentiles in its midst who did not keep Torah strictly. Collins's study *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* warns against too rigid an idea of who would and would not be considered a Jew in the diaspora: "There was a soft boundary line between Jew and gentile. The God-fearers and sympathizers may not have been a well-defined class, but they are important because they illustrate the gray area where the boundary between Jew and gentile becomes unclear and loses much of its importance."[11]

Gentile members of Matthew's community certainly would have to have progressed as far as step five in Cohen's scheme, and that might qualify them for being considered Jews in the eyes of non-Christian Gentiles. But it is unlikely that such Gentiles would have been considered part of the Jewish community by strictly observant members of the church, and if they thought that members of their group ought to obey the Torah, then they would have had difficulty accepting the presence of these Gentiles in their church.

Circumcision was an important symbol of the covenant of Israel, and so it would help tremendously if we could determine whether or not Gentiles joining Matthew's community were required to be circumcised. But the gospel is silent on this. Hare's first section takes up this question. The gospel's silence concerning circumcision of Gentiles has been read both as meaning the community required it and that it did not do so, and Hare cautions that no conclusions can be drawn with certainty. He notes that some scholars, including Saldarini, Levine, White, Mohrlang, and Sim, read 5:17–20 as requiring all church members to obey the whole Torah and think that Matthew required circumcision.[12] Other scholars, among whom

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"ethical criterion" to decide when a person was a proselyte and ceased to be a heathen (p. 22, n. 28).

[11] New York, 1983, p. 243.

[12] In addition to the works of Saldarini and Levine mentioned above, Hare refers to the following: L.M. White, "Crisis Management and Boundary Maintenance: The Social Location of the Matthean Community," in Balch, *Social History*, p. 242, n. 100; R. Mohrlang, *Matthew and Paul: A Comparison of Ethical Perspectives* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 44–45; D.S. Sim, "The Gospel of Matthew and the Gentiles," in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 57 (1995), pp. 44–45.

are Meier and Gundry, think that the Great Commission marks a new beginning in which baptism replaces circumcision as the mark of initiation.[13] Hare includes Davies and Allison among those who hold the later view, but it is important to note that those commentators claim that the Jewish members of Matthew's church are Torah-observant, even though the community allows Gentiles into the community who do not observe Torah. They conclude, "If, as we have urged, the Jewish Christians of Matthew's community still followed the Mosaic law, they could not but have thought of themselves as Jews and been thought Jews by others."[14] They think that Matthew does not mention circumcision because it has proved a contentious matter in the church, and church unity is a priority for him. For the same reason, Matthew does not allude to Paul in any way.[15] It is worth noting that in 1994 Allison wrote a review of Saldarini's book in which he says of its arguments, "I moreover find myself completely convinced at every turn. Criticism will have to come from elsewhere."[16]

Saldarini suggests that since circumcision is not mentioned in the gospel, it is not controversial in Matthew's community.[17] Admittedly, this is an argument from silence, but he buttresses it with the consideration that the gospel records many disputes concerning Torah interpretation. If Matthew's group had indeed judged circumcision unnecessary, they would have had to justify that position, which would have left its mark in the gospel. Saldarini argues cogently against the view that the reason for this is that the Pauline view had taken firm hold by the late first century.[18] First, Judaism and Christianity were too diverse at this time for such blanket statements.

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[13] Hare cites John P. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church, and Morality in the First Gospel* (New York, 1979), pp. 13, 213; R.H. Gundry, "A Responsive Evaluation of the Social History of the Matthean Community in Roman Syria," in Balch, *Social History*, p. 66, n. 21.

[14] W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (3 vols.; Edinburgh, 1988–1997), vol. 1, p. 696. For a full statement of the commentators' assessment of Matthew's relation to Judaism, see vol. 3, pp. 692–704.

[15] Vol. 3, p. 703. It is ironic that Davies and Allison see the gospel's silence on circumcision as due to the fact that it was controversial, while Saldarini thinks it is because it is *not* controversial.

[16] *Ioudaios Review* 1994, ftp://ftp.lehigh.edu/pub/listserv/ioudaios-review/4.1994/saldarini.allison.024.

[17] He discusses circumcision in *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 156–160.

[18] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 157.

Second, in Syria and the land of Israel, many "believers-in-Jesus" remained part of Judaism for quite some time. Third, it is doubtful whether Pauline thought had any influence over Matthew or his church.[19]

The argument for circumcision is surely stronger than the one against it.[20] The idea that baptism precludes circumcision is not well founded. The Great Commission, while enjoining baptism, says nothing about circumcision. John the Baptist practiced baptism without thereby doing away with circumcision, as far as we know. And we know from the letters of Paul and from Acts of the Apostles that many early Christians saw no contradiction between baptism and Torah-observance.

It is equally debatable that Jesus' command to teach and observe all that he has commanded the disciples (28:20) overrides the Torah. Matthew's Jesus explicitly and strongly denies such an inference in 5:17–20. To observe what Jesus has taught in his ministry as recounted by Matthew is to observe the Torah, according to this gospel. Of course, different interpretations of Torah were current in the first century. To insist on observing Torah obviously does not mean that Matthew's Jesus would agree with others, Jerusalem scribes, for example, on exactly what that meant. But this is no argument that Matthew's community did not insist on Torah observance. On the other hand, observance of the Torah would certainly entail for almost all Jews such things as Sabbath observance, dietary rules, and circumcision. But there is no indication that such rules were ignored in the Matthean church. Just the opposite, in fact. Matthew is very concerned to prove that Jesus did not offend against the Sabbath, nor did he annul dietary rules. It is surely reasonable to infer the same for circumcision.

So Hare is strictly speaking correct when he says that the gospel is silent about circumcision. But unless there is some evidence to the contrary, it seems more likely that silence argues for rather than against circumcision, as Saldarini, Levine, and others have held.

There is yet another side to the question. Saldarini notes that it is at least debatable whether all Jews everywhere in the Roman world

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[19] Here he points to the work of Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis, 1972), p. 135.

[20] See Levine's arguments in *The Social and Ethnic Dimension of Matthean Salvation History*, pp. 179–181.

required circumcision.[21] He admits that evidence of Jews who thought that circumcision was unnecessary for membership in Israel is weak, but it is not non-existent. His evidence includes the following. During the Maccabean period, some Jews hid their circumcision (and probably ceased circumcising their children). Much Greek-Jewish literature does not mention circumcision, perhaps to stress similarities rather than differences with the surrounding culture (see Joseph and Aseneth, the Third Sibylline Oracle, the Letter of Aristeas).[22] Philo's moral allegorical interpretation of circumcision coupled with his insistence that it must also be practiced literally suggests that some Jews in Alexandria had given up the practice. Rabbinic authorities debate the necessity of circumcision "in ambiguous cases" and "the relative importance of immersion and circumcision in the conversion process," although most assume that circumcision is necessary and must eventually be undergone by converts. Still, in extreme cases, its necessity is debatable. Josephus tells the story of Izates in which the necessity of conversion of a foreign monarch is debated in the light of the practical problems of governance it might cause. Saldarini also sees the work of Segal as supporting some doubt about how central circumcision was at this time. He says that Segal "argues that gentiles could be functionally Jews without circumcision. Later rabbinic rules and sharp boundaries were not yet in force, and many Jewish communities had indistinct borders."[23] Saldarini also notes that Balch agrees with Segal that inclusion of uncircumcised Gentiles in the community was "one possibility within first-century Judaism, not a uniquely Christian possibility."[24] Saldarini concludes, "This evidence does not deny that circumcision was practiced by Jews and ordinarily required of converts. It shows, however, that it was not demanded in all circumstances."[25]

Given this variety and ambiguity in non-Christian Jewish contexts, one must exercise caution in making absolute statements about what

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[21] For what follows, see Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 158–159.

[22] Throughout his *Between Athens and Jerusalem* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, 2000), John Collins frequently remarks on the absence of references to circumcision in Jewish diaspora literature.

[23] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 251, n. 39. He cites Alan Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven, 1990), chapter 3.

[24] David Balch, "The Greek Political Topos *peri nomon*," in Balch, *Social History*, p. 81.

[25] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 158–159.

synagogues with Gentile sympathizers, adherents, or converts might look like when it came to circumcision. Saldarini suggests the possibility of a Matthean community that was Jewish but that had Gentiles related to it in a variety of ways, on analogy with Jewish communities.[26] But Saldarini, Levine, and others think that it is reasonable to suppose that Matthew's observant community would have practiced circumcision and required it of Gentile converts. It is worth remembering one of Saldarini's refrains in his book, that scholars have tended to read Matthew through lenses formed by the knowledge of what happened later, as Christian communities became a religion separate from Judaism.[27] Without that knowledge, would one doubt that Matthew's community, with its insistence that it is in conformity with Torah, would require circumcision? Probably not.

Scholars, including Saldarini, who see Matthew's community as Torah-observant, naturally see the community as primarily Jewish.[28] Hare says that the gospel is silent on the question of how many Gentiles were in Matthew's church and contends that we simply cannot know. He takes issue with arguments based on the role of Gentiles within the gospel itself because Matthew is, after all, writing about the ministry of Jesus, and Jesus' ministry was primarily or entirely to Jews. This raises the methodological problem of reading "facts" about Matthew's church from the gospel. Critical scholars agree that the evangelists rewrote the story of Jesus according to their own points of view and agendas and that something of the evangelists' communities is reflected in their gospels. Indeed, most interpreters

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[26] Ibid., p. 160.

[27] Saldarini insists on the multiplicity of ways in which Christians related to Judaism in the first centuries of the existence of Christianity. See a summary of his views in *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 25–26. For a recent extensive treatment of the complexity of the process by which Christianity became a religion distinct from Judaism, see James D.G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1991).

[28] Saldarini names the main proponents of the thesis that Matthew's church was primarily Gentile and that the Jewish mission is concluded ("The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict," p. 42, n. 12). Among the proponents he lists are Hare (*The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel according to St. Matthew* [Cambridge, 1967], p. 153) and John Meier (*Law and History in Matthew's Gospel* [Rome, 1976]). Saldarini considers this position to have been effectively refuted by M. Hengel ("Zur matthäischen Bergpredigt und ihrem jüdischen Hintergrund," in *Theologische Rundschau* 52 [1987], pp. 327–400) and Benno Przybylski ("The Setting of Matthean Anti-Judaism," in *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity* [Waterloo, 1986], vol. 1, pp. 181–200).

depend on some reconstruction of the historical circumstances of the evangelists for their interpretations, and most of the evidence for that reconstruction comes from the gospels themselves. But the evangelists do not directly tell us about their communities, nor do we have independent sources that supply this information. This is a hermeneutical circle. Saldarini takes something of a maximalist approach to this problem. In other words, he sees the situation of Matthew's community fairly clearly represented in the gospel. For example, the Jewish leadership in the gospel reflects non-Christian Jewish leadership in the evangelists' own setting, and how other Jews are depicted in the gospel tells us a good deal about how Matthew looked at non-believing but potentially sympathetic Jews of his own day. This approach allows a degree of detail in describing Matthew's community that exceeds what scholars less inclined to move from text to community would accept. But Saldarini's reading of Matthew's situation into the account of Jesus' ministry is not simply based on assumption. For example, he argues that Jesus' reaction to his opponents in the Jewish leadership is out of proportion to their opposition to him.[29] Jesus' reactions are really those of the early church which knows that Jesus was executed.

Hare is among those less willing to draw firm conclusions about Matthew's community, because for him the methodological problems leave too much uncertainty. But he insists that if we do use the gospel to make statements about the community, we must then give full weight to the fact that Matthew actually gives more attention to Gentiles than does Mark. Saldarini does analyze the role Gentiles in the gospel, but he maintains that they play a marginal role in the narrative and a correspondingly marginal role in Matthew's community.[30] Because of their marginal role, Saldarini believes that they

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[29] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 45.

[30] Ibid., pp. 68–83. Sim finds the view of Gentiles in Matthew to be primarily negative, and, although Matthew's community expected a mission to the Gentiles as is envisioned in the Great Commission, it would not participate in it. See D.C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh, 1998) and "The Gospel of Matthew and the Gentiles" (see note 13 above). Donald Senior argues convincingly against such a radical hypothesis in "Between Two Worlds: Gentiles and Jewish Christians in Matthew's Gospel," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 61 (1999), pp. 1–23. Senior agrees with Davies and Allison that Matthew was anxious that the Jewish nature of his community be preserved, and so he hypothesizes that the "mixed community would be essentially Jewish-Christian in character" (p. 20).

"are so peripheral to the narrative and main characters that the thesis that the gospel is predominantly oriented toward a gentile mission or a gentile group is very unlikely."[31] Positive references to Gentiles and the Great Commission reflect Matthew's hopes that in the future Gentiles will join the church in greater numbers. If these observations are combined with the arguments that Matthew's church is Torah-observant, then it is likely that the church as a whole is still Jewish, ethnically as well as religiously.

Barclay's study indirectly supports these conclusions. He demonstrates the variety embodied by diaspora Judaism but insists that there is a unity shared by all diaspora communities as well. For him, the important questions are as follows. "Some explanation is required for the way that Jewish communities survived *as coherent and enduring entities*. What bound Jews together and prevented disintegration of their communities? And what were the boundaries which made clear to themselves and to others the difference between a Jew and a non-Jew?"[32] For Barclay the key is ethnicity, defined as a combination of kinship and custom. If he is correct, then it becomes still more difficult to imagine a community that thought of itself as Jewish in character, as did Matthew's, that was not largely Jewish by birth had at its center strict observance of Torah.[33]

Hare's second category is self-identification. How did members of the Matthean church think of themselves? Hare notes that Saldarini considers their "master status" to have been believers-in-Jesus, but Hare acknowledges that this did not "extinguish their sense of being Jewish."[34] Hare's comparison of these Christians to Pauline Jewish Christians in this regard is misleading. True, Paul still considered himself Jewish. But he explicitly argues that the Torah was no longer binding, not even on himself, precisely because of the Jesus event, whereas Matthew's Jesus says clearly that Torah is still in effect. So for Paul, being in Christ meant that one was no longer under Torah, while this is not so for Matthew.

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[31] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 69.

[32] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, p. 400.

[33] The case of the communities addressed by Galatians is not a counterexample. It is questionable that those Gentile Christians actually obeyed the whole Torah. Otherwise, Paul's insistence in 5:3 that acceptance of circumcision entails observance of the whole Torah would be superfluous.

[34] Hare explains that by "master status" Saldarini means "a primary trait of a person to which all others are subordinate" ("How Jewish?," p. 270, n. 27; quoting Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 264, n. 116).

Saldarini suggests that Matthean Christians had formed their own assembly apart from the synagogue because they had been expelled by non-Christian Jews.[35] Hare rightly argues that there is little evidence that synagogues expelled Christians at this period.[36] But given the paucity of evidence on many aspects of this question, the lack of evidence is not determinative. Saldarini could still be right. But little hinges on this. Whether Matthew's community was expelled from the synagogue or left voluntarily, most recognize that it lived in tension with the local synagogue. The question of whether Matthean Christians would consider themselves full Jews in the sense of being obligated to observe Torah would not be affected. If they had been ejected instead of leaving voluntarily, that might support the idea that they still considered themselves fully part of the Jewish community, properly understood. But the people of Qumran voluntarily departed for the shores of the Dead Sea, and no one suggests that they did not consider themselves fully Jewish and Torah observant.

Hare says that Saldarini minimizes the significance of Matthew's use of the word *ekklesia*, seeing it as a common Greek word, used in a variety of contexts, which Matthew's community uses in order to distinguish itself from the communities of its Pharisaic opponents.[37] Hare argues that Matthew must have known that the Pauline churches had adopted this word as the main way they referred to themselves. This would mean that Matthew considered his group to be "part of a network that included Pauline churches."[38]

Hare's contention that Matthew must have known of the Pauline use of the term is considered doubtful by Saldarini. Not much weight can be put on this. And even if Matthew did know the usage of the Pauline churches, it is a leap to contend that he would have accepted

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[35] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 112, 121.

[36] See particularly his discussion of the evidence from the gospel of John ("How Jewish?," pp. 267–69). The older view, espoused by J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* [2nd ed.; Nashville, 1970], pp. 37–62, that the Twelfth Benediction was aimed at Christians, has now been effectively refuted by R. Kimmelman, "*Birkat ha-Minim* and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in E.P. Sanders, A.I. Baumgarten, and A. Mendelson, eds., *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition 2: Aspects of Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period* [Philadelphia, 1981], pp. 226–244, and S. Katz, "Issues in the Separation of Judaism and Christianity after 70 C.E.: A Reconsideration," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103 (1984), pp. 63–76).

[37] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 116–123.

[38] Hare, "How Jewish?," p. 269.

Paul's solution for the role of Torah in the churches. Saldarini insists that we look first to Matthew's literary and social context in interpreting *ekklesia*.[39] He demonstrates a variety of usage of the term even in the New Testament and argues that the term does not necessarily indicate that Matthew thought of his community as Christian instead of Jewish. The word *ekklesia* has a long history of usage in Jewish contexts. In the Septuagint, it frequently translates *qahal*, a Hebrew word denoting the Israelite assembly. It is common in post-exilic Jewish literature, for example, Chronicles, Sirah, and 1 Maccabees. Saldarini suggests that Matthew chooses a term with a Jewish background but that allows him to distinguish between his own community and those of his opponents. This phenomenon is analogous to the choice of the term *yahad* at Qumran.

Hare next moves on to Matthew's views on Torah observance in general. He states at the outset that those who argue that Matthew is Torah-observant base themselves on "a few verses."[40] But the verses are strategically located. 5:17–20 occurs toward the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount where, at the beginning of his ministry, Jesus provides a crucial summary of his message. Matt. 23:2–3, in which Jesus tells his audience to obey the scribes and Pharisees on matters of Torah, occurs in a climactic chapter that is key to understanding Matthew's attitude to the Jewish leadership of his day. Later in this climactic chapter, Matthew indicates that Jesus continues to insist on obedience even to some regulations not contained in Torah but derived by the Pharisees from Torah and intended to erect a fence around it (23:23).

Primary among the "few" verses to which Hare refers is 5:19. This verse (and the one before it) seems to enjoin strict observance of every legal injunction of Torah, but Hare warns against reading it this way. He asserts, "Such affirmations of the sanctity of Scripture were accompanied by many departures in practice in all forms of first-century Judaism known to us."[41] Matthew can make a statement like 5:19, while at the same time depicting Jesus as relaxing the Torah (in the case of divorce, for example) or of violating it (touching a leper, for example). But, of course, this is simply to place Matthew's community within the reality of first-century Judaism in

[39] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 116–120.
[40] Hare, "How Jewish?," p. 270.
[41] Ibid.

general. Instances in the gospel of Jesus' relaxing some aspects of Torah do not really cast doubt on the idea that Matthew considered his community to be strictly observant, since every strict community, ancient and modern, gets caught up in inconsistencies, as Hare admits. Saldarini shows that Matthew claims that even where Jesus seems to transgress Torah, in Sabbath observance, for example, he in fact is not doing so in Matthew's view.[42] Hare's warning does remind us that even if we consider Matthew's community strictly observant, that does not necessarily assure us that it observes every single command in Torah literally. We need to look at each case on its own merits. But again, the same goes for any Jewish group contemporary with Matthew. But we can say that Matthew considered it incumbent on his group to be Torah-observant, and we have argued above that this was likely to include circumcision, although it is at least possible that even that commandment was not always absolute.

Hare observes that Matt. 5:19 does not exclude from the kingdom those who are not Torah-observant, but simply declares them to be "least" in the kingdom. That is true. But this does not count as evidence that Matthew does not expect his community to be strictly observant. Just the opposite is the case. In any community, there will be those who do not completely live up to the ideals of the community. Even the people at Qumran had to develop ways short of expulsion of dealing with those who violated their rules (e.g., CD 9–16; 1QS 6–9). Not all transgressors were expelled from Qumran. If neglect of the "least" of the commandments results in one's being considered "least" in Matthew's community, then it certainly qualifies as being one that considers itself Torah-observant, and even strict in that regard. That transgression of the "least" of the commandments does not result in exclusion from the kingdom hardly argues against the seriousness with which the community takes Torah observance.

Matt. 23:2–3 are problematic verses. Hare claims that, whatever they mean, they cannot mean that Matthew's community is to obey the scribes and Pharisees on halakhic matters, since Pharisaic interpretation is presented as wrong both in chapter 23 and elsewhere in the gospel. Overman insists that 23:2–3 must mean that the scribes and Pharisees are to be obeyed on matters of Torah, and he notes

[42] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, chapter 6.

that the scribes and Pharisees are to be followed in their teachings, not their actions (Matt. 23:3).[43] Levine's general approach to the gospel is to maintain that Matthew is a "competent" author, so that apparent contradictions might be resolved by accurate interpretation of specific verses.[44] So, for example, she claims that Matt. 23:2 concerns biblical interpretation, while 15:3 deals rather with the Oral Law. Similarly, 23:3 has to do with Pharisaic homiletics, while 23:13–16 concerns Pharisaic behavior.[45] Some such solution is necessary, unless we maintain that Matthew's gospel contains blatant contradictions on issues central to the gospel's concerns. Matthew seems to say that Pharisaic interpretation is valid in its main lines, despite numerous specific points of disagreement. As Levine says, "Their general interpretation of orthopraxy is to be followed," while disagreements on specific interpretations are possible.[46]

Hare presents 23:23 as an example of Matthew's subordinating scrupulous tithing to ethical concerns. But what is striking about this verse is that we have a matter not of Torah but of regulations that go beyond Torah and that fall into what might be considered building a fence around the Torah. And yet, even here, Matthew's Jesus enjoins obedience to the Pharisaic tradition: "These you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others." Matthew's Jesus sees no contradiction between ethical concerns and scrupulous practices, even if one is more important than the other.

In Matt. 24:20, Jesus tells his audience to pray that when Jerusalem is destroyed it will not be on a Sabbath, so that they would have to flee on that day. Hare says that this cannot be a prohibition of flight on the Sabbath, since in chapter 12 Jesus rebukes those who advocate "extreme sabbatarianism." But even if Jesus does not forbid flight on the Sabbath in 24:20, and I agree that he does not, the verse still exhibits reverence for the Sabbath. Precise rules for Sabbath observance were in some dispute at this period, and it must be admitted again that there is much we do not know about them.

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[43] Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, p. 145.

[44] She repeatedly argues against the practice of assigning specific passages, such as 23:2–3, to earlier traditions that do not represent Matthew's view. If Matthew preserved them, they must be valid for him. He is willing to omit or rewrite material that does not fit his views.

[45] Levine, *The Social and Ethnic Dimension of Matthean Salvation History*, pp. 37–38.

[46] Ibid., p. 248.

We do know that the people of Qumran gave attention to the formation of Sabbath rules that did not completely conform to those of Jews in Jerusalem. So in Matt. 12 and elsewhere, Jesus engages in a discussion of Sabbath observance that also occupied other Jews of the time. It is because Matthew takes the Jewish Sabbath seriously that he carefully rewrites the pericope in 12:1–8 to leave no doubt that Jesus does not violate Sabbath law.[47] On the particular issue of flight on the Sabbath, it is not clear that all Jews would consider this a violation. The Maccabees, champions of the Torah, found it necessary to fight on the Sabbath to avoid death (1 Macc. 2:39–41). Flight from Jerusalem might fall into the same category.

Saldarini analyzes Matt. 15, showing that Matthew carefully rewrites Mark 7 so that the issue is not Jewish dietary laws but the washing of hands.[48] In this chapter, "the core of the discussion is a saying which may go back to Jesus and which potentially threatens the whole of the biblical purity code." Mark's version of the saying is, "There is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile" (7:15). Mark interprets this to mean that Jesus abrogates all food laws: "Thus he declared all foods clean" (7:19). Matthew's interpretation is quite different. This is clear from the changes Matthew makes to the story. He completely omits the editorial statement in Mark 7:19. Saldarini says, "Matthew suppresses this interpretation of Jesus' saying and understands Jesus' teaching as an affirmation and fulfillment of the biblical purity and dietary laws." It is significant in this regard, as Saldarini says, that "Matthew does *not* say here, in contrast to Mark (7:18–19), that whatever goes into a person cannot render him unclean. He says only that it passes through and is gone. He does not really make clear his exact interpretation of Jesus' saying, but rather shifts the topic to his own ground."

Matthew concludes the entire pericope by putting the focus firmly on the issue of handwashing, making it clear that this is what is contrasted with moral laws: "These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile" (15:20). Pharisaic rules about laypersons eating with unwashed hands, while ultimately derived from the Bible, are not found there. What rules are there apply only to

[47] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 126–134.
[48] For what follows, see Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 134–141.

priests, and only in specific circumstances. So Matthew's Jesus clearly categorizes the Pharisaic rules as human rules and says that the Pharisees make a habit of subordinating God's rules to their own and therefore miss the point of Torah. Matthew's rewriting sharpens the conflict with the Pharisees, as is typical of this gospel. He inserts verses that attack them directly (15:12–14).

Mark contrasts a general list of moral concerns with dietary laws, while Matthew's corresponding list includes only those dealt with directly by the Bible. He is interested in biblical commandments. Matthew does establish a hierarchy of rules, in which moral ones trump ritual ones, but the effect, as Saldarini says, is that "biblical purity and dietary rules are not contradicted, the commandments are, as usual, placed first, and emphasis is on the inside rather than the outside." This emphasis on the inside rather than the outside corresponds to a Hillelite, rather than a Shammaite, view of the cleanness of vessels, so falls well within Jewish tradition. Matthew's Jesus argues for a particular interpretation of Torah here, and Matthew keeps the issue of interpretation in the foreground, according to Saldarini.

Hare insists that because Matt. 15:11 says that what goes into a person cannot defile, this means that food does not defile. Mark would agree, since he, like Hare, pushes the words of Jesus to their logical limit. Matthew does no such thing, as Saldarini rightly argues. He characterizes Matthew's treatment as follows: "By not fully interpreting the Jesus saying, Matthew qualifies it so that biblical laws are protected and affirmed. Biblical purity and dietary laws are not contradicted, the commandments are, as usual, placed first, and emphasis is on the inside rather than the outside, just as it was in the Sermon on the Mount."[49] Hare is of course correct when he asserts that "there is overwhelming evidence in Matthew's gospel that the ritual requirements have been firmly subordinated to the moral law (as was undoubtedly true of many non-Christian Jews as well)."[50] Saldarini would agree, and he makes this argument himself. But Saldarini convincingly argues that Matthew does not thereby abrogate biblical purity rules.

Hare notes Matthew's addition of 15:12 to Mark's story: "Then

[49] Ibid., p. 139.
[50] Hare, "How Jewish?," p. 273.

the disciples approached and said to him, 'Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?'" Hare takes this as evidence that Matthew realized that Jesus' words had the same sorts of implications for Jewish purity rules that Mark makes explicit.[51] This is the more striking, in his view, because Hare agrees with Carlson that the historical Jesus is unlikely to have expressed himself clearly on purity rules, since the early Christians had no clear statement of Jesus by which to solve their problems in that regard.[52] Saldarini shows such reasoning to be doubtful. But Matthew's Jesus is attacking the Pharisees' authority here, so it is hardly surprising that it is specifically the Pharisees who are scandalized. Hare has pretty much bypassed Saldarini's careful analysis of the passage. Saldarini presents a compelling argument for the care with which Matthew has rewritten this passage and the purposes for which he did so.

William Loader offers a further argument that, even if these words were spoken by Jesus, they would not need to be interpreted as Mark (and Hare) does.[53] Just as Hosea 6:6 did not intend to argue for the abolition of the sacrificial system, neither does Jesus mean to annul Jewish dietary regulations. Rather, both use what Loader calls "inclusive contrast." When Hosea says, "Not sacrifice, but mercy," this is a prophetic way of setting priorities. Mercy is more important than sacrifice. Similarly, when Jesus says, "not food, but deeds," he is saying that moral deeds are more important than observance of *kashrut*. Neither proclamation negates Torah.

Hare's final category is that of worship. Can Matthew's gospel really be considered Jewish if within its pages Jesus is portrayed as worshiped? We can broaden this question beyond the issue of worship alone to ask whether there is anything in the portrait of Jesus in Matthew that is incompatible with what we know of Second Temple Jewish conceptions. As we address this question, we do so with Saldarini's caution in mind that Second Temple Judaism was diverse, and we should not decide too quickly that something is out-

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[51] Ibid.

[52] See C.E. Carlson, "The Things that Defile (Mark vii.14) and the Law in Matthew and Mark," in *New Testament Studies* 15 (1968–69), pp. 75–96; T. Donaldson, "The Law that Hangs (Matthew 22:40): Rabbinic Formulation and Matthean Social World," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57 (1995), p. 693.

[53] *Jesus' Attitude to the Law* (Grand Rapids, 2002), pp. 75–76.

side its pale. Saldarini himself offers an extensive treatment of Matthew's Jesus and reaches the conclusion, "All the activities, names, and relationships attributed to Jesus are thoroughly Jewish."[54]

There is little question that most Jews would take exception to the degree of authority that the gospel claims for Jesus or to the way in which some in the gospel revere him. In this connection, it is striking that the verb *proskyneo* often has Jesus as its object. Hare notes that the word can mean simply "give homage to," but that it is unlikely that this is the meaning in Matthew.[55] In 4:10, Jesus quotes Deut. 6:13, "You shall worship (*proskyneo*) the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."

Powell investigates the question of worship in Matthew.[56] He notes that some translators and commentators have been reluctant to translate *proskyneo* as "worship," since it is used of a servant "worshiping" a king in 18:26.[57] Powell argues that since in this parable the king represents God, this is not a persuasive counterexample. He accepts "worship" as an accurate translation and notes that it is used several times with Jesus as the object. This happens, he says, because "Matthew regards Jesus as one in whom God is uniquely present (1.23)."[58] Powell's phrasing is cautious here, but he seems nonetheless to posit of Jesus a status that would fit within Jewish thought only with difficulty. But taking *proskyneo* in the full sense of "worship," as Powell does, raises problems. Matt. 18:26 remains a problem, since it is within the storyline of the parable that the servant pays his king homage. Also, it is hard to see how the magi could worship Jesus in the full sense in the infancy narrative, or how Herod could promise to worship the new king. In that context, the idea of homage to a ruler is far more likely as a translation. Given the ambiguity of the word, we should perhaps not make our translation of it decisive for how Matthew looks at Jesus.

One aspect of Powell's subsequent discussion is particularly significant for our question. He observes that *proskyneo* is used several times when characters are approaching Jesus for a miracle, and that no

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[54] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 167.

[55] Hare, "How Jewish?," p. 274.

[56] Mark Allan Powell, "A Typology of Worship in the Gospel of Matthew," in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 57 (1995), pp. 3–17.

[57] Throughout his commentary, Harrington consistently translates *proskyneo* as "to pay homage."

[58] Powell, "A Typology of Worship in the Gospel of Matthew," p. 5.

term of worship is ever used to indicate that the recipient of the miracle thanks Jesus.[59] Powell finds three cases in which the recipient does express gratitude (9:8; 15:31; 11:25): "In all three of the cases cited, the worshipers acknowledge that God is responsible for something that might have been attributed to another." Speaking of the healing of the paralytic in Matt. 9, Powell says, "The crowd does not glorify him (Jesus) for possessing such authority. Rather, they glorify God for giving such authority to humans."[60] Their glorification of God in response to actions of Jesus are "in keeping with what Jesus himself has described as the appropriate response to good works by God's agents (5.16)."[61] So, despite the use of the word *proskyneo*, Matthew draws a properly Jewish distinction between God and Jesus and remains monotheistic.

Hare lists other elements of Matthew's presentation that suggest that Matthew's view of Jesus goes substantially beyond Jewish messianic conceptions.[62] Jesus' claims to all authority in heaven and earth in the Great Commission are noteworthy, as is the statement in 11:27 that only the son knows the Father. Matt. 18:20 and 28:20 imply that the risen Jesus is omnipresent and echo statements about God in the Bible. In 28:19, Jesus groups himself with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In 13:41, 16:27, and 24:31, he refers to "his" (the Son of Man's) angels. Has Matthew stepped outside the Jewish world in such passages?

Hurtado and Segal have made us aware that the range of possibilities within Jewish thought for exalted humans and superhuman beings is broader than might be expected.[63] Biblical and post-biblical monotheism leaves room for angelic and other beings with surprising degrees of status and authority. Hurtado argues against the opinion that the development of high Christologies took place only when Christianity left its Jewish context and entered the broader Hellenistic world. Rather, he claims that they developed within the early, Aramaic-speaking Palestinian church. As time went on, it

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[59] Ibid., p. 7.
[60] Ibid., p. 11.
[61] Ibid., p. 13.
[62] Hare, "How Jewish?," pp. 274–275.
[63] Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia, 1988); Segal, *Paul the Convert*. In preparing this article, I did not have available to me Hurtado's recent book *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, 2003).

became obvious that what Christians said about Jesus could not find a place within Judaism. Hare notes that Hurtado calls these later christological developments a significant "mutation" of Judaism's monotheism.[64] But Hurtado argues for both continuity and discontinuity. Hurtado suggests that in the earliest stages of Christianity, Jewish members of the new movement used already existent ideas of divine agency to explain the status of Jesus: "Jesus was experienced and understood as exalted to the position of God's chief agent."[65] But then Christian belief and worship went further, taking on a binitarian aspect, described by Hurtado as "a mutation in the treatment of such chief agent figures and in Jewish monotheistic devotion."[66] Hurtado claims that this mutation took place as a result of early Christians' experience of the risen Christ. They saw him exalted to such a degree that they were led to honor him in ways previously restricted to God.

It is true that Matthew's christology exalts Jesus.[67] Our question is whether either Matthew's theology has reached the binitarian stage. In applying Hurtado's study to Matthew, we should consider carefully his description of the transition to that stage. We note that in the following quotation he is not speaking specifically of Matthew but of early Christian christology in general.

> They were also quite sure that Jesus had been exalted to heavenly glory and chosen as God's chief agent of eschatological salvation, probably involving his exaltation over all other authorities in God's hierarchy. This of course is remarkable enough, though not perhaps entirely beyond the imagination. The unexpected development is the early emergence of the risen Jesus at the center of religious devotion, next to God, in the early Christian groups. That is, this particular "chief agent" of this particular Jewish sect quickly became the object of the sort of religious devotion normally reserved for God alone.[68]

Hurtado makes few direct references to Matthew, but he does mention the Great Commission. When the risen Jesus appears to the disciples in Matt. 28, he claims that all power in heaven and on

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[64] Hare, "How Jewish?," p. 275.
[65] P. 123.
[66] P. 124.
[67] However, Jewish messianic ideas were varied, and we have no assurance that all have been preserved. Certainly ideas about the messiah found in 4 Ezra and the *Similitudes of Enoch* are also striking when compared with those found at Qumran or in the *Psalms of Solomon*, for example.
[68] Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, p. 117.

earth has been given to him. This does not go beyond the sort of divine agency Hurtado discusses as part of the first stage. His conclusions about it are cautious: "These passages [Luke 24:25–27, 36–39; Matt. 28:16–20] reflect the redactional work of the Evangelists but may also preserve for us the creative effect of the early postresurrection encounters of Jesus' followers with the exalted Christ, creative effects that included a new hermeneutical standpoint from which to reinterpret the Old Testament and a heightened sense of the place of the risen Jesus in the divine plan."[69]

Granted all that Hurtado says here, one need conclude only that the portrayal of Jesus in Matt. 28 is the sort of thing that leads toward a binitarian theology. He can be considered God's chief agent wielding great authority without this being a challenge to monotheism. We need not go beyond Saldarini's judgment that Matthew's gospel contains elements used by later Christians as they attributed divinity to Jesus. Matthew's christology is not yet at that stage. Indeed, Hurtado says that devotion to the risen Christ need not be seen by the early Christians as a challenge to monotheism: "Devotion to Jesus did not involve confusing him with God or making Jesus a second god. . . . Christ's position did not threaten the uniqueness of God."[70] So at the crucial stage when exaltation of Jesus is shading into a binitarian theology, it is not at all clear that those holding such ideas would be conscious that they had gone beyond what could be tolerated by Jewish monotheism.

It is debatable whether the language used in the Sermon on the Mount ("you have heard that it was said, . . . But I say to you . . .") puts Jesus above Torah.[71] Although Jesus' formulation here is certainly odd, he himself, in that very same sermon, says that he is not changing Torah at all. Jesus' claim to interpret Torah authoritatively does not in itself put him outside Judaism.

A useful comparison can be made between Matthew's conception of Jesus' postresurrectional authority and that of Paul. One of Paul's most common designations of Jesus is "Lord." It is quite possible that Paul means that Jesus had been appointed Lord of all by God because, as the second Adam, he obeyed God and won back the

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[69] Ibid., pp. 117–118.

[70] Ibid., p. 121.

[71] See Jacob Neusner, *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus: An Intermillennial, Interfaith Exchange* (New York, 1993), chapter 2.

lordship that Adam exercised until he lost it through his act of disobedience.[72] Of course, the lordship of Jesus exceeds the original lordship of Adam, but it does not amount to making Jesus equal to God. In 1 Cor. 15, one of the very few places that Paul gives us a hint of a detailed eschatology, Christ, once he has conquered the entire cosmos, turns it over to God. At the eschaton, Jesus will "hand over the kingdom to God the Father" and be subjected to him, "so that God may be all in all." So Paul thinks that the human being Jesus has become Lord of the universe because of his actions as a human being.[73] In Matt. 28:18, Jesus says that all authority in heaven and on earth "has been given" to him. God decided to invest Jesus with this authority. Again, although this may go further than other known Jewish messianic schemes, it is not necessarily the radical break that would be made if Jesus were said to be divine.

The virgin birth is not evidence to the contrary. It merely indicates the miraculous nature of Jesus' birth and the fact that he is God's agent. It is not meant in a biological sense. It is noteworthy that the New Testament documents that most clearly exalt Jesus (the Gospel of John, Hebrews, Revelation, Colossians) do not mention the virgin birth at all. And to conclude that, because they believe in the virgin birth, Matthew and Luke mean that Jesus is divine is a leap that goes beyond the evidence.

In treating Matthew's titles for Jesus, Saldarini examines the term "Lord," often thought to indicate divinity.[74] He notes that Matthew can use the term simply as a mark of respect (of a slave to a master in 10:24 or simply to mean "sir" in 27:63), but that in Matthew it appears most frequently on the lips of those approaching Jesus for help. They do so because they realize that he is God's agent, so the usage does not violate monotheism.

> Since Jesus is God's agent to heal and teach and takes on transcendent aspects of a divine intermediary, the uses of "Lord" for God and Jesus

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[72] See James D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Philadelphia, 1980), chapter 4.

[73] An interesting parallel is found in Acts 2:36: "God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." This may mean that at some point, God made Jesus Lord. He was not always so. And this may also have no implications of divinity. Whether this statement is a remnant of an adoptionist Christology is debated.

[74] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, pp. 186–88. He also treats "Son of God" (pp. 172–177) and finds that it does not imply divinity.

> often overlap. However, the meanings of "Lord" are so protean that no precise claims for a divine status for Jesus can be based on it.[75]

Saldarini ends his chapter on christology as follows: "Though Matthew's narrative would later be used to support ontological theories of the Son's relation to the Father, Matthew remains firmly in the orbit of Judaism."[76]

We do have examples in the New Testament in which an exalted view of Jesus causes a writer to be conscious of a rift with Judaism caused by that view. The Gospel of John has a high christology and sees that christology as separating it from Judaism.[77] Indeed, in John, Jesus is explicitly contrasted with Moses. "Grace and truth," God's covenantal qualities to Israel in the Mosaic Torah, are now said to come not through Moses but through Jesus Christ. Similarly, in the high christology of Hebrews, there is a conscious separation from Judaism. The claims about Jesus mean that Torah and Judaism are surpassed and are obsolete. For Hebrews, the Jewish cult only symbolizes what humans desire in terms of access to God. The reality is available only in Jesus. These two high christologies explicitly contrast Jesus with Judaism. Even Paul, who may well not have thought that Jesus was divine,[78] thought that what God did in Jesus proved that the Torah could never have justified humanity before God. Otherwise, there would have been no need for Jesus' death (Gal. 2:21). So these three christologies presage later Christianity and later Christian doctrine that, among other things, made it clear that Christianity was indeed a new religion (though they may not have expressed it that way). And in all three cases there is an awareness of discontinuity with Judaism. In contrast, Matthew's gospel shows no such awareness. It clings tenaciously to the idea that the coming of Jesus does not abrogate Torah or change it in the slightest degree. Of course, things are very different now that Jesus has come, just as for the Qumran community things were very different after the appearance of the Teacher of Righteousness. But that does not imply that Matthew has stepped outside Judaism.

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[75] Ibid., p. 188.
[76] Ibid., p. 193.
[77] For a reconstruction of how John's Christology may have related to the nature of the community and for its relationship to outsiders, see Raymond Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York, 1979).
[78] See Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Becoming Human Together* (Wilmington, 1982).

Saldarini is on firm ground when he insists that Matthew's christology must be seen in the context of "a consideration of God and God's activity through Jesus."[79] He continues,

> Jesus as Son of God and Messiah can be understood as a Jewish figure because Matthew's Christology is completely embedded in his theology, which is itself explicitly and deeply rooted in the Bible as it was understood by most of first-century Judaism. Matthew's claims for Jesus' high status and special roles in the narrative are based on Jesus' close relationship with God, his participation in the biblical traditions of Israel, and his fulfilling of God's will in bringing the kingdom of God.[80]

In other words, Matthew's high appraisal of the status of Jesus does not put him outside the bounds of contemporary Jewish monotheism.

Throughout this paper my emphasis has been on whether the Matthean community might legitimately consider itself within the broad limits of Judaism judging by things like observance of the Torah and devotion to Jesus. But one can ask whether, regardless of the Matthean church's view of itself, non-Christian Jews would consider it Jewish. The question must be asked within the context of the realization, now common in scholarship, that Judaism of the first century was hardly a monolith, but was characterized by a good deal of diversity. Nonetheless, it is likely that Matthew's community aroused opposition among at least some non-Christian Jews. Hare's book *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel according to St. Matthew* documents the problematic nature of relations between some Christians and Jews.[81]

Saldarini takes full account of Jewish opposition to Matthew's group. Many other Jews probably considered it deviant, an attitude that left marks on the gospel as Matthew refutes specific charges and attacks, as Saldarini demonstrates. But, again, this shows that Matthew's community was still within Judaism broadly conceived, so that non-Christian Jews had to take it into account. Segal reaches the following conclusion:

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[79] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 165.

[80] Ibid., pp. 165–166.

[81] Cambridge, 1967. Hare cautions that we do not know whether indications in the gospel of Jewish persecution reflect present or past experiences of the evangelist's community ("How Jewish?," p. 266).

> Nor can the opposition to the community be considered uniform. It is pretty clear that many Jews would not have accepted Matthean Jewish Christians readily within their religious life and that most would have insisted on some purity distinctions between Jews and Matthew's gentile converts. But there was no uniformity in Judaism, as the Gospel of Matthew helps show us so well. Thus, we cannot say that Judaism uniformly dismissed Matthean Christians from their midst.[82]

Toward the beginning of this paper we noted that Saldarini takes Matthew's polemics against Jewish leaders as an indication that Matthew's community was still within Judaism. Davies and Allison take Jewish opposition to the Matthean group to be a sign of the same reality: "Even persecution cannot be taken as a sign that the Matthean community was separate from the synagogue. The situation is rather the opposite: if Jewish authorities persecuted Christians it strongly implies that those Christians were still perceived to be Jews."[83]

So our conclusions, in the end, conform to Saldarini's. Matthew's community considered itself fully Jewish and Torah-observant. They probably insisted on full Torah observance from Gentiles who entered the community. They differed on specific points of law from their non-Christian Jewish adversaries, but that does not indicate that they had departed from Torah. Non-Christian Gentiles would have seen the Matthean community as Jewish. They would have looked Jewish both because the majority of them were ethnic Jews and because they observed Torah. We cannot know for sure how other, non-Christian Jews looked at Matthew's community, but in some cases, at least, they would have opposed it. Members of the synagogue may have labeled Matthew's group deviant, but this is evidence that Matthew's group fell within the broader group known as Israel. Jews outside Matthew's community may well have considered Matthew's community in violation of Torah, but such conflicts were common within Jewish communities during the Second Temple period and immediately afterward.

I make no claim to having solved the question of the Jewishness of Matthew's gospel. Hare raises substantive questions that cannot be dismissed lightly. If the answers were clear, there would not be

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[82] "Matthew's Jewish Voice," in Balch, *Social History*, p. 37.

[83] Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew*, vol. 3, p. 696.

competent scholars arrayed on both sides of the question. Hare rightly insists that the battle against anti-Semitism within modern Christianity has at its disposal "stronger ammunition" than scholarly arguments that Matthew's group remains within Judaism. Christian belief in the faithfulness of Israel's God should defeat supersessionist views that have blinded Christians to God's continuing relationship with Israel. That is a theological argument, and one to which I subscribe. But, as Saldarini demonstrates, there is still a crucial role for biblical scholarship that challenges earlier views that served Christian interests by denigrating Judaism and that are simply bad scholarship. Whether or not one accepts the thesis of Saldarini's book, one can agree with him in one crucial conclusion he draws from his study of Matthew: "This gospel forces Christians to confront again and again their Jewish roots and rules out Marcion's expedient of obliterating the Jewish foundations of faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God."[84] Tony's erudite and open-minded discussion of the key issues is an invaluable and enduring contribution to the ongoing conversation about the relation of early Christianity and early Judaism. His presence in these debates and his warm and generous humanity will be sorely missed in our academy.

[84] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, p. 205.

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THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE HOUSE OF SHAMMAI

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Professor Anthony Saldarini straddled two fields. His doctoral studies centered on early Rabbinic literature, while much of his writing and teaching dealt with early Christian history and literature. This chapter concerns both areas. Writers frequently picture Jesus and the early Christians, at least those represented by the New Testament, as quite liberal in regard to traditional Rabbinic views. Whereas Jesus and his followers might often have agreed with what became traditional Judaism, many Christian scholars have depicted Jesus and his followers as quite untraditional and having more in common with what we regard as liberal.[1] This view of Jesus and his followers finds even deeper roots among Christians generally. There the common view seems to be that Jesus was the first Christian, who rejected the Judaism of his day.[2] But the opposite is largely true. Jesus and his followers were Jews whose teachings were thoroughly Jewish.[3] It is the contention of this essay that in those cases in which New Testament teachings treat subjects discussed in early Rabbinic literature, the New Testament not only can agree with the Rabbinic view but commonly tends to

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[1] See, e.g., H. Falk, *Jesus the Pharisee* (New York, 1985), passim; idem, "Further Studies of Jesus and Paul Based on Swidler's Yeshua," in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 28 (1991), pp. 120–122; P.J. Hartin, "The Pharisaic Roots of Jesus and the Early Church," in *Neotestamentica* 21 (1987), pp. 112–124; Leonard Swidler, "Yeshua and His Followers Were Not Christians—They Were Jews," in *Religious Traditions*, 12 (1989), p. 77; Mark Hollingsworth, "Opponents and Brothers," in *Bib. Today*, 28 (1990), p. 287. J. Jeremias, "Paulus als Hillelit," in E.E. Ellis and M. Wilcox, eds., *Neotestamentica et Semitica: Studies in Honor of M. Black* (Edinburgh, 1969), pp. 88–94. Against Jeremias, see K. Haacker, "War Paulus Hillelit?" in *Das Instututum Judaicum der Universität Tübingen in den Jahren 1971–72*, pp. 106–120. See also S. Kim, *The Origins of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids, 1981), p. 43, n. 6.

[2] Krister Stendahl stated the problem succinctly in his introduction to *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (New York, 1957), p. 6: "Our pattern of thought is that of natural science: Jesus is the inventor of Christianity and the church is the guardian of his patent and his copyright. In the New Testament the major concern is the diametrically opposite one."

[3] Of course the New Testament has much in common with the Greco-Roman world as a whole, but the same can be said of writings from other types of Judaism.

follow Rabbinic teachings usually labeled conservative. More specifically, in ten cases in which comparisons can be made, New Testament teachings seem to agree seven times with what came to be associated with House of Shammai[4] but only twice with the House of Hillel, while in one case the New Testament seems divided between the two Houses. In addition, in two other areas, one might argue Hillelite tendencies in the New Testament, but these are more apparent than real.

There are two problems that arise in any comparison of Jesus or earliest Christianity with what became early Rabbinic Judaism. The first concerns the diversity within both Judaism and Christianity and to what extent we can regard Christianity as a separate religion. This question Professor Saldarini treated in his final book, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*,[5] where he indicates that it may be anachronistic to speak of Christianity as a separate religion in the first century. At least in a community such as that represented by the Gospel of Matthew, one could follow Jesus while remaining within the parameters of the various Jewish groups of his day.

The second problem concerns the Pharisees. They are the one Jewish group that appears over and over again throughout the Gospels, usually in opposition to Jesus and his followers. In fact, this group was the sect to which the apostle Paul had belonged as a persecutor of the Church (Phil. 2:5–6). Religious enmity, however, need not imply great differences. Groups with much in common tend to argue most vehemently. Indeed, even today, some of the bitterest religious disputes occur among Christian groups with similar views, and orthodox Jews often save their harshest words for other orthodox Jews. Because the Pharisees are the ones generally disputing with Jesus and his followers, we might well expect to find much in common between the Pharisees and the Gospels. The fact that the Gospels report Jesus' condemning the Pharisees may well suggest similarity rather than difference. Indeed it is quite possible that the reason Jesus is often represented as addressing Pharisees is that they would come to hear him as one addressing their problems. The New Testament has Jesus stressing the importance of acting out of love, while early Rabbinic

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[4] For a convenient listing of early Rabbinic traditions, see Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (Leiden, 1971). Volume two of this work cites 235 legal situations that mention the two Houses. One reason that so few of these are reflected in the New Testament may be simply that the New Testament is not primarily concerned with the details of Jewish Law.

[5] Chicago, 1994.

works commonly mention seven kinds of Pharisees (Heb.: *Perushim*),[6] many of which we might describe as hypocritical, but the last of which is the Pharisee of love. Then follows the conclusion that none is more dear to the Divine than one who is a Pharisee out of love.[7]

Unfortunately we know relatively little about the Pharisees, but what we do know is a subject of another major work by Professor Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society*.[8] Among other things, he shows that we should not equate early Rabbinic literature with the Pharisaic movement, although there seems to be some relation between the two. In fact, the Mishnah has Yohanan ben Zakkai, a Rabbinic Galilean contemporary of Jesus, depicting the Pharisees as a group separate from his own circle but with whom he had much in common.[9]

Related to the question of who were the Pharisees, there are difficulties in identifying the House of Shammai. Their views were not written down until the end of the second century,[10] and it was the House of Hillel that preserved them. Nevertheless, there is no reason to assume that what remains of Shammaite teaching is totally unrepresentative of their views. In any case, the fact that the New Testament contains teachings that agree with these views indicates that these Rabbinic views go back at least to New Testament times.[11]

As stated above, there are seven points at which the New Testament seems to reflect a Shammaite, or Shammaite like, point of view, while only two issues agree with Hillelite positions. The first of the two concerns cup-purity, but it is only regarding the Sabbath that we definitely find a more liberal[12] viewpoint that would be associated

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[6] *Perushim* in this context is usually translated "Pharisees," as in *The Talmud of the Land of Israel*, vol. 27: *Sotah* (Chicago, 1975), pp. 155f., by Neusner; but cf. ibid., vol. 1: *Berakhot* (1975), p. 345, where Tzvee Zahavy renders *Perushim* as "pietists."

[7] Y. Ber. 9:7 (or 5) (14b) bar.; Y. Sot. 5:7 (or 5) (20c) bar.; see *ARN*, A 37; *ARN*, B 45; B. Sot. 22b bar.

[8] Wilmington, 1988. For a shorter study, see his "Pharisees," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, 1991), vol. 5, pp. 289–303.

[9] M. Yad. 4:6. Still, writers like Tal Ilan, *Integrating Women into Second Temple History* (Tübingen, 1999), pp. 43–44, have no trouble in regarding Hillel and Shammai as Pharisees.

[10] See Neusner, vol. 2, passim; Martin S. Jaffe, "Mishnaic Literary History and the History of a Mishnaic Idea," in *AJSReview*, 11 (1986), pp. 135–155.

[11] For a balanced view of the difficulties and advantages in using Rabbinic texts for New Testament studies, see Saldarini, "Rabbinic Literature and the New Testament," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5, pp. 602–604.

[12] Actually the House of Hillel was not always the more liberal. M. Ed. 4 contains a list of issues in which the Hillelites took the strict view. See Eliezer Shimshon Rosenthal, "Tradition and Innovation in the *Halakha* of the Sages," in *Tarbiz*, 63 (1994), especially pp. 322f. (Hebrew), for various cases in which the House of Shammai

with the House of Hillel.[13] In addition there is a tenth issue in which the views of the two Houses seem to disagree in a way that would correspond to two opposing factions among the followers of Jesus. This issue concerns the status of non-Jews.

The first example of a Shammaite viewpoint in the New Testament concerns the question of a post-death repentance. This belief in a post-death repentance appears in the letters of the apostle Paul, who is the one New Testament writer whom we know had been a Pharisee (Phil. 3:5). According to 1 Cor. 3:15, those who build inadequately on the foundation of Christ have their works destroyed at the *eschaton*; however, "they themselves will be saved but only as through fire." Exegetes have long disputed the meaning of these enigmatic words. For Chrysostom[14] and most eastern Church writers, such inadequate builders would suffer the fires of hell. In the West, Roman Catholics regarded the verse as pointing to a doctrine of purgatory. Most Protestants of course have rejected the idea of purgatory and suggested various alternatives, for example, that such a builder would be saved by a narrow margin. There is a key to the verse, however, in B. R.H. 16b–17a bar. (parallel at T. San. 13:3). According to the baraita[15] the Houses of Hillel and Shammai agreed that on judgment day the thoroughly righteous and the thoroughly wicked inherit eternal life or Gehinnom respectively; but concerning those in between, the *benoniyyim*, who were neither thoroughly good nor wholly bad, the Houses differed. The Hillelites reasoned that a gracious God would incline the scales in their favor. But the Shammaites maintained that the *benoniyyim* would "go down to Gehinnom, 'squeal' (*mesphatsephim*, cf. Is. 29:4), and arise."

Jacob Neusner may well be right that at least the forms in which

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appears to be the more liberal. See, e.g., M. Ed. 1:12; also M. Pes. 6:1–2, where the Shammaite position is taken by Eliezer b. Hyrcanus (see below). See Ilan, *Integrating Women*, especially pp. 43–81, who finds the Shammaites more favorable to women. See also Samuel T. Lachs, "Talmudic and Midrashic Miscellany," in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 25 (1994), pp. 59–60; idem, "Rereading some Talmudic and Midrashic Passages," in ibid. 30 (1999), pp. 82–83, who depicts difference between the Houses as theocentrism (Shammai) vs. anthropomorphism (Hillel). Cf. M. Ed. 1:12–14, which lists four cases in which the Hillelites adopted a Shammaite rulings. See Shmuel Safrai, "With All Due Respect. . . .," in *Jerusalem Perspective*, 56 (1999), p. 11.

[13] On the so-called exegetical rules of Hillel and Hillel's willingness to summarize the Law in a single verse, see below.

[14] *In Epist. I ad Cor. Homil.* IX, § 3 (*P.G.*, vol. 61, cols. 78f.).

[15] I.e., a passage said to derive from the period of the Mishnah, which was codified sometime before the year 220, but not included in the Mishnah.

this aggadic tradition appears is relatively late.[16] Still the parallelism is striking enough to suggest that Paul was alluding to something like this tradition. Like the baraita, he speaks about those who were neither wholly evil nor wholly good. They had built upon the foundation of Christ (vss. 10–12) but had done so badly. Both believed that this mediocre group would pass through hell fire before salvation, for there was to be repentance even after death. Moreover, 1 Cor. 3:15 is not the only passage in the epistle that suggests the possibility of salvation from the fires of hell. According to 1 Cor. 5:1–5, Paul demanded that the Corinthian Christians in solemn assembly deliver an incestuous brother "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord" (vs. 5). Similarly, 1 Cor. 15:29 speaks of "those baptized on behalf of the dead." These words have been subject to various interpretations, but they are commonly understood to refer to some form of vicarious baptismal rite to benefit those who have died. Such a rite would be meaningless if one's fate were fully determined before death. We may well question whether this belief in salvation from Gehinnom after death ever became an integral part of the Apostle's thought, since he only alludes to the belief and never mentions it directly, even when describing the last things. What seems more likely is that Paul occasionally alluded to this teaching, which he had learned as a Pharisee, but that he never fully considered its significance in terms of what he later came to believe as a follower of the Jesus sect.[17]

Another area in which Paul touches on a dispute between the Houses, but without taking sides, concerns vows of sexual abstinence within marriage. The Houses differ over the allowable length of such abstinence. For the Shammaites it might be for two weeks, but for the Hillelites it should only be for one week.[18] In 1 Cor. 7:5 Paul states that such abstinence should be temporary but does not mention any specific time limit.

Various teachings associated with the name Shammai appear in the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew, especially 5:21–37. The teaching most commonly cited in this regard concerns divorce.[19] According to Matt. 5:31–32 Jesus would allow divorce only

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[16] *Rabbinic Traditions*, vol. 2, pp. 238–239.

[17] For a fuller discussion, see my article, "I Corinthians 3:15 and the School of Shammai," in *Harvard Theological Review* 61 (1968), pp. 500–504.

[18] M. Ket. 5:6; M. Ed. 4:10; T. Ed. 2:4. M. Ket. 5:6 also grants a scholar a sexual leave of absence for thirty days to study Torah, a leave that B. Ket. 61a–b extends indefinitely. Similarly Y. Ket. 5:7/8 (30a).

[19] For a general discussion, see Saldarini, *Matthew*, pp. 147–151; Reinhard

for unchastity. Also Matt. 19:3–9 has the Pharisees asking Jesus, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?" After arguing that the marriage bond is of God, Jesus again concludes that only a divorce for unchastity is allowed.[20] Similarly according to the Shammaites one should understand Deut. 24:1 in a general way. The verse begins, "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and she does not please him because he has found an *unchastity thing* in her and writes her a certificate of divorce. . . ." Thus a man should only divorce his wife for unchastity. But the Hillelites, and particularly Aqiba (d. 135), followed the principle that every word of Scripture must have meaning.[21] To such exegetes the word, "thing," which is superfluous within the Shammaite interpretation, must carry meaning. Therefore, the House of Hillel understood it to signify any fault, including unchastity, so that one could divorce a wife for any cause, even for spoiling the soup; Aqiba even allows divorce if a husband finds someone prettier.[22] Unchastity was specifically mentioned lest one assume that in such a case the divorced woman would not be free to marry another man.[23] This interpretation would also fit in with the so-called fifth exegetical rule of Hillel,[24] although the rule is not cited as such. According to the second half of this rule, if one or more specific categories (in this case "an unchastity") precedes a general category, the specific categories do not limit the general category but merely illustrate it.

Other New Testament teachings on divorce include Mark 10:2–12, likely a partial source of Matt. 19:3–9 and Luke 16:18 (cf. 1 Cor.

Neudecker, "Das 'Ehescheidungsgesetz' von Dtn 24, 1–4 nach altjüdischer Auslegung. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der neutestmentlichen Aussagen zur Ehescheidung," in *Biblica*, 75 (1994), pp. 350–387; and Ilan, *Integrating Women*, pp. 50–52, who argues that the Shammaite position on this and other points favored women.

[20] Neudecker, "Das 'Ehescheidungsgesetz,'" pp. 384–387.

[21] See Midrash *Tanhuma* (Buber), Gen. 1:8. Similarly Gen. Rabbah 1:14, according to which Aqiba learned his exegesis from the first-century scholar Nahum of Ginzo. Note also that Aqiba's disciple, Aquila, followed this principle in his Greek translation of the Bible and renders the Hebrew word denoting a direct object by the Greek word for "with." See J.W. Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts* (Assen, 1954), pp. 59f., n. 5; pp. 62f., 73f.

[22] M. Git. 9:10; Y. Git. 9:11 (50d) bar.; B. Git. 90a bar.; Y. Sot. 1:1 (16b); Sifre Deut. 269; see Neusner, vol. 2, pp. 37–39; Neudecker, "Das 'Ehescheidungsgesetz,'" pp. 362–367.

[23] Y. Git. 9:11 50d bar.; B. Git. 90a bar.; Sifre Deut. 269; see Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 C.E.* (Tübingen, 1992), pp. 126–138; Neudecker, "Das 'Ehescheidungsgesetz,'" pp. 367ff. For the Shammaite scriptural interpretation according to Eliezer, see Y. Sot. 1:1 (16b).

[24] *Kelal upherat upherat ukhelal* ("the general and the specific and the specific and the general").

7:10–11). These teachings are stricter than those of the Shammaites and do not even allow the unchastity exception. We should also note that Mark 10:12 speaks of a woman's divorcing her husband, a possibility that some commentators have regarded as non-Jewish. There is considerable evidence, however, that, at least in certain circles, a Jewish woman might indeed divorce her husband.[25]

Two other precepts in Matt. 5:21–37 suggest Shammaite teaching. These are Matt. 5:21–22, which ascribes sinfulness to evil intentions, and Matt. 5:37, with its demand for absolute truthfulness. According to Matt. 5:21–22 hating one's brother or sister makes one liable to the judgment. Similarly 1 John 3:15 identifies such hatred with murder. This view reflects the teaching of the House of Shammai, according to which guilt was attached to intent, while the Hillelites imputed guilt for actions alone.[26]

Again Matt. 5:37 and more clearly James 5:12 stress the need for absolute truthfulness and eschew the need for oaths. While there are no exact parallel teachings from the two Houses, tradition generally regarded the Hillelites to be rather tolerant of conventional fibs in cases in which the Shammaites demanded absolute truthfulness. Thus the Shammaites would not allow one to call a bride "beautiful and graceful" if such adjectives were not accurate.[27]

Fifth, there is some evidence that the story of Jesus' cleansing the Temple, in so far as it represents a hostility to dove-sellers, may suggest a Shammaite bias. M. Keritot 1:7 tells a story of how a well-known convert to the House of Shammai, Simeon b. Gamaliel, got rid of the dove sellers without the use of violence. He simply made the bottom suddenly fall out of the Temple dove market. At a time when dove sellers had stocked up on doves to sell for a golden denar,

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[25] See, e.g., Bernadette J. Brooten, "Konnten Frauen im alten Judentum die Scheidung betreiben? Überlegung zu Mk 10, 11–12 und 1 Kor 7, 10–11," in *Evangelische Theologie* 42 (1982), pp. 65–80, and Ilan, *Integrating Women*, pp. 255–262 (essentially a reprint from *Harvard Theological Review* 89 [1996], pp. 195–202), both of whom cite among other things a divorce bill of a woman divorcing her husband from Nahal Se elim. See also Mordechai A. Friedman, *Jewish Marriage in Palestine* (New York, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 312–346, who without knowledge of this divorce bill, concludes that in the Palestinian tradition a woman might initiate a release from an unbearable marriage through a clause inserted into her marriage contract.

[26] So Jacob J. Rabinowitz, "The Sermon on the Mount and the School of Shammai," in *Harvard Theological Review* 49 (1956), p. 79, who cites M. B.M. 3:12, which brings up the question of culpable intentions in relation to embezzlement. Similarly *Mekhilta de R. Ishmael, Nez.*, 15:49–55; B. B.M. 44a; B. Qid. 42b; Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics*, p. 74. See also, Neusner, *Rabbinic Traditions*, vol. 2, pp. 7–8, 235f.

[27] B. Ket. 17a bar. For some typical but brutally honest views from the wedding crowds of a later age, cf. M. Pss. 21:1.

Simeon ruled that after childbirth a woman need sacrifice only one dove instead of multiple offerings for five undoubted abortions or undoubted discharges. As a result of his ruling, by the evening doves were selling for half a silver denar, one thirty-second the morning price.[28] Besides being effective, this method of ridding the Temple court of dove sellers avoided direct confrontation with Roman authorities. Any direct action in a temple under Roman protection would have been seen as an act of rebellion against Rome.

There are two other areas of the New Testament that may represent a Shammaite view. The first concerns angels, and the second concerns attitudes toward Rome. While there are no direct reports of how the Houses of Shammai and Hillel differed concerning angels, there are reports of how Aqiba, a second century follower of the House of Hillel, and Ishmael, his counterpart, differed on the issue. According to B. Yoma 75b, R. Aqiba believed that angels were anthropomorphic, at least in the sense that they had bodily needs, such as eating and drinking; but according to Ishmael angels had no such needs.[29] Moreover, such controversies over angels were not only a post-New Testament development. According to Acts 23:8, the Sadducees denied the existence of angels altogether, a position the New Testament never espouses. There are New Testament passages, however, that seem to agree with Ishmael that the angels are not anthropomorphic. According to Mark 12:18–17 // Matt. 22:23–33 // Luke 20:27–40, Jesus tells the Sadducees that in the resurrection life there will be neither marriage nor giving in marriage, but that the resurrected ones will be like angels. Similarly Paul in 1 Cor. 15:35–45 speaks of those risen from the dead as having spiritual bodies, and presumably he would have had a similar view concerning other heavenly beings. Still Aqiba's view that angels had physical bodies needing food and drink is quite ancient. In fact, Jub. 15:27 speaks of circumcised angels, and the story of the fallen angels in Gen. 6:1–4 certainly indicates that the belief in angels as sexual beings was very old indeed.

The second area in which the New Testament may reflect a Shammaite point of view is political. While Rabbinic tradition affords the House of Shammai great respect and tends to mention Shammaite views before those of the House of Hillel, the views of the Hillel-

[28] B. Ker. 1:7. See Louis Finkelstein, *Akiba* (Philadelphia, 1936), pp. 50–51.

[29] Cf. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees* (Philadelphia, 1962), pp. 180–185, who seems to exaggerate the evidence somewhat.

ites are the ones adopted. In fact, after the fall of Jerusalem, the Shammaites seem to disappear. The answer may lie in the fact that the Shammaites were politically active against Rome, while the Hillelites eschewed political debate. Such a situation would explain why the Shammaites where held in great honor but possessed little or no authority. In any case, tradition remembers the Shammaite, Simeon b. Gamaliel, as active in the first revolt against Rome[30] with the Hillelite, Yohanan b. Zakkai, following a more pacific policy.[31]

Similarly there are hints in the New Testament that Jesus may not have been totally above politics. To begin with, as mentioned above, Jesus presumed to take direct action in a temple under Roman protection, and Rome took its control of the Jerusalem Temple most seriously. It was the Roman governor who appointed and discharged high priests at will; and Pontius Pilate's predecessor, Valerius Gratus, managed to appoint four high priests during his short tenure from 12 to 15 C.E.[32] Moreover, to demonstrate Rome's authority in this area, the governor kept custody of the high priestly vestments needed to celebrate the Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, Passover, and Pentecost.[33] For Jesus to have interfered directly in anything having to do with the Temple was an act of rebellion against Rome for all to see.

More significantly, all accounts of the crucifixion agree that the Roman government crucified Jesus as one who would be king of the Jews. Even though the New Testaments accounts all affirm that he was not guilty of the charge, the Roman governor had the impression that he was politically dangerous,[34] and not without reason. The mere fact that Jesus is reported to have gathered large crowds, as in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1–10 // Matt. 21:1–9

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[30] Eliezer b. Hyrcanus may also have been a Shammaite (see below). Yitzhak Dov Gilat depicts him as "near in spirit to the Zealots" in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v., Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, vol. 6, col. 622. Still tradition maintains that the sage was willing to escape Jerusalem with Yohanan b. Zakkai, when the latter chose to make peace with the Romans (B. Git. 56a) and that he later joined a delegation to Rome (Y. San. 7:19 [or 7:13] [25d]).

[31] Neusner, A *Life of Yohanan ben Zakkai* (2nd ed. rev.; Leiden, 1970), pp. 145–195, especially p. 146; similarly, idem, *First-Century Judaism in Crisis: Yohanan ben Zakkai and the Renaissance of Torah*, augmented ed. (New York, 1982), pp. 135–175, especially p. 136; W.D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 264–266.

[32] Josephus, *Ant.* 18:33–35, 95. Note that the last of these appointments, namely Caiaphas, evidently satisfied the Roman authorities and kept his high priesthood during the whole governorship of Pilate.

[33] Josephus, *Ant.* 18:90–95.

[34] See my *A Liturgical Interpretation in Narrative Form of the Passion of Jesus Christ*, 2nd edition (New York, 1985).

// Luke 19:28–40 // John 12:12–19), would have been seen as politically provocative in a setting in which freedom of assembly was hardly taken for granted. Indeed, the very title of Christ (= Messiah), which in the Hebrew Bible generally denoted the king of Israel, would have been enough to support the accusation; and the title is applied to Jesus in the earliest strata of the New Testament, namely, the various formulae cited by Paul in his letters (e.g., Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:3; Phil. 2:11).

Another hint of Jesus as a political activist is found in Mark 2:23–28, the story of Jesus' disciples' walking through the grain-fields and plucking grain on the Sabbath. As the story has been rewritten, it is an indication of Jesus' breaking the Sabbath commandment against working on that day, but Mark's actual portrayal of the event suggests otherwise. Contrary to nearly all translations, the Greek text of Mark 2:23 has a main clause state that Jesus' disciples "began to make a way" with a participial phrase, "plucking grain," telling how they did so.[35] The significance of such an act is to be found in early Rabbinic tradition that followed the general custom of the Near East in allowing the king, and the king alone, the right to make a way through a person's field.[36] Such an act would certainly appear provocative.

The two areas in which the New Testament seems to agree more with the House of Hillel than with the Shammaites concern cup-purity and the Sabbath. According to Matt. 23:26, the readers are to "cleanse the inside of the cup so that the outside also may become clean." This precept adopts the view of M. Kel. 25:1, which regards the inside and outside of a cup as separate entities in regard to clean and unclean and seems to agree with the Hillelite stance suggested in M. Ber. 8:2, namely, that, while for the Shammaites the outside of the cup could be clean with the inside unclean, the Hillelites regarded the outside of a cup as always unclean, so that the cleanness of the inside of a cup determined the cleanness of the cup as a whole.[37]

In regard to the Sabbath, Jesus was noted for being somewhat lax,

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[35] Note that the parallels in both Matthew 12:1 and Luke 6:1 switch the clauses to stress only the plucking of grain.

[36] Sifre Deut. 17:19 (*Shophetim*, # 161); B. B.B. 6:7; B. San. 2:4; B. Murmelstein, "Jesus Gang durch die Saatfelder," in *Angelos* 3 (1930), pp. 111–120. Similarly, in modern times, Mahatmas Gandhi began his fight for freedom in India simply by going down to the sea and boiling off a few grains of salt in defiance of the British monopoly.

[37] So Saldarini, *Matthew*, pp. 139–140. On the inference from M. Ber. 8:2, see Philip Blackman, *Mishnayoth* (New York, 1965), the note ad loc., vol. 1, pp. 65f., n. 1. See also Y. Ber. 8:2 (11a).

although a possible infraction might involve the disciples rather than Jesus himself (as in the present version of Mark 2:23 and parallels). Moreover, in justifying what the disciples did, Mark 2:27 has Jesus conclude that "the Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath," a justification that would have made sense to many of his Jewish contemporaries. Indeed in a later age such a saying was attributed to Aqiba,[38] and similar sayings were quite wide spread. At other times, as when Jesus healed on the Sabbath (e.g., in Mark 3:4 and parallels), he would take the trouble to justify what he himself did in terms that would have made sense to his Jewish contemporaries.[39] Unfortunately the two Houses do not record differences on the particular Sabbath questions found in the New Testament. Still the relatively permissive Sabbath interpretations by the Hillelites[40] would seem more in keeping with the relatively permissive views on Sabbath found in the four Gospels.[41]

The tenth area of dispute between the Houses in which a similar issue appears in the New Testament concerns the status of Gentiles. It is quite likely that the Hillelites were generally more open to non-Jews and held that a righteous Gentile would have a share in the world to come, while there are hints that the Shammaites gave them no such standing. Various legends portray Shammai as sending Gentiles away in situations in which Hillel welcomed them.[42] Also Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, whose rulings tended to agree with Shammaite positions[43] and who may well have been a Shammaite himself,[44] wanted nothing to do

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[38] *Mekhilta, Shabbata*, Chap. 1 (on Exod. 12–17) near the beginning, but the justification was known somewhat earlier in 2 Baruch 14:18.

[39] So David Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation," in *Hebrew Union college Annual* 22 (1949), p. 255; see also B. Yoma 85b, which like the New Testament stresses that saving life is more important than Sabbath laws.

[40] See Neusner, *Rabbinic Traditions*, vol. 2, 10f., 121ff., 126 (but cf. p. 133, which reverses the Houses), 127f., 132, 133f.

[41] See Neusner, *Rabbinic Traditions*, vol. 2, which lists eight areas where the two Houses differ on keeping the Sabbath.

[42] B. Shab. 31a; *ARN* A, 15; *ARN* B. 29. Cf. Falk, *Jesus the Pharisee*; idem, "Further Studies;" followed by Hartin, "Pharisaic Roots," pp. 112–124, both of whom exaggerate the evidence in this area.

[43] So Neudecker, "Das 'Ehescheidungsgesetz,'" p. 369.

[44] See B. Shab. 130b; Y. Bes. 1:4 (60c). What the texts actually say is that Eliezer had been placed under the ban of excommunicated (*shammuti*), but this ban is commonly interpreted to mean that he was a Shammaite. Thus the standard translations (Soncino and Neusner respectively) interpret this statement to mean that Eliezer was a Shammaite in accord with all the standard commentaries, i.e., Rashi and the Tosafot on the Bavli, plus *Qor ha Edah* and *Pene Mosheh* on the Yerushalmi; also Rosenthal, "Tradition and Innovation in the *Halakha* of the Sages," pp. xx, 331. See Finkelstein, "Ben Zoma's Paradoxes," in *Judaism* 40 (1991), p. 453.

with Gentiles.[45] For him their acts of charity were to be reckoned as sin,[46] and he certainly had reservations about accepting them as proselytes.[47] Similarly within the New Testament, which generally represents the views of the Gentile churches, there are indications that some followers of Jesus represented a Shammaite type point of view. Thus according to Matt. 10:5–6 Jesus tells his disciples to "go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but rather go only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." Again in Matt. 15:24 Jesus proclaims the he was "sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."[48] Similarly Gal. 2:11ff. indicates that James along with Peter and Barnabas were uncomfortable associating with Gentiles in common meals and broke with Paul over the issue. Even Luke's account of the Apostolic Council (in Acts 15), which affirms that the issue of Gentiles had been solved, admits that there were quite different views on the matter (cf. also Acts 10).

The two other areas in which one might falsely claim a certain similarity between the New Testament and views associated with Hillel concern the summing up of Torah under one precept and the supposed use in the New Testament of exegetical principles attributed to this Rabbinic authority.[49] Regarding the first, it is well known that the Gospels have Jesus summing up the whole Torah in one commandment, such as in the Golden Rule of Matt. 7:12 // Luke 16:31, to love one's neighbor as one's self. The Golden Rule was also attributed to Hillel, who cited it in a negative form to sum up the Law in a situation in which Shammai had not done so;[50] however, the saying in this form probably predates Hillel and was quite

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[45] B. Hul. 2:7; B. Git. 45b.

[46] Because they are mere acts of self-magnification (B. B.B. 10b).

[47] B. Yeb. 48b; B. B.M. 59b.

[48] Matthew's own view of Gentiles was probably not quite as harsh as Shammaite views. See Saldarini, *Matthew*, especially pp. 68–83.

[49] See Jeremias, "Paulus als Hillelit," pp. 92–94, who cites as his main argument for Paul's being a Hillelite that the Apostle made use of the so-called seven exegetical rules of Hillel. Apart from doubts concerning the relation of these rules to that sage, Paul never uses the rules in their exact Rabbinic form. Rather he uses the more general Hellenistic exegetical principles upon which the Rabbinic rules are based. Cf. Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics*, p. 61, also pp. 65–71.

[50] B. Shab. 31a: "'What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbor.' This is all of the Torah." Cf. R. Jospe, "Hillel's Rule," in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 81 (1990), pp. 45–57. According to the usual version of the story, a pagan challenged Shammai to teach him the Law while he stood on one leg (*regel*). Jospe follows an oral suggestion from Mordechi M. Kaplan that *regel* stands for the Latin *regula* ("rule") and refers to the Law's being based or standing on one ethical foundation.

widely cited.[51] It also appears in the so-called Western Text of the Apostolic Decree in Acts 15:10, 29 and in the Didache 1:2. Again, according to Mark 12:28–34 and parallels, Jesus endorsed a summary of the Law that begins with the *Shema* of the Jewish liturgy. Indeed the practice of summing up the Law in a saying or two seems to have been quite common and may not have been exclusively a Hillelite practice.[52] Moreover, the story of Shammai's refusing to sum up Torah in one verse need not mean that Shammai was against the practice. Rather the story seems to illustrate Shammai's quick temper against someone trying to provoke him more than his principled refusal to summarize the Torah.[53]

In regard to Rabbinic exegetical rules attributed to Hillel, when used as such in Rabbinic texts they are generally cited by name, but they are never so named in the New Testament.[54] Moreover, the New Testament uses such principles in generally looser ways common throughout the classical world.[55] Thus, for example, the Rabbinic principle of bringing together two passages containing the same word (*gezera shewa*) was only to be used in situations in which there was a tradition for doing so. Also the two passages had to share the same word in exactly the same form and not merely the same root, as one might find in the New Testament.[56] Again there

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[51] Tobit 4:15; Philo, *Hypothetica*, 7:6; cf. Ep. Aristeas 207.

[52] B. Makkot has a whole section near the end (23b–24a) telling of people's trying to reduce the 613 principles of Torah to eleven (David), six (Isaiah), three (Mica), two (Isaiah again), and finally one by Amos ("Seek me and live;" Amos 5:4) and again by Habakkuk ("But the righteous shall live by his faith;" Hab. 2:4; cf. Rom. 1:15).

[53] See, e.g., Hollingsworth, pp. 286–287. For similar stories on Shammai's quick temper see B. Shab. 30b–31a; *ARN* A, 15; *ARN* B, 29. Such stories can also be understood to illustrate Shammai's harsh attitude toward Gentiles.

[54] A classic work on Jewish Rabbinic and New Testament interpretation is that of Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics*.

[55] So Saldarini, "Rabbinic Literature and the NT," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5, p. 603. See David Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, especially pp. 1–23, 226–231. More generally on the relation of Rabbinic law to the classical world including its hermeneutics principles, see Rosenthal, "Tradition and Innovation in the *Halakha* of the Sages," pp. xix–xx, 321–338. Even Jeremias, "Paulus als Hillelit," p. 92, sees a connection with Hellenistic hermeneutics. For a detailed study, see Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation," pp. 239–264, who regards Hillel as a key figure in the Rabbinic adoption of exegetical methods from Hellenistic rhetoric. See also Günter Stemberger, "Griechisch-römische und rabbinische Hermeneutik," in *Communio Viatorum*, 41 m (1999), pp. 101–115; Henry Wansbrough, "Jewish Methods of Exegesis in the New Testament," in *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt*, 15 (2000), pp. 219–244.

[56] As an example of *gezera shewa*, Jeremias, "Paulus als Hillelit," pp. 92f., cites Rom. 4:1–7, where the Apostle supposedly used the rule to join Gen. 15:6 and Ps.

is the principle of comparing two matters of unequal importance (*qal wahomer* or *a fortiori* or *a minore ad majus*). An example might be "If doing a certain act is wrong generally, how much more would such an act be wrong on the Sabbath." In the first place, according to M. Ed. 12:1, this principle was also used by the House of Shammai.[57] More significantly, however, the principle is so logical that one could hardly argue that it is specifically Rabbinic, especially if not cited by name as commonly done in Rabbinic texts.[58]

There is one final point to consider. In recent years Tal Ilan has presented a convincing case that the Pharisees were generally more favorable to women than other Jewish groups and in turn were more popular among women. In fact it was a woman, Queen Salome Alexandra, who gave the Pharisees ruling power during her nine-year reign from 76–67 B.C.E.[59] Ilan also argues that Shammaite rulings were generally more favorable to women than those of the House of Hillel,[60] but that after 70 C.E., when Pharisaism was transformed from an opposing sect into a position of leadership, it could afford to dispense with this female support. In any case, Rabbinic Judaism as represented in the Mishnah came to favor the decisions of the House of Hillel, which were less favorable to women.[61] This interpretation would correspond to the fact that, within the New Testament Jesus and Paul (in his genuine epistles) seem relatively favorably disposed to women but that writings attributed to Paul and written after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 are far more male oriented.[62]

To sum up, while Rabbinic Judaism generally followed the House of Hillel, from what the New Testament tells us, Jesus and his followers tended to follow the stricter interpretations associated with

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32:2f., both of which contain a form of the Greek word λογίζομαι. See Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, pp. 17f.

[57] Rosenthal, "Tradition and Innovation in the *Halakha* of the Sages," p. 332.

[58] As examples of *qal wahomer* in the Pauline epistles, Jeremias, "Paulus als Hillelit," p. 92, cites Rom. 5:15, 17; 11:12; 2 Cor. 3:7f., 9, 11. Cf. Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation," pp. 251–256, who interprets Matt 12:10ff. and Rom. 5:8f. in terms of this Hellenistic/Rabbinic principle. See also Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, p. 17.

[59] Ilan, *Integrating Women*, pp. 11–42.

[60] Ibid., pp. 43–81.

[61] Ibid., pp. 80–81.

[62] E.g., Eph. 5:22–24, Col. 3:18, 1 Tim. 2:11–15, 5:11–15, Titus 2:5. See also Eldon Jay Epp, "Text-Critical Exegetical and Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting the Junia/Junias Variation in Romans 16,7," in A. Denaux, ed., *New Testament Textual Criticism and Exegesis*: Festschrift J. Delobel (Leuven, 2002), pp. 290–291.

Shammai. Many today think of Jesus and his followers as being extremely liberal with regard to Judaism, but at least where any comparison can be made, their early teaching generally leans to the stricter side. Perhaps the reason that Christians became noted in time for being so liberal was that most of them were not Jews. The mission to the Gentiles became so successful that the Jewish factions in the Church became relatively powerless. Even so, few Jewish Christians would have expected Gentile Christians to follow Jewish laws and customs. Of course, Jewish and non-Jewish Christians' eating together would come to raise problems. Still since most meals would not have involved meat, such problems might have been avoided (cf. Acts 15). Unfortunately, according to Gal. 2:11ff., the early Christians did not always choose to avoid the problems.

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JUDAISM FROM 70

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EARLY RABBINIC LITURGY IN ITS PALESTINIAN MILIEU: DID NON-RABBIS KNOW THE *AMIDAH*?

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One of Anthony Saldarini's primary scholarly concerns was to understand Christianity in the context of the Jewish world in which it emerged. His was a leading voice among those scholars of early Christianity and New Testament who are also deeply grounded in Rabbinic Judaism, conversant with its texts and with contemporary scholarship on them. As my senior colleague, his mentorship and critical insights were invaluable. This paper would certainly have generated further intense discussion between us. I am saddened but honored to dedicate it to his memory.

In recent years several leading scholars have challenged basic historical assumptions about the world of early Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity, significantly rereading the available evidence and suggesting that many "facts" about the Judaism from which Christianity emerged cannot be supported. Behind this methodological shift lies a recognition that the picture emerging from Rabbinic texts does not conform to that presented by non-Jewish texts and material evidence from late antiquity. Consequently, we need to question our ability to generalize from the seemingly historical data embedded in Rabbinic literature, reading it instead as only the rabbis' selective self-presentation and sacred memories, often redacted centuries after the "event." Similarly, we need to read non-Rabbinic literary and material evidence without imposing on it the categories of Rabbinic Judaism. This new scholarship suggests that although the Rabbinic movement may well have existed from the first century, it remained peripheral in Jewish society until at least the third or fourth centuries; even then, it gained influence gradually, becoming socially and religiously dominant only in the sixth century or even later.[1]

[1] A recent and important, if somewhat controversial, contribution to this approach is Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton,

This paper will focus on one small aspect of this world, the Rabbinic worship system, and most specifically, the central element of that liturgy, the *amidah*.[2] It offers a beginning exploration of the consequences of this new historiography for our understanding of the development of Rabbinic prayer and, conversely, an evaluation of this theory against the liturgical evidence. By examining whether and when we can detect influence of the *amidah* on non-Rabbinic Jewish and non-Jewish cultures, we will establish that, while the evidence remains rather sparse, this theory is helpful in explaining several otherwise troublesome aspects of this prayer's history.[3] While the results published here are only preliminary, the consequences of the historical revision suggested here are vast: they suggest that early Christianity cannot be seen as developing in a world of significant Rabbinic influence. The Judaism from which Christianity emerged was even more complex than heretofore understood.

I. *The Problem*

Discussions of the origins of Rabbinic prayer have looked most closely at the *amidah*, partly because it is the only liturgical element that the rabbis themselves present as having begun under their auspices. The Babylonian Talmud records that a decade or two after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., an otherwise little-remembered sage, Simon Hapaquli "organized the eighteen benedictions in the presence of the patriarch, Rabban Gamaliel, in his academy at

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2001). In his introduction, he summarizes and critiques his predecessors. This paper is a beginning exploration of the implications of his theories for the history of Jewish liturgy.

[2] Here we will use "*amidah*," the term that became more common among Jews of non-Ashkenazi origin and the scholarly standard. It is first attested in the early medieval but post-talmudic tractate, *Soferim* 16:9. *Tefillah*, the official name for the prayer in the Mishnah and Talmud, did not persist, simply because the word itself also refers, generically, to prayer in general, and Hebrew has no easy way to distinguish the technical term from the generic one. "*Shemoneh Esreh*" ("eighteen") remains the popular name for the prayer among many Jews of European descent. For scholarly purposes, this is problematic as no current form of the prayer consists of precisely eighteen benedictions.

[3] In a future companion essay, I plan to explore the obverse question of whether and when we can detect influences of non-Rabbinic and non-Jewish cultures on the *amidah* itself.

Yavneh."[4] This prayer is the most frequently recited element of Jewish liturgy[5] and is arguably its most important segment.[6]

Almost all academic scholars beginning with Leopold Zunz, if they understood the Yavnean story to be historical, gave credence to the Talmud's later tradition that Simon Hapaquli "organized" a preexisting prayer that had originated in the early Second Temple period.[7] They thus looked for the origins of the *amidah*'s components—often rather imaginatively—in the Second Temple world. Most recently, however, Ezra Fleischer has argued that the *amidah* indeed originated at Yavneh. As of this writing, there is no consensus among scholars of Jewish liturgy as to the circumstances that generated this prayer. Similarly, there is no consensus on the question of what exactly was generated. With the exception of Joseph Heinemann and his followers, who understand the liturgy to have evolved organically in the broader Jewish society, most historians of Jewish liturgy have presumed that someone, whether at Yavneh or earlier, composed and promulgated an authoritative text that was more or less immediately accepted broadly by Jews.[8]

Several elements of these theories are deeply grounded in now-outmoded historical understandings of the period. If we understand that Second Temple-era synagogues (and even late-antique synagogues)

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[4] B. Meg. 17b–18a; compare B. Ber. 28b.

[5] It should be recited a minimum of three times each day by each individual. In addition, in public worship settings at all but the evening services, the precentor repeats the prayer for the congregation. The recitations multiply rapidly to five on weekdays, seven on most holidays, and nine on Yom Kippur.

[6] For a detailed introduction to the prayer, see Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, translated by Raymond P. Scheindlin (Philadelphia, Jerusalem, and New York, 1993), pp. 24–66. Note, though, that his discussion of the prayer's origins is not current.

[7] Redacted as a continuation of the passage cite in n. 4, but found only in the Babylonian Talmud and not in Palestinian sources. However, M. Ber. 4:3 attributes the requirement that each individual recite this prayer daily to Gamaliel, indicating that the association of this prayer with his court is indeed tannaitic.

[8] For methodologically oriented surveys of Jewish liturgical scholarship, and their references to the larger literature, see: Richard S. Sarason, "On the Use of Method in the Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy," in William S. Green, ed., *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice* (Missoula, 1978), pp. 97–182; Reuven Kimelman, "Liturgical Studies in the 90's," in *Jewish Book Annual* (1994), pp. 59–72; Stefan C. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (Cambridge, 1993), Ch. 1, "On Jewish liturgical research." For a summary of Fleischer's arguments, see my "Revisiting Early Rabbinic Liturgy: The Recent Contributions of Ezra Fleischer," in *Prooftexts* 19, no. 2 (1999), pp. 179–194 and our subsequent correspondence, "Controversy," in *Prooftexts* 20, no. 3 (2000), pp. 380–387.

were not loci of organized public prayer, that synagogues did not become ubiquitous in Palestine until at least the fourth century, that the rabbis were only peripheral to the wider Jewish community, that Rabbinic texts represent selective and ahistorical memories, that Hebrew was not widely understood let alone spoken, then we need to rethink the evidence on which our theories for the early history of Rabbinic liturgy are built.

There is reasonable scholarly consensus today that although synagogues are well documented in the Second Temple period, both in Judaea and in the diaspora, their primary and only verifiable ritual purpose was to serve as a place of public gathering on the Sabbath for the reading of Torah with perhaps some associated rituals. The only significant evidence for another purpose is a Greek name for the structure, *proseuche*, meaning a "house of prayer,"[9] but no literary or epigraphical source from the period suggests what prayers were offered. Public worship of God (as opposed to personal prayerfulness) was the function of the Jerusalem Temple and its officiants; there is no evidence that the synagogue as an institution competed for this role.[10] Some sorts of organized verbal prayer are recorded in the Dead Sea Scrolls, but these cannot be seen either as functioning in the popular synagogues or as the direct precursors of Rabbinic liturgies.[11] Therefore, if the *amidah* predated Yavneh, it did not exist in a social context known to us.[12]

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[9] The Greek *synagoga* and its Hebrew equivalent, *beit hakenesset*, mean simply "house of assembly."

[10] See Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven and London, 2000), pp. 151–58, who draws on and critiques Fleischer's arguments.

[11] These texts have been recently collected in James R. Davila, *Liturgical Works* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, 2000). There is significant debate over the extent to which these prayers are indeed sectarian. If they are sectarian, they represent the liturgy of a group deliberately separating itself from mainstream Jewish cultic life. Daniel Falk, *Daily Sabbath and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden, 1998), suggests that many of these liturgies are actually otherwise unrecorded rituals of the Jerusalem Temple—i.e., they are not sectarian at all. In either case, there is little grounds to claim a direct relationship either with the synagogues of the period or with Rabbinic prayer. Although some versions of Rabbinic blessing formularies, (small) clusters of similar themes, and regular prayer times do appear in the scrolls (and occasionally in other literature from this period), there is no equivalent to any of the larger elements of Rabbinic prayer. The similarities point more to shared cultural assumptions than direct dependency.

[12] M. Tam. 4:3, end-5:1 records that the third central component of the eventual post-destruction liturgy, the recitation of *shema* embedded in blessings, was performed by the priests in the Temple's "Chamber of Hewn Stone" (apparently a synagogue-like setting) as part of their morning sacrificial ritual complex. However, there is neither independent confirmation of this memory nor a record of com-

Drawing on this understanding of the Second-Temple synagogue, Fleischer argues that the rabbis gathered at Yavneh under Gamaliel's direction in the late first century responded to the destruction of the Temple by decreeing a new and revolutionary worship system. Not only did this system replace sacrifices with verbal prayer, but, unlike Temple sacrifices, it required active daily participation by every Jew. Fleischer suggests that within a relatively short period of time, maximally several generations, all Jews, at least in Palestine, had accepted this new obligation and were either praying privately at the decreed times or ideally gathering in synagogues where fuller prayers were led by ritual experts. The uneducated Jew could fulfill his prayer obligations by responding "amen" to this public prayer. Fleischer insists that the promulgation of such a system would have been impossible unless the Rabbinic decree included not only the obligation to pray but also the verbatim texts to be recited.[13]

However, the questions of historical method raised here severely challenge central elements of this theory. Fleischer presumes that Rabbinic texts are themselves accurate records of history. More seriously, he accepts the Rabbinic claims for immediate success on the historical stage. If we follow the historical model that argues that Gamaliel and his circle of sages were not in a position to promulgate anything that would affect the wider community of Jews, we can only presume that the *amidah* originated as the internal worship system of a small elite group. The important question then becomes not what were its origins but how and when did it (and the rest of the Rabbinic system) come to influence and shape the religious life of the larger Jewish world?[14]

II. *Extra-Rabbinic Evidence for Recitation of the* Amidah

There is little or no evidence to suggest that the Yavnean liturgical system and especially the *amidah* influenced its surroundings for several

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munal recitation of *shema* anywhere else in the Jewish world at the time (nor are these blessings identical with eventual Rabbinic practice). Thus, this is best understood as a priestly, Temple ritual.

[13] See my summary of his densely argued (Hebrew) articles in "Revisiting."

[14] Schwartz, *Imperialism*, pp. 215–217, critiques at length those who focus overmuch on the origins of the synagogue, pointing out that its origins tell us essentially nothing about its eventual role in Jewish religious life. The same argument applies, if less starkly, to the *amidah*.

centuries after the destruction of the Temple. Evidence from Samaritan, Christian, and extra-Rabbinic Jewish sources suggests that it may have been at least the third century or very possibly later before the prayer became a feature of communal religious life near centers of Rabbinic activity. In the deepest diaspora, penetration of the Rabbinic liturgy took significantly longer.

No parallel to the *amidah* appears in known Samaritan liturgies, even though these liturgies apparently emerged late enough that such a parallel might be expected. The origins of Samaritan synagogues and their liturgy are obscure. The earliest evidence for the synagogues themselves is the memory of their closure in the late second century C.E. by the Emperor Commodus and their reopening in the third century. Reinhard Pummer suggests that the final split between Samaritans and Jews came at some point after this, meaning that there was ample opportunity for sharing of liturgical customs between the communities for several centuries. Rabbinic traditions suggest that only in the late third century, under Abbahu, did the rabbis erect social barriers between Samaritans and Jews.[15] The shared culture is evident in the great similarities between Jewish and Samaritan synagogue remains (mostly from the fourth century and later).

Only in this period did a distinctive Samaritan liturgy begin to develop, called the *Defter*, consisting of Aramaic hymns and abbreviated biblical readings (*qetafim*). Prior to this, the liturgy apparently consisted entirely of Scripture readings.[16] Critical to our argument here is the fact that while the rabbis and the Samaritans both inher-

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[15] Y. A.Z. 5:4, 44d; B. Hul. 6a, record a ruling that Samaritans are to be considered idolaters, i.e., non-Jews. Consequently, the rabbis forbade various types of business transactions with them.

[16] See Pummer's "Samaritan Synagogues and Jewish Synagogues: Similarities and Differences," in Steven Fine, ed., *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction During the Greco-Roman Period* (London and New York, 1999), pp. 124, 139–140. See also his fuller description of Samaritan liturgy in "Samaritan Rituals and Customs," in Alan D. Crown, ed., *The Samaritans* (Tübingen, 1989), pp. 672–676. Pummer places the origins of the liturgy in the fourth century, while others have begun to date the religious reforms led by Baba Rabba, of which this was a part, to the third. See A.D. Crown, "The Byzantine and Moslem Period," in ibid., especially pp. 58, 63. Apparently inferring from Abbahu's equation of Samaritans with idolaters, Crown suggests that the Rabbinic ambivalence to Samaritanism may derive from the pagan practices that cosmopolitan Samaritans adopted in this period. Seth Schwartz's argument that Jews were equally involved in paganism at precisely this time may confirm this reality while challenging Crown's explanation of the Jewish/Samaritan split.

ited a synagogue-based liturgy that centered on the reading of Scripture, the Samaritans never adopted anything remotely paralleling the rest of Rabbinic liturgy. However, if the primary function of Rabbinic liturgy was to compensate for the destruction of the Temple, this lack of parallel might not be surprising. Samaritan religious life focuses on the disappearance (and future reappearance) of the Sinaitic ark from Mount Gerizim—and gives no role to the Jerusalem Temple.[17] Yet, if Rabbinic liturgy had played a role in the synagogue from which the Samaritans were separating, we might expect to see traces of it in their emerging prayers. That these prayers bore little resemblance to Rabbinic models, either in form or language, suggests that Rabbinic prayer was not yet an integral part of the Jewish synagogue from which the Samaritans were distancing themselves.

Similar arguments can be made for Christian liturgy. Although central elements of Christian liturgy obviously drew on Jewish precedents, none of these derived from the *amidah* or some equivalent. If one understands the definitive "parting of the ways" to have occurred soon after the destruction of the Temple, one might simply argue that the basic elements of Christian liturgy predate the prayer's enactment. Hence, while the early Church incorporated pre-Rabbinic liturgical elements like the reading of Scripture, the *qedushah/sanctus*,[18] or meal-related rituals[19] into the evolving mass, it had no need to add later-developing rituals like the *amidah* that were not part of the active experience of those Jews who became the first Christians. However, if, as is becoming the scholarly norm, one accepts that the separation of the two communities was a gradual process, lasting well past the Christianization of the Roman Empire, then the lack of Christian parallel to this central Rabbinic prayer becomes significant, suggesting that the *amidah* was not a dominant model and perhaps not even an available model for the early church as its

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[17] Ferdinand Dexinger, "Samaritan Eschatology," in Crown, *The Samaritan*, pp. 276f.

[18] For a discussion of the various forms of this prayer in Judaism and Christianity and their early history, see Meir Bar-Ilan, "Major Trends in the Formation and Crystallization of the *Qedushah*," [Heb.] in *Da at* 25 (1990), pp. 5–20.

[19] The narratives of the Last Supper and their correspondence to known Jewish patterns are one of the best sources for Jewish meal rituals. However, the Rabbinic idea that the home table substitutes for the Temple altar and its sacrifices is only implied in amoraic layers of the Babylonian Talmud (B. Ber. 55a; B. Men. 97a) and hence is an unlikely source for Christianity's transferral of sacrificial themes to this setting.

central rituals were developing in the late first century and onwards.

The earliest (and so far, only) evidence for the *amidah* in Christian liturgical literature appears in the late fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions. The redactor of this text compiled it from several pre-existent sources, many of them known early Christian texts, revised to fit his purposes. AC VII:33–38 has no known Christian source; rather it strikingly parallels the first six blessings of the Sabbath *amidah*, both in thematic arrangement and in some linguistic elements. If the current dating of the editor's source to the mid- to late-third century is correct, this is the earliest verifiable exemplar of an *amidah*-like prayer in any language.[20] However, the identifiably Jewish elements of this liturgy do not present a particularly close parallel to any known *amidah* text. Not only does it lack a supporting structure of statutory blessings, but the details of its language create a different tone and content. It is impossible to claim that the earliest preserved (medieval) texts of the *amidah* and this both derive from a fixed text decreed at Yavneh. However, this source, like the later authoritative Rabbinic texts, could be read as a jazz-like "riff" on the themes of the Rabbinic liturgical structure, indicating that at least some third-century Jews, either in Hebrew or in Greek, participated in a loosely-scripted liturgy, elaborating on its mandatory themes at will.[21]

Several scholars have identified a second Greek *amidah*-like text.[22]

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[20] David Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to be Jewish: An Examination of the Constitutiones Apostolorum* (Chico, 1985), pp. 220–228. See also Pieter W. van der Horst, "The Greek Synagogue Prayers in the Apostolic Constitutions, Book VII," in Joseph Tabory, ed., *From Qumran to Cairo: Studies in the History of Prayer* (Jerusalem, 1999), pp. 32–36, who verifies this dating although he rejects Fiensy's primary argument for it. Fiensy suggests that this third-century text was a Greek translation from Hebrew synagogue prayer—downplaying the possibility that Jews themselves had adapted the Rabbinic model into their vernacular. Van der Horst, pp. 35–36, argues for the presence of Greek prayer in the synagogue in the third century.

[21] Both Fiensy and van der Horst suggest reconstructions of the Jewish original. Further evidence for this sort of improvisational prayer text (and Rabbinic discomfort with it) can be found in Rabbinic sources themselves. See, for example, the various stories about unusual repetitions of the *amidah* in B. Ber. 33b, 34a; B. Meg. 25a; Y. Ber. 9, 12d, and my discussion of them in "The *Amidah* as Formative Rabbinic Prayer" in *Identität durch Gebet?: Zur gemeinschaftsbindenden Funktion des institutionalisierten Betens in Judentum und Christentum* (Paderborn, 2003), pp. 136–138.

[22] The most recent publication of this text is Pieter W. van der Horst, "Neglected Greek Evidence for Early Jewish Liturgical Prayer," in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 29, no. 3 (1998), pp. 278–296. Van der Horst has located no other similar texts as of this writing (private correspondence).

This fifth-century Greek papyrus may well contain a Jewish prayer, and it does show some thematic similarities to the *amidah*. However, this prayer lacks significant structural similarity to the Rabbinic liturgy and it includes only those themes that could be argued to be more generic—i.e., for health, welfare, forgiveness—themes that appeared already clustered in other settings and that are not really specific to the *amidah*.[23]

Our one or two Greek texts were preserved by chance by the church, not by Jews. The dating of the Apostolic Constitutions to the late-fourth century, with a possible dating of the Jewish original of the prayer about a century earlier, corresponds exactly to the period that Schwartz and others identify as the beginning of significant Rabbinic influence over Palestinian Jewish society. It also conforms with Stefan Reif's suggestion that only in this period did Rabbinic liturgical customs begin to cohere into something more authoritatively structured,[24] something that might have received the relative permanence of a written text.[25] These Greek prayers, thus, may be understood as evidence for a transitional period to the eventual virtual elimination of vernacular prayer from Jewish ritual life and the establishment of fixed Hebrew texts.

Even if only one (or two) Greek versions of the *amidah* survived, we must confront the question of the prayer's language. Although the rabbis theoretically allowed prayer in any language,[26] all preserved Jewish texts from the first millennium and more of the *amidah*'s existence are entirely in Hebrew, in a register of language deeply influenced by, but not identical to, that of biblical prayers.[27]

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[23] Moshe Weinfeld, "The Prayers for Knowledge, Repentance and Forgiveness in the 'Eighteen Benedictions'—Qumran Parallels, Biblical Antecedents and Basic Characteristics [Heb.]," in *Tarbiz* 48 (1969), pp. 186–200.

[24] *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, pp. 123–124.

[25] On the fundamentally oral nature of early Rabbinic liturgy, see below.

[26] M. Sot. 7:1–2, T. Sot. 7:7. See my *To Worship God Properly: Tensions Between Liturgical Custom and Halakhah in Judaism* (Cincinnati, 1998), pp. 22–23.

[27] In 1981, Chaim Rabin called for linguistic analysis of liturgical Hebrew in his "*Isuq Balshani Bileshon Hatefillah*," in Ezra Fleischer and Jacob J. Petuchowski, eds., *Studies in Aggadah, Targumim, and Jewish Prayers in Memory of Joseph Heinemann* (Jerusalem), pp. 163–171. Relatively few have answered the call of this largely programmatic essay, and those that have been hampered by assumptions that the prayers were composed in the Second Temple period. Indeed, the very flexibility of Jewish liturgy creates a moving target that severely challenges linguistic tools. The most important study so far is by Refael Tourgeman, "Morphological Features in the Language of Early *Siddurim*," [Heb.] in Shimon Sharvit, ed., *Studies in Ancient and Modern Hebrew,*

Hebrew, even in the late Second Temple world, was not the vernacular of Jews in Judaea. Indeed, it is questionable how widespread knowledge of the language was. Schwartz suggests that the Rabbinic term for Hebrew, "*leshon haqodesh*," means not "the holy language" but "the language of the Holy," i.e., the holy place, the Temple, one of the main loci of the ongoing active use of Hebrew. In a world in which Hebrew was no longer the vernacular, the Rabbinic choice of prayer in this language carried great symbolic force, for it grounded their liturgical system not only in Torah but also tied it strongly to the world of the Temple.[28] But it also meant that only those learned in Torah could understand their prayers and only those deeply learned could compose new prayers. The centrality of Hebrew for Rabbinic prayer thus suggests that, at least during its formative period, the social locus of the *amidah* was within the elite circles of the rabbis, with little real attempt to influence the wider Jewish world. In contrast, prayers in non-Rabbinic synagogues may well have been in Greek, as is suggested by the institution's significant attraction for pagans and Christians, at least in the diaspora.[29]

Placing the spread of Rabbinic liturgy in the period suggested by the Greek prayers also, ironically, offers a solution for the persisting dominance of Hebrew prayer. Concomitant with the rise in Rabbinic prestige in this period, archaeological evidence points to a transformation in the community synagogue itself; elaborate, monumental structures begin to appear, not just in the major cities, but in all settlements of any size at all. Schwartz suggests that this religious revival is a direct response to Christianity, for Christians in this period were also building elaborate and remarkably similar churches.

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in honour of M.Z. Kaddari (Ramat Gan, 1999), pp. 133–145, based on his 1994 dissertation at Bar Ilan University.

[28] For a history of the use of Hebrew in this period and its symbolic importance, see Seth Schwartz, "Language, Power and Identity in Ancient Palestine," in *Past and Present* 148 (1995), pp. 25–35. See also Steven Fine, *This Holy Place: On the Sanctity of the Synagogue During the Greco-Roman Period* (Notre Dame, 1997), p. 74, and the sources he cites there. It may also be reasonable to suggest that the rabbis employed Hebrew as part of their effort to create an aura of authenticity for their new ritual by tying it as strongly as possible to the traditional, but now unavailable, worship of the Temple. See Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York and Oxford, 1997), chap. 5, "Characteristics of Ritual-like Activities." For other tools used by the rabbis to tie their liturgy to the Temple, see *To Worship God Properly*, pp. 5–14.

[29] Shaye Cohen, "Pagan and Christian Evidence on the Ancient Synagogue," in Lee I. Levine, ed., *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 1987), p. 167.

In these churches, there developed an elaborate ritual life, centered around the reading of Scripture and the Eucharist, performed by an ordained clergy.[30] In response, Jews looked for a similar religious leadership, a heightened liturgical experience, and a sanctified setting in which this could all take place. The gradual sanctification of the synagogue during the fourth to sixth centuries is well documented, both by archaeological discoveries and literary evidence.[31] We also know that at least in Antioch in the late fourth and early fifth century, the synagogue's liturgy attracted enough Christian attendance to arouse the ire of the Church Father John Chrysostom.[32] The two institutions were in direct competition.

In this context, the performance of the *amidah* necessarily became more elaborate. The precentor became, at least in major centers, a professional musical and literary expert, all this in the beautiful physical setting of the Byzantine synagogue. This may have mitigated the question of language and comprehension. As anthropologists have demonstrated, ritual language does not have to be "meaningful" in the conventional sense.[33] Hebrew itself became symbolic, a part of the Temple-ization evident in the synagogue structure itself. This, plus the acceptance of Rabbinic norms and religious leadership may also have heightened the popular motivation to achieve Hebrew literacy. However, Christian fulminations against Judaizing during this period also include warnings not to attend the synagogue. Would Christians fully untrained in Hebrew have been attracted by an incomprehensible if well-performed liturgy? Vernacular Greek (or Aramaic) Jewish prayer likely also survived, certainly in those areas

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[30] Ecclesial sources confirm the nature of Christian religious life in this period. See particularly the descriptions of Egeria, a female pilgrim from Spain, in John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 3rd ed. (Warminster, 1999), pp. 142–164, and Wilkinson's introductory discussions, pp. 49–83.

[31] See *Fine, This Holy Place* and the relevant sections of Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, as well as Schwartz's discussion, *Imperialism*, chaps. 8–9.

[32] His sermons in reaction to this situation may be found at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/chrysostom-jews6.html.

[33] A classic discussion of this concept is Frits Staal, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual," in *Numen* 26, no. 1 (1975), pp. 2–22. Medieval evidence does suggest that the popularity of liturgical poetry was not dependent on its being comprehended but rather on elements like its musical performance and the prestige that its inclusion brought to the community. See *To Worship God Properly*, pp. 130ff. Extrapolation back from the high medieval descriptions to the early medieval reality is, of course, methodologically problematic.

of Syria and Asia Minor in which church records suggest that this was an issue.[34] It is highly likely that the transformation to the all-Hebrew liturgy of the medieval synagogue was a gradual process, formed from the combination of rising Rabbinic authority and their promulgation of their increasingly fixed Hebrew texts, on the one hand, and historical shifts in Jewish vernaculars resulting in the loss of prayer traditions in those languages.[35]

Fleischer argued that the successful Yavnean promulgation of the *amidah* required the composition of precise prayer texts. As we have seen, while his logic may be correct, his applying it to Yavneh cannot be supported. Within the elite and orally oriented culture of the rabbis themselves, there was no need for either strictly defined texts or for their transmission in written form. But the spread of Rabbinic worship and a popular move away from vernacular prayer may well have contributed to a move from fairly free composition to preferred and ultimately codified forms.[36] Unfortunately, actual preserved texts of the *amidah* come only from several centuries after the close of the Talmuds, from the texts preserved in the Cairo geniza, representing the living customs of the end of the first millennium C.E.

Arguments against such a theory based on talmudic-era Rabbinic texts have little foundation. Rabbinic literature itself only rarely preserves prayer texts that are demonstrably "original;" scribal tenden-

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[34] See van der Horst, "Greek Synagogue Prayers," pp. 33–34. Note that the issues surrounding the reading of Scripture were different as the lections were accompanied by translation into the vernacular, the *Targum*. Traces of Aramaic liturgical poetry have also survived from this period, suggesting that even more of the liturgy may have been comprehensible. See: M. Sokoloff and J. Yahalom, "Aramaic Piyyutim for the Byzantine Period," in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 75 (1985), pp. 309–321.

[35] Exceptions that prove this rule persist in the margins of the statutory liturgy even today. The Spanish and Portuguese Jews in Western Europe preserve the pre-expulsion Portuguese translation of the prophetic portion on the Ninth of Av (it is still recited at the Bevis Marks Synagogue in London, but has been dropped at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in New York). Various European rites preserved for centuries the Aramaic *targum* especially to holiday readings, long after the regular translation of the reading had been dropped. Of particular interest is the Italian rite for Simhat Torah, preserved in part still in modern *mahzorim*, which intertwined *targum* and *piyyutim* verse by verse through the reading of the final section of Deuteronomy by the "bridegroom of the Torah." In general, though, vernacular prayers have not long survived changes in the community's vernacular.

[36] As is argued by Kimelman, "The Literary Structure of the Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption," in William G. Dever and J. Edward Wright, eds., *The Echoes of Many Texts: Reflection on Jewish and Christian Traditions, Essays in Honor of Lou H. Silberman* (Atlanta, 1997), p. 185.

cies to "correct" their manuscripts (or oral texts) according to their familiar customs mean that only obviously deviant texts or texts rejecting certain options are likely to be preserved accurately.[37] Even so, Rabbinic literature preserves amazingly few discussions of the language of any statutory prayers, including the *amidah*, focusing mostly on theologically sensitive points and questions of larger structure. While texts of some occasional prayers entered Rabbinic literature, those recited daily receive almost no witness. For at least eight hundred years after Yavneh, we have no Rabbinic Jewish prayer texts from which to draw conclusions.

The introduction of the *amidah* into the synagogue structure, in whatever language, may itself have transformed it architecturally, contributing to its growing Temple-ization. Tannaitic texts locate this prayer's public recitation in the presence of the *teivah*, the portable chest holding the Torah scrolls, which may or may not have been located in a synagogue. In other discussions, without reference to the Torah, they require the worshiper to face Jerusalem during the prayer.[38] While there is little doubt that the rabbis fairly quickly located all their public liturgy in a synagogue-like setting, we cannot assume that local synagogues accepted this imposition on their established customs. Among other factors, there is an essential disjunction between Rabbinic prayer and the popular synagogue. The content of the *amidah* makes no reference at all to the synagogue or to its specific community, focusing entirely on Temple and the greater community of Israel. In contrast, archaeological evidence suggests that embedded in the synagogue itself was a focus on the local community. Byzantine inscriptions as well as prayers found in later liturgical manuscripts suggest that prayers for the congregation and its leaders and donors were common synagogue practice.[39] Jews continue

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[37] An obvious example of this are the variants to the (four) questions of the Passover *haggadah* where even the Mishnah texts have been altered by various communities to reflect their own customs. For a summary and discussion of the different versions, see Menahem Kasher, *Haggadah Sheleimah*, edited by Shmu el Ashkenazi (Jerusalem, 1955), pp. 112–117.

[38] The standard tannaitic designation for the precentor for this prayer is "the one who descends before the ark." See, for example, M. Ta. 2:2, T. R.H. 2:18. M. Ber. 4:5–6 and T. Ber. 3:14–18 establish the orientation of the prayer to Jerusalem, physically and spiritually.

[39] Gideon Foerster, "Inscriptions from Ancient Synagogues and their Relation to Blessing and Prayer Texts," [Heb.] in *Qatedrah* 19 (1981), pp. 12–40, draws attention to an inscription from Jericho that closely parallels a prayer for the community

today to locate such prayers in conjunction with the Torah reading, the initial, pre-Rabbinic liturgical function of the synagogue. The eventual translation of the *amidah* into the synagogue did not change the prayer's focus, perhaps because its contents were fixed or because there was no need to supplant existing prayers for this purpose. But the regular recitation of the *amidah* in the synagogue may have transformed that structure, contributing to its Temple-ization, including, most significantly, the permanent location of the ark on the Jerusalem-facing wall (beginning in approximately the fourth century) and the consequent orientation of the building's interior space in the direction of prayer required for the *amidah*.[40]

Rabbinic literary evidence, read critically, allows for the possibility of this historical revision. Early Rabbinic traditions show surprisingly little active concern for the popular performance of the *amidah*.[41] A few traditions do suggest at least an inner-Rabbinic rhetoric teaching the virtue of participation in Rabbinic liturgy. Resh Laqish calls the person who does not pray in the synagogue a "bad neighbor" who brings exile upon his family (B. Ber. 8a). An anonymous tannaitic tradition calls on Jews, on pain of death, to come to the synagogue to study and pray before going home to eat and rest in the evening (B. Ber. 4b). But such rhetoric suggests lack of success rather than the opposite. The earliest Jewish confirmation that Jews from somewhat broader circles were indeed reciting the *amidah* can be gleaned from the liturgical poetry, *piyyut*, that begins to

known from various rites. Joseph Yahalom's response printed with this article, "Prayer for the Public in Synagogue Inscriptions," pp. 44–45, draws attention to this distinction between the inscriptional prayers and Rabbinic liturgy. See also Moshe Weinfeld, "Synagogue Inscriptions and Jewish Liturgy," [Heb.] in *Shnaton: An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 4 (1980), pp. 288–295. My thanks to Hanan Eshel for these references. Note, though, that literary evidence for the prayers themselves, as opposed to the inscriptions, is much later. Our earliest literary evidence for a prayer of this type—for the rulers—is in Nathan the Babylonian's ninth-century description of the installation of the exilarch. The text appears in A. Neubauer, ed., *Medieval Jewish Chronicles and Chronological Notes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), vol. II, pp. 83–84.

[40] On the Temple-ization of the synagogue in general and its increasingly standard (but never fully universal) orientation to Jerusalem, see Fine, *This Holy Place*, pp. 79–94, 105–111, and Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, pp. 219–220, 222–224, 302–306. Levine, p. 306, suggests that "it is probably not coincidental" that the more normative orientation of the synagogue interior and its increased use for prayer occurred at the same time.

[41] Popular performance is not necessarily the object of the tannaitic discussion about the abbreviated *amidah* for the one whose prayer is not fluent. (M. Ber. 4:3).

flower in the fifth and sixth centuries. By the waning years of Byzantine rule in Palestine, poets like Yannai were generating cycles of complex compositions for weekly recitation that depended on the structure and replaced the standard content of the *amidah*.[42] However, Hebrew *piyyut* is so heavily indebted to Rabbinic learning for its content that we must question to what extent it was immediately popular outside of Rabbinic circles. That it did eventually achieve such popularity is clear both from its geographical spread throughout the Jewish world and from the voluminous quantities that were composed over centuries and preserved in the Cairo geniza. The movement to an insistence on fixed texts for statutory prayers is also evident in the history of *piyyut*. In its origins, *piyyut* replaced most statutory texts; Babylonian diaspora influence resulted in its transformation into an accompaniment to these prayers.

It is only in the geonic period (eighth–eleventh centuries) that we have clear evidence that that Rabbinic liturgy was triumphing, spreading to become the official religious ritual of all Jewish communities and located in their synagogues. Undoubtedly, this was a gradual process, spreading from the centers of Rabbinic life to its periphery.[43] The rise of Karaism in the eighth and ninth centuries with its explicit rejection of, among other things, Rabbinic liturgy also suggests, perhaps relatively recent, Rabbinic success. However, the general structural similarity between Rabbinic and Karaite prayer indicates that, unlike the Samaritan and Christian liturgies discussed above, the Karaites developed their prayer in active dialogue with the Rabbinic model.[44]

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[42] Preserved predecessors to this style of *piyyut* did not engage the actual structure of the *amidah* and thus cannot demonstrate the prayer's dispersion.

[43] By the Amoraic period, these centers included Babylonia. However, lack of extra-Rabbinic evidence from the Babylonian world hampers our ability to document transformations in Jewish ritual life there. Our ignorance is even more acute about Jewish liturgical life in any part of the diaspora before the rise of the European centers of learning in the high middle ages. While some synagogue structures have been discovered, literary evidence is entirely lacking.

[44] This is less true for the surviving hints of the prayers of Anan ben David, the movement's founder, than it is for the eventual form of the community's prayer book. See Abraham Harkavy, "*Sefer Hamitzvot Le'Anan: Letoldot Haqaraim Vesifrutah (3)*," reprinted in *From the Early Books of Commandments of the Karaites* (Jerusalem, 1969). The Karaite dialogue with Rabbinic liturgy persisted, as is evidenced by the gradual accretion of Rabbinic *piyyut* and even Rabbinic blessing texts. This is consistent with the general history of the community which maintained close if uneasy relations with their rabbanite brethren.

The first surviving attempts to write official prayer books occurred only in the late ninth century when leaders of the Babylonian academies, Amram Gaon and his contemporary Natronai Gaon wrote responsa to communities in Spain that had asked for liturgical direction.[45] Their very request suggests that these communities knew that a norm existed, were motivated to meet it, but did not yet know its details. Certainly, all the medieval halakhic works discussing liturgy, from geonic compositions on, suggest general conformity to the structures and content of Rabbinic prayer and give essentially no evidence of a struggle to impose its system.[46] Common to all these sources is the presumption that the primary and ideal locus of Rabbinic prayer is now the synagogue.

III. *Conclusions*

No single piece of evidence offered here definitively proves that the central prayer of Rabbinic Judaism, the *amidah*, began to influence Jewish practice at the earliest in the mid- to late-third century, several centuries after it was decreed at Yavneh in the aftermath of the destruction of the Temple. Even the aggregate does not constitute

[45] Natronai Gaon's responsum is a list of prayers, lacking complete texts. The *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* has a complicated manuscript history, and contemporary scholars agree that our received versions almost certainly do not preserve Amram's own prayer texts. See E. Daniel Goldschmidt's introduction to his critical edition (Jerusalem, 1971) and Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture* (New Haven and London, 1998), pp. 192–193 and the Hebrew articles that he references there.

[46] Of course these works are themselves Rabbinic. But they give no evidence for alternative practices common among Jews that challenge the Rabbinic system of worship in any fundamental way. All the debates are over the details of its implementation. This of course give us no evidence for the degree to which individual Jews actually attended the synagogue or prayed on a daily basis. That not all did is suggested, for example, by a geonic tradition that continued to be included in some Italian rite prayer book manuscripts that explains the need for seven Torah readers on the Sabbath, saying that the recitation of *barekhu* seven times by these readers is so as to enable those who did not attend the synagogue during the week to compensate for their not responding to this "call to worship" on the other days. Of course, this reasoning is somewhat fallacious, as there is always an eighth reader, the *maftir*, on the Sabbath reading a symbolic portion before reading from the Prophets, and the *barekhu* is recited twice daily during the six weekdays, making a total of twelve (except in those rites in which an additional *barekhu* was added at the end of the service for the latecomers, making 24!). Nonetheless, some social situation obviously drove this comment.

proof. But it does suggest the strong possibility that the historical revisions suggested by Seth Schwartz and his predecessors have validity and that the history of early Rabbinic liturgy needs to be understood anew. While the rabbis may have developed relatively quickly a complex ritual response to fill the void left by the loss of the biblically mandated sacrifices, successful promulgation of this liturgy was an exceedingly slow process. The process of this promulgation transformed the synagogue building and even the liturgy itself as they adapted to new realities.

More research is needed on many fronts. First, other elements of Rabbinic liturgy and ritual practice require similar consideration to that granted the *amidah* here. Second, philological methods, largely discounted today in Jewish liturgical studies, should be carefully applied to the earliest documentable variants of the prayer texts to investigate how these prayers might have been shaped by the historical realities of life in the early medieval worlds in which Jews began to crystallize their texts. Can we legitimately understand these prayer texts as products of the fourth through sixth centuries? Finally, and here we return to Anthony Saldarini's work: if the rabbis were not influential in the late first century or the synagogue of that time, then how do we understand the Jewish communities and institutions with which the New Testament authors or their patristic heirs interacted? The implications of these questions are vast.

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WHAT USE ATTRIBUTIONS? AN OPEN QUESTION IN THE STUDY OF RABBINIC LITERATURE

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At the present time we do not know what to make of attributions of sayings to named authorities and narration of stories about them. What sort of indications these signal is unclear, unless we simply determine to accept at face value as historically factual all of the attributions of sayings to named authorities and to affirm with perfect faith the historicity of all stories told about them. That is a problem that engaged Anthony J. Saldarini, one of the principal participants in the study of formative Judaism for the last third of the twentieth century. A statement of how matters presently appear certainly engages with his *oeuvre*.

I first met Tony Saldarini in Fall, 1968. I had just moved from Dartmouth to Brown and, reaching the later volumes of my *History of the Jews in Babylonia*, I saw the need to translate into English the fourteen *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat on Judaism.[1] So I had begun commuting to New Haven to attend Franz Rosenthal's course in Syriac. In the same day, I found, I could audit Judah Goldin's seminar in Midrash at Yale, and I gladly did so. There I met Tony, along with several other super-stars of the coming generation. A gregarious, congenial fellow, Tony quickly became a friend. In the seminar he marked himself as a man of intellect and honor, from whose erudition and acumen I learned much. We remained good friends, and I took special pride in publishing his doctoral dissertation in a series of monographs I edited for Brill and in including him in many other projects that I organized over the past four decades. He never disappointed me, either intellectually or personally.

Among the handful of university scholars of ancient Judaism, the use of attributions engaged those with academic commitments to

[1] *Aphrahat and Judaism. The Christian Jewish Argument in Fourth Century Iran* (Leiden, 1971; reprint: Atlanta, 1999).

criticism. Most work then and for decades to come took for granted the historicity of Rabbinic sayings and tales. But colleagues in Tanakh and New Testament took an interest in our work and raised the questions that the established academic agenda provoked, but that the Jewish seminary and Yeshiva agenda ignored (in an active, transitive sense). In my own case, at that time I was working on the later volumes of my *History of the Jews in Babylonia*,[2] on which my friend and mentor, Brevard Childs, commented (in his own, gentle way), "I wonder whether you may not be asking the historical question too soon." In the model of New Testament scholarship, with its intense focus on the critical, historical biography of Jesus, I responded with a set of form-analytical biographical studies, all of them organized around attributions of statements to, and narration of stories about, named authorities. It seemed to me that if I could show which sayings were authentic and which pseudepigraphic, I might be able to find a firmer critical foundation for history than at that time we possessed. They produced no solution to the question, what sort of historical inquiry do attributions of sayings and stories make possible?[3] Consequently, I shifted to a different set of problems altogether, which after ten more years of work led to the documentary history of ideas. There attributions played little role, other than as formal indicators for exegetical purposes. I shaped the problems on which I would work in such a way that attributions played no probative role whatsoever, and I continued to make possible, and to participate in, debates on the requirements of critical history based on the Rabbinic documents.[4] So to state how matters emerge after nearly four decades of experimentation.

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[2] *A History of the Jews in Babylonia* (Leiden, 1965–1970; reprint: Atlanta, 1999): I. *A History of the Jews in Babylonia. The Parthian Period*. 1965. Second printing, revised, 1969. Third printing: Chico, 1984. II. *A History of the Jews in Babylonia. The Early Sasanian Period*. 1966. III. *A History of the Jews in Babylonia. From Shapur I to Shapur II*. 1968. IV. *A History of the Jews in Babylonia. The Age of Shapur II*. 1969. V. *A History of the Jews in Babylonia. Later Sasanian Times*. 1970.

[3] *Development of a Legend. Studies on the Traditions concerning Yohanan ben Zakkai* (Leiden, 1970; reprint: Binghamton, 2002); *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (Leiden, 1971; second printing: Atlanta, 1999): I. *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70. The Masters*. II. *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70. The Houses*. III. *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70. Conclusions; Eliezer ben Hyrcanus. The Tradition and the Man* (Leiden, 1973; reprint: Binghamton, 2002): I. *Eliezer ben Hyrcanus. The Tradition and the Man. The Tradition*. II. *Eliezer ben Hyrcanus. The Tradition and the Man. The Man*.

[4] The debate has gone on in several venues. Where I have provided the occa-

What are we to make of a simple fact: throughout Rabbinic literature, numerous sayings are assigned to named masters. To understand the issue at hand we have to take account of two contradictory facts. First, all Rabbinic documents are anonymous, and all of them include vast numbers of compositions bearing no assignments; none of the compositions of which a document is comprised is assigned to a named author; no document bears a dependable attribution to a specific person. But, by way of contradiction to these facts, every one of the documents of the Judaism of the dual Torah produced in the formative age is characterized by numerous attributions of statements to specific figures. So individuals at the same time play no role and also dominate the representation of discourse. The literary situation is characterized by William Green in the following way:

> Most Rabbinic documents are unattributed works; all in fact are anonymous. . . . Rabbinic literature has no authors. No document claims to be the writing of an individual rabbi in his own words; and all contain the ostensible sayings of, and stories about, many rabbis, usually of several generations. Selected to suit the purposes of compilers and redactors, the documents' components are not pristine and natural. They have been revised and reformulated in the processes of transmission and redaction, with the consequence that the *ipsissima verba* of any rabbis are beyond recovery. Rabbinic literature is severely edited, anonymous, and collective.[5]

These contradictory traits—exclusion of distinctive, personal traits of style, absolute refusal to recognize an individual in his own setting, e.g., by preserving a book written by, or about, a named authority, and, at the same time, ubiquitous and persistent inclusion of names along with sayings—provoke the question at hand. If the literature were anonymous as well as collective, or if it exhibited the marks

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sion, I invited those of contrary views to participate, e.g., Richard Kalmin, for the U.S.A., and Zev Safrai, for the state of Israel, to appear in books under my editorship. Where those who hold the contrary view sponsored conferences and published the result, I and all those who concurred with me were excluded from participating. That intellectual boycott signals the intellectual bankruptcy of the uncritical position. For the inclusion of diverse opinions and positions in discussions under my sponsorship, see especially Alan J. Avery-Peck and Jacob Neusner, eds., *Judaism in Late Antiquity. Volume Three. Where We Stand: Issues and Debates. Part One, Two, and Three* (Leiden, 2000; paperback edition: Boston, 2002).

[5] William Scott Green, "Storytelling and Holy Men," in J. Neusner, ed., *Take Judaism, For Example. Studies toward the Comparison of Religions* (Atlanta, 1992), p. 30.

of individuality along with its constant references to named figures, we should not find puzzling the definitive trait before us.

The question is addressed, "Why is the Rabbinic literature so interested in coupling utterances and decisions with names?" The question finds a facile answer for those who take for granted that issues of history govern in the formulation of the Judaism of the dual Torah. If the primary interest lies in what really happened, so that events of a specific, one-time character bear incontrovertible and compelling truth, then names are attached to sayings to indicate who actually said them; then the word "really" carries the meaning, which particular authority stands behind a given statement? That premise, at the same time historical and biographical, certainly has much to recommend it, since, in our culture, with its two-century-old stress on the authority of demonstrable, historical fact, if we can show that something really happened or was truly said by the person to whom it is attributed, then much else follows. But for "our sages of blessed memory," particularly in the two Talmuds, that premise will have presented considerable difficulty.

For we look in vain in the analytical documents for evidence to sustain the stated premise that people really concerned themselves with the issue of who really said what. That is to say, while sayings are attributed, the purpose of the attribution—what is at stake in it, what else we know because we know it—requires analysis in its own terms. Since, as a matter of fact, a saying assigned to one authority in document A will circulate in the name of another in document B, the one-time, determinate assignment of said saying to authority X rather than authority Y cannot be accorded enormous consequence. If the documents were broadly circulated and known, then people ought to have observed that a given saying is assigned to more than a single authority and ought also to have asked why that was the fact. But discussion on that question nowhere takes a central position in the literature. It is no more troublesome than the fact that a given authority will be assigned a given saying in two or more contexts; then, as with the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain, people will simply maintain (as do the true believers in the historicity of everything in the Rabbinic literature who dominate scholarly discourse in the Israeli universities and the Western Yeshivot and seminaries), "he would often say . . .," or, "many times he said. . . ."

Where, when, and why, then, do the names of authorities play a

consequential role in the unfolding of discourse? What role is assigned to them, and what premises seem to underpin the constant citation of sayings in the names of particular masters? To answer these questions, it will hardly suffice to speculate. Our task is to turn to the documents themselves and to ask the broad question, what role do named sages play in these compilations, and on what account do specific names joined with particular statements come under discussion? That question forms a particular detail of a broader issue, which is, how come specific sages play so critical a role in the Rabbinic literature?

When we consider counterpart writings in Christian circles, by contrast, we find a very different kind of writing. There, very commonly, a named figure, whether Matthew or Paul, presents a piece of writing, and he bears responsibility for everything in that document, either as an account of what he has seen and heard, as in the case of Matthew's Gospel, or as an account of his own systematic views, as in the case of Paul's letters. True, we find anonymous writings; but such documents as Hebrews, which bears no named author (though probably belongs to Paul), also contain no sayings assigned to specific authorities in the way in which the Rabbinic writings contain attributions not only to Scripture but to living or recently deceased holy men. A counterpart would have been a citation in Hebrews of a statement of Matthew or Mark, Paul, or Peter. But that insistence on citing current authorities, a paramount trait of Rabbinic literature, start to finish, has no parallel in Christian literature. The much later Zoroastrian law codes, which intersect in contents and at some points even in form with the Judaic ones, assign a given code to a named authority. So we should regard as emblematic and enormously consequential the constant intrusion of the names of authorities in the Rabbinic writings, from beginning to end, from the Mishnah through the Bavli.

Rather than address the question in general terms, which shades over into vacuity and banality, let us first ask about the role of attributions in some few specific documents: how seriously are they taken and for what purpose? The first document is the Mishnah. There we find a principal and constitutive form, the dispute, built around the names of opposing authorities, e.g., the Houses of Shammai and Hillel, or Aqiba and Tarfon, or Meir and Judah, and the like. We also find in some few passages clear evidence of the collection of statements on a given, cogent problem in the name of a specific

authority, e.g., Mishnah-tractate Kelim Chapter Twenty-Four is a statement of Judah's views. But, over all, the Mishnah must be described as an entirely anonymous document, which at the same time contains extensive citations of named figures. The same names occur throughout; we cannot demonstrate that a given authority was viewed as particularly knowledgeable in a specific area of law, most of the sages being treated as generalists. At the same time that names predominate everywhere, sixty-two of the sixty-three tractates are organized around not named figures but topics, and, as indicated, perhaps 98% of the chapters of which those tractates are made up likewise focus on subjects, not named authorities. Only tractate Eduyyot as a whole is set up around names.

If we turn to that tractate devoted not to a particular subject or problem but rather the collection of attributed sayings and stories told about authorities, what do we find? The answer given in Eduyyot is that we find collections of rules on diverse topics, united by the names of authorities cited therein, either disputes, e.g., between Shammai and Hillel and their Houses, or sets of rulings representative of a single authority. A single representative passage shows how the document does its work (M. Ed. 1:2):

1:2 IIA. Shammai says, "[Dough which is made] from a qab [of flour is liable] to a dough offering [Num. 15:20]."
B. And Hillel says, "[Dough made] from two qabs."
C. And sages say, "It is not in accord with the opinion of this party or in accord with the opinion of that party,
D. "But: [dough made] from a qab and a half of flour is liable to the dough offering."

Now what is interesting here—and not characteristic of the document throughout—is the inclusion of a final ruling on the dispute, which is different from the rulings of the Houses' founders. That pattern being repeated and so shown to be definitive of the redactor's subtext, the question is raised: why record not only the official rule, but the opinion of a named, therefore schismatic figure as well? And that of course forms the heart of the matter and tells us the document's answer to our question. First let us consider the source, then draw the conclusion it makes possible (M. Ed. 1:5–6):

1:5A. And why do they record the opinion of an individual along with that of the majority, since the law follows the opinion of the majority?

B. So that, if a court should prefer the opinion of the individual, it may decide to rely upon it.
C. For a court does not have the power to nullify the opinion of another court unless it is greater than it in wisdom and in numbers.
D. [If] it was greater than the other in wisdom but not in numbers,
E. in numbers but not in wisdom,
F. it has not got the power to nullify its opinion—
G. unless it is greater than it in both wisdom and numbers.

1:6A. Said R. Judah, "If so, why do they record the opinion of an individual against that of a majority to no purpose?
B. "So that if a person should say, 'Thus have I received the tradition,' one may say to him, 'You have heard the tradition in accord with the opinion of Mr. So-and-so [against that of the majority].'"

The premise of this passage is simple. The law follows the position of the anonymously-formulated rule. Then why attribute a rule to a named figure? It is to identify the opinion that is not authoritative, but, nonetheless, subject to consideration. Then it follows, the purpose of citing sayings in the names of authorities is to mark those positions as schismatic and not authoritative—not to validate, but to invalidate.

To test this surmise, we turn to the Tosefta's commentary on the passage of Mishnah-tractate Eduyyot that is before us. Here we find explicitly articulated the premise I identified (M. Ed. 1:4):

1:4A. Under all circumstances the law follows the majority, and the opinion of the individual is recorded along with that of the majority only so as to nullify it.
B. R. Judah says, "The opinion of an individual is recorded along with that of the majority only so that, if the times necessitate it, they may rely upon [the opinion of the individual]."
C. And sages say, "The opinion of the individual is recorded along with that of the majority only so that, if later on, this one says, 'Unclean,' and that one says, 'Clean,' one may respond that the one who says it is unclean is in accord with the opinion of R. Eliezer [and the law must follow the majority, which opposed his opinion], so they say to him, 'You have heard this opinion in accord with the ruling of R. Eliezer.'"

Judah's theory of matters—that of the minority—is that the minority opinion registers, so that, under duress, it may serve as precedent; sages take the view that the very opposite consideration pertains;

once an opinion is given to an individual, that opinion is to be dismissed as schismatic wherever it occurs—even when not in the name of the individual. So we find here confirmation of the surmise that at stake in assigning opinions to names is the formulation of the legal process in such a way as to permit reliable decisions to be made.

But there is a second consideration important to the Mishnah, and that emerges in another passage in the same tractate (M. Ed. 5:6):

5:6A. Aqabiah b. Mehalalel gave testimony in four matters.
B. They said to him, "Aqabiah, retract the four rulings which you laid down, and we shall make you patriarch of the court of Israel."
C. He said to them, "It is better for me to be called a fool my whole life but not be deemed a wicked person before the Omnipresent for even one minute,
D. "so that people should not say, 'Because he craved after high office, he retracted.'"

The passage proceeds to specify the disputes, and then the narrative continues, reporting that because he refused to retract, sages excommunicated him (M. Ed. 5:6–7):

M. They excommunicated him, and he died while he was subject to the excommunication, so the court stoned his bier. . . .
5:7A. When he was dying, he said to his son, "My son, retract the four rulings that I had laid down.
B. He said to him, "And why do you retract now?"
C. He said to him, "I heard the rulings in the name of the majority, and they heard them in the name of the majority, so I stood my ground on the tradition which I had heard, and they stood their ground on the tradition they had heard.
D. "But you have heard the matter both in the name of an individual and in the name of the majority.
E. "It is better to abandon the opinion of the individual and to hold with the opinion of the majority."
F. He said to him, "Father, give instructions concerning me to your colleagues."
G. He said to him, "I will give no instructions."
H. He said to him, "Is it possible that you have found some fault with me?"
I. He said to him, "No. It is your deeds which will bring you near, or your deeds which will put you off [from the others]."

The crux of the matter then comes at 5:7C: Aqabiah has received rulings in the name of the majority and therefore regards them as

valid. So the purpose of assigning names to sayings once more is to label the unreliable ones: those in the names of individuals. And at stake, underneath, is of course the shape and structure of the tradition, which is once more stated explicitly: "I stood my ground on the tradition that I had heard. . . ." What comes down anonymously is tradition—from Sinai, obviously—and what bears a name is other than tradition. But matters we see also prove subject to negotiation. Sages bear the obligation to remember what they heard in the name of the majority but also in the name of individuals. So the inclusion of names forms part of a larger theory of tradition and how to be guided by tradition, and the Mishnah's account of itself makes that point in so many words.

We hardly need to find that fact surprising, since the Mishnah's first apologetic, Pirqé Abot, the sayings of the fathers, points to Sinai as the origin of the Mishnah's tradition when it formulates its opening chapter. Tractate Abot in its opening chapter responds to the question: what is the Mishnah? Why should we obey its rules? How does it relate to the Torah, which, we all know, God gave to Israel through Moses at Sinai? The answer is contained in the opening sentence at M. Ab. 1:1:

> Moses received the Torah a Sinai and handed it on to Joshua, Joshua to elders, and elders to prophets. And prophets handed it on to the men of the great assembly. They said three things: Be prudent in judgment. Raise up many disciples. Make a fence for the Torah.

What is important here is three facts. First, the verbs, "receive . . . hand on . . .," represent the Hebrew words *qabbalah*, tradition, and *masoret,* also tradition. There is no more lucid or powerful way of making the statement than that: the Torah is a matter of tradition. Second, the tradition goes from master to disciple, Moses to Joshua. So the tradition is not something written down, it is something that lives. Third, we know that the tradition is distinct from the written Torah, because what is attributed to "the men of the great assembly" (and we have no interest in who these might be assumed to have been) are three statements that do not occur in Scripture. In fact, among all of the sayings in the entire tractate, only very rarely is there attributed to a sage who stands in this chain of tradition a verse of Scripture. So the essence of "the tradition" is not what is said, e.g., citing a verse of Scripture and expanding on it, but that a saying is said and who does the saying: a master to a disciple,

forward through all time, backward to Sinai. Torah—revelation—stands for a process of transmitting God's will. That process is open-ended but it also is highly disciplined.

How is the question of the origin and authority of the Mishnah answered? The chain of tradition from Sinai ends up with names that are prominent in the Mishnah itself, for example, Shammai and Hillel, and their disciples, the House of Shammai and the House of Hillel. So the message is blatant: major authorities of the Mishnah stand in a chain of tradition to Sinai; hence, the Mishnah contains the Torah of Sinai. It is that straightforward: through discipleship, we reach backward; through the teaching of the sage, we reach forward; the great tradition endures in the learning of the ages. It follows that when sayings are assigned to sages, a quite separate issue is in play. I cite only a small sample of the opening chapter of Abot, which suffices to make my point:

> 1:2. Simeon the Righteous was one of the last survivors of the great assembly. He would say: On three things does the world stand: On the Torah, and on the Temple service, and on deeds of loving-kindness.
> 1:3. Antigonus of Sokho received [the Torah] from Simeon the Righteous. He would say: Do not be like servants who serve the master on condition of receiving a reward, but [be] like servants who serve the master not on condition of receiving a reward. And let the fear of Heaven be upon you.

Now the key point comes with the beginning of the Mishnah-sages themselves, and that is with the pairs, five sets, with named authorities who carry us deep into the pages of the Mishnah itself. But there is another point not to be missed. Once the pairs end, whom do we find? Gamaliel, who is (later on) represented as the son of Hillel, and then Gamaliel and Simeon, his son, Hillel's grandson. The names Gamaliel, then Simeon, continued through this same family, of primary authorities, through Gamaliel II, ruler of the Jewish community after the destruction of the second Temple in 70 and into the second century, then his son, Simeon b. Gamaliel, ruler of the Jewish community after the defeat of Bar Kokhba in 135—and also, as it happens, the father of Judah the Patriarch, this same Judah the Patriarch who sponsored the Mishnah. So Judah the Patriarch stands in the chain of tradition to Sinai. Not only the teachings of the sages of the Mishnah, but also the political sponsor of the document, who also was numbered among the sages, formed part of

this same tradition. What the sages say in these sayings in no way contradicts anything we find in Scripture. But most of what is before us also does not intersect with much that we find in Scripture.

We see, then, two distinct but closely related considerations that operate in the persistent interest in assigning sayings to named authorities. Identifying an authority serves as a taxic indicator of the standing of a saying—classified as not authoritative; but identifying an authority bears the—both correlative and also contradictory—indication that the authority had a tradition. Enough has been said even in these simple observations to point to a broader conclusion. If we wish to ask why names are included, we have to examine the various writings that contain assigned sayings, looking for the importance accorded to attributions by the authors of the compositions and redactors of the composites of each such compilation. It suffices to note that in the later documents, a variety of positions emerges. One of the most weighty is also most surprising. In the Tosefta, we find that what is attributed in the Mishnah to a given authority will be rewritten, so that the cited sage will say something different from what he is supposed in the Mishnah to have said. Nothing in the Mishnah's statements' theory of matters prepares us for the way in which the Tosefta's authorities treat attributions. So far as they are concerned, I shall now show, while attributions set forth fixed positions on a disputed point, precisely what was subject to dispute was itself a contentious matter.

Attributions in the Tosefta bear a quite distinct task from those in the Mishnah. A set of names signifies two persistent positions, principles guiding the solution to any given problem. We find in the Tosefta two or more positions assigned to the same named authority, and these positions contradict one another. It follows that attributions bear a quite distinct sense. What they stand for, as we shall see now, is a fixed difference. Party A and Party B will differ in the same way on a variety of issues, and if we know the issues, we also know the positions to be taken by the two parties. Then all consideration of tradition is set aside; all we have in the attribution is the signification of a fixed difference, a predictable position on an unpredictable agenda of issues. A fair analogy, I think, will be the fixed difference between political conservatives and political liberals; whatever the issue, the positions are predictable. Then in place of the House of Shammai and the House of Hillel, X and Y, or black and white, or pigeon and turtledove would serve equally well. Neither

history, nor tradition, nor designation of the accepted and the schismatic position comes into play when all that is at stake is the matter of invoking fixed and conventional positions. Then the attributive serves as a formal protocol, nothing more.

What we shall see in the following is that the Mishnah presents a picture of a dispute and the opinions of cited authorities, and the Tosefta provides a quite different account of what was said. The Tosefta has opinions attributed to Judah and Yose and "others say," and at stake are three distinct positions on the law. So the framers of the Tosefta's composition exhibit access to no single tradition at all; and subject to dispute is not the outcome of a case, but the formulation of the case itself. Mishnah-tractate Besah 1:6 reads as follows:

A. The House of Shammai say, "They do not bring dough-offering and priestly gifts to the priest on the festival day,
B. "whether they were raised up the preceding day or on that same day."
C. And the House of Hillel permit.
D. The House of Shammai said to them, "It is an argument by way of analogy.
E. "The dough-offering and the priestly gifts [Deut. 18:3] are a gift to the priest, and heave-offering is a gift to the priest.
F. "Just as [on the festival day] they do not bring heave-offering [to a priest], so they do not bring these other gifts [to a priest]."
G. Said to them the House of Hillel, "No. If you have stated that rule in the case of heave-offering, which one [on the festival] may not designate to begin with, will you apply that same rule concerning the priestly gifts, which [on the festival] one may designate to begin with?"

The Hillelites allow designating and delivering the priestly gifts owing to the priests from animals slaughtered on the festival day. The House of Shammai do not allow doing so, since the restrictions of the festival day come to bear. We shall now see a completely different picture of matters; I underline the points in Tosefta Tractate Besah 1:12–13 at which the dispute is reformulated:

1:12G. Said R. Judah, "The House of Shammai and the House of Hillel concur that they bring [to the priest] gifts *which were taken up on the day before the festival along with gifts which were taken on the festival* [vs. M. 1:5A–C].
B. "Concerning what did they differ?
C. "Concerning [bringing to the priest on the festival] gifts which were taken up on the day before the festival by themselves.

D. "For the House of Shammai prohibit.
E. "And the House of Hillel permit.
F. "The House of Shammai said, 'It is an argument by way of analogy. The dough-offering and the priestly gifts are a gift to the priest, and heave-offering is a gift to the priest. Just as they do not bring heave-offering [to a priest on the festival day], so they do not bring these other gifts [to a priest on the festival day]' [M. 1:6D–F].
G. "Said to them the House of Hillel, 'No. If you have said that rule in the case of heave-offering, which one may not designate to begin with, will you say that same rule concerning the priestly gifts, which one may designate to begin with?'" [M. 1:6G].
H. R. Yose says, "The House of Shammai and the House of Hillel concur that they do bring the priestly gifts to the priest on the festival day.
I. "Concerning what do they differ?
J. "Concerning heave-offering.
K. "For the House of Shammai prohibit [bringing heave-offering to the priest on the festival day].
L. "And the House of Hillel permit."

1:13A. "Said the House of Hillel, 'It is an argument by way of analogy. Dough-offering and priestly gifts are a gift to the priest, and heave-offering is a gift to the priest. Just as they do bring the priestly gifts to the priest on the festival day, so they should bring heave-offering to the priest on the festival day.'
B. "Said the House of Shammai to them, 'No. If you have stated the rule in the case of the priestly gifts, which is permitted to be designated [on the festival], will you state that rule concerning heave-offering, which may not be designated [on the festival day]?'"
C. Others say, "The House of Shammai and the House of Hillel concur that they do not bring heave-offering on a festival.
D. "Concerning what did they differ?
E. "Concerning priestly gifts.
F. "For the House of Shammai prohibit [bringing them to the priest on the festival].
G. "And the House of Hillel permit" [= M. 1:6A–C]

The second century authorities are alleged to have three distinct "traditions" on what is at issue between the Houses; each then assigns to the Houses the same language in the same words, along with the same secondary arguments for its distinctive viewpoint. All that varies is the definition of that about which the Houses to begin with are conducting their dispute—no small thing!

Now that we have seen ample evidence that attributions serve, even in the Mishnah and the Tosefta, to carry out three quite distinct

functions—[1] distinguishing regnant from schismatic opinion, [2] identifying the traditionality of a saying, and [3] marking off fixed points of difference concerning a variable agendum of issues—a measure of humility guides us as we revert to our original question, "Why is the Rabbinic literature so interested in coupling utterances and decisions with names?" The question has received only a preliminary answer, but the method before us is clear: we have to ask, document by document, what function is served by attributions, what importance is assigned to them, what difference the presence of an attribution makes in one context or another, and, finally, what conclusions, if any, are drawn from attributions?

Certainly a survey of the two Talmuds, with their intense interest in the consistency of positions assigned to principal authorities, alongside their quite facile practice of following the dictates of logic, not tradition at all, in switching about among various names the opinions assigned to one or another of them, will yield puzzling evidence. But the outlines of the answer are clear. We may reject as simply irrelevant to the character of the evidence any interest in preserving historical information concerning named figures, e.g., for the purpose of biography. The sages of Rabbinic documents have opinions, but no biography; many individuals play critical roles in the formation of the several documentary statements, but no individual is accorded a fully articulated individuality, either as to his life, or as to his philosophy or theology.

What conclusions may we draw from this inquiry into the uses of attributions in the earliest of the Rabbinic compilations? Let us note, first, what we do not have. For the entire cadre of sages, we do not have a single biography devoted to an individual, or even the raw materials for a sustained and systematic biography; We do not possess a single document produced by a clearly-identifiable individual author, a single coherent composite of any consequence at all that concerns itself with a named figure. The counterpart writings for Christianity, the lives of saints and holy men and women, the letters of Paul, not to mention the huge collections of signed, personal, individual writings of Church Fathers, show us the documents we do not have in Rabbinic literature. The theory of authorship accounts for that fact. A document to warrant recognition—thus to be accorded authority, to be written and copied, or memorized and handed on as tradition—had to attain the approval of the sages' consensus.

That meant every document in Rabbinic literature emerged anonymously, under public sponsorship and authorship, stripped of all marks of individual, therefore idiosyncratic, origin. Personality and individuality stood for schism, and Rabbinic literature in its very definition and character aims at the opposite, forming as it does the functional counterpart to the creeds and decisions of Church councils. Framed in mythic terms, the literature aimed to make this theological statement: sages stood in a chain of tradition from Sinai, and the price of inclusion was the acceptance of the discipline of tradition—anonymity, reasoned argument to attain for a private view the public status of a consensus-statement. The very definition of tradition that comes to expression in the character of Rabbinic literature—God's revelation to Moses at Sinai received and handed on unimpaired and intact in a reliable process of instruction by masters to disciples—accounts for the public, anonymous character of Rabbinic writing.

Not a line in the entire Rabbinic literature even suggests that schismatic writing existed, even though named statements of individual authorities are preserved on every page of that literature. The point that is proven is simple. People disagreed within a permitted agendum, and the protocol of disagreement always began with the premise of concurrence on all that counted. That was, as we saw, the very goal of Rabbinic dialectics: the rationality of dispute, the cogency of theology and of law as a whole. As every named saying we have examined has already shown us, dissenting views too found their properly-labeled position in Rabbinic literature, preserved in the name of the private person who registered dissent in accord with the rules governing the iron-consensus of the collegium as a whole.

The final question raised by the ubiquity of attributions to named authorities is, what then is the standing of the named sage? We have seen that the sage is subordinate to tradition, on the one side, and the consensus of sages, on the other. That means the individual as such bore only instrumental importance; he mattered because, and only when, he served as a good example. Or his value derived from the traditions he had in hand from prior authorities. But that fact accords to the individual very high standing indeed—when the individual exemplifies the Torah, attests to tradition, or through wit in sound reasoning demonstrates the validity of a position and compels the consensus to favor his view. So attributions fulfill contradictory

tasks. They both call into question the validity of what is attributed and also validate the sage as exemplar of the Torah. The sage stood at that same level of authority as did the Torah, on the one side, and the Mishnah, on the other. Therefore the failure to compose gospels alongside Midrash-compilations and Mishnah-exegesis is not to be explained away as a by-product of the conception of revelation through words but not through persons that is imputed to the Judaism of the dual Torah. Quite to the contrary, God reveals the Torah not only through words handed down from Sinai in the form of the Torah, written and oral, but also through the lives and deeds of saints, that is, sages. The same modes of exegetical inquiry pertaining to the Mishnah and Scripture apply without variation to statements made by rabbis of the contemporary period themselves.

A single example of the superficially-contradictory, but deeply harmonious, meaning imputed to attributions suffices. For that purpose we turn to the way in which the rabbis of the Yerushalmi proposed to resolve differences of opinion. Precisely in the same way in which talmudic rabbis settled disputes in the Mishnah and so attained a consensus about the law of the Mishnah, they handled disputes among themselves. The importance of that fact for our argument again is simple. The rabbis, represented in the Yerushalmi, treated their own contemporaries exactly as they treated the then-ancient authorities of the Mishnah. In their minds the status accorded to the Mishnah, as a derivative of the Torah, applied equally to sages' teachings. In the following instance we see how the same discourse attached to (1) a Mishnaic rule is assigned as well to one in (2) the Tosefta and, at the end, to differences among (3) the Yerushalmi's authorities (Y. Ket. 5:1.VI):

A. R. Jacob bar Aha, R. Alexa in the name of [a sage] Hezekiah: "The law accords with the view of R. Eleazar b. Azariah, who stated, If she was widowed or divorced at the stage of betrothal, the virgin collects only two hundred zuz and the widow, a maneh. If she was widowed or divorced at the stage of a consummated marriage, she collects the full amount [M. Ket. 5:1E, D]."
B. R. Hananiah said, "The law accords with the view of R. Eleazar b. Azariah."
C. Said Abbayye, "They said to R. Hananiah, 'Go and shout [outside whatever opinion you like.' But] R. Jonah, R. Zeira in the name of R. Jonathan said, 'The law accords with the view of R. Eleazar b. Azariah.' [Yet] R. Yosa bar Zeira in the name of R. Jonathan said, 'The law does not accord with the view of R. Eleazar b. Azariah.' [So we do not in fact know the decision.]"

D. Said R. Yose, "We had a mnemonic: Hezekiah and R. Jonathan both say one thing."
E. For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:
F. He whose son went abroad, and whom they told, "Your son has died,"
G. and who went and deeded over all his property to someone else as a gift,
H. and whom they afterward informed that his son was yet alive—
I. his deed of gift remains valid.
J. R. Simeon b. Menassia says, "His deed of gift is not valid, for if he had known that his son was alive, he would never have made such a gift" [T. Ket. 4:14E–H].
K. Now R. Jacob bar Aha [= A] said, "The law is in accord with the view of R. Eleazar b. Azariah, and the opinion of R. Eleazar b. Azariah is the same in essence as that of R. Simeon b. Menassia."
L. Now R. Yannai said to R. Hananiah, "Go and shout [outside whatever you want].
M. "But, said R. Yose bar Zeira in the name of R. Jonathan, 'The law is not in accord with R. Eleazar b. Azariah.'"
N. But in fact the case was to be decided in accord with the view of R. Eleazar b. Azariah.

What is important here is that the Talmud makes no distinction whatever when deciding the law of disputes (1) in the Mishnah, (2) in the Tosefta, and (3) among talmudic rabbis. The same already-formed colloquy applied at the outset to the Mishnah's dispute is then held equally applicable to the Tosefta's. The process of thought is the main thing, without regard to the document to which the process applies. Scripture, the Mishnah, the sage—the three spoke with equal authority. True, one had to come into alignment with the other, the Mishnah with Scripture, the sage with the Mishnah. But it was not the case that one component of the Torah, of God's word to Israel, stood within the sacred circle, another beyond. Interpretation and what was interpreted, exegesis and text, belonged together. The sage, or rabbi, constitutes the third component in a tripartite canon of the Torah, because, while Scripture and the Mishnah govern what the sage knows, in the Yerushalmi as in the Bavli it is the sage who authoritatively speaks about them. What sages were willing to do to the Mishnah in the Yerushalmi and Bavli is precisely what they were prepared to do to Scripture—impose upon it their own judgment of its meaning.

The sage speaks with authority about the Mishnah and the Scripture. As much as those documents of the Torah, the sage too therefore has authority deriving from revelation. He himself may participate

in the process of revelation. There is no material difference. Since that is so, the sage's book, whether the Yerushalmi or the Bavli to the Mishnah or Midrash to Scripture, belongs to the Torah, that is, is revealed by God. It also forms part of the Torah, a fully canonical document. The reason, then, is that the sage is like Moses, "our rabbi," who received torah and wrote the Torah. So while the canon of the Torah was in three parts, two verbal, one incarnate—Scripture, Mishnah, sage—the sage, in saying what the other parts meant and in embodying that meaning in his life and thought, took primacy of place. If no document organized itself around sayings and stories of sages, it was because that was superfluous. Why so? Because all documents, equally, whether Scripture, whether Mishnah, whether Yerushalmi, gave full and complete expression of deeds and deliberations of sages, beginning, after all, with Moses, our rabbi.

A few concluding observations suffice to return us to our starting point. No document in Rabbinic literature is signed by a named author or is so labeled (except in a few instances long after the fact, e.g., Judah the Patriarch wrote the Mishnah) as to represent the opinion of a lone individual. In their intrinsic traits of uniform discourse all documents speak out of the single, undifferentiated voice of Sinai, and each makes a statement of the Torah of Sinai and within that Torah. That anonymity, indicative for theological reasons, comes to expression in the highly formalized rhetoric of the canonical writings, which denies the possibility of the individuation not only of the writings themselves, but also of the sayings attributed to authorities in those writings.

Books such as the Mishnah, Sifre to Deuteronomy, Genesis Rabbah, or the Bavli, that after formulation were accepted as part of the canon of Judaism, that is, of "the one whole Torah of Moses our rabbi revealed by God at Sinai," do not contain answers to questions of definition that commonly receive answers within the pages of a given book. Such authors as (the school of) Matthew or Luke, Josephus, even the writers of Ezra-Nehemiah, will have found such a policy surprising. And while Socrates did not write, Plato and Aristotle did—and they signed their own names (or did the equivalent in context). In antiquity books or other important writings, e.g., letters and treatises, ordinarily, though not always, bore the name of the author or at least an attribution, e.g., Aristotle's or Paul's name, or the attribution to Enoch or Baruch or Luke. For no doc-

ument in the canon of Judaism produced in late antiquity, by contrast, is there a named author internal to the document. No document in that canon contains within itself a statement of a clear-cut date of composition, a defined place or circumstance in which a book is written, a sustained and ongoing argument to which we readily gain access, or any of the other usual indicators by which we define the authorship, therefore the context and the circumstance, of a book.

The purpose of the sages who in the aggregate created the canonical writings of the Judaism of the dual Torah is served by not specifying differentiating traits such as time, place, and identity of the author or the authorship. The Judaic equivalent of the Biblical canon ("the Old Testament and the New Testament") is "the one whole Torah of Moses, our rabbi," and that "one, whole Torah" presents single books as undifferentiated episodes in a timeless, ahistorical setting: Torah revealed to Moses by God at Mount Sinai, but written down long afterward. Received in a canonical process of transmission under the auspices of a religious system, any canonical writing, by definition, enjoys authority and status within that canon and system. Hence it is deemed to speak for a community and to represent, and contribute to, the consensus of that community. Without a named author, a canonical writing may be represented, on the surface, as the statement of a consensus. That consensus derives not from an identifiable writer or even school but from the anonymous authorities behind the document as we have it. A consensus of an entire community, the community of Judaism, reaches its full human realization in the sage.

That is why the sage will be mentioned by name—but at the same time represented as exemplary, therefore subordinate; exemplary, not individual; exemplary, not schismatic. In that context writing down of that consensus will not permit individual traits of rhetoric to differentiate writer from writer or writing from writing. The individual obliterates the marks of individuality in serving the holy people by writing a work that will become part of the Torah, and stories about individuals will serve, in that context, only so far as they exemplify and realize traits characteristic of all Torah-sages. But these observations only open the question for further research: precisely how do attributions function in the diverse documents? What they do is close off the framing of the question by positivist historians, in

quest for historical facts concerning what really happened that day. That is something we shall never know. The purpose that attributions served from the beginnings of Talmudic history in the nineteenth century proves monumentally irrelevant to the signals that attributions set forth.

MIDRASH AND THE RABBINIC SERMON[1]

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Tony and I were friends and colleagues since our days in graduate school. For about thirty years we shared ideas and read and commented on each other's writing. Most joyously, we would meet at conferences and learn what each of us was doing in our scholarship and our lives. Most important to me is that Tony's work informed my research in many ways. Among his abiding concerns were the commonalities and the differences between Judaism and Christianity during the first centuries C.E. The fundamental common element was Scripture, and the essential difference was that to the Jews it was the Hebrew Bible while to the Christians it became the Old Testament. Here I develop the conversations we used to have by speaking of the rabbis' interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, interpretations intended to connect their world directly to the revealed word of God written down in the TaNaKh.

This paper argues that Rabbinic Midrash is a definable literary phenomenon that finds its primary locus within the Rabbinic schoolhouses of late antiquity. It challenges the claim that much of our current Rabbinic Midrash originated in the Rabbinic sermons of late antiquity. While some rabbis may have delivered sermons in the synagogues of late antiquity or to the "community" in different public settings, we shall see that there are few specific indications of that fact. When we find rabbis within the context of synagogues, they most often are *not* delivering sermons. And when rabbis "preach" to the community, it is often in cities with Rabbinic academies, so it is unclear exactly to whom these "sermons" were delivered.

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[1] A version of this paper was read at the meeting of the European Biblical Studies Association in Utrecht.

I

For our purposes, Rabbinic Midrash is "literature, either written or oral, which has its starting point in a fixed canonical text, considered the revealed word of God by the midrashist and his audience, and in which this original verse is explicitly cited or clearly alluded to."[2] In the present context, I want to focus on the importance of the revealed nature of the cited exegeted text, which both the midrashist and the audience accept, and the context in which I believe Rabbinic Midrash arose.

The pervasive Rabbinic opinion was that God had dictated the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai and that Moses had faithfully transcribed God's words. The last eight verses of Deuteronomy, which record Moses' death, were the only part of the first five books of the Bible that some sages were willing to exclude from Moses' own writing (B. B.B. 14b, B. Men. 30a). However, others maintained that Moses had written even these verses: Up to the end of Deuteronomy "God dictated and Moses repeated and wrote," from that point on, "God dictated and Moses repeated and wrote with tears in his eyes" (B. B.B. 15a, B. Men. 30a).[3]

From the Rabbinic point of view, Midrash involved interacting with God's word, the Hebrew Bible. In this way, it was different from contemporary exegeses of Homer or from the other rhetorical activities taking place throughout the Roman world in late antiquity. Daube[4] and Lieberman[5] have demonstrated that many of the Rabbinic exegetical rules are Hebrew translations of Greek rhetorical terms. But, for the rabbis, the essential nature of the Greek rhetorical enterprise and the rabbis' midrashic activity was different. The Greeks were interpreting human authors; the rabbis were attempting to understand the divine word. From the rabbis' perspective they were

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[2] G. Porton, "Midrash: Palestinian Jews and the Hebrew Bible in the Greco-Roman Period," in H. Temporini and H. Hasse, eds., *Aufstieg und Nierdergange der römischen Welt* (Berlin and New York, 1979), II.19.2, p. 112.

[3] Some sages questioned Moses' authorship of the entire Torah. See Marc Bregman, "Pseudepigraphy in Rabbinic Literature," in E.G. Chazon and M. Stone, eds., *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden, 1999), p. 27.

[4] David Daube, "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, XXII (1949), pp. 234–264.

[5] S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York, 1950), pp. 47–82.

engaged in a distinctively Rabbinic and Jewish activity. We find an example of this in the rabbis' claim that Hillel and Ishmael had originated the use of specific exegetical techniques within Rabbinic circles. This assertion reflects their appropriation and rabbinization of the Hellenistic rhetorical methods of interpretation. The Rabbinic documents picture Hillel and Ishmael actually employing *only* those exegetical methods that were translated from and borrowed from the Greek rhetorical tradition, without noting that fact. Rabbis, not Greek rhetoricians, stood behind the Rabbinic exegetical methods.[6] The rabbis' claim that they were interacting with God's word in a distinctively Jewish way distinguishes their activities from those of their contemporaries.

Furthermore, Rabbinic Midrash presupposes that both the midrashist and his audience agree on the revealed nature of the biblical text. Ezekiel's drama on the Exodus,[7] much of Philo's work, and Josephus's *Antiquities*[8] demonstrate that non-rabbis interpreted Scripture for non-Jews as well as for Jews. In fact, we find passages within the Rabbinic documents in which a sage interprets a biblical passage in response to a non-Jew's question. However, we do not have evidence that the rabbis engaged in sustained midrashic activity for the benefit of non-Jews. Stemberger correctly notes that it is impossible to ascertain the audience's view of a document,[9] so that we do not know how the Jews or non-Jews who read Philo or Josephus viewed the Bible, or exactly how those who encountered Rabbinic exegetical activities thought of those activities. But, because Jews and non-Jews viewed the status of the Hebrew Bible differently, we may assume that they would also have regarded the comments upon the biblical text in their own unique ways.

The rabbis believed that the *TaNaKh* alone among written documents contained God's word, either directly as in the Torah, or through human and divine intermediaries, as in the prophetic books and in

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[6] G. Porton, "Rabbi Ishmael and His Thirteen Middot," in J. Neusner, P. Borgen, E.S. Frerichs, and R. Horsley, eds., *New Perspectives on Ancient Judaism. Volume One: Religion, Literature, and Society in Ancient Israel, Formative Christianity, and Judaism* (Lanham, New York, and London, 1987), pp. 1–18.

[7] H. Jacobson, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel* (Cambridge, 1983).

[8] H.W. Attridge; *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the Antiquitates Judaicae of Flavius Josephus* (Missoula, 1976).

[9] H.L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 257.

the "Writings." For this reason, the rabbis clearly distinguished between the canonical books and those outside the canon.[10] Because the Oral Torah and the Written Torah together were *sui generis*, Rabbinic literature was self-referential, so that the distinction between canonical and non-canonical literature was important. The Rabbinic texts contain virtually no clear quotations from documents that they did not consider part of revelation.[11] Canonical books "render the hands unclean," while non-canonical books "do not render the hands unclean." M. Yad. 3:5 informs us that all Holy Writings render the hands unclean, and the Mishnah contains several opinions debating whether *Qohelet* and *Shir haShirim* "render the hands unclean."

Things that "render the hands unclean," or "defile the hands," fall into a distinct category. Holy Writings are not the only items that defile one's hands. M. Pes. 10:9 informs us that after midnight the Passover-sacrifice defiles the hands, and the commentators indicate that this was because the sacrifice could not be eaten after midnight. In M. Yad. 3:1 the phrase refers to the transmission of ritual impurity, especially from "a father of uncleanness." It appears that something that renders the hands unclean should be avoided. Or, perhaps more properly in this context, an item that renders the hands unclean should not be used in normal activity. It is unique and stands outside the realm of the "everyday." This implies that Scripture, the Torah, is categorically different from other types of literatures.

Not only the "holy writings" on the Torah Scrolls defile the hands, but also the blank spaces on the Torah's parchment render the hands unclean (M. Yad. 3:4). The Torah Scroll as object is sacred independent of the "holy writings" upon it. Similarly, God's words contained in the "holy writings" are holy independent of the scrolls upon which they are written. The Mishnah does not explain why the blank spaces are as holy as those upon which there are words. The medieval commentators Yom Tov Lipmann and Obadiah Bartinoro claim that because the blank spaces are necessary, so that the words are not rolled onto the rollers, they are holy. This suggests that the blank spaces permit the text to be properly read and understood. For this

[10] Consult the bibliography in B.S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, 1979), pp. 46–49.

[11] The few citations of Ben Sira's text are introduced by terms that suggest that some considered it to be part of the canon.

reason, they are as important as the words themselves. Thus, the issue of holiness resides in the comprehensibility and readability of the text as well as in the exactness of the words.

From the rabbis' point of view, the Torah is God's word on earth and reflects God's sacred nature. However, the rabbis believed that at the same time that God revealed the Written Torah to Moses, God also transmitted the Oral Torah to him. While the Written Torah—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—is available to all people, the Oral Torah resides only in the rabbis' possession. Together the two *torot* formed the totality of God's revelation, and one cannot exist without the other. The Written Torah cannot be properly understood without the Oral Torah, and the Oral Torah depends for its existence on the Written Torah. Rabbinic Midrash was part of the Oral Torah, so that it is part of the revelation at Sinai. The rabbis argued that God's speaking to Moses, *panim el panim*, face to face, was exactly what the rabbis were doing in their schoolhouses. The Rabbinic production of Midrash was not only a religious activity, but it was also part of the ultimate religious experience, like Moses' receiving the Torah directly from God on Mount Sinai. The midrashic enterprise is sacred not only because it is connected to the Hebrew Bible but also because its content as well as its techniques are part of Revelation.

II

Exactly why and where the rabbis translated their view of Scripture as God's word into their midrashic activity is uncertain. A long scholarly tradition, dating to Zunz[12] and Geiger[13] in its "modern" form, holds that Rabbinic midrash originated in the sermons rabbis delivered in the Palestinian synagogues of late antiquity. Among contemporary scholars, Joseph Heinemann[14] was the most consistent in arguing that we posses in our midrashic collections actual Rabbinic sermons,[15] or least orally transmitted records of those sermons. In

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[12] L. Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (Berlin, 1892).

[13] A. Geiger, *Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bible in ihrer abhangigkeit von der innern entwickelung des Judenthums* (Breslau, 1857).

[14] J. Heinemann, *Sermons in the Community in the Period of the Talmud* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1970).

[15] R. Sarason, "Road to a New Agendum for the Study of Rabbinic Midrashic

an article in a recent collection of studies on the synagogue, Avigdor Shinan writes, ". . . [I]n the synagogues of Eres-Ysra el in the talmudic period—approximately between 200 and 600 C.E.—we should remind ourselves that in addition to praying and reading from Scriptures, those attending were usually listening to a sermon and to the simultaneous translation of the reading into Aramaic" (p. 98). Shinan does not footnote the assertion, nor does he cite any Rabbinic evidence of the practice of delivering sermons anywhere in his article.[16] Similarly, in the best book on the development of the medieval Jewish sermon,[17] Marc Saperstein states, "[e]arly Rabbinic literature provided ample testimony of preaching by the greatest rabbis" (p. 26).

In contrast to these views, I would argue that the evidence from late antiquity does not unequivocally support the notion that rabbis routinely preached in the ancient synagogue or that the extant midrashic literature contains the record of such preaching. At the turn of the eras we begin to find evidence that the reading of the Torah was a major feature of synagogue worship.[18] However, the extent of the rabbis' participation in these synagogue worship services outside of their schoolhouses is unclear. The Babylonian Talmud, for its part, does not contain any unambiguous references to rabbis preaching in a synagogue. Indeed, Jacob Neusner already has argued against the idea that rabbis played a major role in the Babylonian synagogue.[19]

The Palestinian Talmud contains only a few references to Rabbinic activity in the synagogue. Y. Sotah 1:4 speaks of a rabbi's teaching a lesson in a synagogue, but it is not clear that he is preaching a sermon. Y. Ber. 3:1 states that Abbahu taught in the Madrata synagogue in Caesarea, but this relates to a matter of law and not

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Literature," in J.J. Petuchowski and E. Fleischer, eds., *Studies in Aggadah, Targum, and Jewish Liturgy in Memory of Joseph Heinemann* (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 62–67.

[16] A. Shinan, "Sermons, Targums, and the Reading from Scriptures in the Ancient Synagogues," in Lee I. Levine, ed., *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 1987), pp. 97–110.

[17] M. Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching 1200–1800: An Anthology* (New Haven and London, 1989).

[18] Porton, "Midrash: Palestinian Jews and the Hebrew Bible in the Greco-Roman Period," pp. 112–118; L.I. Levine "The Second Temple Synagogue: The Formative Years," in Levine, *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, pp. 15–19.

[19] J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia III: From Shapur I to Shapur II* (Leiden, 1968), pp. 234–238; *A History of the Jews in Babylonia IV: The Age of Shapur II* (Leiden, 1969), pp. 149–151.

a sermon.[20] Y. Ber. 4:1 says only that Jonah prayed in a synagogue, not preached. Y. San. 1:1 tells us that Abbahu held court in a synagogue.

In Y. Meg. 3:4, 74a[21] the text compares and virtually equates school houses with synagogues. One must be somber in both; one may not eat, drink, walk around idly, or sleep in them. During the rainy season, one must dry off before entering them, and, in the summer, one may not enter if he is hot. The text states that "they" teach (*nh*) and expound (*dr*) in both of them (*bhn*). Joshua b. Levi states that both the synagogue and the schoolhouse are for the sages and their students. Whether or not this is an accurate assessment of the situation, it is the clearest reference in the Palestinian Talmud to rabbis' preaching in synagogues. One can add that the targum to Judges 5:2 states that the sages taught (*lp*) the people the matters (*ptgmy*) of the Torah in the synagogues.[22]

The Palestinian Talmud also offers instances in which a sage preached (*dr*) to groups of people *not specifically* identified as sages. On Y. Pe. 41b, Simlai preached in public or to the gathered group of people (*b ybwr*). On Y. M.S. 55d, Hanina expounded in Sepphoris. Y. Shab. 4c, Y. Tan. 3b, and Y. Meg. 73b state that Hiyya preached in Sepphoris, an important Rabbinic center. Y. Shab. 13c notes that Yohanan explained something in "his city," and on Y. Shab. 14d he preached in Sepphoris.[23] Whether or not they preached in a synagogue is not clear. But Sepphoris was an important Rabbinic center, so it is possible that the group of people contained a large number of rabbis. In addition, we are told that R. Jeremiah preached in the synagogue of the *boule* in Tiberias, another Rabbinic center.[24]

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[20] In the context of demonstrating that sermons were an important Rabbinic function within the synagogues, Levine notes that "R. Yohanan's student R. Abbahu, like a noted speaker, was often found at the Maradata synagogue in Caesarea and elsewhere." He refers to Y. Naz. 7:2 and PR. However, Abbahu teaches, *mty*, but he does *not* preach. Unlike Levine, I am not willing to argue that a rabbi's teaching in a synagogue necessarily means that he was delivering a sermon there, even if that is one possibility. See Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven and London, 2000), p. 461.

[21] This is actually a citation of T. Meg. 2:3, Lieberman, 353. It also appears on B. Meg. 28a.

[22] My colleague, Professor Howard Jacobson, Professor of the Classics, found these two references for me.

[23] See also Pesiqta deRav Kahanah 18:5.

[24] Y. Tan. 1:2; 64a.

On the other hand, Eleazar b. Azariah expounded at Yavneh (Y. Ber. 7d, Y. Tan. 67d), Judah b. Pazzai (Y. Sheb. 35c), Aha (Y. Tan. 64a), and Yohanan (Y. Shab. 13c, Y. A.Z. 40d, Y. Hor. 48c) expounded in a schoolhouse. Similarly, in Mekhilta Pisha 16 we read that during the Sabbaths at Yavneh, the rabbis would expound and teach one another. In this case, the texts seem to clearly indicate that the "preaching" was to a Rabbinic audience.

In Genesis Rabbah 28:3, Judah b. Simon lectured (*dr*) to a congregation or a group of people (*bwr*) about Adam's total disintegration in the grave. Judah does not cite a verse, we do not have a sermon in any sense of the word, and there is no explicit mention of a synagogue. In Ruth Rabbah 5:12, Simlai also expounds to the congregation, or a group of people. The context suggests that he might have been quoting Hanina's teaching that Ruth 3:3 teaches that one should wear special clothes for the Sabbath, but again there is no verse connected to his comment, although he is clearly speaking to the sages (*bry*).

We have discovered few direct references to a rabbi's preaching/expounding in a synagogue. While, it seems clear that rabbis expounded Scripture just as they taught law, there is little evidence that ties this "expounding" to the synagogue, and even the connection of "expounding" to "preaching" is far from certain. Granted, few midrashic passages are placed in any setting. But, much of the evidence indicates that the rabbis are notoriously uninterested in synagogues and most frequently describe themselves in exegetical and legal debates with one another within the schoolhouse. Thus, those who wish to connect Rabbinic Midrash solely, or even primarily, with synagogue sermons can find little in the Rabbinic sources to support that claim.

The place of the *targumin* in this discussion is hard to assess. *Targumin* are a type of midrash that probably functioned in liturgical settings of the ancient synagogues.[25] The problem arises from the fact that we cannot determine with certainty who created them. One type of *meturgaman* was a functionary of the synagogue, but we have little evidence that any of them were rabbis or that they needed to be

[25] Porton, "Midrash: Palestinian Jews and the Hebrew Bible in the Greco-Roman Period," pp. 119–122.

rabbis.[26] In the later texts, the rabbis identified as "translators" are not connected to the synagogue or to translating Scripture. Hutzpit was called "the *meturgaman*" (Y. Tan. 19b; B. Qid. 39b; B. Hul. 142a; B. Bekh. 36a; Midrash on Psalms 9:13; Midrash on Lam. 2:8; Otzar Hamidrasim, 436, 440, and 443). However, in the earliest references to him, M. Sheb. 10:6 and T. Kel. B.B. 2:2 (Zukermandel 591, l. 36), he is not identified as a *meturgaman*. Hyman states that he was the translator for the courts of Yavneh under the Patriarchate of Rabban Gamaliel.[27] The Rabbinic texts do not picture Hutzpit as a translator of the biblical text within the context of the synagogues. In Y. Tan. 19b we find a Rabbinic discussion about the necessity of reciting the evening Amidah. Hutzpit appears after the discussion has moved to the school house, *beit vvad*. With the exception of B. Bek. 36a, the references in the Babylonian Talmud refer to his martyrdom, and the reference on B. Bek. 36a does not place him in the synagogue; nor do they picture him as translating a verse.

Judah b. Nahmani is identified as Resh Laqish's *meturgaman* (B. Ket. 8b, B. Sot. 37b, B. Git. 60b, B. Tem. 14b, and B. San. 7b). On B. Ket. 8b Resh Laqish takes Judah with him to visit Hiyya b. Abba on the death of the latter's son. When Resh Laqish orders Judah to speak, the latter quotes Deut. 32:19 and perhaps interprets it; however, the explanation of the verse is in Hebrew. On B. Sot. 37b, Judah expounded (*dr*) on the whole biblical section of curses and blessings in Deuteronomy. The explanation is in Hebrew. On B. Git. 60b and B. Tem. 14b, Judah explains the meaning of Exod. 34:27, again, mostly in Hebrew. Finally, on B. San. 7b the rabbis send Judah to assist an incompetent teacher. It is clear that Judah is not a translator in the traditional sense, and, in fact, the Talmud does not even attribute Aramaic words to him. Zvi Kaplan[28] describes him as a translator in the school-house, *bet ha-midrash* in Tiberias. He does not appear as a functionary in the synagogue, but he did expound Scripture, albeit in Hebrew.

Judah the Patriarch appointed Abdon his translator (*mwryh*), who

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[26] The legend that the convert Onqelos translated the Torah for his Rabbinic masters is difficult to assess historically.

[27] A. Hyman, *Toldoth Tannaim ve' Amoraim* (Jerusalem, 1964), vol. 2, p. 419; M. Margalioth, *Encyclopedia of Talmudic and Geonic Literature* (Tel Aviv, 1962), vol. I, pp. 281–282.

[28] Z. Kaplan, "Judah ben Nahmani," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 10, cols. 350–351.

would announce to the community (*bwr*) concerning the time of prayer (Y. Ber. 32a; Y. Tan. 19a). Here we are also told that Hiyya b. Va had a translator. On Y. Ber. 55b, Berekhya sets up a translator near the middle gate of the school-house. Issac b. Tabalyai (Y. B.M. 6a) had a translator, as did Yohanan. Pedat was Amora of Yasa, Bar Yasitah was the Amora of Abbahu (Y. Meg. 4:10); they both function in the context of the schoolhouse and the transmission of Rabbinic traditions. Thus, the Rabbinic texts identify few sages as *meturgamin*, and even these sages are infrequently pictured as having translated the biblical passages into Aramaic within the context of a worship service in the ancient synagogue.

III

The non-Jewish sources are also silent on rabbis in synagogues. There does not seem to be any non-Jewish witnesses to the practice of the rabbis' delivering sermons in the synagogues, even though these sources indicate that Jews prayed in their synagogues, ate communal meals in their synagogues, collected money in their synagogues, and even offered sacrifices in their synagogues.[29] Some Christian sources state that gentiles were welcomed into the synagogues, which indicates to Cohen that, at least in the Diaspora, the predominant language of synagogue ritual was Greek.[30] John Chrysostom suggests that the gentiles were attracted by the theatrical nature of the synagogue, into which, he claims, the Jews brought troops of actors, dancers, and harlots.[31] Chrysostom indicates that gentiles attended the synagogues for numerous reasons, but he does not mention sermons or that rabbis even functioned in this setting.[32] Cohen makes a fairly good case for Patriarchal control of the Diaspora synagogues by the fourth century C.E., but this generally means their ability to collect revenues from these institutions.[33]

Krauss reports that Jerome offers testimony concerning the rabbis' preaching in the synagogues. He cites two passages from Jerome's

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[29] S.J.D. Cohen, "Pagan and Christian Evidence on the Ancient Synagogue," in Levine, *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, pp. 165–167.
[30] Ibid., p. 167.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., pp. 167–168.
[33] Ibid., pp. 170–175.

commentary on Ezekiel to support his claim. However, a review of Jerome's commentary does not support Krauss's conclusion.[34] In both places in his commentary, Jerome is talking about Christians not Jews. In both contexts, he clearly refers to the Church, not the synagogue.[35] Krauss writes:

> . . . [T]he sermon formed an essential part of the [synagogue] Service. Concerning its popularity among the Jews, to which the Midrash bears ample testimony, Jerome also furnishes some data. "They say one to another: Come, let us listen to this or that Rabbi who expounds the divine law, with such marvelous eloquence; then they applaud and make a nose, and gesticulate with their hands" [note 7 reads: In Ezek. xxxiii.33. Venite audiamus illum et illum, mira eloquentia predicationis suae verba volventem; plaususque commovent et vociferantur et jactant manus.][36]

In this first passage,[37] Jerome comments on Ezek. 33:31.[38] Jerome treats 33:21–33 as one unit and notes that 33:30–33 criticize the behavior of the community living in exile in Babylonia. However, he then compares those "wrongdoers" to those who enter "the church of God" (*ecclesiam Dei*), and these are the same ones who treat the words of the prophet like theater. Jerome continues: "'And they hear,' he says, 'your words and they do not do them' (Ezek. 33:31. There are many such even today *in the churches*[39] (*in ecclesiis*), who say: 'Come, let us hear this one or that one, who reels off the words of his preaching with wonderful eloquence. . . .'"[40] Krauss omitted the introductory phrase, *tales sunt usque hodie multi in ecclesiis*, and he supplied the word "rabbi" in his translation of *illum et illum*, for which

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[34] This analysis of Krauss's discussion of Jerome depends on the work of my colleague Richard Layton, an expert on Jerome. Rick and I went over Krauss's citations, and we discovered that he only selectively quoted Jerome's remarks. I asked Rick to read the context in which Krauss's quotations occurred to make sure that the context did not supply any justification for Krauss's readings and interpretations. Rick and I concluded that neither the full quotations nor their contexts support Krauss. I have no idea why he read the passages the way he did.

[35] I want to thank Joshua Levinson for drawing my attention to Krauss's articles: Samuel Krauss, "The Jews in the Works of the Church Fathers," in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Old Series, V, 1893, pp. 122–157; VI, 1894, pp. 225–261.

[36] Krauss, ibid., VI, p. 234.

[37] Jerome, *Hiezech.* X.33.23–33 (CCSL 75:479).

[38] "They will come to you in crowds and sit before you in throngs and will hear your words, but they will not obey them."

[39] Emphasis mine.

[40] Layton's translation.

I can find no justification. The phrase simply means "this man and that man." Furthermore, there is no clear reference to instruction in the Torah in Jerome's own words, contrary to what Krauss's translation suggests. Layton suggests that because Jerome frequently moves between his explanation of Ezekiel's own circumstances and the contemporary life of the Church, Krauss may have missed Jerome's shift to the church of his own days.

In the second passage[41] Jerome discusses a text from Ezek. 34 that criticizes both the leaders, "shepherds" of Israel, and the conduct of the people itself, the "flock." Krauss writes,

> "The Preachers make the people believe that the fictions which they invent are true; and after they have in theatrical fashion called forth applause . . . they arrogantly step forward, speak proudly and usurp the authority of rulers" [note 8 reads: "In Ezek. xxxiv.31. Qui quum populo persuaserint, vera esse quae fingunt, et in theatralem modum plausus concitaverint et clamores, immemores fiunt imperitiae suae et adducto supercilio, libratisque sermonibus, magistrorum sibi assumunt auctoritatem].[42]

In his treatment of the whole oracle, Jerome notes that the same criticism Ezekiel levels against the "kings and princes, scribes and Pharisees and teachers of the Jewish people" can also be applied to "bishops, priests, and deacons among the evangelical people." Again, Jerome interprets Ezekiel as talking about Israel's past *and* the Church's present. Krauss's comment refers to Jerome's comment on Ezek. 34:18.[43] Ezekiel refers to those who are not satisfied with eating from the choice grazing ground, because after they are done they destroy what is left for others. Jerome states that this is what "all heretics do," but it is also the practice of the church; he states, "men of the church (*ecclesiastici viri*) are held fast by a similar error, who do not preserve the truth of the doctrines, but rather fabricate teachings and persist in their own presumption."[44] Krauss's quotation follows immediately, so that the material Krauss cites must refer back to the *ecclesiastici viri* and not to the synagogue. The context suggests

[41] Jerome, *Hiezech.* xi.34.1–31 (CCSL 75.487–88).

[42] Krauss, "The Jews in the Works of the Church Fathers," VI, pp. 233–234.

[43] Ezek. 34:17–18: "And as for you, My flock, thus said the Lord God: I am going to judge between one animal and another. To the rams and the bucks: Is it not enough for you to graze on choice grazing ground, but you must also trample with your feet what is left from your grazing?"

[44] Layton's translation.

that Jerome was criticizing rival teachers within the Church and not rabbis. "Rulers" in Krauss's "usurp the authority of rulers" is a translation of *magistrorum*, and echoes Jerome's reference in the previous sentence to the presumption of their "teaching authority" (*magistram*). Thus, Krauss's implication that the rabbis (to whom Jerome does *not* refer) were in conflict with the secular authorities is a misreading of Jerome's contention that there were teachers *within the church* who were in conflict with *one another*. In contrast to Krauss's claim, Jerome does *not* provide evidence that the rabbis preached sermons in synagogues.

Perhaps the only possible indication that sermons were a regular part of the activities within the synagogue is Jerome's claim that there were *praepositi sapientissimi* in charge of the synagogues, who instructed the Jews in the details of Pharisaic Judaism.[45] But the context does not suggest that Jerome was accurately reporting what occurred in synagogues, nor is it clear that he is discussing rabbis or a specific professional preacher.

IV

When we take seriously the evidence of the Rabbinic period, we see that while Midrash probably served many purposes for the rabbis of late antiquity, there is no clear reason to assume that it derived *primarily* from the synagogues or from the rabbis' attempts, through sermons, to bring their interpretations of the Bible to the average Jew. The majority of the evidence suggests that Midrash originated in the Rabbinic schoolhouses from the rabbis' need to appropriate and to interact with the Hebrew Bible as part of the revelation at Sinai that stood at the center of their intellectual pursuits. It could also have originated in the rabbis' attempt to understand the intricacies of the halakhic system and to find biblical warrant for their ritual and legal practices.[46] The intellectual arena of Rabbinic life was the Rabbinic academy, in which rabbis trained other rabbis. These schools were not formal, permanent institutions in Palestine

[45] Cohen, "Pagan and Christian Evidence on the Ancient Synagogue," p. 174.

[46] Neusner convincingly argues that the early midrashim, such as Sifra, were attempts to ground Mishnaic law in the Bible; J. Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, and Auckland, 1994), pp. 271–304.

until at least the third century and perhaps even later. The basic framework was a master-disciple relationship between the sage and his students, which ended upon the master's death.[47] The rabbis' influence on and concern for the general population is a matter of debate, but probably was not extensive.[48] The rabbis' main goal was to study Torah and to train other rabbis, which meant introducing their students to the oral Torah and to the intricacies and secrets of the written Torah.[49] At most, the rabbis interacted with the populace as civil servants, scribes, notaries, judges, healers, and Holy Men. While this necessitated their knowing and implementing the halakhic system—and in the last role the full range of Judaism's *sacra*, including Scripture—it is not clear that they would have had to explain the rational for their decisions or the biblical warrants for the laws. It is likely that the rabbis were the only ones who needed to know the details of the laws and how their particulars were connected to the Bible. One suspects that only on rare occasions would a common person challenge the rabbi's knowledge of the Torah or the halakhah.

The rabbis claim that their status within the society derived from their ability to study, interpret, apply, and manipulate the Hebrew Bible. This skill placed them into a special relationship to God that made them holy. They healed people because God listened to their prayers. Their curses were effective because they were doing on earth what God was doing in Heaven, studying Torah. They argued with God, implored God, even forced God's hand. They could read the signs of nature and believed that natural phenomena would support their legal decisions. To anger or harm a rabbi was to bring down upon oneself the wrath of God. The rabbis dressed differently from other people, and they spoke their own jargon. While they claimed that their knowledge of Torah gave them extraordinary powers, their exercise of these powers among the common people would have proved more important then their ability to exegete Scripture.

Still, within the context of the Rabbinic academy and the Rabbinic

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[47] D. Goodblatt, *Rabbinic Instruction in Sassanian Babylonia* (Leiden, 1975). L.I. Levine, *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (New York, 1989), pp. 28–29.

[48] Levine, *The Rabbinic Class*, pp. 98–133; Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia III: From Shapur I to Shapur II*, pp. 95–194; Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia IV: The Age of Shapur II*.

[49] J. Neusner, *There We Sat Down: The Story of Classical Judaism in the Period in which It Was Taking Shape* (Nashville and New York, 1972), pp. 44–97.

class, one's ability to interpret the Bible gave the sage status. It was one thing to be a holy person in the context of the common Jewish community. It is quite another thing to establish one's credentials within the community of holy men. Also, to convince one's colleague that one's interpretation of the law was correct, one would have to justify it in terms of Scripture. On B. San. 17a, Judah reports Rav's teaching that a person may not sit in the Sanhedrin unless he can prove from the Torah itself that a creeping thing is ritually fit for food. This is remarkable, for Lev. 11:41 explicitly states that "all the things that creep upon the earth are an abomination." Maimonides may be referring to the implications of this talmudic passage when he described some *midrashim* as correct, some as erroneous, and some as rhetorical. Moreover, he even suggested that some of the passages were playful and the product of games.[50] Similarly, Fishbane writes that Midrash is "forged out of a subtle, serious and even playful imagination, as it comes to grips with life and Scripture."[51] While Maimonides' statement may reflect his bias for the logic of Rabbinic legal thought, it still offers an accurate picture of the rabbis' view of the Torah and their relationship to it. Midrash may be related to sermons, moral teachings, ethical injunctions and the like, but it may also point to the holy men's intimate relationship with a holy text, a text to which they related through the full scope of human creativity. Much of Midrash is a Rabbinic activity that may have been developed for the moral *and* intellectual edification of rabbis alone. Often the connections and allusions in a Midrash are simply too obscure for non-rabbis, even if they heard them, to have understood them. Even if the rabbis did attempt to relate the Bible to their contemporary situations, this does not necessarily imply that the *midrashim* were always taken seriously by those who produced them or their audiences. Reading Rabbinic Midrash does not inevitably lead one to conclude that the Midrash we have today originated in the synagogues of late antiquity.

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[50] I. Heinemann, *The Paths of the Aggadah* (Hebrew) (Second Edition: Jerusalem, 1954), p. 2.

[51] M. Fishbane, ed., *The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History* (Albany, 1993), p. 1.

V

The Rabbinic view of revelation and the task of interpreting the Hebrew Bible may be unique in late antiquity, and clearly it was different from the ideas and needs of the early church fathers. While the rabbis picture Moses as merely copying down what God dictated to him, Augustine[52] and Origen[53] express a decidedly different view of Scriptures. Both believed that humans played an important part in creating Scripture, even though the Holy Spirit stands behind the biblical texts.[54] In his introduction to the art of exegesis, *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine argues that the biblical authors' intentions were to express the will of the Holy Spirit (3.27.28). More than a century before Augustine, Origen treated the question of the inspiration of the Scriptures and interpretive method in book 4 of his *On First Principles*. He too states that the Holy Spirit revealed the mysteries of God to the biblical authors who then narrated them "as human deeds or by handing them down in a type of legal observances and rules" (4.2.8). Both men attributed a good deal more independence to Moses and the other biblical authors than do the rabbis.

Augustine and Origen were troubled by the simple language in which Scripture is written. Augustine spends almost all of Book 4 of *On Christian Doctrine* demonstrating that the Bible follows all of the rules of "eloquence" and rhetoric. He stated that the Holy Spirit modulated Scriptures, so that sections are easy to understand so as

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[52] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, translated by D.R. Robertson, Jr. (New York, 1958). Jeremy Cohen has recently demonstrated that Augustine's view of the importance of the "literal" interpretation of the Old Testament changed over time and was rather complex. At times he clearly favored ignoring the Old Testament's literal meaning, while later in his life he argued for its importance. Cohen reminds us of the complexity of Augustine's view of the Old Testament, although that does not negate Augustine's comments cited below. J. Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1999), pp. 44–51.

[53] Origen, *On First Principles IV*. I have used the translation by Rowan Green in Origen, *An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, First Principles: Book IV, Prologue to the Commentary on the Song of Songs, Homily XXVII on Numbers* (New York, 1979).

[54] Some rabbis had also posited that the holy spirit had played a role in the original revelation. For a discussion see Marc Bregman, "*Ruah Ha-Qodesh* ('the Holy Spirit') in Rabbinic Literature," Lecture delivered as part of *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Conference on the Holy Spirit), Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land, Jerusalem, April 30–May 2, 1998.

to draw humans to its teachings, while other parts are difficult so as to "deter a disdainful attitude" (2.6.8). When we find a meaning in the text that is not obvious, Augustine posits that "the author himself may have seen the same meaning. . . . And certainly the Spirit of God . . . undoubtedly foresaw that this meaning would occur to the reader or listener" (3.27.38). Origen's entire theory of interpreting the biblical text is based on the fact that its simple language and style belie the mysteries behind it.

Both Augustine and Origen attempted to make Scripture accessible to the cultured readers of late antiquity—whether priest or laity. While priests were included in their audiences, they were not the only intended readers. Clearly both wrote for those educated individuals, laypersons and priests, who wished to learn how to interpret Scripture for themselves. The rabbis on the other hand, never indicated that anyone besides a Rabbinic sage had the requisite knowledge for interpreting the Bible. Only by studying with a rabbi, almost always within a Rabbinic academy, can someone learn the proper way to interpret the Torah.

Augustine set about to delineate the rules by which any reader could understand even the obscure parts of Scripture (Prologue 7–9). Augustine advises that one who wises to become "an expert investigator of the Holy Scriptures" should first "read all of them" even if he does not understand them fully (2.8.12). He should first devote himself to those parts "which are put openly . . . for the more one learns about these things the more capable of understanding he becomes" (2.9.14), and these provide the keys for understanding the more obscure passages. He urges people to learn the biblical languages (2.11.16), to compare translations, and to consult the original texts when appropriate (2:12.17). Augustine also claimed that one should learn about the *realia* of the biblical narratives. One should study history, science (2.16.23–24), the science of disputation and numbers, mechanical arts, and even the teachings of pagans and philosophers for "even some truths concerning the worship of God are discovered among them" (2.31.48; 2.39.73–75). One should study music and literature, even though the pagans attribute their origins to their gods, because "every good and true Christian should understand that wherever he may find truth, it is his Lord's" (2.17.27–18.28). Although Augustine spent most of his life fighting the Donatists, he approves of the rules of biblical interpretation set forth by the Donatist Tyconius (3.30.42–37.56). Even a heretic may be useful in aiding us

in understanding Scripture. Augustine believed that the simple words of Scripture were important, but he could not always make sense of them. His frames of reference were the Greek philosophical and scientific traditions. Some of his biblical commentaries reflect his frustration with the biblical text because it did not conform to the intellectual norms of Augustine's world-view.

Augustine envisions the possibility that any one who wishes and who has the intellectual abilities and curiosity can understand Scripture. The rabbis, on the other hand, believed that *only rabbis who had studied with rabbis* and thus gained access to the Oral Torah and its rules concerning biblical exegeses could obtain complete access to the Written Torah. Like Augustine, the rabbis believed that the Scriptures were interrelated and that one part could be employed to interpret another part. Similarly, the rabbis required that one gain whatever intellectual tools one needed to understand biblical *realia*. However, the Rabbinic intellectual endeavor is much more self-referential than Augustine's. While some of the rabbis were clearly familiar with Greek writers and Greek wisdom, nowhere in the Rabbinical corpus do we find similar advice that one should master "the teachings of pagans and philosophers." Nor do the sages seek to fit the Bible into Greek philosophical or scientific categories. Even if the rabbis had recourse to non-Rabbinic materials, they rabbinized them, so that their non-Jewish origins were obscured. The Bible and its interpretations did not require knowledge of any non-Rabbinic materials. The sages never mention non-Jewish authors as their sources of information.

For Origen, the simple narrative of the Hebrew Bible contains mysteries and spiritual meanings. Therefore, in *On the First Principles*, he boldly contends that those who read the Hebrew Bible only according "to the sound of the letter" do not properly understand its meaning (4.2.2). Literal interpretation, according to Origen, is the root of heresy (4.2.1), a trait that the Jews, Gnostics, and "simple" share in their interpretation of the Bible. Origen suggests that Scriptures have a body, "the ordinary and narrative meaning," a soul, which comes when the reader "contemplates something more fully," and spirit, which has "a shadow of the good things to come" (4.2.4). There are, however, some passages in which one cannot find the body (4.2.5), because the literal words do not serve an edifying purpose. Origen claims that the Holy Spirit revealed the mysteries of God to the writers of the biblical books. Then, they narrated them

"as human deeds or . . . hand[ed] them down in a type of legal observances and rules," so that only one who "devoted himself to studies of this sort with all purity and continence . . . might be able in this way to inquire into the profoundly hidden meaning of God's spirit . . ." (4.2.8). Thus, the actual words of the biblical text seem to be human creations.

The interruptions in the narrative that result from certain impossibilities and contradictions indicate that a simple reading of the text is not enough (4.2.9). This also explains why some of the laws in the Hebrew Bible "are useful in their bodily form," but there are others "in which no straightforward useful purpose is evident," and some contain "impossibilities" (4.2.9). Origen concludes by stating that "everyone who is concerned with the truth should be little concerned with names and words, because different nations have different customs about words. One should pay more attention to what is meant than to how it is expressed in words, especially in the case of such great and difficult matters" (4.3.15).

Origen's views probably resulted from his need to discount the legal portions of the Torah to ground his Christianity in the Hebrew Bible. This mediated against his easy acceptance of a literal reading of the text. The rabbis, on the other hand, often pay very close attention to the exact details of the biblical narratives in order to determine their meaning, even though they also believed that the text contained simultaneously hidden levels of meaning. While they were willing to ignore the literal meanings of some texts, especially Chronicles and the Song of Songs, they were not able to ignore the literal wording of other parts of the Bible. For the rabbis, the spiritual truths of the text could, and often did, lie on the surface; for Origen, they were almost always hidden from plain view.

Origen knew that the Old Testament was inspired because 1) peoples throughout the world "have dedicated themselves to the observance of Moses' Law and to the discipleship and worship of Christ" (4.1.1–3), and 2) the Hebrew Bible accurately predicts the Christ's advent and the situation of the Jewish people after Christ's appearance on earth (4.1.3–6). The "Christianity" of the Bible was obvious and essential, for the Bible was above all else a witness to the Christian faith, so that the details of its narrative are less important than the theological or moral values that underlie its text. For the Jews, the Bible is a list of commandments that must be followed, so that Jews scrutinize every passage for their legal precedents and

ramifications.[55] This fact helps to explain why the human authors of the Bible play a more important role in Christianity than in Judaism. In Judaism, the emphasis falls on each word, or even the shape of each letter. The actual words of the Bible are God's words; they must be read and understood on their surface level as well as on any deeper level. If the Bible's words come directly from God, they in themselves must be important, even in their literal meaning. At least on one level much of the Torah does not need to be heavily interpreted. In Christianity, the meaning of Scriptures lays behind the actual words. If the biblical narratives and legal codes are human creations hiding divine truths, every word must be interpreted by a properly trained individual. Nothing means what it literally says; every item must be explained. The rabbis had to tease out the fine points of Rabbinic law from the simple biblical text. But, there was another level of reading the Bible that did not necessitate their interpretation. For the Christians, on the other hand, virtually everything in the Torah had to be explained, especially to the common person who might mistakenly take the Torah's text at face value and miss the Christology "evident" throughout the text.

For both Augustine and Origen the Bible was obscure, and its interpretation presented serious difficulties. Augustine often complained that he could not make sense out of the simple meaning of Scripture, and Origen argued that the text could not possibly mean only what it says on the surface. Both Christian teachers believed that anyone and everyone had to interpret the Hebrew Bible or have it explained to them in order to discover God's truth. It was impossible for a Christian merely to confront the Hebrew Bible and attempt to understand it. The text cried out for interpretation at every level, and the Church Fathers resorted to public preaching to expound God's word.

While we have no evidence that the rabbis regularly delivered sermons in the synagogues, we know that the Church Fathers regularly delivered public sermons in the churches as part of the worship services. Generally they delivered two types of sermons: 1) Lessons to the newly converted and 2) detailed interpretations of Scripture, especially the Hebrew Bible. First, Christianity was a proselytizing reli-

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[55] F.E. Greensphan, ed., *Scripture In The Jewish and Christian Traditions: Authority, Interpretation, Relevance* (Nashville, 1982), p. 88.

gion; the message was directed at the populace in an attempt to bring them into the Church. There is no evidence from late antiquity that the rabbis mounted an effort to convert people to Judaism.[56] While the Christians wanted to bring Scripture to the world, there is no reason for the rabbis to have done this. The Church Fathers needed to deliver public sermons explaining Scriptures; the rabbis did not. While the rabbis needed to exegete Scriptures for their own purposes, these did not necessarily include preaching in the synagogues. Moreover, the Christians did not limit themselves to exegeting Scripture in their attempts to refute heretics or to attract the Romans to Christianity. They drew upon a variety of Greek and Roman literary genre to get their message to the world. The rabbis, on the other hand, limited their arguments on theological matters to biblical exegesis.[57]

Furthermore, Christian doctrine demanded that the reader move beyond and behind the written word to the spirit behind the biblical text (2 Cor. 3:6). Thus, the leaders of the Church had to explain what was not at all obvious in the biblical text itself. The rabbis, on the other hand, needed to find biblical precedents for the commandments, but these were secondary to encouraging people to observe the *mitzvot.* It simply was less important for the rabbis to interpret the biblical texts for the populace than it was for the Church Fathers. The rabbis were holy men, and the common Jew knew that to ignore the rabbis' rulings could have dire consequences.[58]

Finally, the rabbis focused on training other rabbis, while the Church Fathers' main task was to convert the world to Christianity. The Church Fathers had to teach Christianity primarily to a non-Jewish world. They had to explain doctrine, justify ritual, delineate a moral code, and read the Bible in their own ways. The Church Fathers had to deal with everyone because they sought to make everyone a Christian. Their area of activity was the Church, the worship service, the public forums. They had to convince intellectuals as well as non-intellectuals that their system was religiously, philosophically, and scientifically valid. Eventually, the Church gained

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[56] G.G. Porton, *The Stranger within Your Gates: Converts and Conversion in Rabbinic Literature* (Chicago, 1994).

[57] M. Hirshman, *A Rivalry of Genius: Jewish and Christian Biblical Interpretation*, translated by Batya Stein (Albany, 1996), p. 10.

[58] Neusner, *There We Sat Down.*

the support of the Emperor and his power structures; but even then, in theory at least, preaching was the primary tool of gaining new Christians.

The rabbis, on the other hand, could focus only on their own kind. Their task was to bring Jewish life into conformity with the 613 *mitzvot*. While they might have to convince someone of a particular way of performing a certain act, they did not have to justify the theological underpinnings of the halakhic system. Nor, is there any evidence that they had to justify to the public the biblical warrants for their actions. Finally, they were not concerned with convincing those who lived outside the community that they should follow the Jewish way of life. From everything that the rabbis tell us, their main arena of activity was the schoolhouse. While they dreamed that the whole Jewish world would be rabbis, they knew this was not going to happen in the near future. The best they could do was to train sages who could go out into the markets and the courts and make sure that the public life of the Jewish community conformed to Rabbinic standards. These standards of action could be observed, regulated, controlled, and altered. The rabbis might have to justify their decisions, but for the most part, the people would have listen because they knew the consequences of ignoring a rabbi's words.

The evidence before us does not support the contention that the ancient synagogue was the main venue in which the rabbis interpreted Scripture. While there may have been some midrashic activity within the synagogues, the main arena in which Rabbinic Midrash functioned appears to be the Rabbinic academy. The material we have reviewed makes a strong case for claiming that sages themselves comprised the primary original audience for Rabbinic Midrash.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANCIENT SYNAGOGUES UP TO ABOUT 200 C.E.[1]

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In 1983, Eric Meyers and I published *Archaeology, the Rabbis, and Early Christianity*. We had hoped to build a bridge to archaeological material for scholars of New Testament and early Judaism. We were especially hopeful that those scholars in social histories of Judaism and Christianity would see the value of archaeological evidence and move to use it as rigorously as they used textual evidence to argue their theses.

Five years later, Anthony J. Saldarini published *Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach.* I was struck by the fruitfulness of this presentation from Saldarini's pen, but I was again disappointed that archaeology played little or no role in his analysis, for example, of the place of the synagogue in Palestinian society (pp. 52–53). Yet it was with renewed hope that I continued my own researches and publications at the interface of archaeology and texts, because his own approach gave a much-needed nuance to the otherwise repetitive expositions of early Judaism and Christianity by certain other scholars who were entirely textual dependent or at least innocent of archaeological understanding. I felt that Saldarini's sociological approach dovetailed perfectly with the sociological use of archaeological evidence by Meyers and Strange. Perhaps we could open a broad door to move ever nearer to a construction of Palestinian society in the first century that might genuinely illuminate the pages of the New Testament, Josephus, and of other textual sources of early Judaism and early Christianity. It is my hope that this chapter is a move in that direction and that it is worthy to the memory of such a great scholar.

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[1] This chapter was prepared for publication in *The Ancient Synagogue: From Its Origins until 200 C.E.* An International Conference at Lund University October 14–17, 2001 (Coniectanea Biblica. New Testament Series 39), Almqvist & Wiksell International: Stockholm 2002. My thanks to Professor Birger Olsson for permission to publish it also in this volume.

Archaeology has changed in the fifty years or so that synagogue archaeology has taken place. No longer are excavations dominated solely by architectural or history of art concerns, though almost all inferences drawn about the uses of buildings are architectural arguments, and most publications about mosaic floors ask history of art questions.[2] Rather many excavators now gather and record data about the history of use and renovation of a building, detailed data about decoration, but also about abandonment and the re-use by others, re-occupation by transients after abandonment, and so forth. Furthermore, some excavators ask not only what the coins where, but precisely where they were found so that they can examine patterns of dropped coins. From the patterns of lost coins and other small artifacts such as beads, one may infer behavioral patterns within buildings.

The most recent synagogue excavations yield more data than the old excavators thought possible. This is because of the use of more meticulous recording and excavation methods. Not only may one record the characteristics of the soil eroded into a building after abandonment, but one may examine the pollen trapped in these soil layers to infer changing vegetation during synagogue use and disuse. The taking, recording, and interpretation of pollen samples, merely to name one theoretical example, may place a building in an environmental history that once was simply not available.[3]

On the other hand there are limitations in our data. Some of the most recent excavations remain unpublished in final form (Nabratein[4] and Kiryat Sefer)[5] or are too recent to be published (Modi in).[6] In other cases the original excavator has died and others have taken up the task of publishing from notes and daily logs, but without the

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[2] For example see Lucille A. Roussin, "The Zodiac in Synagogue Decoration," in Douglas R. Edwards and C. Thomas McCollough, eds., *Archaeology and the Galilee: Texts and Contexts in the Greco-Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Atlanta, 1997), pp. 83–96.

[3] A recent example is Thomas R.W. Longstaff and Tristram C. Hussey, "Palynology and Cultural Process: An Exercise in the New Archaeology," in *Archaeology and the Galilee*, pp. 151–162.

[4] Eric M. Meyers, "Nabratein," in Eric M. Meyers, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* (Oxford, 1997, vol. 4, pp. 85–87.

[5] Yitzhak Magen, and E. Sirkis, "Qiryat Sefer: A Jewish Village and Synagogue of the Second Temple Period," in *Qadmoniot* 33, pp. 25–32 (Hebrew).

[6] Vicki Cox, "IAA Rescue Excavation at Modi in Uncovers Hasmonean period Jewish Settlement and Artifacts," http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Modi in.htm, 2000. (Oct. 1, 2001)

aid of the ones who directed or conducted the excavations. This means that sometimes later interpretations do not cohere with preliminary reports, as in the case of Hammath-Tiberias.[7]

The earliest putative synagogue sites so far excavated in Israel, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights are Capernaum I, Gamla, Herodium, Masada, Kiryat Sefer, Jericho, and Modi in. This list stands, even if one doubts that some of the buildings are synagogues, for reasons that will be argued below.

The announcement of the excavations at Modi in described a small building that resembles the synagogues of Herodium and Masada, though it has a side entrance. According to the notice, the building stood in the center of the ancient settlement. Furthermore, inside the building four benches surrounded the central hall. There were two rows of four columns on each side. Craftsmen plastered the interior walls in antiquity, and then painters decorated them with shades of red, orange, and white. The pottery, coins, and signs of fire on the site suggested that the Romans destroyed the synagogue in the early second century. Most important for the purposes of this article, Alexander Onn, Director of the excavation on behalf of the IAA, disclosed that the synagogue is similar in plan to those found at Gamla, Masada, and Herodion.[8]

Archaeological Evidence for Early Synagogues in Ancient Palestine

It seems clear to me that there is little reason to deny that the structures at Capernaum, Gamla, Masada, Herodium, Jericho, Kiryat Sepher, and Modi in are "synagogues" for reasons that will become clear below.[9] By "synagogues" I mean buildings devoted to the

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[7] Compare Moshe Dothan, *Hammath Tiberias* (Jerusalem, 1983) and the works cited on p. 75, nn. 17–19.

[8] See n. 4.

[9] The leading contender for the theory that there are no first century synagogue buildings at all is Howard Clark Kee, "The Transformation of the Synagogue after 70 C.E.: Its Import for Early Christianity," in *New Testament Studies* 36/1 (1990), pp. 1–24. A response appears in Richard E. Oster, "Supposed Anachronism in Luke-Acts' Use of synagôgê: A Rejoinder to H.C. Kee," in *New Testament Studies* 39/2 (1993), pp. 178–208; Howard Clark Kee, "Defining the First-Century C.E. Synagogue: Problems and Progress," in *New Testament Studies* 41/4 (1995), pp. 481–500. A similar scepticism also appears in Heather A. McKay, "Ancient Synagogues: The Continuing Dialectic between Two Major Views," in *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 6 (1998), pp. 103–142.

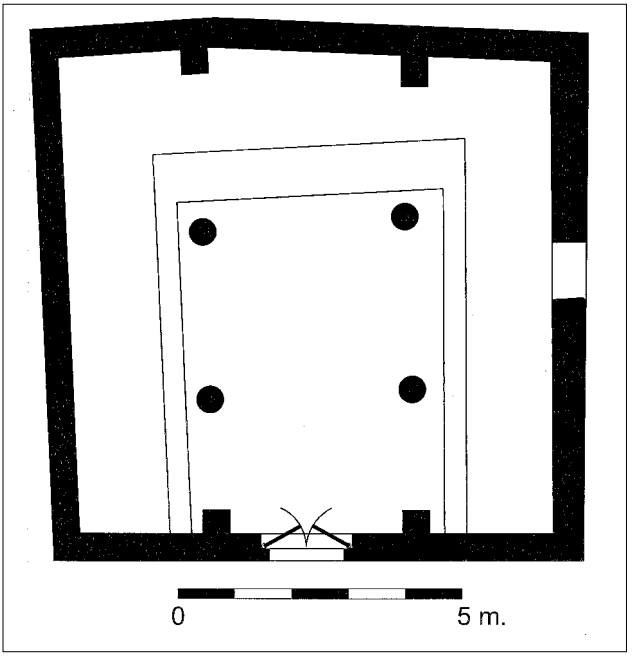


Fig. 1. The Synagogue at Qiryat Sefer, Adapted from Magen, "Qiryat Sefer: A Jewish Village and Synagogue of the Second Temple Period," in *Qadmoniot* 33.

declamation of Torah on certain occasions, notably on Sabbaths and festivals. It may well be that they were also used for other purposes, such as community meetings, instruction of children, informal gatherings, sacred meals, and the like. The main argument, articulated below, is that these buildings reveal a single plan and resemble in plan and furniture later buildings excavated in Israel and known to be synagogues because of inscriptions, Jewish art, and Jewish icons.[10]

[10] Lee I. Levine, "The Nature and Origin of the Palestinian Synagogue Reconsidered," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996), pp. 425–448; Rachel Hachlili, "The Origin of the Synagogue: A Re-assessment," in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 28 (1997), pp. 34–47. For a more skeptical view see Pieter W. van der Horst, *"Was de synagoge voor 70 een plaats van eredienst op sabbat?" Bijdragen* 69 (1999), pp. 125–146; Idem, "Was the Synagogue a Place of Sabbath Worship Before 70 C.E.?" in Steven Fine, ed., *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue. Cultural Interaction during the Graeco-Roman Period* (London and New York, 1999), pp. 18–43. For the latest exhaustive study see Anders Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue: A Socio-Historical Study* (Stockholm, 2001).

Almost all buildings identified as synagogues in Israel exhibit a kind of standard plan. This plan is so regular that it virtually amounts to a signature for its function. The regular plan also reveals intentionality on the part of the builders. In this template, derived from examination of the putative synagogue buildings listed above, the builders marked interior floor space by walkways on three or all four walls with benches between the walls and the columniation. The result of such a design is that participants had to look between the columns to see what was going on. Although this feature is known from Nabatean mortuary temples, it is otherwise virtually unknown in the Roman world.[11]

The seven possible synagogue buildings at Capernaum, Masada, Gamla, Masada, Herodium, Jericho, Kiyat Sepher, and Modi in all follow this template, though not all plans are identical to one another. They have more in common than not.[12] It is to these commonalities that we now turn in detail.

(1) These buildings organize the interior space in a similar manner, namely, by nesting the walls, benches, aisles or walkways, columns, and the innermost rectangle of space.[13] That is, the central space is a rectangular floor with no mosaic, but either simply a dirt floor or paved with plaster or squared paving stones. Columns surround this space on two and sometimes four sides. If the columns surround four sides, then the columns that stand at the intersections of two rows at right angles in at least one case (Gamla) are "corner columns"

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[11] James F. Strange, "The Art and Archaeology of Ancient Judaism," in Jacob Neusner, ed., *Judaism in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1995), vol. 1, pp. 64–114. James F. Strange, "Ancient Texts, Archaeology as Text, and the Problem of the First Century Synagogue," in Howard Clark Kee and Lynn H. Cohick, eds., *Evolution of the Synagogue: Problems and Progress* (Harrisburg, 1999), pp. 27–45.

[12] *Contra* Asher Ovadiah and Taila Michaeli, "Observations on the Origin of the Architectural Plan of Ancient Synagogues," in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (1987), pp. 234–241. On Nabatean Mortuary Temples as a model for the synagogue see Gideon Foerster, "Architectural Models of the Greco-Roman Period and the Origin of The 'Galilean' Synagogue," in Lee I. Levine, ed., *Ancient Synagogues Revealed* (Jerusalem, 1982), 45–48. For a rejoinder see Ovadiah and Michaeli, "Observations," p. 240.

[13] This pattern or template continues until the sixth century C.E. as the majority pattern. Other patterns include the broadhouses of Estemo'a and Susiya and the Samaritan synagogues with no internal columns. Y. Magen, "Samaritan Synagogues," in *Qadmoniot* 25 (1992), pp. 66–90. For more bibliography see n. 20 below. Parenthetically, that the Sepphoris synagogue only exhibits one row of columns calls into question its identification as a synagogue.

or "double columns," even "heart-shaped columns" in imitation of a Roman architectural pattern. An aisle or walkway surrounds three or four sides of the internal rectangle of space. The walkway is always paved. Ranges of benches surround the aisles on two, three, or four sides. The benches nest against the walls. There may be one, two, or three or more benches arranged in ascending or descending ranks.

(2) One may enter at the level of the innermost rectangular floor, or at the level of the top-most bench, depending on the design and placement of the door. To move from entry level to the top bench or landing to the floor (or sometimes from entry level at the floor to the top rank of benches), one must walk on the benches as steps. There is no separate staircase to lead the worshiper from floor to highest bench or the other way around.[14]

(3) Perhaps the most curious feature of the interior is that those seated on the benches must look through a balustrade of columns to see what is going on centrally. This circumstance is also found in the Diaspora synagogue at Priene in Greece.

(4) The "Jewishness" of these structures is not given by building elements or decorations, unless we count the palm tree on the lintels at Gamla as Jewish decorations. Generally speaking, one understands the structures to be Jewish because they stand in a Jewish town or village.

(5) Although parts of these buildings resemble structures in the Roman Empire, their total organization is novel. For example, one might consider a Council Chamber (*bouleuterion*) as a progenitor of this synagogue space.[15] This is because *bouleuteria* were built with concentric, square ranges of benches for seating and a central, rectangular space, presumably for the leader or speaker. One may also think of a basilica as the natural parent of the synagogue, and many scholars do. The parade example of a basilica as synagogue is found at Sardis, though the synagogue at Meiron is also a fine example.[16]

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[14] R. Simeon ben Azai (about second century C.E., but preserved in a much later context), said, "Descend from your place two or three steps and sit down. It is better that you should be told 'ascend' than 'descend.'" (Abot R. Nat. 25.4). Matt. 23:6 mentions "best seats" in synagogues. Josephus knows the idea of preferred seating and refers to it, for instance, in *BJ* 2.25 where Gaius sat in preferred seating.

[15] Gideon Foerster, "Architectural Models of the Greco-Roman Period and the Origin of The 'Galilean' Synagogue," in Levine, *Ancient Synagogues Revealed*, pp. 45–48.

[16] Eric M. Meyers, James F. Strange, Carol L. Meyers, *Excavations at Ancient Meiron, Upper Galilee, Israel, 1971–72, 1974–75, 1977* (Cambridge, 1981).

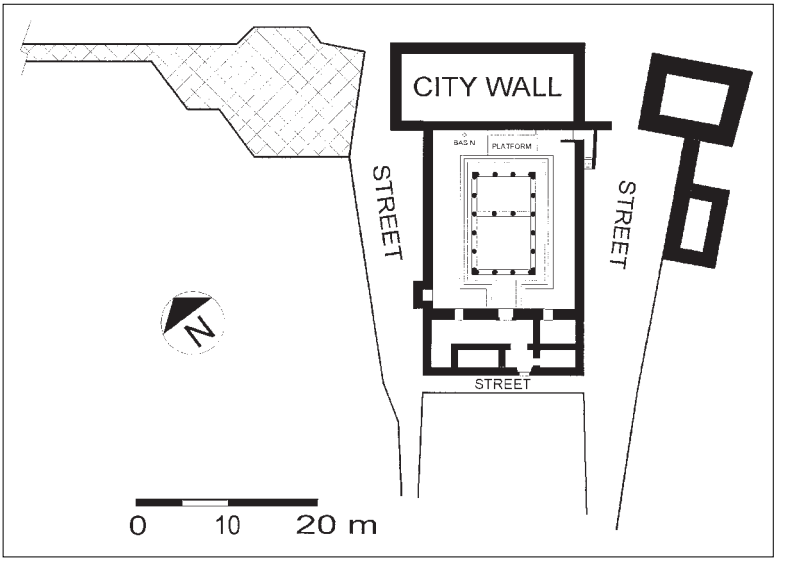


Fig. 2. Plan of the Gamla Synagogue.

As a matter of fact we cannot help but notice—and it occurs many times in the literature—that Late Roman and Byzantine synagogues are most commonly identified as basilicas. Late Roman and Byzantine basilica synagogues organize inner space by dividing it into a nave and three aisles by columns (one aisle on either side of the nave and one across the back).[17] Often the builders placed the principal entrances at the narrow end of the building. Yet neither in a Council Chamber nor in a Roman basilica is one required to stand or sit in the aisles and look between the columns to watch business, a ritual, or a spectacle carried on centrally. Rather, one stands in the nave within the space of the ritual or spectacle in either of these two types of buildings.

(6) In any case, in terms of ancient architecture these seven buildings appear to be a type of basilica or at the very least a building

[17] Note that fourth century churches, in comparison, organize inner space into a nave and *two* aisles leading from entrance to the sacred area in back. (Occasionally there are four rows of columns, that is, two on each side of the nave.) This is no accident. The Christian architects are following another template. See James Riley Strange, *The Emergence of the Christian Basilica in the Fourth Century* (Binghamton, 2000). For a case study in a specific basilica church in Rome, see Margaret Visser, *The Geometry of Love: Space, Time, Mystery, and Meaning in an Ordinary Church* (New York, 2000), pp. 54–56.

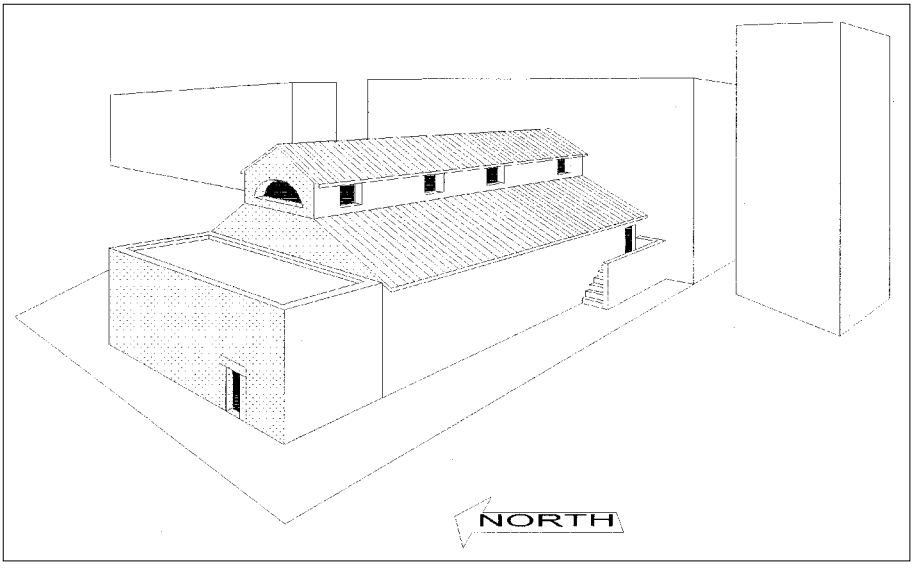


Fig. 3. Silhouette of the Gamla Synagogue.

with an interior colonnade. This does not mean there is no variation between them. It simply means that they are all roofed halls featuring a rectangle of columns around the central space so as to divide the space into a central area surrounded by a walkways between the columns and the outside walls.[18] Double columns ("heart-shaped columns") mark the corners of the columniation in at least one instance. Double columns in any period inform the eye from inside the columniation that there is a corner between two rows of columns. One can also think of the corner columns as corner markers.

(7) The builders of basilicas and of most synagogues arranged for light to enter the structure through second stories over the central space. Windows let in light through a clerestory. The columns support the clerestory walls above. The area within the columns, then, would be relatively more brightly lit by the sun than would the walking spaces or aisles outside the columns.

(8) The roof of such a building yields a distinctive silhouette. That is, the roof over the aisles is one story lower than the roof over the

[18] Donald S. Robertson, *Greek and Roman Architecture* (second edition: Cambridge, 1943), pp. 267f.; William L. Macdonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire.* vol. 1: *An Introductory Study* (New Haven and London, 1982), p. 53.

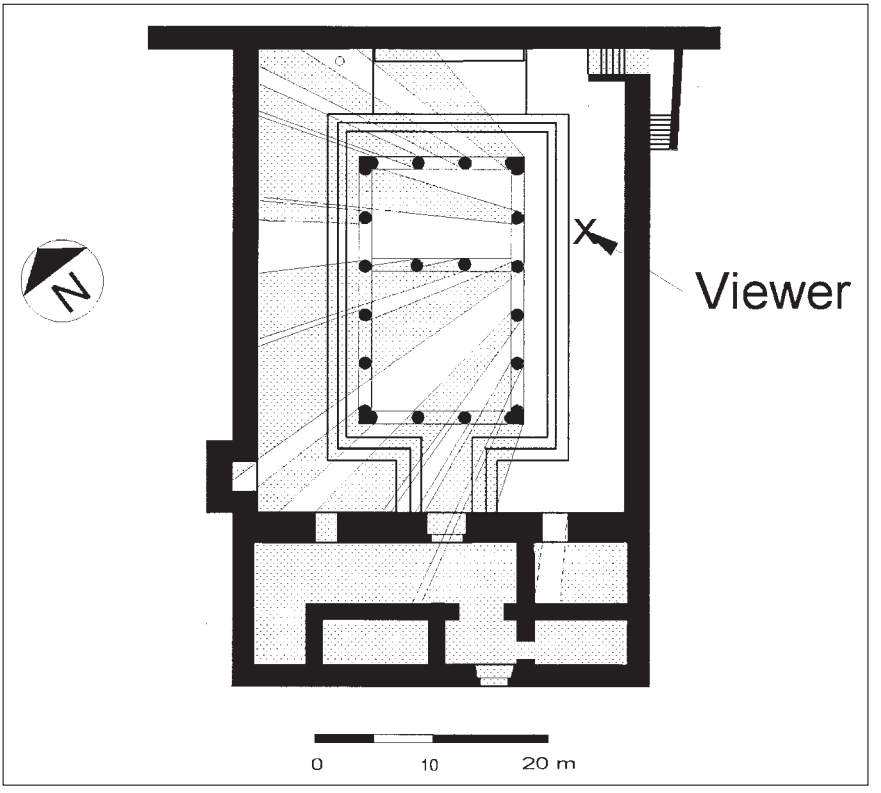


Fig. 4. Viewshed Analysis of the Gamla Synagogue.

central space, which is about twice as high as the side aisles. In all seven cases the silhouette of the putative synagogues would be noteworthy and would call attention to itself.

(9) In all seven cases those who sit or stand on the benches have their attention directed to the central space. The row of columns in front of each observer limits vision. In fact, if it were crowded, it would be quite difficult to gain a vantage that is not blocked by a column. Analysis of the lines of sight in these seven buildings from the benches suggests that the interior space was better constructed for hearing than for seeing (Fig. 4: Viewshed Analysis of the Gamla Synagogue).[19] This suggests that these buildings were built with

[19] James F. Strange, "Synagogue as Metaphor," in Alan Avery-Peck and Jacob

audition in mind, not vision. This circumstance happens to fit the conclusion from Jewish sources that the one unvarying ritual associated with the ancient synagogue is declamation of Torah. Jacob Neusner has said, ". . . the synagogue represents the occasion at which ten or more Israelite males assemble and so embody Israel, and provides for the declamation of the Torah to Israel. . . . It is a place made holy by Israel's presence and activity, anywhere Israel assembles, and the presence is for the activity of hearing the Torah proclaimed."[20]

The resemblance of these seven buildings to one another extends to structures in the Diaspora, notably at Sardis, Ostia, and Priene.[21] The commonality between them also suggests strongly that their builders shared a mental template for this space. Another way to put this is that these seven buildings and their successors refer to or stand for something else. The builders knew some structure that was of such enormous social and religious moment that it impressed them with the extraordinary idea of arranging seating between the columns and the walls.

The most obvious source of this idea is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, but, specifically, those areas in which one expects to hear reading of Torah.[22] This narrows our view to one of the perimeter porticos of the Temple Mount or one of the interior courts. Josephus says that porches with columns surrounded the Court of Women (*BJ* 5.200).[23] We may speculate that the Court of Israel and the Court of the Priests featured similar porches, since populations needed

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Neusner, eds., *Where We Stand: Issues & Debates in Ancient Judaism, The Special Problem of the Synagogue* (Leiden, 2001), p. 120, figure 7.

[20] Jacob Neusner, "Tractate Megillah," in his *The Halakhah: An Encyclopaedia of the Law of Judaism* (Leiden, 2000), vol. 2, pp. 407–431.

[21] The proposal that a first or second century synagogue existed in the Crimea offers another opportunity to test the hypothesis of the constancy of the floorplan abroad. See Robert S. Maclennan, "In Search of the Jewish Diaspora, A First-Century Synagogue in Crimea?" in *BAR* 22 (1996), pp. 44–51, 69.

[22] Noticed as early as 1983 by Theodore Friedman, "Some Unexplained Features of Ancient Synagogues," in *Conservative Judaism* 36 (1983), pp. 35–42, and by the present author independently in 1995, see above, n. 11. Donald A. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts: The Place of the Synagogues in the Second Temple Period* (Atlanta, 1997). See also Joan R. Branham, "Vicarious Sacrality: Temple Space in Ancient Synagogues," in Dan Urman and Paul V.M. Flesher, eds., *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery* (Leiden, 1995), vol. 2, pp. 319–345.

[23] "The western part of this court had no gate at all, but the wall was built entire on that side. But then the cloisters which were betwixt the gates extended from the wall inward, before the chambers ['treasuries' as in Mark 12:41]; for they were supported by very fine and large pillars. These cloisters were single, and, excepting their magnitude, were in no way inferior to those of the lower court."

to be able to view the slaughter and sacrifices out of the weather. Porches or cloisters (stova) resemble the internal space of the majority of Galilean and Judean synagogues from the first to the sixth centuries C.E. Although we know little of benches for seating inside the colonnades on the Temple Mount,[24] the architectural similarities of the buildings of Capernaum, Masada, Gamla, Masada, Herodium, Jericho, Kiryat Sepher, and Modi in to porches on the Temple Mount strongly suggest that the late Hellenistic to Early Roman synagogue in Israel was a Jewish invention based upon the porches or colonnaded spaces of the Temple.[25] This hypothesis still applies whether these halls were sometimes used for ritual purposes and sometimes for non-ritual purposes, such as community meetings.

Samaritan Synagogues in Palestine

In order to strengthen our case that the synagogues of Judea and Galilee represent a type, we need a contrasting type. Since Judaism and Samaritanism seem to have developed separate paths by the first century, it seems appropriate to examine the case of Samaritan synagogues. We hypothesize that, since Samaritanism is self-consciously separate from the Judaism of the period, their synagogues should follow a different template in all periods.

In fact, the excavations of Y. Magen in Samaria, specifically in the region of Nablus (ancient Neapolis), have revealed several third to fifth century synagogues. These include those excavated at Khirbet Samara (Deir Srôr), El-Khirbe near Sebastiya, Hazzan Ya aqov at Shechem, Khirbet Majdal (Zur Nathan), and Kafr Fahma.[26] Several

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[24] We have references to Jesus "seated" in the Temple in Matt. 26:55, Mark 12:41 ("He sat down opposite the treasury"), Luke 2:46 (as a boy) and John 8:2. In the pericope of the woman caught in adultery in John 8:1–11, Jesus is presented as seated in an unpaved area, for he stoops down and writes "in the earth" twice (vv. 6 and 8). The accusers stood the woman "in the middle," which must mean in the middle of a court, because in v. 9 the woman still stood "in the middle" after the crowd left.

[25] Donald D. Binder, *Into the Temple Courts*, p. 169.

[26] Yitzhak Magen, "Samaritan Synagogues," in Ephraim Stern, ed., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1993), vol. 4, pp. 1424–1427. Yitzhak Magen, "Samaritan Synagogues," in *Qadmoniot* 25 (1992), pp. 66–90 (Hebrew). For the English version see Yitzhak Magen, "Samaritan Synagogues," in Frédéric Manns and Eugenio Alliata, eds., *Early Christianity in Context: Monuments and Documents* (Jerusalem, 1993), pp. 193–230.

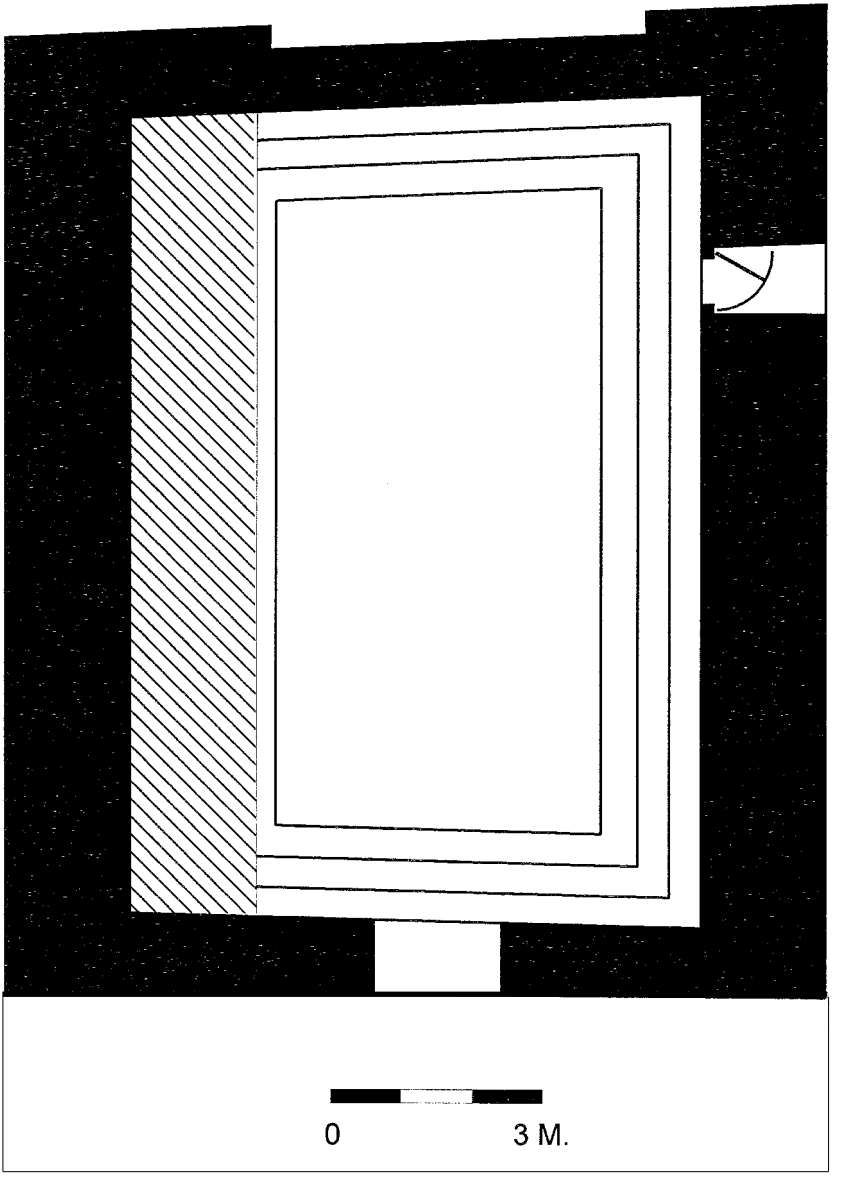


Fig. 5. The Synagogue at el-Khirbe, adapted from Magen, "Samaritan Synagogues," in Ephraim Stern, ed., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1993), vol. 4, pp. 1424–1427.

scholars have discussed these, but no one has noticed that the Samaritan synagogues do not follow the template of the preceding section. Their mosaic floors, when they exist, in fact show beautiful designs with many of the same motifs found in mosaic floors in Judea and Galilee.[27] The differences between Jewish synagogues and Samaritan synagogues lie in other features of their plans.

The builders of the certainly identified Samaritan synagogues near Nablus did not define the rectangle of central space by columns around two, three, or four sides. Although the walls, benches, and central rectangle of mosaic floor are nested, there is no row of columns between which the observer must look to see what transpires in the middle. Otherwise, the mosaic floor in the central area displays two menorahs, the lulav, ethrog, and incense shovel, exactly as in Late Roman synagogues elsewhere in Palestine.

In the case of the El-Khirba synagogue, the entrance on the narrow, east side leads one through an opening in the three benches on four sides directly to the central rectangle. There is no columniation to obscure the view. The interior space is about 12 × 8.3 meters *in toto*.[28]

Likewise the published plan of the synagogue of Khirbet Samara (Deir Sarar) shows benches around four sides, rather like those at Gamla. The benches are interrupted by a doorway for access to the inner rectangle of mosaic, which is *not* surrounded on two, three, or four sides by columns. Indeed, the only columns found are outside in the porch on the north side. The total interior space was about 15 × 8.5 meters.[29]

Magen publishes another putative synagogue from Zur Nathan (Khirbet Majdal), which he dates to the fourth or fifth century C.E. However, this building fits the pattern of a square building with

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[27] Reinhard Pummer, "Samaritan Synagogues and Jewish Synagogues: Similarities and Differences," in Steven Fine, ed., *Jews, Christians, and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue: Cultural Interaction during the Greco-Roman Period* (London and New York, 1999), pp. 118–160. See also Reinhard Pummer, "The Samaritan Material Remains and Archaeology," in Alan D. Crown, ed., *The Samaritans* (Tübingen: 1989), pp. 139–151.

[28] Magen, "Samaritan Synagogues," in Stern, *Early Christianity in Context*, figs. 3–4.

[29] Ibid., fig. 17 on p. 205. Another possible synagogue appears in fig. 45 on p. 224, a fragment of a Crusader building with an apse on the east end, but incorporating earlier masonry on its south side. This room also has no interior columns and appears to measure about 4.8 × 11.2 meters.

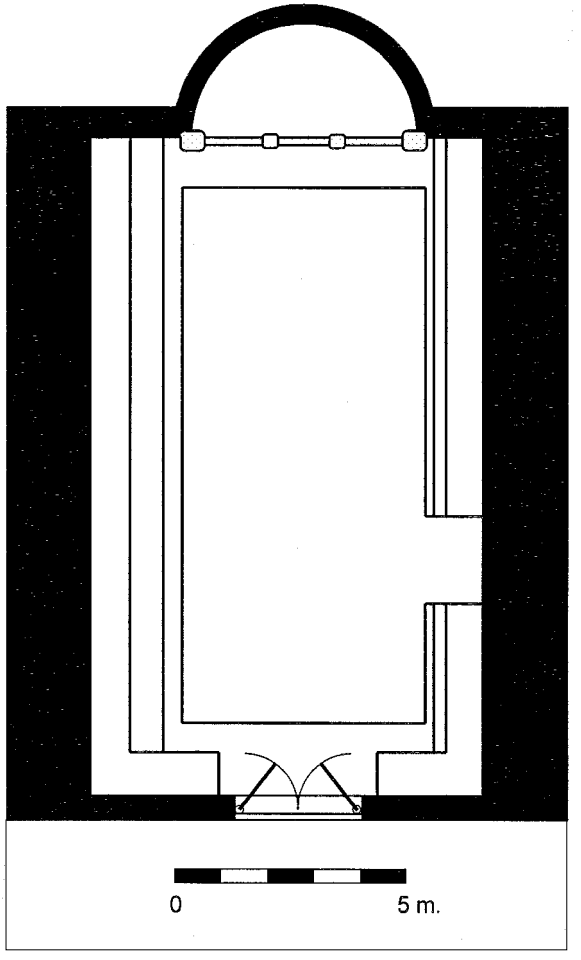


Fig. 6. The Synagogue at Khirbet Samara, Adapted from Magen, "Samaritan Synagogues."

external apse and two stylobates to hold up columns, rather like the synagogue at Ma on.[30] Magen cites the find of Jewish symbols in rooms *north* of the hall. He mentions "a millstone ornamented with a seven-branched Menorah and a fragment of a marble chancel

[30] Ibid., fig. 42 on p. 222. Dan Barag, "Ma on (Nirim)," in Ephraim Stern, ed., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1993), vol. 3, pp. 944–946.

screen, [which] may be attributed to the Samaritan builders of the synagogue."[31] Since the context is a Byzantine monastery, it is prudent to await further evidence from this site.

A third example for which we have some evidence for the plan is the Samaritan synagogue of Sha'alvim (Salbit, Selbit, Selebi), a site in the Shephelah. This synagogue was first reported in the *Survey of Western Palestine*, vol. III, and then excavated by E.L. Sukenik in 1949, who identified the site as Samaritan on the basis of a Samaritan inscription.[32] The plan and some few added details were published by Ronnie Reich in 1994, because Sukenik did not publish the plan.[33]

The building is a rectangle 15 × 8.05 meters oriented on Mt. Gerizim.[34] Reich reports that the interior space was 13.4 × 6.0 meters. It is worth noting that the interior measurements of the two other Samaritan synagogues discussed above were 12 × 8.3 meters and 15 × 8.5 meters. The three are quite similar in size and layout. Reich is of the opinion that there were no columns on the interior, as it is very easy to span six meters. He noted that Barag thought that the interior resembled a basilica with columns to form a nave and two aisles.[35] However, between the inner face of the side wall and the black band that marks the outline of the inner mosaic only about one meter of space remains for columns and a walkway on either side of the presumed columns. This is too little space, given that synagogue columns are about 50 cm. in diameter, which means that the walking space on either side of the row of columns would only amount to 25 cm. It seems that Reich is right.

It is quite arresting that the builders built interior space in at least these three instances with no columns. It is as though they sought to build their synagogues from a template alternative to that in use

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[31] Magen, "Samaritan Synagogues," in *Early Christianity in Context*, p. 222. The drawing (no photograph) of the Greek inscription in the mosaic floor of the putative prayer hall is rather curiously rendered, but may begin with "Be remembered . . .," though only MNHS is preserved, though there seems to be room for more. Magen gives two different translations on p. 232 and in the caption to fig. 43 on p. 223.

[32] Charles R. Conder and Horatio H. Kitchener, *Survey of Western Palestine* (London, 1883), vol. III, pp. 52 and 157. Eliezer L. Sukenik, "The Samaritan Synagogue at Salbit, Preliminary Report," in *Bulletin, Louis M. Rabinowitz Fund for the Exploration of Ancient Synagogues*, I, Jerusalem (1949), pp. 25–30, pls. XIV–XVI.

[33] Ronnie Reich, "The Plan of the Samaritan Synagogue at Sha alvim," in *Israel Exploration Journal* 44 (1994), pp. 216–227.

[34] Reich, "The Plan of the Samaritan Synagogue at Sha alvim," p. 228.

[35] Dan Barag, "Shaalbim," in Stern, *The New Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, p. 1338.

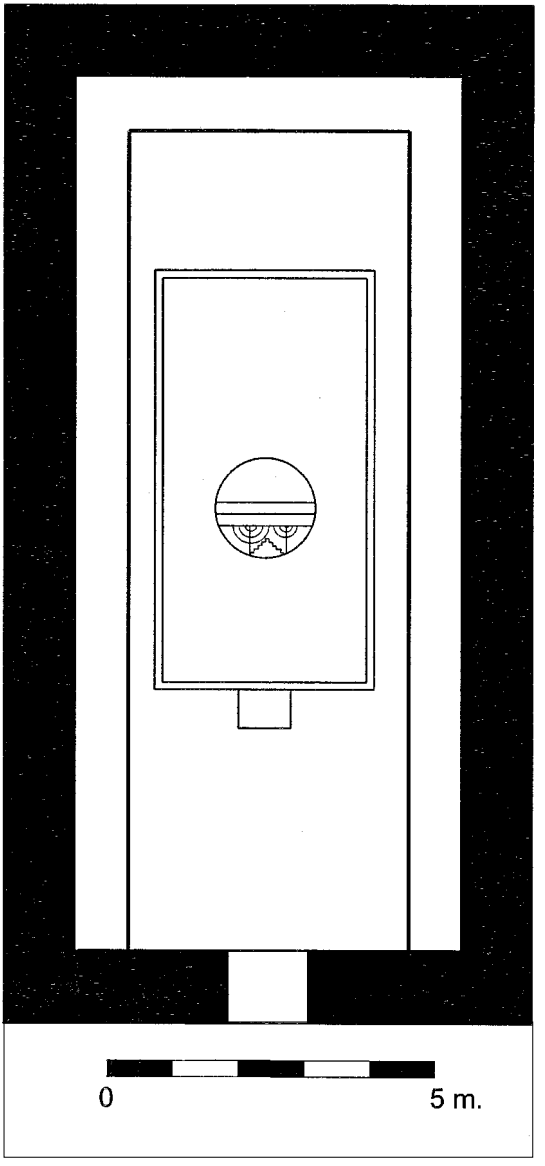


Fig. 7. Plan of the Synagogue at Sha alvim, adapted from Reich, "The Plan of the Samaritan Synagogue at Sha alvim," in *Israel Exploration Journal* 44 (1994), pp. 216–227.

in Galilee and in Judea. The implication of this alternative arrangement is to support a hypothesis that the nesting of walls, benches, walkways, columns, and interior space is a marker for "Judaism," while a similar nesting, but with no columns, is a marker for "Samaritanism," at least in ancient Palestine. In any case, the configuration of space in these three Samaritan synagogues is firmly suggestive. It will take further excavation to confirm the hypothesis.

Analysis of Space in Seven Putative Synagogues

It now seems appropriate to examine the mental template of a synagogue inferred from seven Palestinian but not Samaritan first-century structures. We describe the "type" as a structure resembling a Roman basilica more than any other building, but with the benches arranged along the walls between the walls and the aisles. The purpose of this analysis is heuristic, mainly to discover how the space would work for declamation of Torah in the first two centuries. That is, can we connect this template with the synagogue as envisioned in Mishnah Tractate Megillah, even though it is not described architecturally?

First, we observe that these seven structures invite us into a rectangular floor plan. Columns surround the central space, and benches and walk-ways (or aisles) surround the columns. The benches stood against the exterior walls. The roof is like that of a basilica, either with a sloping roof over each aisle and a peaked roof over the central rectangle or with a flat roof over both areas. Either way, the silhouette of the building is distinctive and calls attention to itself among mainly one-storied, flat-roofed houses. There may be a slightly raised platform at the narrow end opposite an entrance, as at Gamla, but this is not necessary for this analysis. It is also the case that one may enter on the narrow end or in the broad side of the building. The analysis is similar in either case.

I have argued elsewhere that the synagogue stands in a metaphorical relationship to the religion that produced it. The synagogue, in that case, "stands for" this religious reality. It provides ways of giving form to certain abstract, religious ideas. The synagogue brings to expression or presents the religious system of the congregation or its understanding of the world.[36]

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[36] James F. Strange, "The Synagogue as Metaphor."

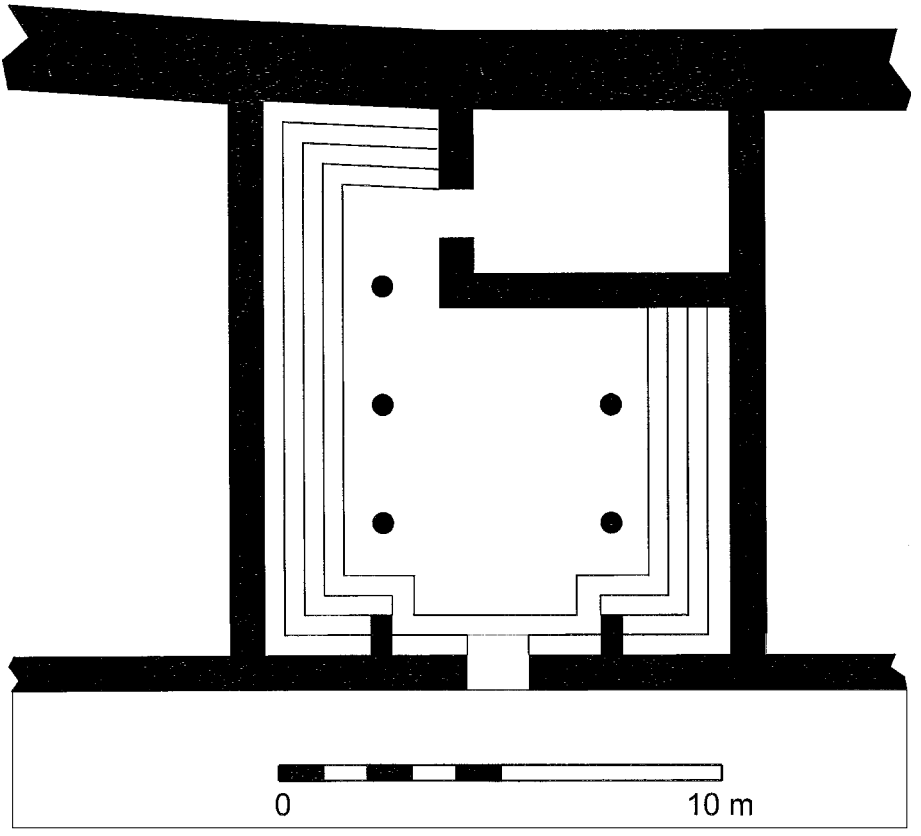


Fig. 8. Plan of the Masada Synagogue.

The builders did not always place these synagogues on the highest point of the city, as legislated by T. Meg. 3:23. Gamla's emplotment consists of streets on three sides (or squares on two sides and a narrow street on one side), which isolate the building. It is also built against the city wall, which ties it to a municipal structure rather than to a domestic building. The other buildings, like Masada, on the other hand, are not isolated. They nestle among other buildings or, in the case of Masada, are built within the casemate wall.

In terms of ancient architecture, the buildings' roofs were surely constructed with a clerestory because of the columns. This roofing gave these buildings a distinctive silhouette. The area within the columns, then, would be significantly more brightly lit by the sun than would the walking space outside the columns.

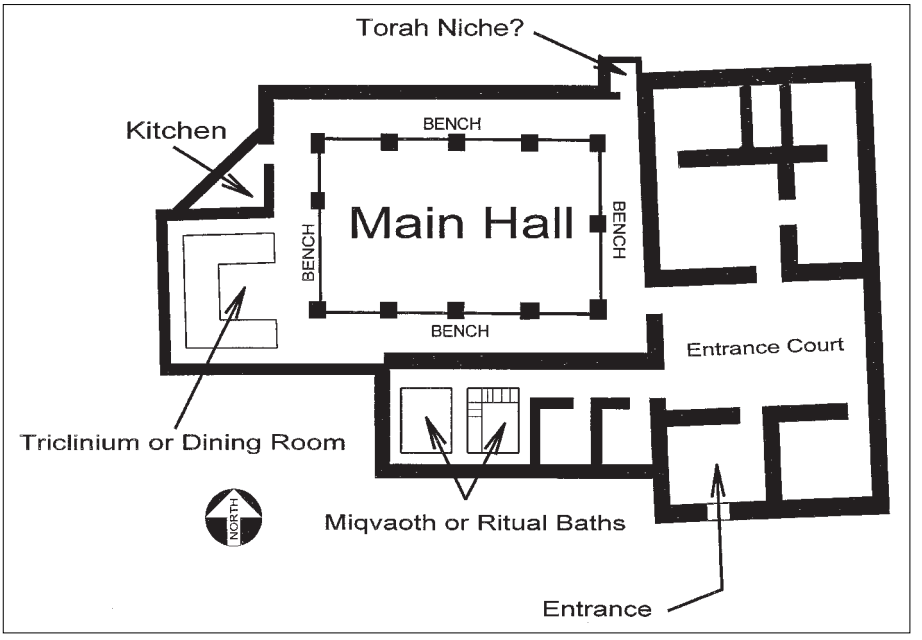


Fig. 9. The Jericho Synagogue, adapted from Netzer 1998.

The tall silhouette of these buildings signal that they are not houses or domestic spaces. This would agree with an assumption of M. Meg. 3:3, which suggests that people may have taken short cuts through destroyed synagogues, but it is (later) forbidden. In other words, the citizen can recognize a synagogue as a synagogue and not take the forbidden short-cut through it. The space is visually distinctive, and what is allowed in domestic spaces is not allowed for synagogues.

If we turn to the interior spaces of these structures with their columns and benches, we notice that the interior space is more or less symmetric about its long axis. A niche near a corner in the case of Jericho and Gamla highlights the lack of symmetry about the short axis. The symmetry about the long axis draws attention to an imaginary line from the middle of the narrow side to the opposite wall. It seems likely that the main activities within the hall would take place along this line.

It is important to notice that, as one enters through an entrance on the long axis and through the narrow wall, he or she does not walk the length of the hall on the long axis. The row of columns

all around forms an architectural marker or boundary for the central space.

The ranks of benches introduce the literal notions of higher and lower, which may in fact operate as metaphors for higher and lower in desirability if not in rank. Of course it is also possible that social rank played a role in the seating arrangement, as was the case in Roman theaters. After walking into the rectangle of space between the columns and the benches, one must *ascend* to stand or sit (in the case of Gamla, Herodium, Masada, Kiryat Sefer), unless one chooses to keep one's seat on the first rank of benches. One must decide whether to stay on the floor or ascend to a higher bench. One must also decide which one of the four sides to occupy. It is possible, of course, that participants simply sat near their friends or relied upon tradition.

Furthermore the columniation draws our eyes down the length of the space, but also upward to the clerestory, which is lighted. Using sun models it is possible to show that, at these latitudes, the light coming in through the clerestory wall near noon in the summer would ordinarily illuminate the central area. If the sun were low enough, as for example during winter, it would illuminate part of the wall on the north side of the meridian.

Analysis of the line of sight or "viewshed" suggests that the interior space is better suited for hearing or listening than for sight. Nearly 50% of the space on the opposite side of the hall is obscured by the row of columns nearest the viewer.

The most desirable seats were those not behind columns and with the best view. This may be at the lowest rank in order to be near the action. A saying of Jesus in Mark 12:38–39 gives the reader the idea of favored seating: "Beware of the scribes, who wish to walk about in robes and be greeted in the markets and yearn for the first seats in the synagogues and the first couch in banquets." It is tempting to place these "first seats" opposite a main entrance on the long axis and atop the highest bench, or even on the lowest, as in theaters.

This restricted visual situation suggests that in the ritual of Torah reading, hearing, and listening are at issue, not watching someone read.

If the building is built so that Torah may be declaimed, then it follows that there must be at least one Torah scroll present. If there is a Torah scroll, is there an ark for the scroll? The literary sources seem to assume the presence of an ark or some kind of repository

for scrolls.[37] This is true of M. Meg. 3:1 and following, where the ark is mentioned many times.

Not only does the Mishnah mention the ark, but it uses a stereotypical phrase for the behavior or ritual appropriate to the ark; namely, one "passes before the ark" (to lead in worship or lead the *Amidah*). Even if one objects that these texts are late (ca. 200 C.E.), it is clear that there is a developed ritual behavior and a ritual piece of furniture associated with the synagogue. If the ark exists around 200 C.E., it is because it fulfills a ritual need. If that need exists in the first century, then it seems reasonable that the ark also existed then.

We reason about the presence of an ark as follows: If one sets aside space for reading of Torah, then one needs a Torah scroll at hand. It is simplest to store the Torah scroll within the hall, perhaps in a chest or container of some sort. If we read as a real practice the legislation of the sages about ending a Torah reading with a lection from a prophet (M. Meg. 3:4, 3:6), then we expect scrolls of the prophets to be present as well. The more scrolls we need, the larger our chest or container must be. Furthermore, because of the number of representations of arks on early Roman gold glass, for example, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that a special container called an "ark" would in fact be present. In other words, Jewish art depicts a real object.[38]

In terms of the present analysis, where was the ark? Some have hypothesized that the niches in the walls at Gamla and at Jericho were for an ark. Ancient depictions of the ark show it standing in a central place opposite the main entrance on the long axis. If this applies to these seven buildings, then, when the ark was in use, the ark would stand on the narrow end opposite the main entrance.

Finally, we may also deduce a simple hypothesis that those involved in Torah reading (as many as seven men according to M. Meg. 3:4)

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[37] In Luke 4:17, the scroll simply appears, so that we have no idea how it got into the space: "The scroll (little book) of Isaiah was given to him;" in v. 20 we discover that it was an attendant who gave it to him, for Jesus gave it *back*: "Giving [it] back to the attendant he sat down." We do not know where the attendant got it.

[38] Considering how religion operates with its artifacts, the chances are that any chest devoted to holding Torah scrolls would exhibit the finest workmanship and materials. See Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice* (New York, 1996), p. 391.

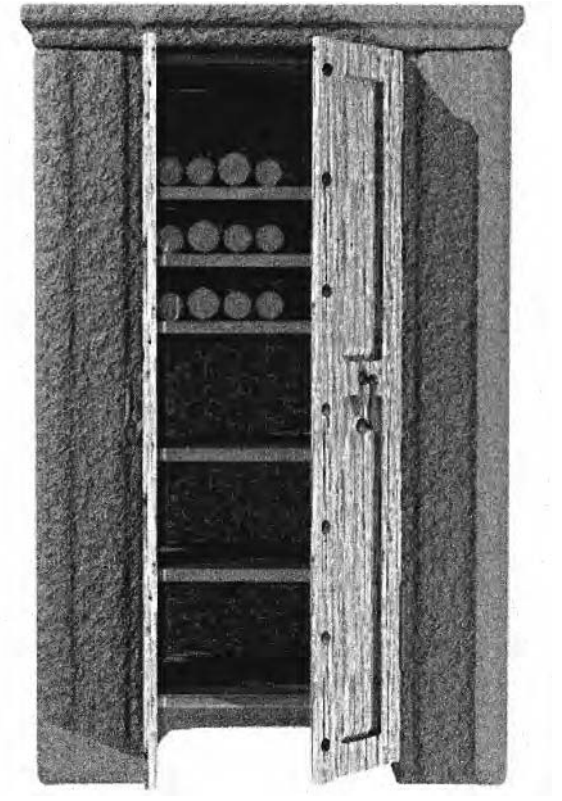


Fig. 10. A Possible Synagogue Ark. Reconstruction courtesy of The Virtual Bible, Inc.

sat at the highest rank of the benches (not necessarily the highest bench) when they were not reading. This would be the evident place also for the translator (M. Meg. 3:6 and more often) and for an attendant (Luke 4:20).

Our analysis has yielded several ways of understanding the putative synagogues of Capernaum, Gamla, Herodium, Masada, Kiryat Sefer, Jericho, and Modi in. First we see that these buildings are nested among other buildings, but they have distinctive silhouettes as compared to domestic structures. Such a silhouette alerts the citizenry to its distinctive status and function.

The vestibule shields or hides the synagogue hall from the street in the two cases in which that feature is available. That is, the

vestibule deadens the sounds of the street and expunges outside sights. Thus the vestibule eases the visitor into the environment of the prayer hall without a sudden transition.

Lighting plays a role, as the brightest area would likely be innermost rectangle of space surrounded by the columns. There would be less lighting on the benches and in the aisles.

We discover that the buildings contain within them the idea of higher and lower, of higher rank and lower rank, or more desirable seats and less desirable seats. This may suggest that the society that uses the synagogue is stratified in terms of rank. It also suggests that high-ranking or most desirable space can be reserved for those who play a central role in Torah reading, the central idea of the synagogue according to Mishnah Tractate Megillah, and a situation known by Josephus.

We discover that the presence of a Torah scroll and other scrolls, as revealed in the ancient literature, suggests that an ark was present, which makes sense of those representations of arks in Jewish art. We can even deduce the likely position of the ark at the narrow end of the building. This position lies on the long axis opposite the main entrance and on a special, high platform built for it and the readers, for the translator, and perhaps even for an attendant, if he is different from the translator. Unfortunately we do not know when such a feature appeared for the first time.

Not all of these ideas are equally probably represented, but all of them are best understood as testable hypotheses. That is, we need to examine further examples of possible first century buildings in future archaeology and discover whether they tend to cohere with this pattern. It is certainly true that the buildings at Gamla, Masada, possibly Capernaum (first building), Herodium, Jericho, Kiryat Sefer, and Modi in exhibit the nesting of walls, walkways, columns, and central space. All seven contain the idea of higher and lower, and therefore potentially of rank. The new building at Jericho exhibits a vestibule with apparently the same functions as the one at Gamla. It also has a niche near the corner, as at Gamla.

Conclusions

We are now in a position to suggest that the ancient Jewish sources, comparison with the remains of Samaritan synagogues in Samaria,

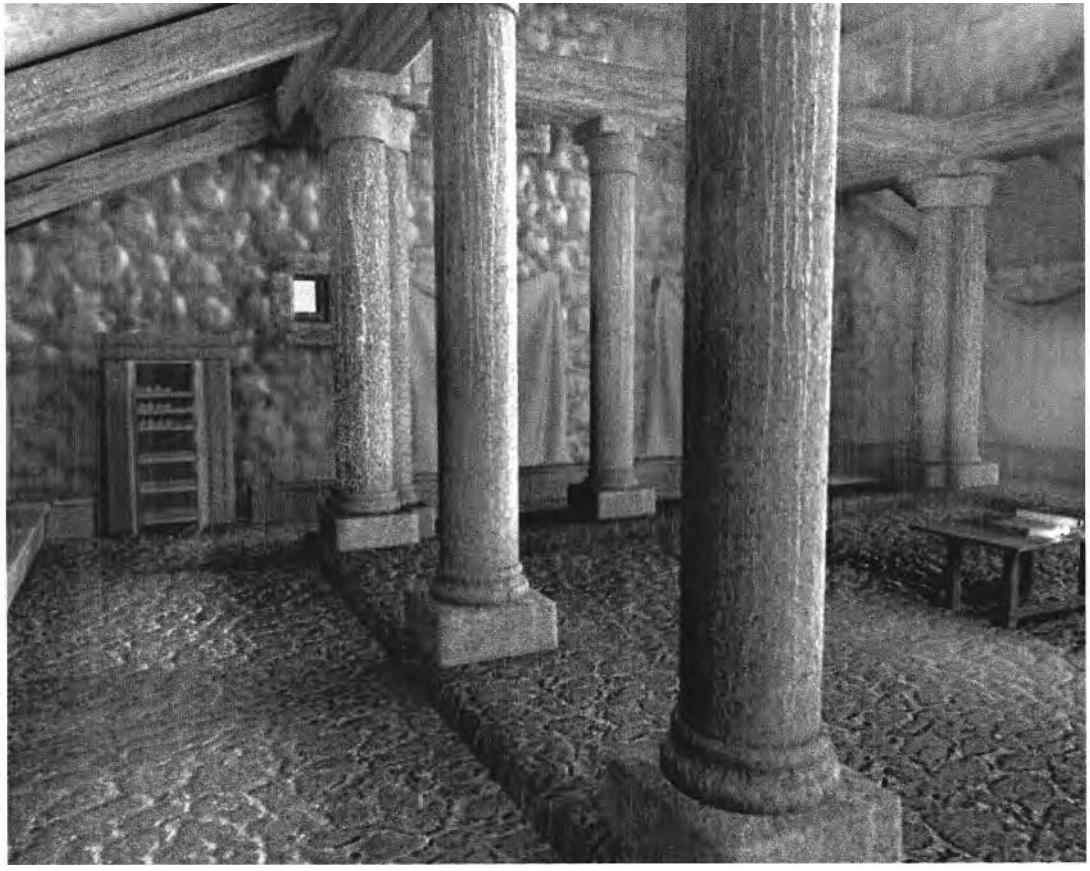


Fig. 11. Interior of Capernaum I Synagogue, showing reconstructed ark. Reconstruction courtesy of The Virtual Bible, Inc.

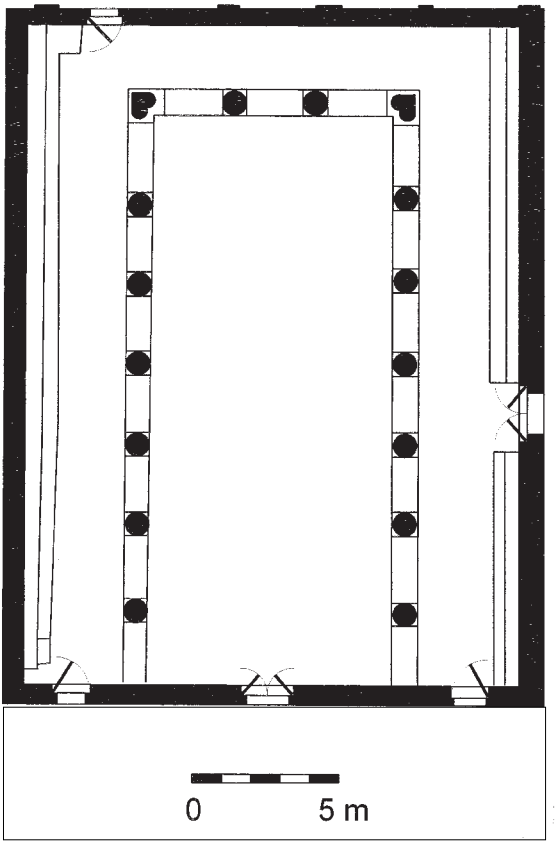


Fig. 12. Plan of the Byzantine Synagogue at Qatsrin.

and analysis of interior space in seven putative synagogues suggest that (1) the builders of first century synagogues in the Golan, Galilee, and Judea followed a kind of cultural template in building synagogues. (2) These buildings were first and foremost appropriate for hearing declamation of Torah rather than for watching a spectacle (including a liturgy), unless one deliberately moved off the benches. It is not so much that one could not see a dialogue or other performance in the innermost space, but it would be far easier to hear it. (3) The architectural similarities of the buildings of Capernaum, Masada, Gamla, Masada, Herodium, Jericho, Kiryat Sepher, and Modi in to porches on the Temple Mount strongly suggest that the late Hellenistic to Early Roman synagogue in Israel was a Jewish

invention based upon the porches or colonnaded spaces of the Temple. (4) This template did not extend to Samaritan synagogues, though the data base is slimmer in that case. Yet the buildings at El-Khirba, Khirbet Samara, and Sha albim reveal an alternative form and regularity of plan that suggests that the Samaritans are following an alternative convention. In other words, the data as it now stands tends to support the hypothesis that these halls were built according to two kinds of templates in the minds of the builders.

If so, then we should expect to find more examples of simple halls with nested walls, benches, aisles, columns, and central space. Furthermore we should expect to find more Samaritan synagogues with no interior columns at all. We will be far less hesitant about calling them synagogues, and we will give them their due, namely, as inventions of ancient Jews and Samaritans in an ancient land.

HOW SOCIETY SHAPED THE LITURGY OF THE SCRIBES, PRIESTS, AND RABBIS

Tzvee Zahavy
Teaneck, New Jersey

Before the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 C.E., three major social forces influenced the nascent formation of Rabbinic Judaism: the priestly and aristocratic class, members of the scribal profession, and individuals within the class of householders who owned land and made substantive contributions to the economy of Judea and later to the Galilee and the Coastal Plain. In a classic work, Jacob Neusner showed that the early third century Rabbinic compilations, the Mishnah and Tosefta, including tractate Berakhot, derive from an amalgam of the interests of these three forces.[1] Neusner states: "There are these two social groups, not categorically symmetrical with one another, the priestly caste and the scribal profession, for whom the Mishnah makes self-evident statements. . . . We must notice that the Mishnah, for its part, speaks for the program of topics important to the priests. It takes up the persona of the scribes, speaking through their voice and in their manner."[2]

Anthony Saldarini took hold of this conceptualization and of the results of the critical work of many others scholars to extend our understanding of how the major corpora of Rabbinic literature and early Christian writings relate to the social world of late antique Judaism. Here I apply some of his insights to the complex formative world of the Judaic liturgy,[3] focusing first on how social dynamics shaped Rabbinic prayers, which I understand to be public pronouncements of the central values and concepts of the religious leaders who initially propound them. They are the content of social rituals that often emerge out of intense conflict and hard-fought compromise.

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[1] See Jacob Neusner, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago, 1981), especially pp. 232–256.
[2] Ibid., p. 233.
[3] A. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees* (Wilmington, 1988).

Specific historical, social, and political conditions contributed to the distinct origins of two major Rabbinic services. In the crucial transitional period after the destruction of the Temple, the *Shema* became the primary ritual of the scribal profession and its proponents. The *Amidah* (i.e., the "Standing Prayer," known also as the *Tefillah* and as the "Prayer of Eighteen Blessings," actually comprised of nineteen blessings in later Rabbinic Judaism) at this formative time was a ritual sponsored mainly by the patriarchal families and their priestly adherents. Compromises between the factions of post-70 Judaism later led to the adoption of the two liturgies in tandem as the primary core of Jewish prayer. But this came about only after struggles among competing groups for social and political dominance over the Jewish community at large and concomitantly for the primacy of their respective liturgies.

Rabbinic traditions tersely report aspects of what must have been prolonged political battles over liturgical compromise. Talmudic sources recount that Gamaliel II of Yavneh was deposed from the Patriarchate at the turn of the second century because of a dispute over the regulation of prayers.[4] Other incidents reported in early Rabbinic compilations suggest that prayer had much more than merely spiritual and theological ramifications for late antique rabbinism and that diversity and conflict characterize the formulation of its liturgy.

Other confrontations involving prayer include those episodes related in the Mishnah, such as the castigation of Tarfon in M. Ber. 1:3 for not reciting the *Shema* in the proper posture (bowing in public ritual may have been suggestive of the priestly rite of the Temple on the Day of Atonement); the suspicion that Aqiba and Eleazar b. Azariah were not reciting the morning *Shema* (T. Ber. 1:2); the reference to Roman concern over the recitation of the *Shema* in Aqiba's house of study (T. Ber. 2:13); and the tradition that Aqiba, a martyr of the Bar Kokhba war, recited the *Shema* at the time of his death (B. Ber. 61b).

Additional evidence reinforces the association of liturgy and conflict. New Testament pericopae depict confrontations between Jesus or Paul and the Jews of various synagogues.[5] Richard Horsely, in his

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[4] B. Ber. 27b–28a, Y. Ber. 4:1, and see my *The Traditions of Eleazar ben Azariah* (Missoula, 1977), pp. 146–159.

[5] See, for instance, Luke 4:16, Acts 9:2, 20; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1, 10–11, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8.

research into early Christianity,[6] explains that, "In traditional historical societies there was no separation of life into different areas such as 'religion' and 'politics' and 'economics.'" He remarks regarding the Gospels that, "The intensity and variety of conflict that runs through the gospel tradition is still overwhelming. The situation in which Jesus heals and preaches is pervaded by conflict, some of it explicit, much of it implicit in stories and sayings."[7] Rabbinism in this era can be viewed in much the same manner.

The reason we can recover evidence of early social conditions from liturgical sources is as follows. Once they are established as standard within a given community, prayers are not easily changed, because their rituals must be accountable on a regular basis to a community of pious devotees. They reflect—even after centuries of use—strikingly disparate characteristics and identities. And because most services resisted change, early Jewish prayers preserve for us useful historical seams through which we may penetrate back into the development of the community of formative Judaism. As Heiler says of institutionalized prayer in general: "The prayer formula is stereotyped and strictly obligatory; the wording is inviolable, sacrosanct; no worshipper may dare to alter the words in the slightest degree, any more than he would think of making a change in ritual acts of sacrifice, expatiation, or consecration."[8] While we know that changes occur and variations exist, liturgy is basically one of the most conservative of all cultural commodities.

Examination of the contents, motifs, and forms of the two main liturgies, the *Shema* and the *Amidah*, in the nascent stages of their development reveals a progression in social-liturgical formulation in three phases:

1. The *Shema* became the primary rite of the scribal brotherhoods, propounding the essential scribal themes. In this perspective the exodus motif in the *Shema* functioned as a polemic of scribal authority.
2. The *Amidah*, by contrast, originated as the main liturgy of the

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[6] *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence* (San Francisco, 1987). See also Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*, pp. 163–173.

[7] Horsely, *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence*, pp. 152, 156.

[8] F. Heiler, *Prayer* (New York, 1958), p. 58.

deposed priestly aristocracy and was adopted by the patriarchate as a central ritual. Priestly and aristocratic themes were central to the *Amidah*. In this perspective, the kingship-motif served as a justification of priestly and patriarchal authority as post-destruction client rulers of the community implicitly for Rome and explicitly for God.

3. Later, as the Rabbinic leadership amalgamated its social forces in the post-deposition era and in the wake of the defeats of the apocalyptic aristocracy in the Bar Kokhba revolt, they combined the formerly distinct liturgical rituals in a single service.

Scribes institutionalized the *Shema* in the first and early second centuries. Matthew Black says regarding the social definition of the scribes that they "represented a distinctive class in the community. They practiced their legal profession throughout Palestine (and as certainly in the dispersion)."[9] Saldarini's more nuanced definition proposes, "Scribes do not seem to be a coherent social group with a set membership, but rather a class of literate individuals drawn from many parts of society who filled many social roles and were attached to all parts of society from the village to the palace and Temple."[10]

This social group promulgated its liturgy to advance its ideas and influence. The *Shema* expressly emphasizes several dominant theological themes (e.g., love of God; unity of God; centrality of Torah) and gives priority to these ideas out of a rich repertoire of other available biblical motifs. The scribes' support of this prayer derives from their social realities. Saldarini discusses the overlapping roles of scribes who served in the Temple and were involved in the wisdom and apocalyptic movements of the time. Scribes, he says, served both in the village as copyists, teachers, and low level functionaries, and in middle level bureaucratic official capacities in the government structures in Jerusalem and the Galilee.[11] It is likely that the scribal faction most active in Rabbinic society derived its livelihood as teachers of the law and from the accompanying need for copies

[9] "Scribe," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, 1962), vol. 4, pp. 246–248.

[10] Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*, p. 275.

[11] See ibid., pp. 241–297, for a full discussion of the social roles of scribes in Jewish society.

of the Torah and on the widespread use of phylacteries, *mezuzot*, and other required religious articles. The verses of the *Shema* stated plainly that Torah-study and the observance of selected commandments were among the highest values in Israelite life.

The period of origin of the *Shema* as a popular scribal rite may be traced to the time of the Houses of Hillel and Shammai, wisdom fellowships commonly thought of as the immediate precursors of some Rabbinic associations of the late first century and after that. Several Rabbinic traditions associate rules and practices for reciting the *Shema* with the Houses.[12] Early Christian evidence in Mark 12:29–30 depicts Jesus' reciting the first two verses of the *Shema* in the context of a debate with a group of scribes and as an opponent of the Temple hierarchy.[13] The scriptural verses of the *Shema* appear in the earliest phylacteries found at Qumran.[14] Of course, some values promoted by the *Shema* may be located even further back in Israelite history in the wisdom movements of the Hellenistic age.[15] Israelite sages and scribes commonly emphasized Torah and commandments as primary motifs of religious life.[16]

In formative Rabbinic Judaism the liturgy figured prominently in daily ritual life. Both the inclusions and exclusions of the contents of the standard Rabbinic text of this liturgy clearly define its focus and early intent. The primary motifs of the national cult in Jerusalem are noticeably *missing* from both the *Shema* and from the frame of blessings that surrounds it.[17] Such ideas and institutions as the Temple, the priesthood, Jerusalem, and Davidic lineage, all prominent motifs in the *Amidah*, are not primary concerns of the framers of the *Shema*.

Conspicuous evidence of revision in the *Shema* shows that some

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[12] See, e.g., M. Ber. 1:3.

[13] Regarding the role of scribes in the Gospel traditions, see Saldarini, pp. 159–166.

[14] See Y. Yadin, *Tefillin from Qumran* (Jerusalem, 1969).

[15] The Nash Papyrus, c. 150 B.C.E., from Fayyum, contains the Decalogue and the first two verses of the *Shema*.

[16] See James Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* (Atlanta, 1981), pp. 27ff., for a discussion of some aspects of the sage as a member of a professional class. Crenshaw briefly reflects on the Exodus motif in the Wisdom of Solomon. Also see his prolegomenon to *Studies in Old Testament Wisdom* (New York, 1977), where he deals with the importance of the theme of creation in the wisdom circles. I. Elbogen claims that the *Shema* and its benedictions constituted the earliest form of the "synagogue service." See *Studien zur Geschichte des jüdischen Gottesdienstes* (Berlin, 1907), pp. 38–44.

[17] Even if we place the formalization of these blessings late in the second century, these expressions undoubtedly evoke the main themes of the earliest formulations of the *Shema*. See below.

disagreement arose over time among various subsequent sponsors of the liturgy. Mention of the patriarchal motif of kingship was added, intruding after the first biblical verse[18] and in the framing blessings. M. Ber. 1:5 cites a dispute over the legitimacy of mentioning the exodus in the evening *Shema*. Rabbinic pericopae indicate that there was significant disagreement over some main themes of the *Shema*-liturgy.[19] It is fair to conclude that such materials probably reflect divisions between the local scribal brotherhoods, who sought independent authority over their adherents, and the national priestly-aristocratic leadership, who likely served as part of the client governance of Israel on behalf of imperial Rome and accordingly advocated other values.[20]

Admittedly the case for the origination of the *Shema* in a scribal social context appears to be contravened by the oft-cited M. Tamid 5:1, which projects the recitation of the *Shema* back to the priests in the Temple in Jerusalem. One might argue that this evidence is scribal apologetic seeking to link their *Shema* with ancient priestly authority. Priests in the Temple could hardly have been expected to sponsor and perpetuate a liturgy with the limited range of content and themes of the *Shema*.[21] It would be perfectly natural for a group sponsoring its own liturgical rite to seek legitimacy by establishing *post factum* a fictitious account of the antiquity and broad authority of the ritual. To the contrary, one could argue that this pericope is not a simple projection of a later ritual back to an earlier context. It conveys a confusing picture of an unfamiliar mélange of liturgies, supporting the supposition that we have there an authentic tradition. Fictitious or not, the Mishnah describes at best a variant precursor to the ritual "recitation of the *Shema*" that later historical and

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[18] "Blessed be the name of his glorious Kingdom for ever and ever," and cf. T. Ber. 1:10.

[19] See the discussion in T. Ber. 1:10 of whether reference to sovereignty (a patriarchal theme) must be removed when reference to the Exodus (a scribal motif) is inserted in the *Shema*. The pericope makes good sense when understood as an encoded dispute of political or social dimensions rather than as a strictly theological debate.

[20] See Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judea* (Cambridge, 1987), and *State and Society in Roman Galilee, A.D. 132–212* (Oxford, 1983), *passim*.

[21] Josephus provides a more obvious exaggeration by associating the *Shema* with Moses in *Antiquities*, IV, vii, 13, and he avers it was part of the daily morning service in the Jerusalem Temple.

social forces adapted and adopted as a primary liturgical institution.[22]

An ostensibly contrived association of the *Shema* with the Temple is presented prominently in the very first pericope of the Mishnah. M. Ber. 1:1 goes out of its way to link it with the Temple and with the sons of Gamaliel the Patriarch.[23] Other Rabbinic evidence more firmly attests to the scribal provenance of the *Shema*, outside the control of the Temple hierarchy. So, for instance, T. Ber. 2:6 rules that scribes only interrupt their professional duties when the time comes for the recitation of their main liturgy, the *Shema*. The Tosefta adds that they need not stop their tasks to recite the prayer of the Priestly-Patriarchal aristocracy, the *Amidah*.

Scribal values are evident in the selected content of the texts of the *Shema*. As I suggested, the blessings that became standard in later rabbinism for framing the *Shema* may have been established as late as the second century.[24] Still, they continue to focus on the scribal agendum and omit direct mention of major Israelite themes: the Temple, the Priests, Jerusalem, David, and the related concepts within these constellations of discourse, crucial to the fostering of priestly and aristocratic ideals. The framing-blessings do make prominent reference to several subjects: cosmic motifs, suggesting the mystical dimensions of religious discourse; the Exodus and the promise of future redemption; and the Torah and the commandments, the value of the study of Torah, all essential thematic concerns of the scribal factions in post-70 Israel, as we now explain.

The standard blessings before the morning *Shema* refer to cosmic-mystical dimensions of the world, mention the love of God, and refer to the return to the land of Israel, but, interestingly, not to Jerusalem.[25]

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[22] My thanks go to Professor Israel Knohl, Hebrew University, for helping me clarify this point.

[23] In M. Ber. 1:1, Gamaliel's children defy him by making reference to the *Shema*. By proposing to regulate their liturgy, Gamaliel asserts his authority over his rebellious sons:

> G. Once [Gamaliel's] sons came from the banquet hall.
> H. And they said to him, "We have not [yet] recited the *Shema*."
> I. He said to them, "If the day has not yet broken, you are obligated to recite [the *Shema*]."

Political conflict and social circumstances help explain the artificiality and awkwardness of this anecdote as part of this initial pericope of the Mishnah.

[24] See my *Mishnaic Law of Blessings and Prayers* (Atlanta, 1987), pp. 20–28.

[25] This distinction is subtle. But consider that in the twentieth century C.E. some anti-Zionist spokesmen employed the phrase "Land of Israel" rather than "State of Israel" in referring to modern Israel.

The blessing recited in the morning after the scriptural passages of the *Shema* mentions the cosmic dimension and refers to the Exodus and the ultimate messianic redemption. The mention of the kingship of God appears, but only as a theme subsidiary to the Exodus.

The blessings before the scriptural passages in the evening liturgy reiterate the cosmic references and rehearse the value of Torah study. After the passages, the blessing in the evening returns to the theme of the Exodus, to a generalized statement of redemption and to references to God as protector of Israel, apropos of the dangers of the night. This scribal liturgy builds its dramatic tension toward a promise of messianic redemption, in alternation with reiteration of the miracles of the Exodus from Egypt.

The invoking of the Exodus associated the *Shema* with a broader ritual complex, namely the Seder, through which participants reenacted the Exodus in the long-standing Israelite springtime ritual. Scribal political interests had much to gain by persistently recalling this theme. The Rabbinic Passover, observed with a Seder, was essentially a banquet for Torah study. It previously was the most popular of Israelite festivals, celebrated through the cultic offering and feast of the Paschal lamb. As the festival evolved it became instead a primary means of annually reinforcing scribal social solidarity. The scribes promoted the Seder as a ritual occasion to substitute for the sacrifice and a vital way to promote their political and social aims.

Prior to the emergence of Rabbinic Judaism, and later within rabbinism, these scribal factions renovated the festival and transformed the feast into an occasion for Torah-study and a deft means of undermining the authority for controlling ritual formerly claimed to be exclusively in the domain of the priesthood.[26] Those who recognized the Seder as the authentic means to celebrate Passover participated in the annual ritual, which was a reminder of the absence of the Temple—an embarrassment for the priests and their allies and avowed successors, the patriarchal houses. These constituencies felt the loss of the Temple and its sacrificial cult most acutely at the time of the Passover festival.

The Rabbinic-scribal Seder was openly anti-cultic. Instead of describing the Paschal sacrifice and its rite, the crux of the ritual

[26] See B.M. Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder* (Berkeley, 1984). In parallel developments, the early Christians appropriated the Seder in their own way.

was a recitation of questions and answers and Rabbinic midrashim on the ten plagues and on various historical scriptural verses.[27] The Seder mentions the Paschal offering only reluctantly in the context of a statement ascribed to the Patriarch Gamaliel. The passage arbitrarily insists that it be mentioned along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. "Rabban Gamaliel said, 'Anyone who has not said these three things on Passover has not fulfilled his obligation: Paschal Offering, Matzo, and Bitter Herbs.'" Note well that the unit concludes, "The Paschal Offering—on account of God's having passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt . . ." and not because of the Paschal Offering brought to the Temple by generations of Israelite families from all corners of the Land.[28] This attitude persists as undertone throughout the fellowship ritual.[29]

One other early tradition associated with the Seder suggests the close linkage between the scribes, Seder, and the *Shema*. A passage describes the arrival of the students in the morning after the Seder who find that the rabbis have been discussing the Exodus from Egypt throughout the night and declare, "Masters, the time has come for the morning recitation of the *Shema*." They make no mention of the recitation of the *Amidah*. This omission may be simply dismissed by assuming that the rabbis first would have recited the *Shema*, and, after that, the *Amidah*. But if we take this anecdote at its simple face value, the students remind their masters of the *Shema*, the rite of the scribes, not the *Amidah*, the priestly ritual.[30]

Let us now examine how society shaped the *Amidah*. The literary

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[27] For a discussion see L.A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text* (Indiana, 1987), pp. 86–102.

[28] E.D. Goldschmidt in *The Passover Haggadah* (Jerusalem, 1977), p. 51, n. 1, cites Alon's view that this passage be attributed to Gamaliel II at Yavneh, and refers to alternative opinions on its interpretation.

[29] The folk song, *Chad Gadya*, appended to conclude the Seder, though perhaps a late addition, may be viewed as a cynical reference to the Paschal Offering, mocking the two *zuzim*, the monetary interest that the priests had in the sacrifice, and reinforcing their indignity in the wake of the destruction of the Temple.

[30] A version in T. Pes. 10:12 has Gamaliel and the sages dealing with the laws of Passover all through the night. See Goldschmidt, pp. 19–21. Also consider the role of Eleazar in the deposition narrative. In the main action of the story, Eleazar b. Azariah takes the place of Gamaliel after he is overthrown. Eleazar, despite his aristocratic pedigree, elsewhere in Rabbinic traditions upholds a value of the scribal agendum, avowing that he understands why the Exodus must be mentioned at night. Eleazar thereby accepted and promoted practices of the scribes (M. Ber. 1:5), as reflected in the next passage in the Haggadah, Eleazar b. Azariah's statement on mentioning the Exodus from Egypt at night.

form and substantive thematic content of the *Amidah* contrasts strikingly with the *Shema*. Throughout it represents those themes most apt for reinforcing the primacy of the priestly aristocracy. It contains within it the priestly blessing. Elias Bickermann in fact labeled the *Amidah*, the "Civic Prayer for Jerusalem."[31]

We find Bickermann's position on the meaning and origin of the institutionalized *Amidah* attractive because it appeals to the content and themes of the liturgy and because it posits a simple origin-process for the prayer. To review the liturgy, out of the actual nineteen blessings of the *Amidah*, seven contain national or political themes that may be associated with priestly or patriarchal interests, i.e., numbers five, ten, eleven, fourteen, fifteen, seventeen and nineteen, as follows:

1. Shield of Abraham, patriarchs
2. God's powers;[32] resurrection of the dead
3. Holiness of God, God's name
4. Knowledge (no explicit mention here of Torah)
5. Repentance (a cultic theme; mention of Torah with Service)
6. Forgiveness
7. Redemption
8. Healing
9. Yearly sustenance
10. Liberation and ingathering of exiles (national motif)
11. Restoration of judges (political motif)[33]

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[31] *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962), pp. 163–185. My purpose here is not to review all the theories of the origin of the *Amidah*. The better known views include that of Leopold Zunz who employed a problematic monolinear sequential historical model, somewhat arbitrarily tracing its composite development to several distinct eras. For a critical assessment of Zunz's position see R. Sarason, "On the Use of Method in the Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, pp. 101ff. Kaufman Kohler attributed its origin to other forces. See "The Origin and Composition of the Eighteen Benedictions with a Translation of the Corresponding Essene Prayers in the Apostolic Constitutions," in *Hebrew Union College Annual* 1 (1924), pp. 387–425. Louis Finkelstein hypothesized yet another trajectory of development in "The Development of the Amidah," in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 16 (1925–6), pp. 142–169. As discussed above, Joseph Heinemann maintained an alternative position. See "Prayers of the Beth Midrash Origin," in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 5 (1960), pp. 264–280, and *Prayer in the Talmud* (New York, 1977), *passim*.

[32] Frederic Manns, *La Prière d'Israël a L'heure de Jésus* (Jerusalem, 1986), p. 146, n. 6, citing Urbach, sees in this expression (*gibbor*, hero) an anti-Roman sentiment, implicitly demeaning the cult of the emperor.

[33] Manns suggests this blessing responds to the actual loss of juridical power prior to the destruction of the Temple. See his study, p. 149.

12. Slanderers, enemies, apostates
13. Righteous (reference to the "remnant of the scribes")
14. Jerusalem (priestly theme)
15. Davidic salvation (priestly and patriarchal theme)[34]
16. Hear prayer (followed immediately by prayer for restoration of cult)
17. Restore the cult; return presence to Zion
18. Thanksgiving
19. Peace; priestly blessing

Bickermann suggested that the last three blessings (17–19) were parts of the "High Priest's prayer," recited in the Temple, and were added as a unit to an earlier prayer that concluded with the present fifteenth blessing.[35] Blessings 4–7 "form a group centered on the idea of sin," says Bickermann. "They enlarge upon the appeal to God's forgiveness made by the High Priest on the Atonement Day. The Sixth Benediction more or less repeats this pontifical prayer."[36]

He further speculated that the first, eighth, ninth, fourteenth, and sixteenth blessings form a single prayer invoking the patriarchs and concerning health, prosperity, Jerusalem, and an appeal for the acceptance of the prayer. Bickermann argued that this group parallels similar Greek Hellenistic prayers recited for the well-being, health, peace and prosperity of the polis. On this basis he concluded that the original *Amidah* was the Civic Prayer for Jerusalem. Both the Greeks and Jews asked for health and food. In an additional similarity, while the Greek prayed for peace or salvation of his city, the covenanted Jew expressed the same idea by supplicating the deity to have mercy on Jerusalem.[37]

This prayer was recited, says Bickermann, in the Temple, "by the people after the libation rite of the continuous sacrifice (*Tamid*). The prayer was post-exilic, and is first attested ca. 200 B.C. It was first said on the festival days only, but became a part of the daily sacrificial service after 145 B.C."[38]

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[34] The Genizah version conflates this blessing with the preceding. See S. Schechter, "Genizah Specimens," in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 10 (1898), pp. 656–657, and J. Mann, "Genizah Fragments of the Palestinian Order of the Service," in *Hebrew Union College Annual* 2 (1925), pp. 306–308 and cf. pp. 295–297.

[35] Bickermann, "Civic Prayer for Jerusalem," pp. 167–68.

[36] Ibid., p. 172.

[37] Ibid., p. 176.

[38] Ibid., p. 185.

Bickermann errs, I believe, in locating the initial widespread adoption of the full-blown liturgy in the second century B.C.E., for we have ample data that factions among the rabbis in the first and early second centuries C.E. contended over the liturgy's legitimacy. As our evidence shows, based in part on Bickermann's analysis, this prayer formed the core of the priestly liturgy sponsored by the patriarchate after the destruction of the Temple. In the aftermath of the internal political crisis that led to the deposition of Gamaliel, the prayer was accepted by the scribal factions, and the patriarch agreed to foster the official sanction of the *Shema* liturgy with minor modifications. Together these prayers made up the composite liturgy that reflected a qualified compromise between priests, patriarchal aristocrats, and scribe/rabbis.

We support this conclusion with several added points of importance regarding the *Amidah*. First, in the *Amidah* the thirteenth blessing refers to the "remnant of the scribes." Bickermann calls the allusion obscure, and cites Liebermann who adds that it must be "very old." This phrase could in fact depict a facet of the conflict between the two mainly distinct social divisions who sponsored competing prayers as they strove for dominance over the populace in the post-destruction era. This terminology may be a derisive reference to the adherents of the scribal brotherhoods and a prayer for "mercy" for those who follow that "marginal scribal group."

Bickermann focused our attention on the agendum of the liturgy. Prominently absent from the blessings of the *Amidah* are references to creation, to other aspects of the cosmic/mystical dimension of the world, and to the Exodus. Torah is mentioned, but only with the *avodah*, the sacrificial Temple cult, in the fifth blessing. We may safely say that this liturgy does not propound vital elements of a scribal agendum.

This understanding of the dynamic of the definitive first century stage of liturgical institutionalization helps us interpret prior phases in a new perspective. So for example in T. Ber. 3:13 the Houses of Hillel and Shammai dispute the number of blessings to be recited for the New Year or festival that coincided with the Sabbath. The numbers alone are given, and they descend from ten to seven, leaving us to decide to what blessings the Houses refer. One might argue that this unit is a fictionalized projection of later practice to an earlier age. If so, we might object that the dispute does not reflect an expected simple picture of later practice by earlier masters. Therefore

the disputes likely are not artificial. Even so, little can be deduced from the tradition regarding the Houses' relationship to the early use of the *Amidah* on the Sabbath and festivals.[39] As Petuchowski sums up, the most we can say is, "Public worship on Sabbaths and festivals antedated public worship on weekdays, and an Order of Seven Benedictions for Sabbaths and festivals was in existence before the Order of Eighteen Benedictions for weekdays was devised at Yavneh."[40]

In further support of Bickermann's assertions, internal Rabbinic evidence suggests that the *Amidah* was a priestly rite, later taken over by the patriarchate as its own ritual. The relevant Talmudic source suggests that there were dual traditions of the origin of the *Amidah*.

One source attributed the authorship to the Men of the Great Assembly, an institution about which we have little definite evidence. We can presume that this tradition seeks to associate the *Amidah* with some public body attached to the Temple in Jerusalem. Another text links the *Amidah* to the later Simeon Hapaqoli under the supervision of Gamaliel the patriarch at Yavneh.[41] This unit leaves little doubt that patriarchal sympathizers sought to promulgate the *Amidah* as their own authorized liturgy. No comparable patriarchal oriented tradition exists regarding the origin of the *Shema*.[42]

Based on our analysis of the evidence we concluded that the *Amidah* and *Shema* were prototype liturgies of competing social factions. Beyond this we can trace to a particular period the compromise that led to the joint institutionalization of these prayers as permanent fixtures of Rabbinic worship. Rabbinic texts preserve evidence of the main conflict and compromise that lead to the "canonization" of the

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[39] See my *History of the Mishnaic Law of Blessings and Prayers*, pp. 70–72.

[40] See J.J. Petuchowski, "The Liturgy of the Synagogue: History, Structure and Contents," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, vol. iv (Chico, 1983), p. 16.

[41] B. Meg. 17b–18a; see my *Mishnaic Law*, pp. 57–58. Also see I. Schiffer, "The Men of the Great Assembly," in *Persons and Institutions in Early Rabbinic Judaism*, pp. 237–276. Also consider M. Ber. 4:3, the dispute between Gamaliel and Joshua over the formalization of the Prayer and T. Ber. 3:12, which draws specific parallels between the times for the Prayer and the sacrifices of the Temple.

[42] To make the picture even more complex, evidence also exists that the *Amidah* may draw upon earlier formulae, e.g., from Ben Sirah, who appears to have been sympathetic to both scribal and priestly interests. See J.J. Petuchowski, "The Liturgy," pp. 7–11. Note that S. Talmon has convincingly argued on the basis of evidence in the Thanksgiving Psalm and the Psalm of Appointed Times that the Covenanters at Qumran recited daily prayers with some parallels to the Rabbinic *Amidah*. See his *The World of Qumran* (Jerusalem, 1989), pp. 200–243.

core of Rabbinic liturgy. The deposition narrative centers on the struggle between first-century factions over the imposition of a liturgical ritual as obligatory. According to this narrative, Gamaliel was deposed from the Patriarchate because he insisted that the rabbis recite the *Amidah* at night. We have two versions of this deposition-narrative that vary on some substantive details. In the version of the narrative in Y. Ber. 4:1, the action begins in the *Beit Va ad* ("Gathering Hall") and continues in the Yeshivah. In the main action of the story, Eleazar b. Azariah, a priest descended from a scribe and himself an aristocrat, replaces Gamaliel after he is overthrown.

I interpret the social forces at work in this sectarian drama a follows. Eleazar served as the interim Patriarch as the scribes wrested control from the Patriarchal aristocracy. He was described as a priest who supported the ideals of the scribes, a pragmatic political figure. Aqiba, who was rejected as the compromise candidate for the Patriarchate, is portrayed as lacking the practical ability to mediate between factions as an active politician. Tradition tells us that he supported the messianic rebellion of Bar Kokhba and suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Romans.[43]

The version of the deposition at B. Ber. 27b–28a contains several additions. First it locates all the action in the Rabbinic study hall. It depicts a guard of shield bearers supporting the Patriarch. In the Bavli, the reform of the patriarchal court is effectuated by packing the membership of the house of study by "adding benches." The deposition in the Bavli's version was followed by a reconciliation in which Gamaliel reclaimed the patriarchate, bowing to the new realities and the change in the balance of power in Rabbinic leadership. As part of this process, the patriarch visited the scribe's house and suffered debasing humiliation, counterbalancing Gamaliel's earlier humiliation of Joshua.[44] Once the deal was cut to restore Gamaliel,

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[43] Eleazar, despite his aristocratic pedigree, elsewhere in Rabbinic traditions upholds a value of the scribal agendum, avowing that he understands why the Exodus must be mentioned at night. Eleazar thereby accepted and promoted practices of the scribes (M. Ber. 1:5). His statement takes on a dual application. The rabbis applied it as justification for both the mention of the Exodus in the evening *Shema* and inserted the same tradition in the Seder to warrant the retelling of the Exodus in the evening, and accordingly to justify the Seder ritual itself.

[44] In a touch of irony, M. Ber. 1:1 starts the primary Rabbinic legal compendium by linking the *Shema* with the Temple and continues with Gamaliel's sons' mocking him by telling him, upon their late return home from the "banquet hall," that

Eleazar was informed in priestly metaphor to yield his position back to the legitimate authority.

Hence the deposition-narrative compresses into stylized Rabbinic form an account of events that probably stretched over a sustained period of social unrest and instability within Rabbinic society itself.[45] Naturally, the underlying struggle for dominance within the nascent Rabbinic community ought to be interpreted ultimately in light of all pertinent political, social, and economic consequences of the conflict. Nevertheless we must not ignore that the traditions we have report the leadership of ancient Israel fought bitterly over liturgy. Prayer had powerful real and potential impact within the community of the faithful. Various other sources show historical tension in the development of both the *Shema* and the *Amidah*.[46]

Accordingly it makes no sense to assume that the account of conflict over a liturgical issue was just a peripheral means of reporting a broader conflict, *pace* Goldenberg. He dismisses the ostensible issue of liturgical reform as an excuse for the turmoil, referring to the "striking triviality of the dispute over the evening prayer."[47] However, there is reason enough to believe that the pivotal issue over which the Patriarch was deposed is just as stated, the question of whether the recitation of the evening prayer of eighteen blessings was optional or compulsory. Institutionalization of the performance of the *Amidah*-ritual at night must have been seen as a move to displace the *Shema* from its place of liturgical primacy. It was in short a direct challenge to the authority of the scribal factions within rabbinism.[48] Further, Goldenberg fails to take notice that promulgation of public prayers, the stated issue of the conflict he discusses, was

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they did not recite the *Shema*. Instead of chastising them, Gamaliel is portrayed as reciting a ruling to them permitting them to recite the liturgy. Echoes of division and transition reverberate in this and other compressed narrative references to the liturgy.

[45] In the Bavli's version of the deposition narrative, the anonymous student responsible for the destabilization of the status quo to begin with is Simeon b. Yohai, the mystic apocalyptic—a force of provocation and instability in that era.

[46] We see that M. Ber. 4:3, for example, gives us a dispute between Gamaliel and Joshua over the formalization of the *Amidah*. As we mentioned, T. Ber. 3:12 makes an explicit comparison between the *Amidah* and the rituals of the Jerusalem Temple.

[47] Robert Goldenberg, "The Deposition of Rabban Gamaliel II," in *Persons and Institutions in Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Missoula, 1977), p. 37.

[48] Ibid., p. 38.

one primary means of exercising influence, dominance and control over a community of the faithful.

To conclude, I have posited that social factions within Rabbinic Judaism promulgated their liturgies as follows. The scribes promoted the *Shema* with particular motifs, such as the Exodus,[49] to foster their influence within Israelite society. Others employed their own forms of liturgy to compete with the scribes for prominence in the community and in the leadership of the Jewish people.

This reconstruction examined the development of two major liturgical rituals of early rabbinism as they progressed through several probable stages. During the initial transition after the destruction of the Temple, from about 70–90 C.E., the priests instituted the *Amidah* to reinforce their authority, and the scribes promoted the *Shema*. At this time it would have been natural for the scribes apologetically to associate the *Shema* with the Temple Service. In the second phase of development, from about 90–155 C.E., the patriarchate sponsored the *Amidah* to counter a growing scribal faction within the Rabbinic movement. Scribes countered by rallying popular support, deposed Gamaliel, and effectuated a lasting compromise. Subsequently, both liturgies were adopted in tandem and made obligatory Rabbinic rituals.

The rabbis in the era from about 155–220 C.E. consolidated the compromise that led to the shape of the composite Rabbinic service that survives down to the present day. The leadership within rabbinism amalgamated the *Shema* and *Amidah* into a compound liturgy with varied rules and prescribed mannerisms. As a result of this process of internal conflict, the *Shema* was revised to include the theme of kingship. In this era, the priests were relegated to figurehead status in Rabbinic communities. The Patriarch continued to observe the conventional boundaries of his authority established after the deposition and was excluded from most internal Rabbinic affairs. The scribal faction dominated in the internal Rabbinic power struggle and they disconnected Rabbinic ritual from dealing with real national political structures and focused them entirely on Torah values.

What Stefan Reif has written regarding the general characteristic

[49] Regarding a dispute over the dominance of the theme of sovereignty over the Exodus as a liturgical subject, see T. Ber. 1:10.

of Jewish liturgy applies well here: "The essence of Jewish liturgy is that it carries within it . . . competing tendencies and successfully absorbs them all."[50] The scholarly legacy of Anthony Saldarini helps us better understand how this came to pass.[51]

[50] From his chapter, "The Early Liturgy of the Synagogue," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism* (Cambridge, 1999), which summarizes the state of scholarship in the area. Also see his articles "Some Liturgical Issues in the Talmudic Sources," in *Studia Liturgica* (1982–1983), pp. 188–206, and his "Jewish Liturgical Research: Past, Present, Future," in *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 34 (1983), pp. 161–170.

[51] Much of the content of this article appeared previously in my monograph, *Studies in Jewish Prayer* (Lanham, 1990).

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JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY TODAY

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MATTHEW'S CHRISTIAN-JEWISH COMMUNITY AND INTERRELIGIOUS ENCOUNTER TODAY

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Anthony J. Saldarini's 1994 *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* and 1999 lecture "Christian Anti-Judaism: The First Century Speaks to the Twenty-First Century"[1] remind us to read the Gospel according to Matthew in its Jewish context and to understand Matthew's Christian community as enduringly Jewish, even if distinguished by its adherence to Jesus as its teacher and its vital center of the Christian-Jewish community. My reflections on this well-received and important book do not attempt an evaluation of Professor Saldarini's work in light of the voluminous research on Matthew, a task I leave to specialists; nor do I reassess the Jewish-Christian relationship in light of his *Matthew*, even if this would be most directly appropriate in light of his work. Rather, I offer a complementary reflection in order to indicate how Saldarini's insights can be productive in the wider context of pluralism. His insights, important in the context of biblical studies and Jewish-Christian dialogue, offer promising vantage points from which to review the theory and historical practice of Christian mission and to understand anew today's Christian dialogue with people of other faith traditions. While Saldarini did not for the most part venture significantly into that wider context, my comments are, I believe, in keeping with the direction of his work in the several years before his untimely death.[2]

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[1] *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* was published by the University of Chicago Press in 1994. "Christian Anti-Judaism: The First Century Speaks to the Twenty-First Century," The Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture, April 14, 1999; references are to the page numbers in the small pamphlet version of the lecture. In page references I will use respectively the abbreviations *MCC* and *CAJ*.

[2] See for instance his essays in each of the volumes produced from the Boston University Comparative Religious Ideas Project (1995–1999): "Religious Dimensions of the Human Condition in Judaism," in *The Human Condition*; "God as a Many-Sided Ultimate Reality in Traditional Judaism," in *Ultimate Realities*; "To Practice Together Truth and Humility, Justice and Law, Love of Merciful Kindness and Modest Behavior," in *Religious Truth*. All three volumes were published by the State University of New York Press, 2001.

Christian theologians and mission theorists have often drawn on several biblical paradigms in order to illuminate Christian mission and interreligious dialogue. The following are most familiar: the Spirit-led and confident expansion of the Church from Jerusalem to Rome in *Acts*; a Johannine-inspired focus on the Word of God as a cosmic Logos; a forceful "nothing-but-the-cross" attitude rooted in the letters of Paul; more recently, a hearkening back to *Exodus* to discover a liberationist hermeneutic at the core of what is necessary and best in religions; and, of course, at the end of Matthew, the command that has inspired generations of missionaries: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (28:19).

Such models are important and helpful, but each is burdened with its own drawbacks and none is adequate. Saldarini's insights into Matthew suggest another important and potentially very fruitful way of imagining the encounter between Christians and people of other faiths: a Christian community, aware of its Jewish roots and intent upon affirming them, that envisions an expanding Christian community attractive to newcomers who are persuaded by the wisdom of a Jesus-centered affirmation of core elements of Jewish piety and practice. This community makes itself known and attractive by good example, teaching, and persuasion; its deep Christian commitment notwithstanding, it is tolerant and flexible, accommodating different modes and degrees by which outsiders become involved in this Christian-Jewish community.

In the following pages I first follow Saldarini in sketching Matthew's understanding of the Jewish-Christian community, of Jesus himself, of the nations (*ethne*), and finally of the way in which the new community invites outsiders to membership. I then suggest how this position might promote fruitful ways of re-reading mission history and of imagining the interrelationship among religions today.

The Jewish Community of Those Who Follow Jesus

The author of Matthew "is an informed participant in a number of first-century Jewish legal debates" who joins ongoing debates about the practices of Jewish life "as a serious defender of his group's understanding of how one should live as a Jew according to the

teachings of Jesus. He accepts the Jewish Bible and bases his arguments on it, drawing on the types of reasoning found in first-century Jewish literature. But he sees the whole tradition through the eyes of Jesus as he understands him" (*CAJ*, p. 10). Instead of presenting us with the scenario of a pure Christian community that had left Judaism behind when it created a primarily Gentile church, for Matthew the situation is more complex:

> Many people think that Jews and Christians were sharply divided from one another by this time and that a new Christian religion was fighting its Jewish parent for independence and supremacy. But for most places in the Mediterranean world this view is inaccurate. Most people still could not clearly distinguish the followers of Jesus from Jews. . . . The assemblies of believers in Jesus may have had their conflicts with the Jewish community but they were for the most part not yet self-consciously opposed to the Jewish community. The clear boundaries that divide us today had not yet been drawn. . . . By becoming followers of Jesus neither the author nor his audience ceased to be Jews. People did not change the ethnic group into which they were born and Christianity did not yet exist as a separate religion which they could join. Many first-century Jews probably viewed the author of Matthew as deviant, misguided or strange, but he was precisely a strange Jew. (*CAJ*, p. 9)

The polemic in Matthew against some Jewish leaders and Jewish practices is an insider argument; Saldarini notes that polemic elements can be assessed accurately only if we see them as voiced in a debate among Jews, some of whom are followers of Jesus. Anti-Jewish polemic by non-Jews would come later, after Matthew's time. Jewish identity is never rejected or left behind, and there is no expectation in Matthew of a fundamentally Gentile church, no mode of "being-Christian" that is tantamount to "being-not-Jewish." There is no replacement of "Judaism" by "Christianity;" models of their relations based on dichotomy and replacement are not supported by Matthew. Instead we find a complex set of continuities, adjustments, and extensions in which a Jewish community centered on Jesus finds ways to invite into its midst well-disposed Gentiles who have found that community attractive.

Jesus in Matthew's Community

Saldarini also reminds us that Matthew's Jesus is not someone whose significance can be taken as justifying a Christianity separated from the Jewish tradition. To be sure, Matthew's Jesus is the agent and subject of extraordinary claims, differing from those made in Jewish literature about other figures: "By the creative combination of many of the archetypal figures, leads, and roles found in the Bible, Matthew turned Jesus into *the* transcendent teacher, revealer, ruler, and savior authorized by God for Israel and humanity" (*MJC*, p. 193). But he did not see himself as discontinuous with his Jewish tradition: "He is understood in his relationship with the God of Israel, known in the Bible, and in the experience of the community. Although Matthew's narrative would later be used to support ontological theories of the Son's relation to the Father, Matthew remains firmly in the orbit of Judaism" (*MJC*, p. 193). Indeed,

> All the categories and titles Matthew uses to explain Jesus were native to Judaism in the first century and were immediately comprehensible to his Jewish community. None of them is precise and univocal in its meaning, but all are part of the rich tradition of Israel based on the Bible and developed in the literature of the Second Temple period. (*MJC*, p. 192)

Yet Matthew also goes out of his way to indicate how Jesus himself already had non-Jewish blood, as did other key figures in the tradition; the interaction of Jews and non-Jews is not a novel phenomenon:

> Yet even the genealogy, which purports to define strictly the Jewish ancestry of Jesus and the Davidic house, suggests the inclusion of non-Jews in Israel . . . Jesus' ancestry includes non-Jews who were committed to Israel. Tamar saw to the carrying on of the name of Er, according to Jewish law; Rahab saved Joshua's spies; Ruth bound herself willingly to Israel; and Bathsheba intervened to assure Solomon's succession to the throne (1 Kings 1). Since first-century interpreters probably considered these women to be proselytes, they symbolize Gentile converts to Matthew's own group of Christian-Jewish followers. (*MJC*, p. 69)

Matthew's Jesus remains deeply placed in the Jewish community, and cannot be approached in isolation from the Jewish tradition already in place; faith in Jesus does not instigate the formation of communities in radical rupture with their traditions nor communi-

ties defined by a sectarian declaration about who is not included. A commitment to Jesus ought not to entail a rupture with Jewish traditions; neither, as we shall now see, is there a stark exclusion of outsiders nor an uncompromising insistence that outsiders accept a single, settled form of Jewish identity. There is no simple "in" or "out," nor a simple eradication of the difference.

Gentiles As Those Invited into the Jewish Community of Those Following Jesus

By Matthew's calculus, the *ethne* can be judged a neutral group, recognized as friends, or treated as hostile individuals and groups:

> . . . the Greek word ethnos/ethne has a variety of meanings. It can designate an ethnic group or tribe with its own proper name or a larger group, that is, a people or nation with its own cultural, linguistic, geographical, or political unity. It can also refer to guilds and trade associations, social classes of people, political subdivisions, and rural in contrast to urban residents. In the Septuagint and other Jewish literature ethne, the "nations" (Hebrew goyim), often means non-Jews in contrast to Israel. . . . Matthew uses the word ethne in several of its meanings. . . . Numerous Gentiles had a variety of relationships with the Jewish community, and what was required to be a member of the community varied in time and place. Not only where the actual practices and relationships diverse, but more important for understanding Matthew, members of the Jewish community disagreed in their understandings and evaluations of community life and practice. Consequently, the primary cultural divisions are not always between Israel and the "nations." Sometimes Israel and certain nations or Gentiles have relationships that are more positive than those between groups within Israel. (*MJC* 78–79)

If the living and evolving Jewish and Gentile communities are to be brought into fruitful encounter, the conversation between them needs to be flexible, not burdened with overly fixed expectations.

One thinks here of the Magi who figure in Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus. They are looked upon favorably as sincere Gentiles who, standing in stark contrast to Herod, come with honest motives to see Jesus; they seek, discover, recognize, intend no harm to the child and, we presume, return home better for the experience. So too, although the Roman soldiers who crucify Jesus and guard the site of the crucifixion have only limited comprehension of what is happening, they are not enemies of Jesus nor hostile to the spectacle

of the cross. Moreover, neither the Magi nor the Roman soldiers make a radical change of life; there is no suggestion of conversions. Saldarini notes,

> The Magi and the guards may be symbolic of Gentile acceptance of Jesus, but the acceptance is rudimentary and inchoate. No organized program or permanent relationship is established. The Gentiles show promise and hint of things to come. In addition, the Gentile recognition of Jesus takes place within the social and religious boundaries of Israel. The Magi and guards symbolize the attraction of Jesus for Gentiles and the possibility of their being welcomed into Israel through their recognition of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. (*MJC*, p. 70)

Nevertheless, as well-disposed and honest about what they encounter, they model how prospective Gentile members of the Christian-Jewish community might move toward Christ, and the expectations the Christian-Jewish community should have.

Saldarini's comment on the Last Judgment scene in Matthew 25 catches the tension between the local and inclusive features of Matthew's vision of Christian-Jewish community. The judgment sorts out the saved and damned in a way that cannot be neatly settled by separating Jews and Gentiles, insiders and outsiders. Rather, in the end-time, the boundaries of settled, monolithic communities are set aside:

> Some have suggested that the judgment of the Gentiles only is meant, but most schemes for distinguishing a Jewish judgment from a Gentile one depend on elaborate periodizations of salvation history and forced distinctions on various groups. That all people and groups are finally subjected to an ultimate, comprehensive justice is much more likely. The saved are symbolized by sheep; this suggests that they join the sheep of the house of Israel (10:6, 15:24) in the end. . . . Thus ordinary national and ethnic boundaries are transcended in order to focus on the relationship to Jesus and his group of believers as the ultimate criterion for the judgment of all. (*MJC*, pp. 80–81)

Matthew thus proposes a complex picture of Jews and Gentiles possessed of various virtues and vices. The point is not to replace Jews with Christians, nor Jewish Christians ("bound by rules") with Gentile Christians ("inspired by compassion"), nor to obliterate Gentile identity and replace it with Jewish identity. The goal is rather to make attractive and inviting to at least some Gentiles the small but inclusive Jewish group which has gathered around Jesus. Gentiles need not entirely abandon their own traditional identities in order to join

the community of those gathered around Jesus. They must indeed understand that it is a Christian-Jewish community, not simply a Christian community, into which they are invited, but the virtues Gentiles already possess and prize will be honored as they join the new community.

Saldarini indicates that for Matthew the relationship of Jews and Gentiles is not defined in terms of a dichotomy between law and "freedom from the law," since the Torah rightly understood provides guidance for everyone:

> The relationships between Jews and believers-in-Jesus remained flexible in various places for a long period. Within this varied situation, Matthew seeks to incorporate non-Jewish believers-in-Jesus into his renewed Jesus-centered, but still Torah-observant Jewish community. The nations, insofar as they are responsive to Jesus, are candidates for membership in Matthew's group. (*MJC*, p. 79)

The community more broadly defines itself in judgments about which particular Jewish values are central, and how those values are enacted in relation to traditional religious practices:

> Jesus and his designated followers ([e.g.] Matthew) provide guidance for those who seek God faithfully. The guidance is not simply the general injunction to love God and neighbor, though this double command is foundational and important. Faithful adherence to an interpretation of all the commandments that stresses justice and mercy is the core of Jesus' message and of the Matthaean way of life. (*MJC*, p. 163)

By Saldarini's reckoning, Matthew undercuts the anti-pagan theology which in fact merely mirrors anti-Jewish theology. An expectation of a pure break between Jewish and Christian is mirrored in an expectation that pagans need to make a sharp break with their own pasts. As the relationship between Jews and Christians is nuanced, so too will be the expectations regarding how Gentiles are to reconsider their own traditions in light of the invitation to join the Christian-Jewish community forming around Jesus.

Extending the Community by Teaching

As Matthew envisions an expanding community of people dedicated to the beliefs of Jesus and his piety and religious practice, thus the key vehicle for this expansion is proper teaching, a sharing with newcomers of the wisdom of the Torah as practiced by the followers

of Jesus. *Matthew*'s community remains largely Jewish in its piety, relationships, and practices, and sees itself primarily as deepening values already in place:

> The teachings and actions of Jesus in Matthew's narrative serve to create and strengthen the group identity of those seeking justice and Godlike perfection. God's relationship with Israel and love for Jesus, his Son, serve as warrants for the promises made to the members of the group. By obeying Jesus and changing their lives, they hope to overcome the injustice and evil of the present, and triumph at the universal judgment at the end of the world . . . The author places great stress on teaching and the master-disciple relationship. Since such instruction was carried on in households, the master-disciple relationship was integrated into fictive kinship relationships, which bound the group together. (*MJC*, p. 122)

It is in this context that the command in Matthew 28 is to be understood as primarily an injunction to teach properly:

> Through all this [that is, his public ministry and even up to his death] Jesus continues to teach his understanding of God and his kingdom in the sermons . . . culminating in the commission to his followers to teach all nations (28.19–20). Thus Matthew relates both his group's teachings and their ostracism by the leadership of the Jewish community to Jesus' life and teachings. Jesus' teachings are of crucial importance, according to Matthew, because they have an effect on life, come from God and the Bible, and are essential to the welfare of the Jewish community and the world. (*MJC*, p. 161)

The command is a directive to imitate Christ the teacher; by the instruction to teach the nations "all that I have commanded" (Matt. 28.20), "the role of teacher is passed on to the disciples, who are scribes instructed in the kingdom of heaven to bring forth old and new things from their storeroom (13.52), that is, biblical, Jewish tradition understood through the teachings of Jesus" (*MJC*, p. 179).

Good teaching is a matter of persuasion, not force, intimidation, or preaching which does not factor in the need to listen as well. A discourse fiery with contempt and disregard for the audience's prior values and customs may win a few shaken converts in the short run, but fail to instill new values and ways of behaving in the intended audience. To preach the Gospel, in Matthew's view, has primarily to do with showing people why it is to their own advantage to live their lives within an expanding Jewish community now focused on Jesus and his teaching.

Re-Reading Mission History from a Matthaean Perspective

Thus far we have considered Saldarini's presentation of Matthew's understanding of the new Christian community in light of its enduring Jewish identity, Jesus as a Jewish teacher, "Gentiles" as a complicated group of people in varying relations to Israel and the Christian-Jewish community, and teaching as a primary vehicle for introducing new members of the Jewish community of those following Jesus. In the concluding sections of this essay I extend Saldarini's reflections on Matthew in two ways: first, by indicating its usefulness as a lens through which to reexamine mission history, which at its best is more Matthaean than we might ordinarily recognize; second, by some more general reflections on how Matthew prompts rethinking Christian mission today.

At the beginning of this essay I noted that the usual models which have guided Christian missionaries are those of Acts, Paul on the Areopagus; Paul in Romans, preaching the folly of cross against the wisdom of the pagans; Exodus as establishing liberation as the criterion for good religion; the mandate announced at the end of Matthew (often read apart from the rest of Matthew). Without claiming any sharp disjunction between those models and Matthew's program as sketched by Saldarini, I suggest that Matthew has usefully anticipated another model, one which illumines how key missionaries have in fact actually engaged in Christian community-building. Rather than simply preaching the Gospel loudly into a world imagined to be woefully bereft of good news, missionaries have often striven instead to offer the wisdom of life that is modeled on that of Jesus as beneficial and attractive and that, while superior to other ways of life, draws on and accommodates customs and practices already familiar to people in their previous idealizations of the virtuous life.

One famous example must suffice. It is well-known that Jesuit missionary pioneers such as Mateo Ricci, S.J. (1552–1610) in China and Roberto de Nobili (1577–1656) in India were notable for a twofold zeal. First, of course, they were missionaries who faithfully sought to convert the people of China and India. Second, however, they also argued for a complex cultural accommodation in which those choosing to become Christian could, even in their new Christian identities, maintain most of the customs of their families and social groups. Mandarins could maintain their etiquette and ancestral values, while

Brahmins could retain caste distinctions and maintain purity rules. In both China and India, moreover, the major Jesuit tool in persuading people of the value of conversion was to argue with them in order to remind them of what really mattered in their own cultures; it was hoped that this opening of the mind would also open people to the Gospel. This educational practice was justified as the approach taken by Jesus himself.[3] When complaints—during the time when Ricci and de Nobili were working, but also and more heatedly during the ensuing century—led to the involvement of Church leaders (in Asia and in Rome) in determining which indigenous customs and rites could be observed by Christians and which could not, the arguments and the solutions employ remarkably little lofty theological language. The arguments pro and con, and the decisions handed down, were pragmatic assessments of boundaries, primarily in search of norms to govern what could fit properly with established Christian practice.[4]

It is useful to re-read this Jesuit strategy in light of the Matthaean model of community-building summarized by Saldarini. Ricci and de Nobili, and even those Christians who argued with them, seem to have been acting in an way analogous to that chosen by *Matthew*'s community. Points of principle were honored, the importance of Jesus central; but the implications of these tenets were negotiated obliquely through attention to practice, since the Jesuit goal was not to destroy communities and replace them with Christian structures, but rather simply to adjust and expand the boundaries of established Christian and Gentile communities so that some Gentiles could live as disciples of Jesus too. Christians from the West were shown able to accommodate new members while, by analogy, Indian and Chinese elites could adjust their behavior and fulfill all the more successfully their familiar goals by joining the Christian community. Persuasive arguments as to the possibility and wisdom of change, and models

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[3] For instance, de Nobili presented Jesus most prominently as a teacher; see Francis X. Clooney, "Christ as the Divine Guru in the Theology of Roberto de Nobili," in Ruy Costa, ed., *One Faith, Many Cultures* (Maryknoll, 1988), pp. 25–40.

[4] On Ricci, see D.E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Honolulu, 1989); on de Nobili, see Augustin Sauliere, *His Star in the East* (Anand, Gujarat, 1995). For a general view of the Jesuit missionary attitude, see Francis X. Clooney, S.J., "A Charism for Dialogue: Advice from the Early Jesuit Missionaries in our World of Religious Pluralism," in *Studies in Jesuit Spirituality*, March, 2002.

of mutually acceptable adjustments in behavior, counted for more than absolute philosophical claims or stark, unyielding claims about salvation.

Conversely, though, it is striking (though not surprising) that the Jewish roots of Christianity are hardly evident in the Jesuit missionary writings. While resisting the anachronism of looking for modern Biblical interpretation in the seventeenth century, we can still admit that their self-defense and own practice would have profited from closer attention to the parallels between their project and Matthew's (with perhaps a bit less attention to the solitary witness of Paul on the Areopagus). The missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth century knew of the successful adaptation of the Church to the Roman empire, but seem to have been less attentive to the adaptations by Jews which made Christianity possible in the first place. Although a similar approach to conversion and its communal implications is evident in Matthew and in the Jesuit missionary era, there seems to be little conscious attention among the Jesuit missionaries to the ways in which the early Christian communities, such as Matthew's, understood Christian identity in a very close relation to Jewish identity. Although Ricci and de Nobili and their colleagues were insistent on the Roman Catholic context of their preaching, they seemed to imagine the truth of a Gospel otherwise free of encumbrance, unrestricted by Jewish roots. If today we notice more fully the continuity between Jesuit missionary practice and the model established long before in *Matthew*, we are better positioned to appreciate both the promising and the problematic features of the Jesuit approach.

Interreligious Dialogue Today in Light of Matthew

Let us reflect finally on interreligious encounter today, specifically on how a Christian community inspired by Matthew might more fruitfully understand missionary endeavor and the invitation to people of other faith traditions to join the Christian community. But first, two cautions.

My observations on Saldarini's reading of Matthew are on the whole intended to encourage the view that Matthew offers us a fruitful paradigm by which to promote a healthier and more respectful exchange—now including even Christian evangelists who wish for

nothing more than to obey the final command Jesus gives in Matthew 28 (now put back into the context of the entirety of the Gospel). But Saldarini's insights also complicate interreligious conversation by disabusing us of the idea of an absolute or culture-free Christianity. There is a localized, specific density to a Christian community that takes its Jewish roots seriously; if the case is made properly it can appeal widely, but not because Christianity is universal but not local, or because there is a cosmic Christ who transcends Jesus of Nazareth. The link between "the Jewish" and "the Christian" means that in dialogue with people of other faiths Christians always retain a sense of Jewish roots; being-Christian, even in Asia or Africa or the Americas, is rooted in the experience of Israel. By the logic of Matthew, there will be no Christian community that does not also invite people to become associated with that Jewish experience. The suggestion that different religious traditions might serve as "the (Indian or Chinese or African) Old Testament" to be completed in Christ is well-intentioned and may be worthy of consideration on other grounds but makes little sense in light of Matthew.

A second caution is found near the end of *Matthew's Jewish-Christian Community* when Saldarini gives us this sober reminder:

> But we do not live in the world of pretend. Even though the Gospel of Matthew was written for Jews within the first-century Jewish community, it has had its effect and its home among Gentiles for the last nineteen hundred years. The gospel's polemics have been used again and again by Gentile Christians as a club to beat the whole Jewish tradition, marginalizing the Jewish community and threatening its existence. The actual history of the gospel thus ironically includes a large measure of anti-Semitism along with its honorable role in promoting a healthy communal life within the Christian churches. . . . Matthew is at once the most Jewish of gospels in its traditions and interpretations and the most critical of gospels in its attacks on certain forms of Judaism. Matthew is an authentic witness both to the shared traditions that unite and to the deep hostilities that divide the Jewish and Christian communities. (*MJC*, p. 205)

We cannot actually leap back through time to an ideal Matthaean community, as if to retrieve our pristine beginnings. Few Christians are actually able to see how Jewish Jesus is. Our teaching is often less a matter of persuasion and guidance and more the broadcast of established truths. Nor are Gentiles an unchanging species. The diverse peoples of today's world cannot merely be deposited into the category of the *ethne*, as if there are no dimensions of Muslims or

Buddhists or Native Americans or secular humanists that are very important but that *Matthew* could not have anticipated. The conversation and the persuasion have to be different today.

Nonetheless, Matthew's response to pluralism—an open and intelligent Jewish community aiming to persuade both Jews and Gentiles that learning from Jesus was a particularly viable way to construct human community—remains a model from which we can learn even today. Positive claims about the value of Matthew in an interreligious context can still be made, and here I will draw together some of the insights already implied in the preceding pages.

Given the specific Jewish roots of the Christian community and the founding of the latter through persuasion, shared piety, and cooperation, then the proper and most effective appeal to the wider world community today will accordingly be based on appeals to the Christian community's values and virtues. Conversations and efforts to persuade upright persons to listen to some new ideas will be seen as far more appropriate than drastic and harsh evangelical warnings, and more relevant than philosophical assertions of the higher, universal truth of Christianity. Because they are not burdened by detail and relevance to context, denunciations of pagan deficiencies and abstract claims about Christian superiority are easy to propose; and for the same reason they are most often ineffectual.

From a Matthaean perspective, a Christian approach to interreligious conversation and persuasion will be deeply practical. A negotiation must take place which attends to the entire range of practices which make up life in the community transformed by its placing Jesus in its center. The process expands the family, gradually including people of other backgrounds—who consider the journey to Jerusalem, who are welcomed and in some cases then incorporated into the Christian-Jewish community. The enduring connectedness of Christians to Jews, and the maintenance of a wise teaching tradition, both enriches and considerably slows any expected process of expanding the Church, and reminds that in any case speed and quantity ought not to be the chief concerns. By Matthew's measure, evangelization is necessarily a dialogical process, and conversion a question of adjustments in ways of living. The means of conversion will be skilled teaching and well-argued, persuasive claims as to why listeners might be better off, even by their own standards, should they join this community.

As mentioned earlier, Saldarini's interpretation of Matthew also

undercuts the anti-pagan theology that is the twin of an anti-Jewish theology. A radical rejection of what is Jewish makes it more comfortable to reject whatever is not Christian. It seems unexpectedly true that those who are accustomed to dismissing Jews will most likely also be those prone to despise the adherents of today's other world religions. The notion of a pure break between Jew and Christian lingers on in the expectation that pagans need to make a radical break with their religious and cultural pasts in order to become Christian. Conversely, respect for the deep interconnection of Judaism and Christianity in Matthew will help to undercut stereotypical views of the *ethnoi* in general, particularly views seeming to support a radical exclusion of whatever is "non-Christian" as incompatible with Christian community. A Christian community which stands in a complex and patient interrelationship with Judaism is more likely to be in a complex and patient relationship with other religious communities as well, where old and new elements are both accommodated; this was the insight inspiring Ricci and de Nobili. When Matthew's ideal of persuasive teaching is put into practice, the necessity of confidence in those who teach and of respect for those who are to be taught suggests that for teaching to occur at all, a human community involving all concerned must already exist.

In Matthew and in a Christian perspective rooted in Matthew, Jesus—himself a Jew with some non-Jewish blood in his ancestry—is less a figure of rupture and radical division, and more a bridge figure comfortable at the boundary between insiders and outsiders, encouraging the former to welcome new members, and the latter to see in Christian-Jewish wisdom a satisfactory fulfillment of their own traditional values. Choosing Jesus is a way of opening the community up, not rendering it exclusive. A deeper commitment to Jesus by those forming community around him means less exclusive rhetoric, more tolerance of ambiguity and adjustment, and a patient confidence that it is a slower and more organically growing Christian-Jewish community which will have roots deep enough to flourish over time.

This reflection on Anthony Saldarini on Matthew needs to be assessed in terms of the wider array of positions available in the Bible, in light of the subsequent two thousand years of theological development and experience, and in ongoing dialogue with people in other religious traditions today, particularly with respect to their responses to models such as the one sketched here. But Matthew is a promising place for us to keep looking; as understood by Saldarini

it offers a model for a generous, moral, and pious project of Christian interaction with other faith communities. While rooted in Christian-Jewish identity, it allows for a rich range of partial and provisional relationships of a positive sort and does not demand of people decisions that split them entirely from their traditions. We can all be grateful to Anthony Saldarini for his timely contribution to the study of Matthew and thus potentially to our understandings of Christian-Jewish community and the widening of Christian identity in today's world; we can be all the more saddened by the fact that our friend Tony has not been able to work out these promising implications himself.

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JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY: THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

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The early relations between Christianity and Judaism are hidden in retrospective interpretations of the New Testament text by the Church fathers, who were themselves involved in a search for the true Church and its beliefs. In consequence they seem to have interpreted the Pauline writings[1] in ways that obscured and skewed his understanding of and teachings about the Jewish Law, the Halakhah.[2] The message of the Gospels was obscured further by the editorial activity of those who edited, rewrote, and transcribed the New Testament into Greek in the second century, removing its Hebraisms and Aramaisms and rationalizing its texts to accord with developing teachings of the church.

Comprehension of the Jewish attitude to the Gospels and primitive Christianity was both marred and masked by editorial activity in Rabbinic writings, which restated the developing attitudes to converts and to minim, heretics. Perceptions were clouded further by censorship, which saw references to Christianity removed or replaced by euphemisms in the Talmud and other contemporary writings, so that it is difficult to perceive what was actually recorded therein about Christianity. In view of these problems it is clear that the attitudes of both Jewish and Christian observers of their early common history have not necessarily been formed in the light of clear and unbiased information and that there has been a reluctance to understand that Judaism and Christianity took a long time to move apart

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[1] For an assessment of Paul's attitude to the Law, see David Flusser in *Judaica* 43 (1987). Flusser makes it clear that Paul's attitude is ambivalent, almost "all things to all men."

[2] The term Jewish law is used generically. It is realized that the nature of the law changed throughout post-Exilic times and that it differed in the pre-Christian era from what it became in the period after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. For an assessment of the changes, see Anthony J. Saldarini, "Reconstructions of Rabbinic Judaism," in R.A. Kraft and G.W.E. Nickelsburg, eds., *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia and Atlanta, 1986), pp. 437–477.

from their birth situation and develop with some independence from each other. The situation today is rather different, as we are better informed through the availability of a richer body of manuscript sources and more willing, through a variety of public forums, to examine this difficult question in harmonious discussion.

The process of reinterpretation and reexamination of the parting of the ways began to some extent in the modern era with the publication between 1922 and 1928 of Strack-Billerbeck's *Commentary on the New Testament*, which examined the Jewish background of Christianity,[3] and of C.G. Montefiore's *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings*[4] in 1930, which did much the same task and left its readers in no doubt that early Christian literature was a literary expression of the Jewish world into which Christianity was born. In other words, Christian literature seemed to be an extension of Jewish literature, and early Christian practice and belief seemed to be very Jewish. However, the nature of the Judaism that underlay Christianity was not clear.

Evidently, there was a deep and ineluctable reluctance among Christian scholars to recognize the priority of a Jewish literature that seemed to be solidly Pharisaic and manifestly edited, for it was inconsistent and contained anachronisms. It was argued that the Judaism described in Rabbinic literature had evolved and was very different from the Judaism in which the early church was born, for the literary sources on which evaluation was based had a transmission history long enough to allow for editorial activity by several generations of Tannaim and Amoraim. At the same time, Jewish scholars, by and large, until the late 1950s, accepted the view that the Judaism of the Mishnah represented the core of Judaism as it developed from the exilic period. Teachings attributed to later rabbis were accepted as reliable data for the historical reconstruction of early Rabbinic Judaism.[5] Jewish scholars, in the main, were not convinced that any comparison between Christian literature and Jewish literature was possible, for the New Testament text presented anti-Pharisaic attitudes, which did not seem to have arisen in the Jewish world described

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[3] Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (1922–1928).

[4] Reprinted by Ktav (New York, 1970) with a prolegomenon by Eugene Mihaly, who points out that Montefiore's work was a valuable correction to Strack-Billerbeck.

[5] Saldarini, "Reconstruction" p. 439.

in the literature of the sages. Both sets of scholars, Jewish and Christian, were suspicious of the authenticity of each others' source literature and were restricted by its paucity. Thus, these early studies were not actively followed up in a disciplined and substantial manner until the Dead Sea Scrolls provided a new impetus to assess relationships between the scrolls and Christian literature, and new methodological approaches were applied to the traditional Jewish writings, which reinforced that impetus.[6]

The discovery and continuing publication of the Qumran scrolls has reinforced, perhaps even rammed home, the message that one must evaluate New Testament teachings against parallel data from the contemporary Jewish milieu.[7] The literature of that milieu is now expanded, and it is possible to side-step the perceived leveling of Judaism (whether that leveling was real or imaginary) and examine the pluralism of Jewish religious life in the first century. As Anthony Saldarini has demonstrated,[8] the Judaism of the late Second Temple period was richly pluralistic—latitudinarian—an amalgam of many streams of thought and practice from the Diaspora with its various languages through to the local philosophies and mystical ideas. It is now quite clear that Christianity in its birth century was part of that pluralism.

Since, as its late second century critic Celsus saw, Christianity was based very clearly on what Jewish sages had said previously (*CC* VII:58), it was difficult for him and others to see any new phenomenon in Christianity. Even the matter of the divinity of Jesus was in no way strange, for the Greco-Roman world was accustomed even to seeing men elevated to the status of Gods.[9] Hence, Greco-Roman

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[6] See J. Neusner, "The Teaching of the Rabbis: Approaches Old and New," in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 27 (1976), pp. 23–35, and idem, "The History of Earlier Rabbinic Judaism: Some New Approaches" in *History of Religion* 16 (1977), pp. 216–236.

[7] See Krister Stendahl and James H. Charlesworth, *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (New York, 1992) and Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (Leiden, 1998), en passent. Unfortunately, this assessment does not include an index and does not offer a dedicated chapter on the impact of the scrolls on Christianity.

[8] "Reconstruction," p. 440.

[9] Robert L. Wilken, "The Christians as the Romans and Greeks Saw Them," in E.P. Sanders, *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (Philadelphia, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 100–125, examines the evidence briefly and draws our attention to Plutarch's statement (*de orac*. 415c) that some heroes are "borne upward, even so from men into heroes and from heroes into *daimones*. But, from the *daimones*, a few souls still, in

observers saw in Christianity a variety of Judaism. Jews certainly saw the primitive church in this way, and, in view of Paul's ambivalence in staying true both to his basic life as a Jew and to his guiding vision, the one body of Christ,[10] even its own adherents may not have been clear as to whether they were Jews or Christians or something in between the two philosophies.

This, again, is the message of Celsus, supported by Clement of Alexandria (*Str* VII.15.89) and Origen in their failure to deny Celsus' observations, when he noted that there were many Jewish Christians who accepted Jesus but who "still want to live according to the Law like the multitude of Jews" (*CC* V.61). This too, according to Flannery,[11] is the message that we should draw from the fact that in the first three Christian centuries pagan animosity to the Jews was transferred to the Christians. Both, at first, were indistinguishable to Roman eyes.

The parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity has been described and identified in a variety of causes by different observers. To some, it was in the matter of the difference between Jews and Christians over the person of Jesus, the uniqueness of his teaching and the acceptance or rejection of his divinity. For others it was in the matter of the observance or abnegation of the Law. Some have argued that there was a complete divorce between Judaism and Christianity early in the Christian era, to be precise, in the year 80, when Jews are alleged to have excommunicated Christians as heretics[12] or in the various acts of violence and ostracism recorded in the New Testament that are regarded as a consistent persecution of Christians by Jews. Yet others have argued for the separation's being clear only when it was consummated by state legislation against the Jews, when Christianity became the official religion of the Byzantine empire. There are indications that some of these were stages in the parting of the ways but none in itself was a final breach, and that at every stage but the last there was no clarity in the matter.

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the long reach of time, because of supreme excellence, come, after being purified, to share completely in divine qualities." For this reason, *daimones* are sometimes called "gods." Gods who had once been men included Heracles, Orpheus, Alexander, and Asclepius (who is sometimes mortal and sometimes a god).

[10] See Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law*; *Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (New York, 1990), p. 281.

[11] E.H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* (New York, 1965).

[12] Ibid., pp. 28–29. But see below for a discussion.

It may be observed that the church apparently proclaimed that its first mission was to Israel and not to the nations. Matthew 10:5 presents the instruction to the apostles that they are not to "go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. [10:6] Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel." Even when the mission is extended to all nations (Matt. 28:19) the instruction to teach everything that they had been taught by Jesus simply is in line with the prophetic ideology of *ki mitzion tese torah*, "for out of Zion shall go forth the Law."[13] The word of God was to be mediated to all nations as an obligation upon, and as a historic mission of, the Jews. Thus the concerted missionary approach described in the Gospels was not unknown in Jewish history and was an expression of Jewish ideology. Like all Jewish religious philosophies of the time, Jesus' teaching, in so far as we are able establish what it was, was endowed with trans-Judaic elements.

The need for caution in speaking of the early church as a sect must be emphasized. It was a branch of the Jewish philosophical tree and had no homogeneity. The New Testament canon does not constitute the foundation of the unity of the Church; earliest Christianity is an amalgam of divergent traditions—traditions of doctrine, of worship, of church-order, of sacramental practice and Christian experience at large. The question, as with all groups, was would it survive and how would the trans-Judaic elements in its thinking and writings develop. The early church was Jewish in leadership and membership; its members preached and functioned in Synagogues, had Rabbinic traditions and characteristics for guiding conduct, and the church never lost all traces of Rabbinic halakhah. While it is often compared with the *Yahad* of the Qumran documents, it took another direction. While one of the Qumran documents decreed that converts went through a novitiate and then were subject to the legal observances and obligations of the group into which they were converted, the early Christians argued that converts were not necessarily to be held to legal observances (Acts 15:5–11). Possible relationships between Qumran and early Christianity should caution us to look more closely at this difference. On scrutiny, one sees that early Christianity had not necessarily turned its back on the law as some have argued. Indeed it could not have done, as halakhic elements constantly reappear in the Christian tradition.

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[13] See Acts 8:16; 19:5; Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 1:13; 10:2, and Gal. 3:27.

One should note that in Paul the word Law, *nomos*, has several different meanings, and one cannot take any translation at face value but must attempt exegetically to determine the meaning of what is said. In some places it means the external regulation of conduct and applies to ethical teaching as well as to anything else. Sometimes it means Torah, or Judaism as practiced by Jews, and in Galatians it refers to the ceremonial laws as they concern Gentile converts. Paul (Rom. 2:11–13: "All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous") seems to espouse the Jewish idea that law is there to guide and that if one sins in or out of the law it is the same. He then seems to bespeak the Noachian covenant that there is a natural law that affects everyone and that those who do not know the law as gentiles are still bound to carry out the precepts of the law as if by nature, and the effects should be engraved on their hearts. The indication that observance of the Noachian laws results in salvation is drawn from the Jewish religious ideology of the day.[14] Very telling is Paul's statement on circumcision, which Schweitzer[15] regarded as central to the Pauline ideas. Paul's view, "For circumcision is nothing and foreskin is nothing but keeping the commandments of God," is surely a statement that if gentiles keep the law they may not be inclined to give their minds, and it is better that their minds and spirits are given to God than that they observe what to them might be a formality. Quite plainly Paul is speaking the Jewish tradition, though his view is habitually misunderstood.[16]

This seems to the writer to be one of the first partings of the ways—not the matter of the law but the misunderstanding of what is being said in the Gospels. Sometimes, in earlier Patristic writings, the misunderstanding is willful; sometimes misunderstanding arises because the text is edited to reflect or support an interpretation. One may suspect that among a previous generation of scholars, particu-

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[14] See the discussion in Maimonides, *Hilchot Melahim* 8:11. See also the brief statement in the introduction to *Avot* in the Jakobovits revision of the *Authorised Daily Prayer Book* (1990), pp. 477–478.

[15] This statement depends on the secondary discussion in Tomson, *Paul*, p. 280.

[16] On the Jewish attitude to Law and its consequences for Jewish-Christian relationships, see below.

larly among the group of scholars who walked in the shadow of the nineteenth century German exegetes, antisemitism was a factor in New Testament interpretation. Beyond the scholarly world one suspects that the Gospels are read in ignorance of the history and other literature of the period.

It should be stressed that it was not the teachings recorded in the Gospels that caused any definitive breach between Judaism and Christianity. Judaism was not a monolithic ideology allied to a monolithic law. It was as heterogeneous in its ideas as was primitive Christianity. Almost every teaching of the Gospels would have been known elsewhere in Judaism among one or other of its so-called philosophies.

In Galatians, Paul seems to be preaching the prophetic adjuration that the practice of the Law without corresponding sensibility to its underlying spiritual purposes and meaning is not valid. While the suggestion that the heart alone has to be involved in matters between man and God might seem to be quite new, there are parallels in traditional Jewish thinking on this same viewpoint extending through the prophets onwards. The idea extends to the view that is sometimes held to be the most important contribution of Christianity to the new spirituality—that the Temple can be set aside and the people itself would form a spiritual temple. This teaching is seen in both the Qumran scrolls, some of whose writers are alleged to have turned their backs on the Jerusalem Temple, and among the Samaritans, whose temple had been destroyed c. 128 B.C.E. It is mainstream to Judaism both before and after the destruction of the Temple, based on the Torah, that the Jewish people is a holy people, an *am segulah*, consecrated to God, as spiritual and holy as the Temple itself. Like Christianity, after the Temple is gone, holiness replaces all. Judaism's concern with the means of atonement without sacrifice is surely that the nation is regarded as consecrated and the lack of formal atonement rituals leaves open the question of how to maintain, rather than attain, a state of spiritual purity. The concern with purity rituals is but a tangible expression of the idea of the need to be in a state of grace. The ideology is not Christian in origin but Jewish, but both traditions declare different methods of reaching the same goal.

One fundamental difference between Judaism and Christianity lies not in ritual and not in law but in whether humans can find God by themselves, that is, without an intermediary. While the divinity

of Jesus was not accepted by Jews other than those who became Christians, the idea of the man becoming divine was not uncommon in the period and the place and would not have occasioned great surprise in the country of Jesus' birth. However, there is more involved in the importance of the place of Jesus in primitive Christianity than the matter of divinity, which is an important step in setting Judaism and Christianity apart.

The suggestion in the New Testament that humans without Jesus are lost souls speaks not of the liberty of the spirit but of its imprisonment. Self-merit is apparently not enough for salvation. Deeds are not enough to reach communion with the Almighty. Instead there is a concept of dependence on the merit of one's fathers and even on one individual. Judaism had something of this in its concept of *zekhut avot*, seen very clearly in an almost trans-Judaic form in early Samaritan teaching. In Rabbinic doctrine the concept of *zekhut avot* was an inadequate ground for salvation. In Rom. 11:26–28, salvation is through Christ and the merit of the fathers and ultimately through the fulfillment of the prophecy of the law going out of Zion. The latter would remain a Jewish ideology, the first two were steps on the road to the parting of the ways.

The persecution of members of the early church by the Jews, which is regarded by the Church Fathers and some scholars as the cause of the separation between Judaism and Christianity, was not consistent nor was it the struggle of one religious truth against another truth, and it was not the result of a recognition that Christianity was a corpus of beliefs that was very different from Judaism. What it shows, just as criticism by pagan observers demonstrates,[17] is that the process of Christian self-definition was beginning in that there was a developing group of people who called themselves Christians but who had not yet clarified their beliefs; nor were they identifiably very different from Jews, nor their religion from Judaism. The force of the events described in the Gospels has to be seen in the light both of inner Jewish history and the retrospective growing hostility to Judaism expressed by the Gospel editors. No one castigates Jewry for its internecine religious and political struggles during the rebellion against Rome in 68–70 C.E., or for its ambivalence about

[17] *Dialogue with Trypho*, 10 or *CC* II.4: "you cannot name any other origin for your doctrine than our law."

Samaritanism, which sometimes verged on open hostility and led to conflict and at other times acknowledged the Samaritans as Israelites. Unfortunately, the Church Fathers had a sharp axe to grind in that they were involved in generating Christian ideology. Their modern interpreters are too prone to anathematize first century Jewry for its internecine struggles with the group of its own members that created a philosophy that, in retrospect, became Christian.

Once again an analogy can be drawn with the Samaritans. Here was a group that, unlike the Christians, had attained status as an identifiable people who stated themselves to be Israelites rather than Jews.[18] Like the Christians they still observed the law in most respects even though they were a long way along the road to self determination in religious matters, having started the process of creating an oral halakhah of their own. Like the Christians they occasionally fell into exchanging blows with the Jews. Like the Gospels, the Samaritan sources exaggerate the degree, causes, and scope of the violent exchanges. Like the Christian sources, Samaritan sources are exceptionally bitter about their relationship with Jews. Observers of the Samaritans, like observers of the Christians, saw them as Jews and some still see them like that.[19] Though Samaritanism was much further developed than Christianity; Jews were quite uncertain whether Samaritans should be counted in the *klal Yisrael*, the body of Israel, or not, especially since the Samaritans maintained that they held the true Torah and were the true house of Israel. As with the Christians, it took until the second, and perhaps even the third, century C.E. for the process of self-definition to become developed sufficiently for Jews to see a parting of the ways from the Samaritans. What should be seen, then, in the sporadic incidents of violence against members of the early church, is purely an internecine struggle in which fear of political consequences colored events as much as and possibly more than, religious differences.[20]

The message is very clear. The hostility between Jews and Christians

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[18] The whole process is discussed in the author's "Redating the Schism between Judaeans and Samaritans," in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 82:1/2 (1991), pp. 17–50.

[19] See the discussion in James D. Purvis, "The Samaritans and Judaism," in Kraft and Nickelsburg, *Early Judaism*, pp. 81–116.

[20] See Arnaldo Momigliano, "Religious Opposition to the Roman Empire," in his *On Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Middletown, 1987), pp. 120–141, for the differing attitudes of Jews and Christians to the Romans and the way in which the differences colored their eschatological and apocalyptic expectations.

recorded in the Gospels should be seen in the light of developing events and retrospective editing. It is not a question of blaming or apportioning blame but of understanding a historic process. Views in both Gospels and Church fathers of an early unified and monolithic church and persecution by a hostile Jewry should be put down to a tradition of history writing that was hostile to Judaism. Of all the political and religious struggles of the time, the Gospel writers only highlighted those that create a picture of Jewish opposition to the primitive church. In fact, the truth is that in a time of great political stress, when the second Jewish Commonwealth was being split by class struggles and political oppression,[21] Jews of different political and religious persuasions turned against other Jews. Schism was perceived to bring down the wrath of the ruling powers on schismatics and there was a fear of public action that would result in punishment on all involved. The matter is surely clarified by the attitude of Gamaliel reported in Acts 5:38–39, who sees the breach with Peter and the apostles as a matter between the state and a body of men who have human quarrels with others. Gamaliel cites several other examples of rebels and their followers who had disappeared from view when their causes petered out. The early Tannaim apparently saw the Christians as Jews with responsibilities to *klal Yisrael* and in times of persecution that affected all Jews, just as much in need of their protection as any of their brethren would have been.

As for the question of a formal parting through excommunication by the Tannaim, there is considerable doubt that such a procedure was used against the early Judaeo-Christians. Flannery[22] and others[23] have argued that the introduction of the twelfth benediction, the *brachah laminim*, in the *Amidah* prayer, at Yavneh,[24] the headquarters of the Rabbinic sages after the destruction of the Temple in 70, was a formal excommunication of the sectaries, who had been Jewish

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[21] Momigliano, "What Josephus Did Not See," in op. cit., pp. 108–119, indicates that the presence of Romans in the provinces exacerbated disputes between rich and poor.

[22] Flannery, *Anguish*, pp. 28–29.

[23] See the article on "*Herem*" in *Encyclopedia Judaica*. See also C.K. Barrett, *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents* (San Francisco, revised ed., 1987), pp. 210–211. Barrett argues for a first century date for the blessing and suggests that it was introduced as a test, since no heretic would pronounce it.

[24] See R. Kimelman, "*Birkat Haminim* and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in Sanders, *Self-Definition*, pp. 226–244.

but were now being identified as Christian. It is claimed that an official letter was sent from Yavneh to the Jewish Diaspora, giving an account of Jesus, his followers, and the new religion, with a warning that Jews should have no dealing with Jesus' followers. Even if such a letter were sent, it should not be seen as a watershed marking a clear breach between Jews and Christians. There is ample evidence that the *brachah*—blessing—or perhaps better in this case, invocation—was formulated for use in the Hellenic Syrian wars and was directed at collaborating Jews. It was invoked subsequently against the Sadducees and then against Christians and Jewish Gnostics. This evidence would suggest that, since the invocation was directed always at deviant Jews, the Christians of the Yavneh period were still perceived as being deviant Jews. Studies of the application of the term *min* in the Tannaitic and early Palestinian Amoraic literature would support this viewpoint.[25]

Tertullian, the third century Church Father, in reporting libels leveled against Jesus, notes that he is accused of being a Samaritan possessed by a devil (*de Spectaculis xxx PL 1 662*), ample confirmation that the Jews saw Christians in the same way that they saw Samaritans before the fourth century, as Israelites with differing religious practices but with the same basic theological premises for their practices.

This confirmation also supports the view that the first stage in Christian self-definition was to decide who was Christian and who was not. It was only in the second stage that there was an attempt to ensure the clarity and homogeneity of the Church's teaching that could have ensured that the Church was distinct, and, from the Jewish point of view, heretical. Part of the Church's move to self-definition and deciding who was Christian was the abandonment of some of the characteristics of Judaism that virtually all Greco-Roman observers saw as constitutive of Jewish identity. These were circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week, abstention from certain foods, and the worship of one God. After it had become possible to identify Christians as separate from Judaism it is clear that there was no uniformity of belief and that many had practices that were akin to those of the Jews. Critics observed that Christians disagreed among themselves, that "Christians slander one another with dreadful and unspeakable words of abuse"

[25] Ibid., p. 228.

(*CC V.63*) and that there were several sects among Christians (*CC V.61*).[26] In any event Christians and Jews shared the same non-canonical literature, both contributed to it, and there is no certainty that contemporary observers were aware of the ultimate significance of the different stances taken by the writers.[27]

It is clear that there was a reluctance of Jews to break with the law, a reluctance that stemmed neither from hostility to Gentiles, nor from obduracy, nor from being a means of avoiding true spirituality. This reluctance is exemplified in the report of Aquila's discussion with Hadrian (*Midrash Exodus Rabbah*) in which he stated that he wanted to be converted to Judaism and was instructed to be converted and to study but not to be circumcised. Aquila's response, that no amount of study could bring acceptance without circumcision, reflects the situation that however much Judaism attracted proselytes, they could not be Jews without submitting to the Jewish law. The history of Judaism in its emergence through the Israelite tradition, which had the basic tenet that the world and its history were the *Magnolia Dei*, the creative and mighty acts of God, had been one of a struggle against paganism and the practices of idolatry, licentiousness, and the worship of the natural world. There was a self evident reluctance to join to themselves things and people who served the pagan world. Wine that had been used for libations was unacceptable. Buildings that were adorned in the spirit of pagan temples were avoided (but could be used in the name of Yahweh).

Some sign was expected of converts to show their devotion to the God of history, and in the case of males that sign was the willingness to accept one test of their authentic wish to be Jewish, circumcision. The point of adherence to the law was that it demonstrated an unwillingness to flirt with the pagan world. While halakhic rituals were not inflexibly ordered, and there was room for discussion on a range of matters, there was no room left in ritual or halakhic theory for anything that was deviant or could be contaminated with the pagan. Ritual was not routine and practice was not ritualistic; it could be devout, spiritual, and have an individual inner meaning. It simply locked out of the reckoning a dalliance with the pagan

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[26] Wilken, "The Christians as the Romans and Greeks Saw Them," p. 119.

[27] Momigliano, "Josephus," p. 115, notes that the Sybilline Oracles were written by both Jews and Christians including interpolations into the basic Jewish text and the addition of wholly Christian books.

rites. The fence that was to be built round the law[28] was the protective palisade of ritual against contamination of the religion by pagan activities.

Not only was the refusal of members of the early church to circumcise proselytes seen as a denial of the law, new rites were introduced that seemed to be influenced by the pagan world. Some of teachings and rites of early Christianity were touched with gnosticism or perhaps even the rituals of the Dionysian cult. Contemporaries must have begun to see in this second phase of Christianity as it moved from its primitive state of identifying Christians to the stage of establishing beliefs and practices a branch of Judaism that had turned its back on the historical God of the Torah and adopted a new God. Jewish observers, like the classical writers, must have seen in this a form of the paganism against which Judaism had fought a long conflict.

The death and resurrection of the God was the central mystery of all the great religions of the Middle East except for Judaism. Tammuz, Adonis, Baal, the Osiris cycles were assuredly well known to the Tannaim. Likewise, the idea of a messiah as God rather than an agent of God was alien to Judaism. The concept of the virgin birth must have been seen as mythic, not Hebraic. Virgin birth was a feature to be found in the known myths of the Danae and the Zoroastrian myth of Saoshyant.[29] The babe in the manger story could have been seen in Mithra's birth from the mother rock.[30] It is reasonably clear that where there was an overlap between the ideas and teaching of the early church and the myths of the pagan world, some degree of contact is to be found or expected. The Feasts of the Magi fell on the date of the Egyptian birth of the new Aion (personification of Osiris) that is on Jan. 6 and not on Dec. 25 as today.[31] Matthew's story of the slaughter of innocents has a parallel in the Krishna tale that is known from 300 B.C.E. It is clear that in

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[28] M. Avot 1:1. The teaching is a primary statement of the Men of the Great Assembly.

[29] Joseph Campbell, *Occidental Mythology*, *Masks of God III* (London, 1991) deals extensively with the parallels between the ancient mythologies and rites and early Christianity.

[30] The difference between the Lukan and Matthian nativity has been seen as indicating that a mythic element was absorbed into the nativity account.

[31] The change in date to December 25 was instituted in 354 C.E.

the atmosphere of the Levant at the time of the birth of Christianity it was inevitable that the savior image of Jesus and the beliefs of Christians should have been in danger of contamination or perceived as contaminated from pagan ideas and of being touched by pagan cults in one way or another.[32]

Paul warned of this in Romans and in 1 Cor. 10:14–29. In a passage that bears several interpretations but that is well in keeping with Paul's knowledge of the halakhah he warned that idolatry can easily contaminate the practices of the church.

> [10:14] Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. [10:15] I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. [10:16] Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? [10:17] Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.
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> [10:18] Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? [10:19] Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? [10:20] No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. [10:21] You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

He argues that the table and the fellowship rituals of Judaism have a clear spiritual intent, that the ritual meal devoted to God is also a partaking of the altar sacrifices. Clearly, he has been asked a question about some ritual related with the Eucharist, and he warns the Corinthians that the blessing of wine could be confused with a pagan rite as well as be seen with a spiritual Christian intent.

Any doubts about the nexus between some Christian ideas and the pagan world should be dispelled by the Nag Hammadi writings of the early Christian Gnostics.[33] The Nag Hammadi finds show the pagan-Christian assimilation at work. The flowering of the Gnostic

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[32] For a brief examination of the contamination of Christian practices by paganism, see Momigliano, "How Roman Emperors Became Gods," in *On Pagans*, pp. 92–107. Momigliano notes that some Christians offered sacrifices to the statue of Constantine.

[33] The writer is in no doubt that gnosticism was native to Palestine and arose in a Jewish environment and ultimately had a major influence on Qabbalistic thinking.

movement was in the middle of the second century when Judaism was in the process of withdrawing from Christianity, as Christianity moved towards the final stage of its self-definition.

It is not only a twentieth century retrospective judgment that sees the mystery cult linkage with Christianity. Contemporaries viewed the elements of the oriental mysteries mixed with Christian-Jewish origins and saw in Christianity a superstition and wrote of it in those terms. Each of the different varieties of Christianity evoked a different adjective from classical observers—*superstitio prava, immodica, exitiabilis, nova et malefica*—but to each was attached the word superstition. While Judaism, within the classical experience, was strange but known, Christianity was new, irrational, and not a genuine religion. Paul's rash assertion that "God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish" (1 Cor. 1:17, 25) was well known in the late classical world, and the idea of salvation by faith was caricatured as impiety. Athenagoras in his *Pleas for Christians* indicated that most anti-Christian opposition in the second century was not from the Jews but hinged on the view that pagans saw Christianity in the same light as they saw their own religions, saying "is it not wonderful that they should get up tales about us such as they tell about their own gods?" (see *PG* vi 894 and 964).

In the second century, Marcion, the heretic Christian, proposed a New Testament divorced from the Old Testament on the basis of the teachings of Luke and Paul. Marcion, a Gnostic, argued that only Paul understood the true Christ and founded churches among Gentiles, but these were now being corrupted by Judaizing tendencies and he, Marcion, wanted to speak out against them.

Marcion placed emphasis on faith alone and in no wise on works, teaching, or knowledge. So powerful were his arguments and so great his following that the fathers of the Church, especially Tertullian, were forced to reshape the Gospels, c. 150–250,[34] to incorporate his ideas and to reinterpret the work of Paul within a narrower framework that lost from Christianity Paul's fine balancing act between

[34] K.W. Clark, "Textual Criticism and Doctrine" in his *The Gentile Bias and Other Essays* (Leiden, 1980), pp. 90–103. Clark notes that many variants are of a textual-doctrinal character involving conceptions of God, man, sacraments, inspiration, resurrection, and future life, and goes on to examine some of these variants and their doctrinal implications. He states that Tertullian accused Marcion of corrupting the Pauline text (p. 93).

the practice of the Law and belief. Paul's view of the Law is that it was to be observed by those Christians born as Jews just as he himself appears to have observed the law all his life. The new teaching, with its own Christian halakhic elements as well as its Jewish halakhic continuum,[35] was still considered to be a fulfillment of the old, but it appears to have dropped all socio-political ideals in favor of the spiritual ones of Marcion. The Gnostic idea of a judgment at the literal end of world was adopted, but at a price, namely, that many cultic rites invaded the Church's teaching.

These rites were dropped in the fourth century when Gnosticism was eliminated as a rival. The Church was forced into the mould of Paul. Paul laid the basis for a Christianity that developed a unity of belief without dissension in place of a Judaism in which belief was pluralistic with practices that were uniform and without dissension. Paul wrote, "I appeal to you that all of you agree that there be no dissensions among you but you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. Be imitators of me as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1; i.e., follow Paul without stepping sideways). Judaism, then, was a religion that was neither to turn aside to the right nor to the left in practice, whereas Christianity eventually was to become a religion in which efforts were made to ensure that believers were to turn aside neither to the right nor to the left in matters of belief.

The parting of ways was in the re-interpretation of Pauline ideas and the adaptation of Marcionic traditions and their rewriting into the Gospels. It is clear that the actual divorce took several more centuries, for church and synagogue shared their basic root stock, their common heritage, and never quite shook off the relationship. The reason for the delay in the final parting was that between theory and practice was a huge gulf. It was not until the Council of Nicaea and the promulgation of the Athanasian creed that the gulf was bridged to the detriment of Jewry but not Judaism.

Before the final rift of the Athanasian creed lies the watershed of Constantine (r. 311–324 C.E.). Converted to Christianity, he transformed a religion that had been indifferent to politics and to the

[35] Among halakhic elements to be noted in the Gospels are commands concerning divorce (1 Cor. 7:10); head covering of women (1 Cor. 11:5); eucharist procedures (1 Cor. 11:23–26); silence of women during worship (1 Cor. 14:34–37); marital relations (1 Cor. 7:3); remarriage of widows (1 Cor. 7:39); community benedictions (1 Cor. 14:16).

current social order into a secular religion of empire (*MG* III 386). The victory of Christianity was not that of its prophet but of a kingly convert. Christianity in Constantine's day faced the Arian heresy that declared that Christ was neither a true god nor a true man but absolutely unknowable and alone. Christ as a created being could not be God. Constantine summoned a Council of Bishops to Nicaea to help weld his empire into one spiritual block for political rather than spiritual reasons. The first act of the 300 episcopal participants was to set a date for Easter, effectively separating Christians from Jews. They then set about dealing with the Arian heresy.

The creed composed for the Council, the Athanasian Creed, helped to unify the church and establish a monolithic religion out of the preceding pluralism. Even then it contained many clearly Judaic elements, some Rabbinic, some biblical, some Qabbalistic.[36] Despite these, the work of the Council of Nicaea must be seen as the parting of the ways for Judaism and Christianity, to be reinforced in effect within one generation by the ban of Theodosius the Great (r. 379–395) on any other religions in his empire.

The transition from being a group within Judaism to becoming a self-defined Christian group, which marks the parting of the ways with Judaism, was a long process. Definition of the transitional stages was clouded by the fact that despite the tussles between early Judaism and Christianity, as Celsus makes clear and Patristic arguments underline, Christianity insisted on an indissoluble link with Judaism as a necessary component of what it meant to be Christian. The separation took many years and went through several further definable stages. These include the crisis of identity created by confrontation with the gnostic movements and the Christianization of the Empire

[36] "We believe in one God, the Father all-sovereign, maker of all things, both visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, an only begotten; that is from the essence (ouvsia) of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God—begotten not made—being of one essence (omoousion) with the Father; by whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, was made man, suffered and rose again, the third day, ascended into heaven, cometh to judge the quick and the dead: And in the Holy Spirit. But those who say that 'there was once when he was not' and 'before he was begotten he was not' and 'he was made of things that were not' or maintain that the Son of God is of a different essence or created or subject to moral change or alteration—these doth the Catholic Apostolic Church anathematize."

under Constantine. It was these processes that made separation from Jewry inevitable and created the unique Church. On the one hand, Judaism reached the limits of intellectual toleration of heretical ideas, and, on the other, the Church began its rejection of its mother's all-embracing teaching, a rejection marked by political and physical confrontation.

ACTUALIZING MATTHEAN CHRISTOLOGY IN A POST-SUPERSESSIONIST CHURCH

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On April 14, 1999, in Chicago, Anthony Saldarini offered one of his last public addresses, the annual Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture. Entitled, "Christian Anti-Judaism: The First Century Speaks to the Twenty-first Century,"[1] it concerned two subjects that were major features of his professional career: the Matthean community and present-day relations between Christians and Jews. He argued forcefully in his introduction that Christianity has only just begun the enormous task of building a new relationship with Judaism and the Jewish people:

> Christians need to rethink and reform their theological tradition. A negative evaluation of Judaism has dominated Christian theology since the second century. This authoritative theological tradition goes by the names supersessionism, substitution, fulfillment, and replacement. The Christian church, according to this view, is the new people of God and the true Israel founded by a new covenant. Most Christians understand this view in a fairly crass fashion. Christians have superseded Jews, that is, Christians have set aside or forced out as inferior or taken the place of Jews. The old covenant is no longer valid because it has been replaced by a new covenant. The new covenant has completed, fulfilled, or perfected the preparatory, preliminary, temporary, imperfect, limited, defective old covenant. [. . .]
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> I concede immediately that this Christian supersessionist outlook has been seriously criticized by many Christian writers and teachers since World War II. But I emphasize to you that replacement theology has not been replaced. Despite thousands of dialogues, uncounted pages of criticism and frequent ecclesiastical pronouncements, Pharisees are still hypocrites to most Christians because Matthew says so (Matt. 23) and Jews are still legalistic because Paul criticized the law. For most Christians and in most educational textbooks and ecclesiastical documents, including the recent Catechism of the Catholic Church, Israel

[1] The text can be found online at: http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/research/cjl/articles/saldarini.htm.

> has value only insofar as it has provided the foundations for the Christian church. In the view of most Christians what is good in Jewish teachings and practices has been absorbed by, integrated into and subsumed under the new, final, and fully adequate revelation from God in Jesus Christ. To put the matter bluntly, for most Christians Judaism doesn't matter after Jesus Christ.

In his lecture, Prof. Saldarini went on to make a number of suggestions about pursuing this needed theological reform. First, he saw a parallel between the first century church, especially as represented by the Matthean community, and the church today. In both eras Jews and Christians "rub shoulders" on a regular basis. In the intervening centuries, Christians who never met Jews were taught contempt for them on the basis of abstract religious claims. But today, when Christians and Jews (especially in the United States) actually live together, "Real conflicts can be solved and real relationships can be worked out in contrast to universal, eternal prejudices which resist reason and experience."[2] Thus, Prof. Saldarini concluded that, "We may make more progress by speaking of the actual relationships of our communities in the first century as well as in the twentieth."[3] Such progress, he felt, was demanded because of his faith conviction that "God has called the Jewish and Christian communities to be his people in some sort of relationship with one another."[4]

Second, Prof. Saldarini proposed that "the New Testament, read in context, may subvert the anti-Jewish theology which it spawned and suggest new avenues of thought." In other words, the tremendous and diverse creativity of the New Testament authors may offer insights to today's church, which is also confronted with a need for theological creativity. As Prof. Saldarini explained:

> [T]he flexibility and openness of the New Testament has the potential to shake Christians loose from the over-determined traditions, attitudes and institutions which subordinate or annihilate the Jews. We need a robust, nuanced theology of Jews and Christians which grapples with the tensions and anguish of our history without the first-century polemics and the nineteen hundred years of theological anti-Judaism and social anti-Semitism.[5]

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[2] Ibid., "Matthew's Community."
[3] Ibid., "Creating a New Theology of Christians and Jews."
[4] Ibid., "God's Manifold People."
[5] Ibid., "Matthew's Community."

Third, Prof. Saldarini cogently observed that the Christian Trinitarian tradition must be emphasized while constructing post-supersessionist theologies:

> The triune Christian God is one reality with inner relations among three subsistents, the begetter, the begotten and the spirated one. [. . .] In all else, in all activity, in all relationships with humans, God is, acts, loves and saves as one, indivisibly. To say that God saves humans means that the Father saves as do the Son and the Spirit. To say that Jesus the Son of God saves is to say that God saves. When God saves Israel, in the Christian understanding of God, the Spirit of God and the Son of God as well as God the Father save Israel. God has acted and acts today in and for Israel and the church. [. . .] At the most fundamental level of theology Christians need to emphasize God more than they have and Jesus Christ as savior within the context of God's relationship to humanity. Christians too frequently center everything on Jesus to the detriment of the God who sent him, guided him and sustained him.[6]

This caution against Christomonism has implications for how salvation is understood and also bears on Prof. Saldarini's repeated references to "relationships," both among first- and twentieth-century Jews and Christians and in terms of the Triune God's interactions with humanity. They suggest to me that a theological emphasis on inter-relationships is necessary for the "radical intervention"[7] in the Christian religious imagination that Prof. Saldarini felt is urgently required today.

I am grateful for the opportunity to develop several of the above ideas in this essay in tribute to Anthony J. Saldarini. I have personally benefited from his generosity and scholarship in a number of ways. Prof. Saldarini was a member of my dissertation committee and provided important counsel in conducting a content analysis of the presentation of Jews and Judaism in primary and secondary Catholic religion textbooks.[8] He was also a colleague and leading voice in the Catholic Biblical Association of America's continuing seminar on Biblical Issues in Jewish-Christian Relations. In addition,

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[6] Ibid., "Creating a New Theology of Christians and Jews." Cf. my *A Story of Shalom: The Calling of Christians and Jews by a Covenanting God* (New York and Mahwah, 2001), pp. 10, 65.

[7] Saldarini, ibid., "The Need for a New Christian Theology of Israel."

[8] This was later published as *Education for Shalom: Religion Textbooks and the Enhancement of the Catholic and Jewish Relationship* (Collegeville and Philadelphia, 1995).

Prof. Saldarini was an enthusiastic supporter of the establishment of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College. I will always regret that illness struck before we were able to work together on Center activities. However, as Daniel J. Harrington noted during the homily he delivered at Tony's funeral, the Center's work in the future will be a testimony to Tony's lasting legacy as a teacher, scholar, and friend.[9]

Matthean Christology

In many writings, Prof. Saldarini persuasively argued that the Gospel of Matthew arose in a predominately Jewish church that was competing for influence in a Jewish world traumatized by the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. He claimed that this could be seen both in the harsh polemic that the evangelist directs at Pharisaic rivals, but also in the thoroughly Jewish categories of thought in which the Gospel operates. As he noted in the Bernardin lecture: "Matthew's Jesus fits comfortably within first-century Jewish understandings of how God guides human affairs and acts through divinely empowered agents. Typological associations of Jesus with Moses, personified Wisdom and the prophets resonate deeply with first-century Jewish understandings of history and its heroes."[10]

Indeed, a case could be made that in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is seen as a sort of personal reprise and culmination of preceding Jewish history. Let me quickly sketch this out on the basis of fairly widespread opinions among Matthean scholars.

Matthew's infancy narrative commences with a tripartite list of Jesus' descent from Abraham that is partitioned at the reign of David (1:6) and at the Babylonian exile (1:11, 12). The evangelist explicitly draws his readers' attention to this organization of the genealogy, "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ, fourteen generations" (1:17). This deliberate structure suggests that Jesus, son of Abraham, son of David, is being born "in the fullness

[9] Daniel Harrington's moving homily may be found at: http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/research/cjl/articles/harrington_homily.htm.

[10] Saldarini, ibid., "Matthew's Community."

of time," at the end of the exilic epoch. The Davidic link is very strong if, as many scholars suspect, *gematria* was at work in the organization of three groups of fourteen generations. Thus, the name David = *d*+*w*+*d* = 4+6+4 = 14.[11] The birth of Jesus, then, represents the coming of an eschatological Davidic reign, culminating all of Israel's hopes.

As is well known, the Matthean genealogy also features five notable women who hold in common unusual sexual histories. Tamar (Matt. 1:3) disguises herself as a prostitute to become pregnant by her father-in-law (Gen. 38). Rahab (Matt. 1:5) is a prostitute in Jericho who assists Joshua's spies (Josh. 2). Ruth (Matt. 1:5) is a pagan who in effect seduces her future husband (Ruth 3–4), while the unnamed wife of Uriah (Bathsheba, Matt. 1:6) commits adultery with King David (2 Sam. 11:2–5). Finally, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is found by her fiancé to be pregnant before their marriage (Matt. 1:18–25). The point of so mentioning these particular five women would seem to be that despite, or even because of, the extraordinary circumstances of their stories God worked through them to advance divine plans for Israel. The coming of Jesus draws together and culminates the story of his people, whom he will save (1:21).

A further feature of Matthew's Gospel are the numerous "fulfillment passages" that explicitly relate Jesus to the Hebrew prophets (1:22–23; 2:5–6, 14–15, 17–18, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9). While these verses are often simply read as the realization in the life of Jesus of predictions made in Israel's past, Matthew's sophisticated use of Hosea in the infancy narrative manifests a more complex engagement with Israel's scriptures. Hosea 11:1, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son," is obviously referring to Israel's defining experience of God in the Exodus, an event centuries in Hosea's past. Matthew is assuredly aware of this but describes the verse as "fulfilled" centuries after the time of Hosea in the flight of the newborn Jesus to Egypt (Matt. 2:15). Since Matthew surely realized that Hosea was not making a prediction, it is better to understand Matthew's use of him as expressing the Matthean conviction that God's historical interactions with Israel were reprised in an intensified individual form in the life of

[11] W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 161–165.

Jesus. The same pattern can be seen in other "fulfillment passages," such as Matthew's citation of Jer. 31:15–17, a non-predictive lament of Israel's sufferings at the hands of the Babylonians, but which Matthew sees as "fulfilled" (i.e., recapitulated) in the grief that attends Herod's slaughter of infants (Matt. 2:17–18).

This latter passage is an example of another Matthean device; namely, allusions in his telling of the story of Jesus to famous Hebrew persons or events of the past. Thus, Jesus, like Moses, was rescued as an infant from a murderous king (2:16–18). Joseph, his mother's husband, receives dream-messages like his biblical forebear (1:20; 2:13, 22). And perhaps most importantly, Jesus' ministry begins with three temptations in the desert that correspond to the experiences of Israel in the desert after the exodus (cf. Exod. 16:1–3; 17:1–2, 7; 32:1–4 and Matt. 4:3–10). However, where Israel son of God failed, Jesus Son of God succeeds. He is, in effect, presented as the perfect Son of Israel, the perfect Jew, doing God's will perfectly.

Beginning with B.W. Bacon,[12] some have suggested that Matthew's Gospel is organized for instructional purposes and note that it contains five sermons of Jesus (5:1–7:29; 9:36–10:42; 13:1–52; 17:22–18:35; and 23:1–25:46), possibly recalling the five books of the Torah. Be that as it may, in the first of these—the "Sermon on Mount" (which in Luke 6:17ff. occurs on a level place)—Jesus is depicted as a new Moses, presenting the definitive, eschatological teaching about the Torah. After stating that Jesus has come not to abolish the law or the prophets but to fulfill them (Matt. 5:17), the sermon goes on to present six pericopae in which Jesus employs the recurrent formula, "you have heard it said of old . . . but I say to you . . ." (5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43). The formula indicates the superlative personal authority of the one whom Matthew has consistently portrayed as embodying and climaxing Israel's historical experience of God.

Jesus' personal authority is further illuminated in the middle of the Gospel. The Matthean Jesus is linked to the figure of the Wisdom of God who is vindicated by her deeds (11:19). She, like the Matthean Jesus, is the one whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light and who gives comfort to those who come to her (cf. Matt. 11:19, 28–30; Sirach 6:18–37; 24:19–24; 51:23–27). There is some debate in Matthean scholarship as to whether the evangelist thinks of Jesus as

[12] Benjamin Wisner Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York, 1930).

the Wisdom of God personified or simply wishes to associate him with Wisdom to the ultimate degree. However, there is little doubt that he brings to bear the authority of the Wisdom of God—that same Wisdom who in the books of Proverbs and Sirach was with God at the creation, took up her abode in Israel, dwelt in the Temple, and was enshrined in the Torah. This explains why in the Sermon on the Mount the Matthean Jesus is able on the basis of his personal authority ("*I* say to you . . .") to teach Torah definitively. If the Torah expresses God's Wisdom in written form, then who better to define its meaning than the one who virtually makes Wisdom present as the perfect son of Abraham? As Matthew puts it in chapter 12, in Jesus is something greater than the Temple (12:6, where according to Sir. 24:10 wisdom has taken up her abode). The Matthean Jesus is greater than the prophet Jonah, who caused the pagan superpower of his day to repent (12:41), and he is greater than Solomon, famed for the depth of the wisdom he received from God (12:42).

To sum up, Matthew's portrayal of Jesus shows him as both the recapitulation and climax of Israel's long history of relationship with God and also as one with divine authority to teach God's will conclusively. Jesus' disciples, Matthew's church, are to carry this teaching everywhere with the assurance that the one who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth will be with them always until the eschaton is established in its fullness (Matt. 28:18–20).

Actualizing Matthean Christology Today

Matthew's exposition of the significance of Jesus Christ was naturally immersed in his social circumstance of competition for influence in the post-Temple Jewish world. As Prof. Saldarini observed, the Matthean Jesus is "presented as a divinely warranted teacher who is messianic ruler and eschatological judge. Jesus' status and access to God, according to Matthew, transcend any authority found elsewhere in the Jewish community."[13]

Christianity is not in the same historical situation today. As a distinct, even if related, religious tradition, the overwhelming majority

[13] Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago and London, 1994), p. 178.

of Christians are not competing with Jewish leaders for influence over Jewish communities.[14] Nor do Christians today share Matthew's imminent eschatological expectations, which, even if not as intense as some other New Testament writers, hardly anticipated that untold millennia would transpire before the establishment of the Age to Come. Thus, Christians today can encounter a dynamic Jewish tradition that has evolved over time from roots in Rabbinic traditions that were not written until after Matthew's generation. Finally, most churches today have begun to grapple with the awful legacy of the Shoah, a horror that was made possible by Christian anti-Jewish theologies. Those replacement or supersessionist theologies made use of Matthew's polemics in ways that the evangelist who wrote, "by their fruits you shall know them" (Matt. 7:16, 20) would presumably disavow if he could.

This brings us to the question of actualization. How should Christians bring the Matthean scriptures to life in our world today? Can we, as Prof. Saldarini suggested, creatively develop "new avenues of thought" by reading the New Testament in context?

A word about the meaning of "actualization" is in order here. In my own Roman Catholic tradition, biblical interpretation is understood to involve a dialogue between present-day faith communities and those communities of long ago in which the biblical texts were composed. As the Pontifical Biblical Commission describes it:

> Such dialogue will mean establishing a relationship of continuity. It will also involve acknowledging differences. Hence the interpretation of Scripture involves a work of sifting and setting aside; it stands in continuity with earlier exegetical traditions, many elements of which it preserves and makes its own; but in other matters it will go its own way, seeking to make further progress.[15]

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[14] I include the caveat "overwhelming majority" to acknowledge the existence of self-identified "messianic Jews" or "Jews for Jesus," who can be understood as competing with Rabbinic authorities for the hearts and minds of Jews, seemingly especially those who are not well educated in the Rabbinic tradition. Their understanding of Christianity typically denies religious legitimacy to Rabbinic Judaism, whose adherents are not "saved" unless they acknowledge Jesus as their messiah. The ongoing vitality of Rabbinic Judaism is absorbed into various eschatological scenarios that often include an ingathering of Jews into the modern State of Israel. In this they differ from major Christian denominations that are coming to a deeper appreciation of Rabbinic Judaism in terms of its own religious experience.

[15] Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, III, A, 3 in *Origins* 23/29 (January 6, 1994), pp. 497–524.

Therefore, how is the Matthean context of rivalry with his Jewish contemporaries to be "set aside" in the Christian community of the twenty-first century? How do Christians preserve and make their own Matthew's christological insights without perpetuating its associated polemic? Is it possible to disentangle the two? Frankly, it must be if Christianity is to be credible ethically in a post-Shoah world.

In the Roman Catholic tradition, which has officially rejected the idea that God had cursed the Jewish people for the eternal blood guilt of the crucifixion (a perennial construal of Matt. 27:25), the challenge has been put very pointedly by the Pontifical Biblical Commission:

> Particular attention is necessary, according to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council (*Nostra Aetate*, 4), to avoid absolutely any actualization of certain texts of the New Testament which could provoke or reinforce unfavorable attitudes toward the Jewish people. The tragic events of the past must, on the contrary, impel all to keep unceasing in mind that, according to the New Testament, the Jews remain "beloved" of God, "since the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:28–29).[16]

In his Bernardin lecture, Prof. Saldarini asked, "So how shall Christians speak of God, Jesus Christ, Israel and the church?"[17]

> If Christian theological teaching does not change, then Christian thought and attitudes will not change and, inevitably, the traditional anti-Jewish teachings will reappear in new ways and anti-Semitism will go on and on. The problem of anti-Semitism in the Christian community and of anti-Judaism in Christian theology is rooted in the New Testament, has flourished in almost all Christian theologies and societies for centuries and is alive and well today despite massive efforts by Jews and Christians since World War II. Radical intervention is required.[18]

For the purposes of this essay, allow me to focus the question this way: can Matthew's christological approach be actualized in a post-supersessionist Church so as to ground theologically an affirmative relationship between the present-day Jewish and Christian communities?

Taking a cue from Matthew's depiction of Jesus as the embodiment of Israel's experience of God, as the perfect Jew and as the

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[16] Ibid., IV, A, 3.

[17] Saldarini, Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture, "Creating a New Theology of Christians and Jews."

[18] Ibid., "The Need for a New Christian Theology of Israel."

human expression of God's divine Wisdom, I would suggest that today we articulate the Church's christological tradition in relational terms. By this I mean an approach to the "being-ness" or *ontos* of some existing thing that stresses its interrelationships with other things that exist. Being "human," for example, is largely determined by an individual's interactions with others over the course of a lifetime. This is so much the case that children raised with little or no human contacts develop grave personality impairments.

So, too, the human Jesus was "formed" in his humanity through his upbringing and life in the rich heritage of the Jewish people of the late Second Temple period. Christian faith understands Jesus also to incarnate the divine *Logos* of God, but that "Word" is defined through interrelationship with the other subsistents of the Triune One. A relational approach to the divine *Logos* apprehends that God's revealing Word is not so much disclosing factual data as it is inviting human beings into relationship with God.

Thus, it is the Church's experience that Jesus Christ incarnates both Israel's covenantal relationship with God and God's constant divine self-revealing Word that brings people into relationship with the Triune God.

By embodying Israel's covenantal life with God, Jesus, the faithful Son of Israel, epitomized what life in covenant was and is all about. Covenant is a sharing, a walking in life together that brings mutual responsibilities to the participants in it. Israel's experience of being in covenant with God and of trying to walk in God's Way has included times of disaster and suffering that were brought about by a combination of internal failings and external Gentile hostility. However, the people of Israel have also experienced restorations and revivals after these calamities.

For Christians, Jesus walked God's Way with perfect fidelity and epitomized the perfect Jewish covenantal partner. Like Israel, he suffered for his faithfulness to God. He also experienced a divine covenantal restoration after his suffering that was uniquely eschatological in nature, a raising up to transcendent life that showed that death itself would be defeated in the inevitable Reign of God. The revelation of this exaltation discloses to the Church the identity of Jesus as the Triune God's Word that invites people into relationship. Through Christ, through the Crucified and Raised Jew, the Church continuously encounters God's sustaining invitation to and empowerment of covenantal life. Jesus Christ brings the Church into

an ongoing covenant with Israel's God. God's will for the Church, now become a Gentile assembly with deep roots in Israel's story, is made known through its Christ-shaped encounter with God.

If Jesus Christ is understood as personifying Israel's covenanting with God, and thereby making possible a similar if distinctive life for the Church, then Israel's covenanting with God in biblical times and down to the present must be permanent and vital. This would explain why the Church knows its own covenanting with God through Christ to also be permanent and vital. If Israel's covenanting could be obsolete or inert, then Christ would be mediating and inviting the Church to a relationship with God that is also susceptible to being rendered outmoded by God. This is unimaginable. It would be contrary to character of the God of Israel and of Jesus to establish a covenantal bonding that was not founded upon divine fidelity and empowerment.[19] A Matthean Christology actualized in a post-supersessionist Church can affirm Jesus as epitomizing and mediating Israel's covenanting life, and would thereby necessarily affirm the "covenant of eternal love which was never revoked"[20] between God and the Jewish people.

This relational approach to Matthew's Christology; namely, understanding Jesus Christ as embodying Israel's covenantal life and experiences, produces helpful (and necessary) interconnections with the Christian Trinitarian tradition, especially if that is also understood relationally. As Prof. Saldarini noted in his Bernardin lecture using classical Christian terms, "The triune Christian God is one reality with inner relations among three subsistents, the begetter, the begotten and the spirated one, or more familiarly, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In all else, in all activity, in all relationships with humans, God is, acts, loves and saves as one, indivisibly."

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[19] N.B. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *God's Mercy Endures Forever: Guidelines on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1988), p. 8: "[F]alse or demeaning portraits of a repudiated Israel may undermine Christianity as well. How can one confidently affirm the truth of God's covenant with all humanity and creation in Christ (see Rom 8:21) without at the same time affirming God's faithfulness to the Covenant with Israel that also lies at the heart of the biblical testimony?"

[20] John Paul II, "Address to Jewish Leaders in Miami" (Sept. 11, 1987), in Eugene J. Fisher and Leon Klenicki, eds., *Spiritual Pilgrimage: Pope John Paul II, Texts on Jews and Judaism, 1979–1995* (New York, 1995), p. 105.

Expressing this relationally, the Church knows God as constantly and simultaneously creating-sustaining, inviting into relationship, and empowering that invitation's acceptance. Everything that God is and does the three "subsistents" participate in utterly and totally. If that "subsistent" traditionally called the *Logos* is conceived relationally as the constant divine invitation into covenanting relationship, then humans are being invited into a sharing in life with God that mirrors on a mortal scale the inner relationality of the Triune God. Christians might say that the divine invitation to relationship that the Church finds embodied in Jesus Christ draws people into the very way of life of the Triune God.

Without excessively developing an aspect of the Johannine tradition in an essay devoted to Matthean thought, this concept is essentially the mutual indwelling (*perichoresis*) formulation of the Gospel of John. That text portrays the Father, Son, and Spirit as "abiding in" one another. In Johannine terms eternal life is a sharing in the love-relationship between the Father and the Son in the Spirit. It is a love-life that transcends human death.

Thus one can say that the *Logos*, God's constant outreach for relationship, brings into human history the very covenanting life of the Trinity. The imminent Trinity, the essential relationality of God within Godself, therefore necessarily coheres with the relational actions of the economic Trinity in human history. Both the people of Israel and the people of Christ are covenanting in their distinctive yet analogous ways with One who summons humanity to live in the divine image. They experience and define their relationship with God differently, one through Torah and the other through Christ. However, Christians would say that both communities have entered into covenant with God through the agency of the divine *Logos*, whose invitation to divine relationship is sustained and enabled by the continuous actions of the other subsistents of the Triune One.

Jews and Christians are thus co-covenanting partners with God. It stands to reason that covenantal partners with the same relational One would be obligated to be partners with one another. For Christians, our covenant with the Triune One impels us to be open to sharing-in-life with others in covenant with that One, even if their covenanting is not Christ-shaped as ours is.

This theological approach to Christian self-understanding, significantly inspired by Matthean perspectives, understands Christ as embodying and mediating Israel's covenanting with God and apprehends

the Triune One's innate relationality as defining all of God's actions in human history. It precludes hostility to the Jewish people and tradition since they are co-covenanting with the same God. It corroborates and justifies the conviction expressed by Anthony J. Saldarini that "God has called the Jewish and Christian communities to be his people in . . . relationship with one another."[21]

[21] Saldarini, ibid., "God's Manifold People."

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REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS: THE LIMITS OF THEOLOGICAL NEGOTIATION

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> As for the future, a healthy appreciation for human limitations counsels moderation in utopian hopes for peace and understanding. Jews and Christians have been thrown together because of their common origins in the Middle East, their common religious traditions (however differently interpreted), and the course of history in the West. The increasingly smaller world of instant communication and swift travel guarantees that Jews and Christians will continue to argue over their traditions, history, political relationships, and ultimate goals.
>
> Anthony J. Saldarini[1]

Tony Saldarini was a learned realist. A scholar of distinctive erudition, exceptional intellectual openness, and unusual generosity, he worked on the edge, broke barriers, and built bridges. Tony's work was disciplined, thorough, careful, and utterly clear-eyed. His lack of pretense, his broad knowledge, and his unyielding candor made him an extraordinary intellectual critic. Tony knew too much about religion—and understood it too well—to romanticize it. His realism made his scholarship consequential and durable. He was a colleague, conversation partner, and friend. I miss him.

I

The study of religion is scrambling to keep pace with its subject. Conditions in the contemporary world have altered religion's circumstances, the theatre in which it performs, the audience before

[1] Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago and London, 1994), p. 205.

which it makes its claims. The expansion of television offerings to include the likes of the History Channel, the Discovery Channel, and such religious networks as EWTN and TBN, brings both unprecedented information about, and advocacy of, religion directly into peoples' homes. The Internet supplies direct access to the diversity of the world's religions in ways unimagined and impossible just a decade ago. The changed context of religion is not just informational. It also is political and social. Religion increasingly is determinative in national and international politics. Such realities as suicide bombings, abortion politics, the events of September 11, and the U.S. Government's "Faith-Based Initiative" are palpable evidence of religion's power to affect society concretely, both for ill and for good. In nearly every way, religion seems more visible and potent than it has been in the past, and the consequences of misunderstanding religion are more serious and potentially dangerous than ever.

In response to the practical urgency of making sense of religion, scholars who study it are freshly envisioning their subject and developing—sometimes rediscovering and redefining—ways of knowing religion that fit its changed circumstances. The recent work of Diana Eck is exemplifies such devising. Eck claims that a "georeligious"[2] reality frames the study of religion in the contemporary world and that "to be a student of religion looking at the late twentieth century world is to recognize that religious communities do not exist in isolation, but in interrelation with one another, and must be studied in that dynamic interrelation."[3] She suggests that the definitive mark of this new reality is "interreligious dialogue."

> Any astute observer of the currents of religious change today must take note of the expansion, even explosion, of the intentional and casual interreligious relations that fall under the phrase "interreligious dialogue"—from formal meetings, to joint working projects, to discussions over the back fence. These new forms of interreligious dialogue constitute a fascinating focus and field of study for scholars of religion today.[4]

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[2] Diana L. Eck, "Dialogue and Method: Reconstructing the Study of Religion," in K.C. Patton and B. Ray, eds., *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age* (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 131–149; the quote is on p. 135.

[3] Ibid., p. 134.

[4] Ibid., p. 138.

As Eck observes, for scholars of religion, interreligious dialogues are naturally intriguing objects of analysis, "fascinating case-studies of religious difference and religious identities."[5] She suggests as well that dialogue can be a method of studying religion, but she acknowledges that the idea may not find immediate acceptance in the academy. For decades, university scholars of religion have worked to maintain critical distance between themselves and their subject in order to establish for the study of religion the same standards of analysis and argument that, in principle, characterize professional research in most other subjects across the academy. The long-established distinction between "theology" and "religion"[6] as academic fields—and perhaps as well between religiously-sponsored and secular universities as contexts for scholarship on religion—has marked the difference between those who self-consciously represent, advocate, and advance the religion they study and those who do not. In the field of "religion," dialogue is likely to be judged an exercise in expression rather than cognition.[7] Against this background, Eck's notion that the current cultural context makes dialogue a newly plausible scholarly approach to religion deserves to be explored.

To achieve a preliminary and realistic perspective on Eck's proposal, it will help to examine interreligious dialogue not only in theory, but also in practice. A useful and prominent example is a project of Jewish-Christian dialogue that appeared in 2000. It consisted of two publications: a short statement on Christianity, entitled *Dabru Emet*,[8] written by four Jewish scholars of Judaism, and an anthology of interreligious dialogues entitled *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (hereafter, CJT), edited by the same four scholars plus one other.[9] The auspices for both publications and the scholarly consultations that

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[5] Ibid., p. 139.

[6] Or "theological studies" and "religious studies."

[7] This is not to deny that, within secular universities, there can be some fields and programs in which faculty are hired because they represent and advocate—speak for as well as about—what they study.

[8] T. Freymer-Kensky, D. Novak, P. Ochs, D.F. Sandmel, and M. Signer, eds., *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000, pp. xv–xvi.

[9] Three of those four are rabbis, two Conservative, one Reform. Two teach at publicly-sponsored universities (one American, one Canadian), one at a Roman Catholic university, and one at a non-denominational Christian divinity school that offers programs in both the academic study of religion and Christian ministry. The additional editor of CJT, also a Conservative rabbi, taught at the institution that both sponsored the statement and convened the group that wrote it.

let to them was the Institute for Christian-Jewish Studies, a private organization in Baltimore, Maryland, devoted to interreligious dialogue.

The authors/sponsors of *Dabru Emet* solicited the supporting signatures of over 170 Judaic religious leaders, primarily Reform and Conservative rabbis, and the statement was printed in selected American newspapers and journals. It made the following assertions:

1. Jews and Christians worship the same God.[10]
2. Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book—the Bible (what Jews call "Tanakh" and Christians call the "Old Testament").[11]
3. Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.[12]
4. Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of the Torah.[13]
5. Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.[14]
6. The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture.[15]

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[10] "Before the rise of Christianity, Jews were the only worshippers of the God of Israel. But Christians also worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, creator of heaven and earth. Although Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews, as Jewish theologians we rejoice that through Christianity hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel."

[11] "Turning to the Bible . . . we each take away similar lessons: God created and sustains the universe; God established a covenant with the people Israel; God's revealed word guides Israel to a life of righteousness; and God will ultimately redeem Israel and the whole world. Yet, Jews and Christians interpret the Bible differently on many points. Such differences must always be respected."

[12] "The most important event for Jews since the Holocaust has been the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the Promised Land. As members of a biblically based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised—and given—to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God. Many Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics. As Jews, we applaud this support. We also recognize that Jewish tradition mandates justice for all non-Jews who reside in a Jewish state."

[13] Central to the moral principles of Torah are the inalienable sanctity and dignity of every human being. All of us were created in the image of God. This shared moral emphasis can be the basis of an improved relationship between our two communities. It can also be the basis of a powerful witness to all humanity for improving the lives of our fellow human beings and for standing against the immoralities and idolatries that harm and degrade us. Such witness is especially needed after the unprecedented horrors of the past century."

[14] ". . . Nazism itself was not an inevitable outcome of Christianity. If the Nazi extermination of the Jews had been fully successful, it would have turned its murderous rage more directly to Christians."

[15] ". . . Jews can respect Christians' faithfulness to their revelation just as we expect

7. A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice.[16]
8. Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace.

The editors of CJT describe it as a "scholarly extension"[17] of *Dabru Emet* and explain its purpose as follows:

> We believe it is time for Jews to learn about Christianity in Jewish terms: to rediscover the basic categories of rabbinic Judaism and to hear what the basic categories of Christian belief sound like when they are taught in terms of this rabbinic Judaism. To hear Christianity in our terms is truly to understand it, perhaps for the first time.[18]

Thus, CJT represents the kind of dialogue the sponsors/authors of *Dabru Emet* hoped their statement would promulgate. It evidently is designed to establish a new foundation for the Judaic conversation about and with Christianity. The collection consists mostly of thematic chapters that contain an essay by a Jewish scholar of Judaism with two responses, one by another Jewish scholar of Judaism and one by a Christian scholar of Christianity. The book contains thirty-six articles by thirty-two authors and comprises thirteen chapters, an Epilogue, and a short Glossary. It covers the following topics: Jewish-Christian Interactions over the Ages, The Shoah and the Legacy of Anti-Semitism, God, Scripture, Commandment, Israel, Worship, Suffering, Embodiment, Redemption, Sin and Repentance, and Image of God. *Dabru Emet* and CJT are appropriate here because they are contemporary, scholarly, and explicitly dialogical. With this published material as a point of reference, it is possible to turn to the questions about dialogue and the study of religion.

II

What kind of intellectual activity is interreligious dialogue? Is it fundamentally different from the established scholarly methods of studying and understanding religion? The answer to these questions is in

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Christians to respect our faithfulness to our revelation. Neither Jew nor Christian should be pressed into affirming the teaching of the other community."

[16] ". . . We respect Christianity as a faith that originated within Judaism and that still has significant contact with it. We do not see it as an extension of Judaism. Only if we cherish our own traditions can we pursue this relationship with integrity."

[17] CJT, p. xii.

[18] Ibid., p. x.

two parts. On the one hand, interreligious dialogue differs from standard academic discourse in the nature of its participants and the limits on its results. By design, dialogue is not an activity for everyone; all its participants speak for, not just about, the religions involved. Unlike scholarship, dialogue presupposes religious commitment. In addition, since dialogue is a bridge-building activity, it requires a special attitude of openness and mutuality. Finally the outcome of dialogue is restricted; some conclusions are not to be reached. On the other hand, interreligious dialogue cannot avoid some basic academic procedures. At the least, it necessarily entails descriptive accuracy, comparison, and translation. Indeed, it is likely that the ability of any dialogue—especially one performed by scholars—to enhance interreligious understanding depends on how well its participants deploy these established scholarly practices. Let us consider all of these and draw on *Dabru Emet* and CJT to illustrate the issues.

Dialogue's Distinctive Constraints: Outcomes and Participants

Interreligious dialogue by definition is overdetermined communication—unusually purposive and therefore unusually constrained. Though its participants must be religiously committed, dialogue is not and cannot be evangelism. Rather, in dialogue, the certitude and passion of religious conviction must not reach their natural end of persuading or converting the other. Instead, they stop considerably short of that point. Dialogue's goals are expression and understanding. As Jacob Neusner has written, "When dialogue is at issue, we seek to understand, not to persuade the other to concur with what I say, not to be persuaded of the truth the other says. Dialogue yields understanding; the condition of dialogue is autonomy, mutual and reciprocal respect."[19] David Novak applies these general limits to Judaic-Christian dialogue:

[19] Jacob Neusner, *Telling Tales: The Urgency and Basis for Judeo-Christian Dialogue* (Louisville, 1993), p. 128; see also Scott Daniel Dunbar, "The Place of Interreligious Dialogue in the Academic Study of Religion," in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 35.3–4 (1998), pp. 455–470: ". . . dialogue is not a debate where one side tries to outshine the other; rather, dialogue is a team effort where both sides see each other as partners in the common quest for greater knowledge, social action, or whatever they may seek" (p. 468).

> Each side must be willing to see the other side in the best possible light from within its own tradition. Second, that vision must not lead to any distortion of what each tradition, itself, separately, teaches as the truth. True dialogue requires the adherents of each tradition to find justification for the other tradition from within his or her own tradition.[20]

On this view, interreligious dialogue is an exercise in mutual affirmation and justification. Neither side is supposed to dominate the other. Novak proscribes "five negative conditions" that undermine Jewish-Christian dialogue: "disputation, proselytization, syncretism, relativism, and triumphalism."[21] These positive and negative strictures on the outcome of dialogue display its distinctive character. Interreligious dialogue is anything but casual conversation about religion.

In addition to its restrictions on participation and outcome, Diana Eck argues that interreligious dialogue demands, and therefore generates, a particular kind of critical self-reflection and self-consciousness.

> Dialogue is the discipline of thought that enables us to gain clarity about our own situatedness, our own form of questioning our own position—whether methodological, political, religious, secular, even antireligious—so that our own subjectivity, our own language, and our own categories are not privileged and universalized unwittingly in our work.[22] . . . to give a careful account of how we situate ourselves in the [interreligious] discussion is increasingly incumbent on us all.[23]

On this view, either as cultural activity or as scholarly method, dialogue makes a distinctive contribution to learning about religion by requiring participants to display their own "situatedness," to be self-conscious about their "viewpoint." Paul J. Griffiths adds a dimension to the specificity required for dialogue. In his conception, the participants in dialogue are "representative intellectuals" of "religious communities." The communities are not abstractions but subgroups of what he terms a general "semifictional entity," such as "Christianity," "Buddhism," etc. Griffiths realistically observes that "anyone who claims to be a spokesperson for Christians or Buddhists is in fact acting as a spokesperson for some subgroup within these large amorphous

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[20] CJT, p. 2.
[21] Ibid., pp. 2–6.
[22] Eck, ibid., p. 140.
[23] Ibid., p. 142.

groupings."[24] The arguments of Eck and Griffiths demonstrate that a basic component of interreligious dialogue is precise identification of the religious communities for whom the "intellectual representatives" speak. All of this shows that interreligious dialogue is a highly disciplined, representative communication that requires clarity about who is conversing and why.

Dabru Emet helps to make these issues concrete. It refers primarily to "Jews" and "Christians" rather than to Judaism and Christianity, and it thus focuses on communities rather than on religions. This generalization, however, yields the ambiguity Eck and Griffiths think dialogue should avoid. About which Jews and Christians—and to which Jews and Christians—does *Dabru Emet* speak? Is it about all Jews and Christians throughout all time? Does it apply only to those who signed on to it? Perhaps the focus on communities rather than religions intends to distinguish contemporary Judaism and Christianity as "lived" religions from a scholarly construct that has no actual practitioners. If so, as Griffiths underscores, specificity about the community and the religion it practices are essential; "Jews," "Christians," "Judaism," and "Christianity" are not monolithic terms. CJT improves matters slightly. The editors make a case for the general condition of improved Jewish-Christian relations that led to the book, and some of the authors—Elliott Dorf and Nancy Fuchs-Kramer, for instance—spell out their denominational affiliations. But "situatedness" is at best an inconsistent feature in the book as a whole, so it is not clear how it matters when it does appear. Maximally effective dialogue requires clarity about its participants. It matters most when all parties know whose interests are represented at the table.

Dialogue's Scholarly Practices: Descriptive Accuracy

Eck's focus on "situatedness" attests that as an intellectual and cognitive practice, interreligious dialogue aims to protect against mistaking personal reactions for a religion's teachings. This is a very important point. It means that, in the last analysis, interreligious dialogue is not and cannot be, as Eck puts it, merely about "our own subjectivity." Rather, dialogue must generate something more sub-

[24] Paul J. Griffiths, *An Apology for Apologetics: A Study in the Logic of Interreligious Dialogue* (Maryknoll, 1991), pp. 5–6.

stantive and durable. As a mode of knowing religion, dialogue is unilluminating if its focus is the personal reactions of the participants. As a means of understanding religion, it is both interesting and revealing if it is an exercise in analysis and clarification. Authentic interreligious dialogue displays a religion's basic structure and core components and shows how a particular community of adherents prioritizes and marshals these elements to present its tradition to an outsider. From this kind of exercise, both students and practitioners of a religion can learn something about its limits and flexibility, its capacities for adaptation and persistence, its means of demarcating the essential and the peripheral. As a way of knowing about and understanding religion, therefore, dialogue is more than practitioners of different religions exchanging random—if deeply held—personal opinions and getting to know one another. To be intellectually consequential and cognitively useful, dialogue must distinguish between an exchange that is genuinely interreligious (even when it is intensely personal) and one that is simply interpersonal (even if it is carried out in religious terms).

If this is correct, then descriptive accuracy must be a major component of interreligious dialogue. As we have seen, David Novak properly contends that dialogue cannot be built on a "distortion of what each tradition, itself separately, teaches as the truth."[25] He rightly insists that interreligious dialogue must avoid relativism: "Relativism is especially dangerous to the dialogue because it denies that some things are true all the time for everyone, everywhere."[26] Moreover, as above, Novak also claims that "True dialogue requires the adherents of each tradition to find justification for the other tradition from within his or her own tradition."[27] If this is the character of dialogue, then its *sine qua non* must be an accurate representation of the religions themselves. If the religions are improperly or inadequately described, the mutual justification will be inauthentic. An unclear or muddled description, or one that misrepresents or fails to reflect the sources, basic affirmations, and practices of a religion cannot advance understanding.

[25] CJT, p. 2.
[26] Ibid., p. 4.
[27] Ibid.

In assessing an interreligious dialogue, then, it is fair to ask about the form, plausibility, and authenticity of the descriptions of the religions engaged. Are the descriptions clear? Did the participants get their own heritage right? Did they get their interlocutor's religion right? To claim that, in principle, it is impossible to be wrong about one's or another's religion is to suggest that religions themselves have no limits, no boundaries, no integrity, and that they are whatever their practitioners claim them to be. This position renders the very notion of interreligious dialogue trivial, if not absurd, because the religions themselves are undefined. Without a defining description of at least the basic contours of the religions involved in a dialogue, the exchange risks becoming arbitrary. The new perspectives on the two religions that should emerge from dialogue are difficult to perceive without a common basis for the conversation. To ask about accuracy and authenticity in interreligious dialogue does not deny that religious traditions have internal conflicts and divisions or that religions evolve and change. Rather, it acknowledges the complexity of religions and affirms that dialogue between them requires a consistent clarity about which division (denomination, sect, branch, etc.) is present in the conversation. The intense discussions after September 11, 2001, about which forms of Islam are authentic and which are not, about which forms of Islam get the religion right and which get it wrong, graphically illustrate the significance for dialogue of this kind of clarity.

Dabru Emet shows how descriptive accuracy matters in dialogue. Its brief generalizations in all likelihood were crafted to be accessible to a wide audience, including potential endorsers, and to be suitable as a newspaper advertisement. They give the statement symbolic value, but at a cost. In key respects, *Dabru Emet's* epitomes lack the clarity necessary interreligious dialogue. For example, consider *Dabru Emet*'s fourth assertion (#4), which says in part,

> Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of the Torah: Central to the moral principles of Torah are the inalienable sanctity and dignity of every human being. All of us were created in the image of God. This shared moral emphasis can be the basis of an improved relationship between our two communities. . . .

This is a powerful declaration of shared values, but it raises more questions than it settles. It claims that the Torah has "moral principles," but it does not specify them. Thus, the range and foci of

agreement between "Jews and Christians" are obscure, and this creates cognitive and conceptual difficulties. The statement focuses on what it sees as the Torah's "central" moral principle of the "inalienable sanctity and dignity of every human being." Even a cursory look at the range of Judaic and Christian religious views of the permissibility of abortion or the legitimacy of homosexuality shows that this "central" moral principle hardly produces agreement within Judaism or Christianity, much less between them. In the end, it is not certain what the statement actually claims.

In an article entitled, "How Not to Conduct Jewish-Christian Dialogue,"[28] Jon D. Levenson has pointed to other difficulties in *Dabru Emet*'s formulations. His concerns follow, listed according to the order above.

1. *Jews and Christians worship the same God.* Levenson points out that this assertion ignores Judaism's refusal to acknowledge Jesus as God and glosses over Judaism's problems with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.
2. *Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book. . . .* Levenson notes that in Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy the Old Testament includes books absent from the Tanakh, that the Tanakh and Old Testament have differently arranged contents, and that Judaism and Christianity read these biblical texts with different assumptions and through different lenses (the New Testament and the Oral Torah). The sense in which the Tanakh and the Old Testament are the "same" is thus unclear. Moreover, he claims that *Dabru Emet* treats Judaic and Christian disagreements about Scripture with an "easygoing relativism," as "mere differences of opinion—as if the two traditions make no truth claims."
3. *Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.* This assertion, Levenson observes, is unclear about the nature of Christian support for the State of Israel, some of which looks to the ingathering of the Jewish people to inaugurate the Second Coming of Christ and, therefore, the end of Judaism.

[28] *Commentary* (112/5, December, 2001), pp. 31–37.

4. *Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of the Torah.* "Christianity has usually considered Jesus' moral principles to be superior to those of the Torah. . . ."
5. *Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.* This section of *Dabru Emet*, Levenson points out, incorrectly and too easily equates the roles of Jews and Christians in the Nazis' plans for genocide.
6. *The differences between Judaism and Christianity will be settled at the final redemption of the world.* This statement, Levenson argues, supposes what Judaism does not, that "the church will survive until the final redemption."
7. *A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice.* Levenson suggests that this assertion is naïve. Particularly in times of reconciliation between two former antagonists, the risks for minority communities are "especially high."

At the very least, Levenson's comments suggest that the formulations in *Dabru Emet* leave room for serious misunderstanding of key aspects of Judaism and Christianity. In a response to Levenson, the authors of *Dabru Emet* claimed that "most" of Levenson's "specific criticisms are answered in" CJT.[29] However, CJT appears to bypass most of the issues Levenson raises.

Formally, CJT's list of topics only partially matches the key points of *Dabru Emet* and therefore of Levenson's critique. The book supplies no treatment of the land of Israel, which is not even listed in its index (though there is one reference to Israel, "as land"), and there are only four brief references to the "State of Israel." Nazism hardly appears. There is no sustained analysis of either the impact of Jewish-Christian dialogue on contemporary Jewish religious behavior or the concrete means by which Jews and Christians can "work together" for justice and peace. In addition, the book barely mentions eschatology, which is central to point #6 in *Dabru Emet.* Thus, in a strictly formal sense, CJT does not discuss or even claim to discuss *Dabru Emet's* points #3, #5, #7, or #8, and its treatment of point # 6 is at best incomplete. Over half of the topics that Levenson addresses are missing from the book's chapters.

CJT formally intersects with Levenson's topics on three of *Dabru Emet's* points: #1) that Jews and Christians worship the same God,

[29] Ibid., p. 113 (April, 2002).

#2) derive authority from the same book, and #4) accept the moral principles of the Torah. The essays on these points, however, address Levenson's concrete concerns inconsistently. On point #1, Peter Och's essay, "The God of Jews and Christians," describes similarities in Judaic and Protestant Christian worship, including Protestant prayer to the "God of Israel;" it explains that "Christian tradition adds certain claims to Jewish traditions," which "Jewish religious tradition does not accept . . . for itself;" and it suggests ways in which elements of biblical and Rabbinic teaching could be used as a basis for Jews to understand puzzling aspects of Christian teaching, such as the Trinity. But it does not actually discuss *Dabru Emet*'s assertion that from a Judaic standpoint, "Jews and Christians worship the same God" or focus on the meaning of "sameness." By contrast, David Ellenson's brief historical review shows that Judaic positions on the Christian doctrine of God run from rejection to toleration. He thus demonstrates that within Judaism *Dabru Emet*'s position is arguable rather than normative; he underscores again the importance of "situatedness" in interreligious dialogue. On point #2, Michael Signer's excellent historical survey of the use of scripture in Judaism and Christianity in no way contradicts Levenson's critique. Rather, it supplies the evidence on which the critique is based. Finally, on point #4, David Novak's thoughtful and provocative essay, "Mitzvah," examines the place of "law" in Judaism and Christianity but does not discuss Levenson's point that Christianity usually judges "Jesus' moral principles to be superior to those of the Torah." In the last analysis, therefore, CJT leaves Levenson's concerns and objections largely unrefuted. Following the elemental procedures of academic argument, Levenson's criticisms of *Dabru Emet* must stand. They show why descriptive accuracy is basic to effective interreligious dialogue.

Bridging Unfamiliarity: Translation and Comparison

At the very least, interreligious dialogue is a sense-making exercise. Its primary goal is to foster understanding between two religions or religious communities that are foreign to one another. In order to bridge unfamiliarity, participants in dialogue must engage in the related activities of comparison and translation.

Interreligious dialogue self-evidently is an exercise in comparison. It naturally and necessarily builds on perceived resemblances and differences between the two religions involved. *Dabru Emet*, for instance,

makes several judgments about ways in which Judaism and Christianity are the "same." Scholars have long noted that comparison is a basic mode of human thought, and it is an elemental component of knowing about religion, both outside and inside the academy. Religions typically build implicit or explicit comparison (usually by contrasting themselves to those they are not) into their core teachings. Comparison also is a fundamental component in the study of religion. Winnifred Sullivan observes that "We cannot think or write about religion without comparing. . . . While comparison is inescapable, we still need to be self-conscious about how we go about it."[30] Jonathan Smith has delineated seven modes of comparison (ethnographic, encyclopedic, morphological, evolutionary, statistical, structuralist, systematic), and assessed their applicability to religion.[31] His trenchant description applies no matter where comparison is carried out: "Comparison requires the postulation of difference as the ground of its being interesting (rather than tautological) and a methodological manipulation of difference, playing across the 'gap' in the service of some useful end."

On the matter of comparison, interreligious dialogue differs from conventional scholarly comparative religion in context but not in substance. In conversation, those engaged in comparison are in one another's presence and answer one another directly—either in writing or in person. But the presence of the two parties to the comparison—and therefore the presence of what we might call "personal stakes" in the conversation's outcome—does not change the nature of the comparison itself. If the comparison produces false analogies or category mistakes, the bridges it builds between the two religions will be illusory. If it shows how similarities and differences between the two produce meaning, it can offer fresh insight. One potential and significant "useful end" of interreligious dialogue is to produce novel, constructive, and revealing comparisons between two religions. Focused and controlled comparison is essential to achieving that goal.

The other—and related—key component to interreligious dialogue is translation. In academic comparison, a scholar may compare one religion to another in terms of a third external framework that is native to neither. Interreligious dialogue, however, is unavoidably a

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[30] Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, "American Religion Is Naturally Comparative," in Patton and Ray, *A Magic Still Dwells*, pp. 117–130; the quote is on p. 118.

[31] Jonathan Z. Smith, "In Comparison a Magic Dwells," in Patton and Ray, *A Magic Still Dwells*, pp. 23–44; the quote is on p. 40.

two-party affair, in which each religion, at some point in the process, must learn how to depict and explain the other in terms of itself. In one sense, interreligious translation is hardly a novel phenomenon. The so-called "world religions" have adapted themselves to diverse nations and societies through translation—linguistic, textual, and cultural—and have been a major factor in intercultural exchange. Translation in principle can open up new possibilities of communication and understanding. In another sense, however, expressing one religion in terms of another can be destabilizing and subversive—particularly when the religions are not merely different but explicitly opposed to one another. In textual translation, the goal is to produce two versions of one text, "two texts that are also one."[32] In interreligious translation, by contrast, the purpose is to use translation as a vehicle of understanding but to preserve the integrity and pristine identity of each religion. Insofar as it engages in translation, interreligious dialogue contains a potential risk of misrepresentation. As with comparison, clarity is all-important. If the translation is self-aware and disciplined, substantive communication can take place.

CJT helps us see how these theoretical issues play out in practice. It is a project of translation and thus of comparison. As we have seen, it claims to employ the "basic categories of rabbinic Judaism" and help Jews "hear what the basic categories of Christian belief sound like when they are taught in terms of this rabbinic Judaism." Unfortunately, the book supplies no description of either Rabbinic Judaism or the "basic categories of Christian belief." It presents no common background against which to understand the thirty-six essays by the thirty-two authors who contributed to the project. The scant five-page glossary at the end does not compensate. Is "Rabbinic Judaism" broadly or narrowly defined? Does it mean only the Talmud and cognate literature, or does it include medieval philosophical and halakhic works as well? We have seen that some of CJT's contributors write about and in the name of Conservative and Reconstructionist Judaisms; does "Rabbinic Judaism" encompass these modern movements too? The book supplies no uniform way to see how the concepts and categories of Judaism and Christianity operate in their discrete religious structures or to determine if ideas, beliefs, or practices in the two religions that seem

[32] Sukanta Chaurhuri, *Translation and Understanding* (Oxford, 1999), p. 10.

similar or interchangeable actually are. Thus, CJT is neither integrated nor substantively consistent, and the terms of the dialogue it aims to establish are unclear. Lacking an overarching description of the structures of the two religions, it presents Judaism and Christianity in fragments, matching parts to parts rather than systems to systems. The book offers diverse interreligious exchanges with comparisons and translation that range from excellent to erroneous. It is instructive to examine representative samples of each.

In a very interesting exchange with David Novak on the place of "law" in Judaism and Christianity, Stanley Hauerwas draws on a citation from Bruce Marshall that depicts Judaic obedience to commandments as "acts of gratitude and thanksgiving to God for his electing love towards the Jewish people, and not as a means to salvation or to some other end."[33] A clear description of Rabbinic Judaism would have helped to constrain and contextualize this very partial description of one of its a central ideas. Jacob Neusner[34] explains that

> Halakhah formed Israel's *paideia*, its *Bildung*, its character-and conscience-building classroom and laboratory. Living within the pattern of behavior inculcated by the Halakhah was meant to produce a person of a particular character and conscience: holy Israel. Through the patterns of action defined by the Halakhah, Israel from generation to generation learned how to live a good life. . . .

In Rabbinic Judaism, then, halakhah is far more than thanksgiving; it is effective action. It maintains the right relationship between Israel and God and transforms Israel's humanity. It constitutes the life of a holy people.

Two other examples show how comparison and translation can go awry because they are executed without the control of a systemic framework of the religions involved. First, to make the Christian doctrine of "original sin" explicable in Jewish terms, Steven Kepnes compares it—with qualifications—to the Judaic concept of *galut* ('exile'), because each is a state that "limits the human ability to be in free contact with God."[35] He also likens it to ritual impurity.

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[33] CJT, p. 137.

[34] Jacob Neusner, *The Halakhah: An Encyclopedia of the Law of Judaism* (Leiden, 2000), vol. 1, p. 3.

[35] CJT, p. 295.

> It is interesting to think about original sin . . . as the condition of being *tameh*, "impure." Both are states of being that affect the whole person and render persons unfit to participate fully in society and religious life, and both are conditions changed through rituals of sacrifice and bathing in a *mikvah* [sic], a ritual bath.[36]

Kepnes' good faith attempt to bring original sin into Judaic syntax, as it were, illustrates the difficulties of interreligious dialogue when there is no clear framework for comparison and translation. Because there is no morphological control, Kepnes works with each notion discretely without comparing them in their religious contexts. On original sin as exile, Kepnes acknowledges that *galut*'s connotations in Judaism are physical, political, as well as existential, and he points to additional similarities between the two ("Like original sin, galut cannot be overcome by human will alone; exile will end only when God intervenes to make it end.").[37] But it is important to point out that *galut*'s range of meanings do not include the idea, as Menachem Kellner puts it (drawing on Romans 3:21–23), that all human beings "fall short of the glory of God."[38] So at a basic level the categories do not intersect in their judgment of humanity. The analogy between original sin and ritual impurity is also problematic. First, it is not obvious that in Christianity original sin keeps one from full participation in society, for this would exclude most of humanity from a full community life. Nor is it clear why being a sinner makes one unfit to participate fully in religious life, since religion seems, at least in part, to be for the sake of sinners. So the comparison may be incorrect in formal terms. Second, original sin and ritual impurity reflect systemically incongruous religious systems. Judaism is a levitical religion, and its notions of purity come from the Israelite cult. In early Judaism, impurity represents neither evil nor willfulness, but human vulnerability.[39] One does not "commit" impurity; it is a fact of the life of humanity. In such a system, the ritual removal of uncleanness is a sign of hope and restoration. Pauline Christianity and many forms of Christianity, by contrast, have no purity system at all, so translation of these terms into one another is unlikely in principle. If baptism actually does derive from the *miqveh*—a contested

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[36] Ibid., p. 298.
[37] Ibid., p. 296.
[38] Ibid., p. 274.
[39] See Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 176–194.

point in scholarship—the act has become orthogonal to its original meaning. The difficulties in Kepnes' interpretation show why dialogue requires a disciplined comparison. Similarities without differences can be misleading.

In another example, Irving Greenberg tries to fulfill David Novak's stated goal of finding a justification for Christianity within Rabbinic Judaism. He asserts that:

> It was God's purpose that a shoot of the stalk of Abraham be grafted onto the root of the Gentiles. . . . To be heard and followed, this group had to swim in the sea of the Gentile people and their culture. This religion dared not be too Jewish (culturally or literally). . . . Rabbinic Judaism brings humans more powerfully into participation in the covenant; but it needs a counterpart religion to explore the element of grace and transcendence in a more central way.[40]

It is hard to think of a single text in "Rabbinic Judaism" (if that means the Talmud and cognate literature) that supports Greenberg's position of Christianity as a "counterpart religion" to Judaism. R. Kenneth Soulen, Greenberg's Christian respondent, doubts that what he calls Greenberg's "covenantal pluralism"—the view that Judaism is for Jews, and Christianity for Gentiles only—is plausible for Christianity either.

> Christians . . . cannot easily yield on the idea that the resurrection of a crucified Messiah, if true at all, has significance for everyone. . . . If God is creator at all, God is creator of Jews and Gentiles alike. Similarly, if Jesus inaugurates a new creation by his victory over death, then again he does so for all.[41]

Greenberg's proposition is an instance of translating Christianity into terms that are neither Rabbinic nor Christian.

The exchange between Greenberg and Soulen raises a fundamental issue in Judaic-Christian dialogue: the definition of the people of Israel. On this question, Richard John Neuhaus[42] pointedly argues that *Dabru Emet* leads to the position that Jews and Christians—that is, practitioners of Judaism and of Christianity—are the single people of the God of Israel.

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[40] CJT, pp. 149–50, 155.
[41] Ibid., p. 169.
[42] Richard John Neuhaus, "Salvation is From the Jews," in *First Things* 117 (November 2001), pp. 17–22.

> In the historic statement of November 2000, *Dabru Emet* ("Speak the Truth") . . . it is said that "through Christianity hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel." Then, toward the end of *Dabru Emet*, it is said: "We respect Christianity as a faith that originated within Judaism and that still has significant contacts with it. We do not see it as an extension of Judaism. Only if we cherish our own traditions can we pursue this relationship with integrity."
>
> Yet, it would seem that, if through Christianity hundreds of millions of people have entered into a relationship with the God of Israel, Christianity must be, in some important sense, an extension of Judaism.

Neuhaus further asserts that since the "God of Israel is not separable from the people of Israel," to be in relationship with the God of Israel is to be in relationship with the people of Israel." The Second Vatican Council, Neuhaus continues, referred to the Church as the People of God, and "there is no plural for the people of God." The conclusion that Judaism and Christianity are parts of a single religion follows naturally.

> Certainly there are distinct traditions that must be cherished and respected, but one may suggest that they are traditions within the one tradition, the one story, of salvation. . . . Our distinct traditions reflect differences within the one tradition of witness to the God of Israel and his plan of salvation. It is misleading . . . to speak of two peoples of God or of two covenants, never mind to speak of two religions.

Whatever its authors' intent, it is hard to see how the language of *Dabru Emet* precludes Neuhaus's reading.

Neuhaus raises an issue that runs throughout CJT and surely stands at the center of any and all Judaic-Christian dialogue: Are Christians members of the people of Israel? On this key issue of religious identity, CJT offers inconsistent Judaic answers. David Novak[43] argues that "Jews and Christians cannot both compose the people of *Israel* in a cogent way." Once the church claims that it is Israel, even if it acknowledges that the Jews remain "*part* of Israel," two conclusions must follow: "one, the Jews are no longer solely identical with Israel; two the church has the more authentic definition of Israel. . . . Needless to say, no Jew who is loyal to Judaism could possibly accept such a subordinate role for Judaism with any Jewish authenticity." Irving Greenberg, however, advocates the very view Novak finds impossible: "[Among the world's religions] . . . only

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[43] CJT, pp. 122–123.

Christians (although possibly Muslims) may be deemed to be members of the people Israel, even as they practice differing religions than Jewry does."[44] David Sandmel, Greenberg's Jewish interlocutor, then explicitly denies his position: "Jews can recognize Christians as people who believe in the God of Israel. From a Jewish perspective, however, that belief, in and of itself, does not make Christianity part of Israel, *as we understand Israel*, that is, a *people* that has a special *covenant* with God who has given us a specific *land*."[45]

This range of contradictory Judaic opinions on so basic an issue surely complicates dialogue between Judaism and Christianity. It shows how and why the ideological pluralism and unclarity of the project represented by Dabru *Emet* and CJT compromise its larger ambitions and admirable goals. At the core of the Judaic-Christian dialogue is the issue of the nature of the two religions. Are Judaism and Christianity different religions or divisions of the same religion? Are they different religious languages or simply different dialects of the same language? Because it lacks a sound descriptive framework for Judaism and Christianity, CJT does not supply a consistent position on this issue. If the Judaic answer to the question, "Are Christians Jews?" is "Yes or No," it is difficult to know how and where to begin the dialogue or to define its stakes.

The difficulties described above are largely the result of flawed comparisons and translations. They do not at all mean that dialogue between religiously committed scholars of different religions cannot produce durable and important results. A superb example of such a dialogue and its potential is the elegant and measured exchange between Lawrence A. Hoffman and Robert Louis Wilken.[46] It explores differences and similarities in Jewish and Christian liturgy in a traditionally authentic, intellectually disciplined, historically controlled, and individually meaningful way. Hoffman[47] centers his essay around the Eucharist, which "makes Christianity what it is." He is explicit about how this fundamental Christian rite grounds Christian religious identity: "All Christians either celebrate it or take their stand as the unique Christians they are by not celebrating it." Hoffman lays out his method and his suppositions: "A deeper analysis of

[44] Ibid., p. 158.
[45] Ibid., p. 166.
[46] CJT, ibid., pp. 175–189, 196–202.
[47] Ibid., pp. 176–177.

Christian worship in Jewish terms requires that we elicit the implicit theological meanings that Jewish worship contains and then compare them to the parallel theological notions that the commentators on Christian worship explicitly profess." To get to what he calls the "'meaning of the liturgical event'—what the liturgical act or prayer in question means in terms of the way Jews and Christians locate themselves in the world," Hoffman offers the following plan of action:

> The first thing to ask is, "What does Christian worship imply about the categories in which Christians think?" Looking at the Jewish parallel, we can ask, "To what extent does Judaism (at least implicitly) think in the same categories?" and "Within the common categories, how are Judaism and Christianity similar and different?"

Hoffman's approach produces such comparisons as the following:[48]

> As Jews had a paschal offering, so, too, do Christians. Jesus is to the new covenant what the paschal lamb had been to the Jewish covenant on Sinai. What Jews and Christians have in common is the root metaphor. Where they differ rhetorically is in the set of questions they ask of the metaphor.

Hoffman explains how dialogue can yield improved understanding:[49]

> Comparing bedrock conceptions helps Jews understand Christianity and Judaism at the same time. Even as they discover classic statements of Christian thought as liturgical theologians explicitly express them, Jews grasp the depth of the same concepts as they are embedded implicitly in this Jewish liturgy. And in this relationship between concept and liturgical practice, both Jews and Christians should be able to see where we differ and where we are the same.

Wilken's response[50] captures something of the "personal" dimension of dialogue:

> . . . worship . . . is the one aspect of religious life in which one speaks, as it were, in a native language where translation is most difficult. How, for example, can one translate the Shema or transpose the invocation that stands at the beginning of the Christian Eucharist—"In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"—into another idiom? There is something irreducible here. In worship, Christians and Jews are most uniquely themselves. . . .

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[48] Ibid., p. 182.
[49] Ibid., p. 189.
[50] Ibid., p. 202.

The exchange between Hoffman and Wilken builds on a clear picture of the structure of Judaic and Christian worship. It consequently can result in a comparison that fulfills its aims by paying careful attention to both similarity and difference.

Interreligious dialogue differs from established scholarship because of its restricted access and prescribed results. Nevertheless, it has the potential to build bridges between (and among) diverse traditions, heritages, and communities. It can help religious practitioners and scholars gain fresh perspectives on how religion works. But dialogue requires discipline. As Jacob Neusner observed, in a work that anticipated much of what is presented in *Dabru Emet* and CJT, authentic dialogue, "requires that different people argue about the same things, appeal to the same facts, invoke the same canons of thought and reasoned argument."[51] More is at stake in dialogue than achieving familiarity. Familiarity can reduce anxiety about the unknown, but alone it does not necessarily yield either comprehension or acceptance. To generate or enhance durable mutual respect, interreligious dialogue must go beyond good intentions. Although interreligious dialogue can be the work only of religiously committed people, it must employ some basic tools of academic scholarship. Interreligious dialogue requires a meaningful measure of specificity: about the situations of the interlocutors, about the logic of comparison, the mode of translation, and descriptive fidelity to the religion itself. Absent clarity in these four areas, dialogue cannot truly advance interreligious understanding, even if it occasions some progress in individual human relations as the parties to the dialogue become personally accustomed to one another's company.[52]

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[51] Neusner, Ibid., p. 22.

[52] I owe a debt of gratitude to Alan Avery-Peck and Jacob Neusner for helping me to clarify components of this article and for patience and support. Rabbi Laurence Kotok, Temple B'rith Kodesh, Rochester, NY, made several critically useful observations, for which I am grateful. I thank Alfred Vitale for invaluable bibliographical help, Richard Jackson for assistance with research, David Reiner and Catrina Lincoln, students at the University of Rochester, and Ray and Barbara Breslau, Beth Am Synagogue, Baltimore, MD, for helpful comments. I was invited to sign *Dabru Emet* but, largely for the reasons explained here, decided not to do so. Prof. Michael Signer also kindly raised with me the possibility of participation in the collective work that led to the statement, but it was not feasible to do so. I remain grateful for his inquiry.

III

For religion, times have changed, and Judaism and Christianity may now encounter one another as never before—and with greater openness, parity, and intensity than ever before—in their histories. Dialogue between these two religions—particularly if the interlocutors are scholars—will benefit from self-conscious clarity about method, content, and context. As Tony Saldarini's life and career remind us, realistic expectations produce the most enduring results. *Zekher tzaddiq livrakhah.*

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HOW TO READ SCRIPTURES FOR RELIGIOUS TRUTH

Robert Cummings Neville
Boston University

My friendship with Tony Saldarini began over twenty years ago when he advised me on personnel for the Judaic Studies program I chaired at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. That neither of us was Jewish made it possible for that program to go forward in that political place. We reconnected in a much more intense way in the mid 1990s, when Tony joined the collaborative Comparative Religious Ideas Project that I directed. Our principle of selection was to invite participation from historical scholars who were expert in religious traditions other than their own affiliation. Tony, a Christian, was our expert in Judaism, while Paula Fredriksen, a Jew, was our expert in Christianity. Again, his being not Jewish was central to our discussions. That collaboration lasted four intense years. Tony participated with great vigor and wisdom, despite his continuing battle with cancer. His articles in our publications are among his last and best.[1] Our collaboration, with that of the other historical specialists and generalists in the Comparative Religious Ideas Project, proved to be an exciting and fruitful model for comparative theology.[2] I shall attempt to honor Tony in this essay by addressing one of the main issues, if not the single most important issue, to surface in our collaborative comparative studies: how to read scriptures for religious truth.

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[1] See his "Religious Dimensions of the Human Condition in Judaism: Wrestling with God in an Imperfect World" with Joseph Kanofsky; "Ultimate Realities: Judaism: God as Many-Sided Ultimate Reality in Traditional Judaism;" and "To Practice Together Truth and Humility, Justice and Law, Love of Merciful Kindness and Modest Behavior" also with Joseph Kanofsky, in Robert Cummings Neville, ed., *The Human Tradition, Ultimate Realities, and Religious Truth* (Albany, 2001).

[2] The other historical specialists were Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Malcolm David Eckel, S. Nomanul Haq, Livia Kohn; the generalists from diverse fields were Peter Berger, John H. Berthrong, Wesley J. Wildman, and myself. Our graduate assistants participated fully in the project and became collaborative colleagues by the end; Joseph Kanofsky worked closely with Tony Saldarini. The others were Christopher Allen, James Miller, Hugh Nicholson, Tina Shepardson, Celeste Sullivan, and John Thatamanil.

Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (the religious traditions we studied, treating Confucianism and Daoism as integrated in Chinese Religion) all have scriptures from which they derive religious truth claims from century to century. Their scriptural texts are quite different from one another. They have different kinds of authority, and the kinds of authority are disputed and altered within each tradition's own history. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam share some scriptures, but each takes a different line of interpretation and understanding of authority; the same is true of Confucianism and Daoism. Hinduisms affirm the Vedic scriptures that the Buddhists define themselves as rejecting. Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism learn from one another's scriptures, although Buddhism was viewed by the others as a foreign religion in China and therefore not authoritative. Despite this diversity, I shall argue that there are common issues in reading scriptures for religious truth.

Recent historical criticism (of the last three centuries, "recent" in the time-scale of the great religions) has obscured the question of how to read scriptures for religious truth. That criticism attempts to get behind the way subsequent generations interpreted the scripture to the analysis of the historical composition of the scriptures and what they meant in their original context. Then historical criticism studies how successive generations interpreted the scriptures in their contexts, historically understood. From this we get a story about how scriptures have been read in various contexts that comes down to the modern era in which the scriptures are read as historical documents. Many of our contemporaries continue to read scripture in "believing" ways, not as history but as true in some sense: that fact is another part of the story. It is a fact, not a normative reading of religious truth in the scriptures.

What most modern historical criticism fails to understand is how anyone ever could have found religious truth in their tradition's scriptures. Historical criticism can say why social or cultural conditions, or perhaps psychological ones, explain why people prefer this or that reading of scripture. This argument is too often reductive and circular: the reading derives from the conditions. Why not say that people adapt their reading to their conditions? That is the way the practice of reading scripture for religious truth seems to the readers, particularly in novel or threatening conditions.

My argument here has three main parts. First, I will give an interpretation of what goes on in reading scripture for religious truth: scriptures are a means of engaging religious realities. Second, I will make some observations on why scriptures are so hard to read for truth at an historical distance. Finally, I will make some suggestion concerning what to do about that for those who are interested in scriptural truth.

1. *Scriptures for Engagement*

No matter what theologians, historians, sages, commentators, adepts, or the texts themselves say about the origin and authority of the scriptures of their religious group, scriptures shape the way religious people engage ultimate matters. In theistic religions, scriptures shape the way the people engage God, the religious dimensions of the human condition, and matters of piety. Other things besides scripture shape engagement of the ultimate, including commentarial traditions, legal traditions, teaching authorities, religious leaders in various capacities, and important historical events taking place after the scriptures' composition and reception. Religions differ in the weight given to these and other factors that shape engagement. Yet scriptures have a kind of primacy in that most of the other factors include a reading of the scriptures to give themselves authority, even when two commentarial traditions or two religious leaders are in direct contradiction with each other. This is as true for the anti-authoritarian and anti-revelational Confucian tradition (whose primary genre of religious thought is commentary) as it is for the classical Vedic or the revelational Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. Scriptures shape not only engagement with ultimate matters but also most of the other factors that also shape engagement with ultimate matters.

What does "engagement" mean? I take a somewhat special meaning of the term from pragmatic semiotic theory.[3] Although many

[3] Charles S. Peirce is the founder of pragmatic semiotic theory. See Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, eds., *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Cambridge, MA, 1932), vol. 2, book 2, "Speculative Grammar," in which the editors have collected many of Peirce's writings on semiotics. Peirce was influential on James, Dewey, and Mead, and on analytic philosophers interested in semiotics such as Charles Morris. More recently his semiotic theory has been applied in detail to religion and

semiotic theories take signs to be substitutes for their object, pragmatic semiotics takes signs to be means of shaping behavior so as better to engage what is real. Without the signs, the real objects they represent would be unnoticed or construed mistakenly according to some other signs. Signs, among other things, are habits for responding to things differentially. When we lack the signs to notice crucial distinctions, or respond with the wrong signs, reality often quickly corrects us. Consider the signs an experienced driver employs when negotiating a difficult road—not only the lay of the road and oncoming traffic but also the kinetic feel of the car accelerating or braking, the styles of the drivers in front and behind, traffic signs, the pitch of other vehicles that shows them to be speeding or slowing, the angles of their wheels, the aggressiveness or hesitance of other drivers at the corner, and so forth. Driving requires an integrated array of very many interpretations with signs that have slipped into habit below consciousness in the case of experienced drivers. But remember the first day on the road in driver's ed, when every sign had to be called to attention for the first time. Driving signs allow us to engage the road and get where we are going; driving with no signs or the wrong signs does not allow us to engage the distinctions needed. Examples of engagement can be proliferated. We learn to look at people's gestures and body language to engage their real intent. We enter a party and if we have the right signs, can pick up on tension, anxiety, exuberance, and letting-it-all-hang-out, even if no one says these things and even though each of these signs is a harmony of many other signs that refer to empirical data: a person laughing too loud is tense, or drunk. Without the right signs, we cannot engage reality and instead miss it or get bumped.

"Ultimate reality" is particularly difficult to engage. What most religions take to be "ultimate" came to human attention during the Axial Age, as Jaspers argued.[4] During that time, cultural traditions in East Asia, South Asia, and West Asia, as well as Northern Africa,

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developed far beyond Peirce's own work. See Robert S. Corrington, *An Introduction to C.S. Peirce: Philosopher, Semiotician, and Ecstatic Naturalist* (Lanham, 1993) and *A Semiotic Theory of Theology and Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2000). My own use of Peirce is explained with an exposition in my *The Highroad around Modernism* (Albany, 1992) and my development of his theory to treat religious symbols in general is in *The Truth of Broken Symbols* (Albany, 1996). The theory is illustrated extensively in my *Symbols of Jesus: A Christology of Symbolic Engagement* (Cambridge, 2001).

[4] See Karl Jaspers, *Way to Wisdom: An Introduction to Philosophy*, translated by Ralph Manheim (New Haven, 1954).

acquired conceptions of the cosmos as a whole, of some ultimate creator, ground, or Dao of the cosmos, and of human individuality that is defined by relations to that ultimate in addition to relations to kin, place, and nation. Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Greek philosophic religions all developed such conceptions; Christianity and Islam built upon them later. Among themselves and within themselves, those religions have different conceptions of the cosmos, its ultimate ground, and human individuality as defined by ultimate relations. Yet the important vague universal truth is that they all have conceptions defining ultimacy relative to the world and individuals, and these conceptions are embodied in their scriptures.

What does it mean to engage ultimate matters? Like engaging the road with a shifting complex of interpretations with driving signs, engaging ultimate matters is the shaped ways by which people live before the ultimate as their religion conceives the matter. Religious traditions are organized ways of life embodying as habits the religions' signs for ultimate matters. For instance, in ancient Israel, life was understood to be lived under obligation given by God, creator of the cosmos. How one responds to such "ultimate" obligation defines one's worth as an individual, and one's group's worth before God. For the Israelites and their Jewish successors, the ultimate obligation was mainly laid out in the Torah, along with the story that gave it meaning. Much of the pattern of living engaged with God consisted in following the commandments and ritual life described in Leviticus and elsewhere. The commentarial tradition in Judaism spelled out the obligations in new circumstances, and this was doubly mediated because much of the commentary about ultimate matters was in terms of life in the Temple after the Temple had been destroyed and most observant Jews lived in the Diaspora. Christianity kept the sense of obligation but gave it new interpretations; Jesus was taken to be a new supplementary revelation regarding its content, and some of the old obligations were set aside. The rituals, such as that of the atonement, were given a new cosmic interpretation with Jesus as both high priest and sacrificial lamb. Islam was born of both Judaism and Christianity, strengthening the sense that people are created to live under obligation, as spelled out in the Quran and sharpened by an intense prohibition of idolatry.[5]

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[5] See S. Nomanul Haq, "The Human Condition in Islam: Sharia and Obligation"

The patterns of daily and annual ritual life in all three religions are a curious mixture of moral and conventional obligations, truly puzzling to the Enlightenment mind. All three Abrahamic religions strongly emphasize the moral virtues of love, justice, and mercy, virtues believed to be divine as well as well as binding on human beings. At the same time, some of the ritual *patterns* are taken to be binding on a special religious community and not to be expected of those in other communities who have different patterns of reverencing God and behaving with love, justice, and mercy. Contrary to Enlightenment sensibilities, the point of the obligations is not to sift the moral from the conventional but to constitute communal and individual ways or patterns of life for living engaged with the ultimate. The Confucian sense of ritual, especially as developed by Xunzi, is an excellent way of understanding this point about patterned ways of life that engage the ultimate.[6]

Among the many elements of life that are patterned to engage the ultimate in religious traditions is thinking, what we in the West call "theology." The genres of theology are notoriously diverse even within a single religious tradition, let alone across religions. Rowan Williams offers an interesting classification of theological efforts.[7] "Theology begins as a *celebratory* phenomenon, an attempt to draw out and display connections of thought and image so as to exhibit the fullest possible range of significance in the language used." Because celebratory theology can become insular and cut people off from the wider society, theology also has *communicative* efforts in which it engages other forms of discourse to enlarge and justify its claims, as the early Christian apologists took to Greek philosophy (so did the early Muslim thinkers) and as most theologians and philosophers today of all religions relate to modern science. Because such communicative engage-

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in *The Human Condition*, chap. 7. Haq also points out that Islam disconnects living under obligation from accounts of the fall, stressing instead that people are created by Allah to live lives of continual moral choice.

[6] See John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, in three volumes (Stanford, 1988, 1990, and 1994). Volume 3, book 19, "Discourse on Ritual Principles," is a focused discussion, although Xunzi treats ritual through all his books. Xunzi was born around 310 B.C.E. and lived perhaps a hundred years, into the Chin dynasty, commenting on the philosophers of Chinese antiquity including Confucius and Mencius. I have developed a Confucian notion of rituals for the point discussed here in *Normative Cultures* (Albany, 1995), chapter 7.

[7] In *On Christian Theology* (Oxford, 2000), pp. xiii–xvi. Shortly after writing this book, Williams was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury.

ment of other modes of discourse and ways of life can raise questions about the validity of the home base of the community's celebratory theology, theology also has what Williams calls *critical* efforts that raise fundamental questions of truth. Celebratory, communicative, and critical modes of theology all are ways by which some religious people, the thinkers, live out their engagement with ultimate matters. Religious thinking, again in all three modes, can affect other elements of patterned engagement with ultimate matters.

Reading scriptures for religious truth takes place in all three modes. It is obviously a part of the celebratory life of religious communities in which the religious symbols are exercised, taught, and applied to govern religious life. As noted above, even in religious traditions without authoritative revelatory views of scriptures, such as the Confucian, the scriptures are a base line of reference in communicative discussions with other modes of discourse. Reading scriptures for relevant religious truth is important for critical theology in which scriptures of different religions are compared and the very question of how to read scriptures for religious truth is raised.

What is the religious truth in scriptures? It is whether and how living with and reflecting on the scriptures engage people truly with what is ultimate. Scriptures are religiously true when they function symbolically to engage people rightly with ultimate matters. Of course religions differ theologically about what the ultimate matters are, the nature of God, and so forth. Also, the question is very complex of how to tell when an existential interpretation of ultimate matters by means of particular symbols is true, a point to which I shall return. Furthermore, prior to the question of the truth of a symbolic interpretation is the question of whether the symbol allows of genuine engagement at all: nowadays critics complain that the old religious symbols of the traditional religions simply do not engage late modern or post modern people. People claim that traditional religious symbols are meaningless, which does not mean that they cannot be defined but that they do not effectively engage people. The religious truth of scripture is a matter of symbolic engagement.

Truth itself happens when what is important in the object interpreted is carried over into the interpreting subjects in the respects in which the signs or symbols stand for the objects. The question of truth is not whether what is carried over into the minds and behavior of the interpreters is a form that mirrors the object (as Aristotelians have tended to stress) but whether what is valuable in the object in

the respect it is being interpreted. Truth is an interpretive carryover of value, as qualified by the biology, culture, semiotics, and purposes of the interpreters.[8] Religious truth is the carryover of what is important in ultimate matters—God, salvation, faithfulness, etc., in the monotheistic traditions—into patterns and decisions of life that engage the ultimate. Patterns of life can engage ultimate matters but not be true, as the feminists remind us of traditional patriarchy or history reminds us of the religious elements of Nazism. Paul Tillich called false religious engagements demonic.

If the claim be accepted that the religious truth of scripture is a matter of symbolic engagement, we can dismiss a number of false leads about that in which the religious truth of scripture consists. For instance, in many scriptures, particularly in the biblical traditions, much purports to be history. Is its religious truth refuted if the history is shown to be false? Not necessarily, because living with that history, identifying with it (even though it is false as history), might engage one truly with ultimate matters. Consider the early Christians. The first Jewish Christians took Jesus' life and teachings to be a purification of their own Second Temple Judaism. The first Gentile Christians (the majority of Christians, apparently, within twenty years) adopted the history of Israel as described in the Septuagint as their own. But they knew full well that their own history was a pagan one, and they used their adopted history to come to terms with that, not caring to purify Judaism. If that historical appropriation helped make them into good Christians following the pattern of love in communities as advocated by Jesus (say, according to the Farewell Discourse in John's Gospel), then it was in that respect true even if the history was not really theirs and if it was historically false. Or consider the laws attributed to Moses that suppose a temple versus those that suppose the Israelites are still in the wilderness. If the rabbis can work out a plan to live with both formulations before God, does it matter which Moses really handed down, or whether he was in historical fact the source of any? Jewish life takes the laws attributed to Moses to be symbols for how to engage God faithfully as Jews.

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[8] I have defended this thesis at length in *Recovery of the Measure* (Albany, 1989), especially chapters 1–4, and have applied it to religious symbols in particular in *The Truth of Broken Symbols*.

The point about accurate history's not being the heart of the religious truth of scripture can be applied to the scriptural passages that seem like science. The texts that present God as creator of the cosmos, with the proper engagement that follows from that, do not depend on the details in Genesis of the creation. That religious truth is a matter of symbolic engagement also means that the legendary stories, say in the Vedas, do not have to be descriptively true, true in a mapping sense, for them to be existentially true, pointing people in the right direction so that what is important about ultimate matters is carried across into their way of living before the ultimate. Even the didactic elements of scriptures, as predominate in some Buddhist scriptures, and in Daoism and Confucianism, need not be descriptively true to be existentially true.

The semiotic point in play here is the distinction Peirce drew between two elements of reference, which he called the iconic and the indexical. Iconic reference works by saying that the object referred to is *like* what the interpretive symbols say it is, a kind of mapping, a carryover of form. A description or a theory is mainly a complicated icon. Indexical reference works like a pointing finger to get the interpreter to look in a different direction; it effects a change in the interpreter to establish something like a causal connection to put the interpreter in a better position to grasp what is important in the object to which reference is made. Most religious symbols have a heavy weight of indexical reference. Many of them require years of being meditated upon for them to effect the change and maturation in interpreters so that they can appreciate their deeper meanings, i.e., receive the value the symbols would carry across from the ultimate realities they interpret. Symbols in prayer are particularly like this, functioning indexically to transform the pray-er rather than to communicate to God a wish-list. My point is that reading scriptures for religious truth needs to be particularly sensitive to the indexical dimension of scriptures, not merely the iconic.[9]

[9] This point is explained at length in *The Truth of Broken Symbols* and in *Religion in Late Modernity*, chapters 3–5.

2. *Imaginative Differences*

The above defense of an interpretive theology of symbolic engagement has not yet faced the hardest issue for reading scriptures for religious truth. That issue is the vast difference between the imaginative world of the centuries in which the classic scriptures were written and that of our own time. By "imaginative world" I mean the operative interpretive assumptions that form the cultural background within which conscious interpretations and decisions are made and within which intentional life is lived. Immanuel Kant pointed out that imagination is the causal synthesis that allows experience to have its shape. Without imagination, the human organism is conditioned by its environment, bombarded with pushes and pulls, and stimulated according to the physics and chemistry of its nervous system. Imagination is the synthesizing of those otherwise merely biological actions and reactions into the stuff of experience.[10] Imagination has extraordinarily complex layers of development, beginning with the biopsychic dance of physiological reactions we take to have significance, for instance, hunger pangs. Semiotics in the largest sense is the logical and causal structure of imagination, and of the assertions, theorizing, and practical intentional behavior that constitute experience. The physiological basis of elementary imagination is probably common to all people, who alike get hungry and see in a bifocal way (not like cattle who look in two different directions or flies who see with multiple facets). Cultures differentially shape what we notice in perception, however, and what different peoples take to be responses to hunger. Semiotic differences among cultures give different senses of space and time, of human friendliness or threat, and of what constitutes the furniture of the world. The religious dimensions of imagination have to do with the boundary conditions of what makes up a culture's sense of the world, the "worldliness of the world" as some philosophers call it after Heidegger. Peter Berger's notion of the "sacred canopy" nicely articulates many aspects of these religious world-defining imaginative conditions.[11] The "imaginative

[10] Kant's argument about imagination is most important in the Transcendental Deduction of the A edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and in the discussion of schematism in both A and B editions. I have developed the biological and semiotic bases of imagination in *Reconstruction of Thinking* (Albany, 1981), part 2.

[11] See Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (Garden City, 1967).

world" of a culture includes much more than the strictly religious elements, being shaped by the arts, by the understanding of history, by world events, and by the variations in world-perspective that a culture tolerates among its various social classes.

The great scriptures of the world were written within imaginative backgrounds vastly different from the imaginative world of late modernity (or postmodernity if there is such a thing). Ancient East Asian, South Asian, and West Asian cultures were extremely various. The crude generalizations about the East's being process-oriented while the West is substance-oriented are true, so long as they are left extremely vague. Nevertheless, all the ancient cultures that provided the imaginative backgrounds for the world's scriptural traditions are vastly different from the late-modern imagination. With the exception of forms of Buddhism and Hinduism, they viewed the cosmos as much smaller than we now know it to be. All of the ancient cultures thought of the cosmos as stratified into different planes of existence, with different forms of agency and causation appropriate to each plane. A visitor from another plane, an avatar, god, angel, or whatever, was often taken to be religiously significant, especially for the elevation of knowledge or revelation. The European Enlightenment thought of these visitations as supernatural. But that was because modern science assumes a uniformity of causation and agency throughout the cosmos: a being that breaks the laws of *our* nature must be supernatural (and therefore impossible in the Enlightenment view). For the imaginative worlds of antiquity, such a being merely had a different nature, that appropriate to a different plane of existence, the many of which belong to a single cosmos.

The scriptures of antiquity were written against the backgrounds of the ancient imaginative worlds. Their inbuilt assumptions about what things there are and how they work assume one of those imaginative worlds. Of course, the scriptures themselves were mightily powerful in shaping the imaginative world of the culture in which they arose, and also subsequent cultures in which they played some of the roles mentioned above. Nevertheless, the imaginative world of our time is vastly different. Our world has been shaped by modern science, by an encounter of world cultures more complete and complex than anything in history, by global communications such as the internet, and by appreciation of global problems relative to the environment and world economy that could not have been imagined in antiquity. Perhaps modern science is the most pervasive novel

influence on our imaginative world because it gives us the sense of how things work and why. We know scientifically and have built in to our imaginative backgrounds that things do not work the way the ancients of any culture thought they did. Nature *is* uniform, and the supernatural cannot be explained as a visitation from another plane with a different nature.

When God settled on the mountain to give Moses the law, God's agency and causal properties, fine in heaven, caused a great strain on the coherence of the earthly plane. God's descent was extraordinarily noisy, like the sound of a trumpet that got louder and louder. The area had to be cordoned off so the people would not be hurt by the divine presence. God caused the mountain to quake and burst into flames (Exodus 19). What are we to make of that? It was a volcanic eruption, of course, but that was not at all what the ancient Israelites made of it. Do we miss their point? Say it is false? Or interpret it "symbolically?"

Contemporary religious people have to interpret as symbolic, that is, not literally true, what the ancients did not conceive that way. The more our historical critical methods allow us to understand just what the ancients did assume and believe, the wider the ditch between their imaginative world and ours. To understand what they assumed and believed is not to get the religious meanings of their scriptures, meanings that are religiously significant for us. So it has become the custom of the contemporary religious people among us to interpret the texts symbolically. The tragedy of this is that too often we simply project into the scriptures the symbolic meaning we want to find. Antebellum Christians found in the Hebrew Bible a justification for slavery; black liberationists find in it a song of freedom from slavery and oppression; that same song persuades Zionists of their right to take a land to which others also lay a claim. Is there no better way to read scripture for its religious meaning?

3. *Symbolic Interpretation*

I suggest three strategies for improved reading of scriptures for religious truth, a comparative strategy, a metaphysical strategy, and a strategy of pragmatic test. If these can be employed together, they can both enhance the depth of our meditative reading of scriptures controlled by the genius of the texts and allow the scriptures to illumine our own religious lives.

The comparative strategy looks a lot like Bultmann's,, namely, to distinguish the ancient and late-modern cultures and find a common fundamental human issue that the ancient texts addressed in ways no longer possible for us; then we find out how to express the scriptural truth in ways that are possible to us. Actually, it was Spinoza who first suggested the germ of this strategy in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. The comparative strategy should not be taken too much in Bultmann's mode, however. First, whereas Bultmann thought of the ancient world as primitive and ours as modern, with an historical assumption of progress relating them, I think the comparison of the two cultures with their different cultural imaginations should be simply comparative. Like comparing Islam and Buddhism, the ancient and late-modern cultures in a single tradition ought to be allowed their separate integrities and well as causal connections. Second, the work of finding the common fundamental human issue is a lot harder than Bultmann recognized. For him, the existential philosophy of his time was revelatory to him, and so he hunted for the elements in the Bible that resonated with the existential emphasis on faith, a strategy that was not far from projection from our time to find a symbolic scriptural meaning to our liking.

I propose rather that we find the common fundamental human issue as we would find a respect in which two religions might be compared. We always have to begin with an hypothesis about some respect in which particular religions are comparable; that functions as our working comparative category. And of course that initial hypothesis usually is prejudicial, coming from our favorite religion, as Bultmann's existential categories came from his favorite philosophy. But the work of making comparisons is vulnerable to correction, and the understanding of the respect in which comparisons are being made grows in sophistication along with the understanding of the ways the different religions say or do something in that respect.[12] Although all comparisons, if made responsibly, are hypotheses subject to further correction, the process of making comparisons in the presence of critical colleagues holding different forms of expertise

[12] This understanding of the process of comparison, especially collaborative comparison, guided and was corrected by the Comparative Religious Ideas Project. See the discussion especially in *Ultimate Realities*, chapters 8 and 9, "On Comparing Religious Ideas" and "How Our Approach to Comparison Relates to Others" respectively, by Wesley J. Wildman and myself.

steadies the hypotheses. Foolish comparisons are quickly rejected, more subtle formulations are reformulated again and again to take into account new evidence and to avoid newly discovered bias. In this comparative process, we come to discover just what is being compared only as we discover as well what the comparisons are in that respect. In religions, "just what is being compared" are how the religions address the common fundamental human issues.

In this regard, I propose as a summary hypothesis that the common fundamental human issues fall into four classes and their combinations.[13]

One class has to do with how to embrace our existential situation, our historical moment, our social position, our personal and interpersonal environment. This was Bultmann's favorite, and we can honor him by calling this the class of issues of *faith.* Instead of denying or attempting to escape our existential situation, Bultmann, Tillich, and others emphasized the courage of will to embrace that situation and deal with it, an act or habit of will that constitutes our existential self.[14] The Confucian decision to become a sage and the Buddhist vow to become a bodhisattva are other rhetorical expressions of this human issue that Bultmann might have taken to heart if he were trained in comparative theology.

The second class of fundamental human issues has to do with finding the right pattern of life, or *justice.* The existentialists were surprisingly silent about problematic issues of justice, both for society and for the organization of individual and interpersonal life, except to say that justice is good; perhaps they thought Kant had solved the basic moral issues. Nevertheless, as we now realize the issues of justice in an age of global economics and nearly unlimited access to information are baffling. Old tensions between the right to keep what one owns or earns and the obligations of equality of opportunity have extraordinary new manifestations. With religious wars currently in all nations whose name begins with "I," and others, wars based on claims of religiously sanctioned justice, the issues of justice are deep. And they have been addressed in the scriptures of the ancients.

The third class of fundamental human problems is far less obvious than those of faith and justice. I have in mind here a kind of

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[13] This classification is discussed extensively with regard to Christian symbols in *Symbols of Jesus*, especially chapters 1 and 3.

[14] See Paul Tillich's *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, 1952).

natural *piety* toward the components that make up human society. As components they are organized in higher patterns, the issues of which are justice. Yet they also have an integrity of their own that is often choked by being forced into larger patterns of justice. Some of these are elements of nature—the fields, forests, and beasts that are domesticated and destroyed in their wildness for the sake of human civilization. Others are components of human organization itself—the proud clans whom just civilization prevents from avenging themselves on hereditary enemies, families forced to suffer a diminished domesticity because of the call of clan or nation; individuals prevented from flourishing because of roles they must fulfill in families. Piety is recognizing and deferring to the integrities of things bent into larger patterns of justice. Justice and piety are not easily reconciled. Justice usually sets the terms of the argument, with the result that some issues, for instance many of those in ecology, are represented as justice issues in disguise when really they are matters of piety. Religions generally have moments that transcend and relativize the human perspective that defines justice. The Dao treats all people as straw dogs.[15] In the monotheistic traditions, the creator is equally close to all things, viewing them with a kind of aesthetic disinterest or love for all; piety involves approximating a God's eye view, or the Buddha-mind, or the "Tat tvam asi" principle of the Vedas.

The fourth class of fundamental issues has to do with the religious quest, with finding meaning or value in the cosmos, with finding ways of thinking of oneself and one's group as standing in ultimate perspective. All the other classes of issues have to do with achieving the values of faith, justice, and piety relative to one's conditions. People are also concerned with how these things add up absolutely, ultimate, non-relatively. Of course our lives are contextual and relative, but does that mean they do not also have some absolute meaning? The religious quest is to find a way of bringing the relativities of life to some kind of non-relative consummation or judgment. All religions have images of "final judgment," of putting out the flame of samsara. These issues have to do with matters of immanence and

[15] "Heaven and Earth are not humane (jen). They regard all things as straw dogs. The sage is not humane. He regards all people as straw dogs." *Daodejing*, stanza 5, Chan translation in Wingtsit Chan, ed., *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, 1963).

transcendence, of effing the ineffable, of finding God. These are the issues of transcendent *hope* for finding finite selves in ultimate perspective.

My comparative hypothesis is that the way to compare religions, and to compare the ancient scriptural culture with late-modern culture within a religion, is to track how they address the issues of faith, justice, piety, and transcendent hope. I have expressed these as if they were separate from one another and, to be sure, they are not. They are intimately bound up with one another, and yet they are often in tension. A further hypothesis worth pursuing is whether the emphasis on *love*, compassion, humaneness, or benevolence so common and yet so elusive in religions is not the issue of harmonizing or balancing these obligations in tension.

The comparative strategy is to read our scriptures (whichever they be) and the thinking of our own time to see how both of them, comparatively, address these fundamental human issues of faith, justice, piety, hope, and love. We can learn from scriptures how to think deeply about these things.

The metaphysical strategy should already be apparent. To be responsible for what we assume about ourselves and others we need to develop metaphysical systems that express them and integrate as best as possible what we know, so that those systems with their assumptions can be made vulnerable to correction. Is existentialism right? At best it is partial. Metaphysics is unpopular these days with people who want to have certainty in their metaphysical principles. Certainty, however, is not worth much. Far better it is simply to engage with the most knowledgeable people from all fields, including metaphysics, and have the best system in the room. Tomorrow someone will improve on that, or, alas, forget something important. A metaphysical system makes assumptions vulnerable and allows for taking responsibility for what we know and do not know. Moreover, a metaphysical system makes it possible to understand the differences in metaphysical assumptions between the imaginative world of scripture and our own time.

Metaphysical systems, of course, are hypotheses, vulnerable to correction. Part of my metaphysical hypothesis is that things are harmonies with existential location, form, components, and achieved value. Although I cannot defend this here, the hypothesis is important with regard to human beings because we can have some control over what we are and become. With regard to existential location, we can embrace it actively or try to flee and deny it; with regard

to form we can have the best form in justice, or less than the best; with regard to how we relate to the components of life, we can have proper piety or not; with regard to summary achieved value, we can pursue a perspective on that or not. The four classes of comparative fundamental human issues derive from this part of my metaphysical hypothesis. So they can be criticized by criticizing the metaphysics, and thus made doubly vulnerable. And should the criticism steady down to reinforcing the metaphysical hypothesis, that would lend extraordinary weight to the comparative classification. The point here is not that my metaphysics is right, although of course I think it is the best in the room. The point is that metaphysics allows us to take responsibility for assumptions that control even the way we comparatively relate ourselves to others and to our scriptures. Without metaphysics, we do not notice the large elephant of assumptions in the room.

The strategy of pragmatic test pulls the strategies together. In reading scriptures for religious meaning we *first* have to be aware of the differences between the scriptures' own imaginative world and that of our own time. We live in our own time—a truism—and need to be faithful to the integrity of the imaginative world insofar as that arises from the best in our knowledge. Of course, our own imaginative world is faulty, behind the times, and filled with prejudices that we should efface as soon as we identify them. Moreover, our imaginative world makes vast assumptions about what we think we know when we do not. The critical examination of our own imaginative world requires a responsible metaphysics that integrates what we know and elucidates what we do not. Serious metaphysicians have an important role to play in reading scriptures aright for religious truth, namely, to tell us about the truth and limits of the imaginative world that defines our own integrity. Some theologians (for instance, Barthians) have argued that we should abandon our own imaginative world and read the events of our lives solely through the terms of the Bible. But this is naïve escapism unless we carefully discriminate the terms of the Bible from the ancient imaginative background that gave them their original significance. If that discrimination can be made and the terms transferred to our own imaginative world, then it is possible that the Bible's terms can speak to our own authentic existence.

Second, in order to tell whether scriptural terms can be transplanted into the contemporary imagination without escapism, it is necessary to identify the respects in which the scriptural claims,

stories, symbols, etc., represented the ultimate in the scriptural imaginative world. Then we can ask whether they can represent the same respects of interpretation in our own imaginative world. Or perhaps they can show us that we need different ways of getting at those respects of interpretation of the ultimate in our lives. Only by tracking comparatively the religious significance of the scriptural texts in their imaginative world relative to the respects of interpreting the ultimate that need to be addressed in ours, can we address the question of the religious relevance of scripture for our time.

With those two strategic layers as background, it then is possible to ask two questions about the religious meaning of scriptural texts: do they engage people today and, if so, do they carry across what is important in their objects to the interpreters whose lives are patterned by them?

Whether the scriptural texts engage (surely within any large scripture some texts engage far better than others) is an empirical question with at least four parts. The first is determining whether the conditions of contemporary life for our group or an individual include the purposes and contextual values that would make the respects in which the texts interpret the ultimate important. The second is to determine whether the network of symbols in the ancient text can be connected with the symbols that are significant for current life, or improve on those symbols in ways revelatory to us. The third is to understand just how the texts are referring, in what respects their reference is iconic so that we have to believe reality is like what they say, and in what respects their reference is indexical so that it transforms us better to address the reality of their objects. The fourth is to determine the conditions that make some among us ready to engage ultimate matters through the texts. Sometimes people are too young or are in the wrong state of soul for texts to be meaningful that should be meaningful in principle according to objective criteria. Sometimes individuals can know perfectly well what a textual passage or symbol is supposed to mean but are alienated from it, as people who as children were abused by their father have a hard time relating to God as father. All of these are empirical questions that need to be answered contextually for particular people. Whether symbols engage is a function of the people that interpret by means of them as well as a function of the symbolic structures themselves.

The second question is whether the symbols, if they engage, do so truly. If they are not true, they are demonic. We have so many

religions of peace whose scriptures have been read as giving ultimate sanction to rape and pillage against neighbors, oppression of women and minorities, and prejudice and violence against people who are "other," that we should be suspicious in principle of any alleged religious reading of truth. The only way to tell whether the scriptures carry across what in fact is important or valuable in their objects is to see whether those who live by the scriptures embody that in their own lives. Does the way they think and behave express what is important in the objects interpreted by the scriptures they read?

To answer this question, of course, involves partly standing outside the particular interpretive context in question. We have to have some independent source for what is important in the ultimate matters addressed in the scripture. If scriptures were extremely spare, this would be a very difficult matter; but scriptures are complex, and all have been set in very rich interpretive contexts. Readings of Christian scriptures, as mentioned above, that do not foster communities of love for God and friendship for one another are likely to be false, given the predominance of the theme of divine and human love in the whole of Christian scriptures.

Just as important as getting some independent purchase on what is important in the ultimate objects of reference is getting some independent judgment on the theoretical and practical meaning those scriptures have in the lives of their contemporary interpreters. I have written here of "us" as the contemporary readers of scripture. What we also need is a contemporary expert perspective of discernment on "them," our contemporaries who are reading scriptures. And our contemporaries ought to advise us discerningly. Spiritual discernment is an intimate process, but in the long run an empirical one. On the one hand, reading scriptures is often a deep, inward, soul transforming activity, very difficult to objectify to others. On the other hand, reading scriptures is a community affair with roles for discerners who can be skeptical and critical. In principle, it should be possible for anyone, from any religious tradition, to enter into the reading of scripture of another tradition by persons from that tradition, judging with discernment whether their reading is true. After all, it is an empirical matter whether the value in the religious object is carried over by the interpreted scripture into the interpreter in the respects in which the scripture interprets its object.

From these considerations several morals can be drawn.

First, uninterpreted scriptures are neither true nor false; only interpretations or "readings" of scriptures are true or false. This has implications for debates about the authority of scriptures.

Second, readings of scriptures are always contextual in the sense that the question of truth is whether what is important in the scriptures' objects is carried across into particular actual interpreters. So the verbal statement of a "reading" that is true in one context might be false in another, or meaningless as non-engaging. A real "reading" is fully contextual.

Third, readings of scripture for religious truth are ineluctably communal or collaborative, because it often takes an outsider to judge whether what seems so compelling in the reading is really the right thing to be carried across into the interpretation. "Collaborative" is better than "communal" because communities can be collectively deceived. "Collaboration" means that readers submit to judgment from people who are more devoted to discerning the truth than to enhancing a communal purpose.

Fourth, reading scriptures for religious truth is a form of religious practice, not merely epistemological pizzazz. On one side religious communities count on and in varying ways shape themselves around reading scriptures for religious truth. On the other side, even disinterested scholars reading scriptures become religious in learning to read them, because to read scriptures means engaging the ultimate things to which they refer. The historical critical method of scripture study is wonderful, but not a full reading of the scriptures. Comparative theology of the sort Tony Saldarini and I collaborated in requires entering into engagement with ultimate things on all sides of the comparison. Given the contextuality of religious reading, this means entering into various religious contexts, not conducive to innocence.

Fifth, part of the collaborative character of reading the scriptures for religious truth is roles for experts. Not everyone in a community can be expert in the hermeneutics of antiquity, in the critical imagination of the contemporary world, in metaphysics, or in spiritual discernment. Most religious traditions have versions of the extreme view of some sixteenth century Christian Protestants that scriptures can be perfectly well understood by anyone who can read them or have them read to them. If what I have argued here is somewhere near the mark, that is a bad view, one set up to foster the worst forms of projection and intolerant otherworldliness. Most religious traditions also have versions of the opposite extreme, that only the

elite few, the Brahmins born to the right class, gender, and educational opportunity understand religious truth, while the masses are consigned to controlling myths. In between these extremes lies the truth about reading scriptures. Scriptures are irrelevant if they do not have something for everyone, because they purport to say what is ultimately important, a topic universally relevant. Therefore the extreme elite view is wrong. Scriptures are violently disastrous tools for harnessing ultimate passions to proximate, finite, and biased programs if the discriminations of different imaginative worlds, metaphysical responsibility, and pragmatic tests for carryover are not carried out.

Tony Saldarini was one of the rare people who could combine scrupulous attention to critical historical method with a passionate, life-defining, devotion to the religious truth of scriptures. I hope to have honored his intent with these reflections, which, at best, will provoke improvements on the discussion he helped to shape in the room of current thinking about religious truth.

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