

Jesus' Use of the Old Testament and the Genesis of New Testament Theology*

E. Earle Ellis
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

For Peter Stuhlmacher on his Sixtieth Birthday

[p.59]

The present paper has its ultimate background in doctoral research at Edinburgh, Tübingen, and Göttingen, at a time when the Dead Sea Scrolls were beginning to be published. My study under Matthew Black, Otto Michel, and Joachim Jeremias placed me, in the categories of that period, among the "rabbinists" rather than the "hellenists," and a visit in 1954 to Qumran and to the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem, where the analysis of the Scrolls was proceeding, left a deep impression of the significance of the discoveries for the beginnings of Christianity. The importance of the pesher commentaries, of 4QFlorilegium, of 4QTestimonia, and of other midrashim combined with my dissertation topic¹ to raise questions about the secondary role given the NT's use of the OT by the then-dominant reconstruction of the ministry of Jesus and by what is now called the classical form criticism.

The place of the OT in early Christian thought will depend on its significance (1) in the word and works of Jesus, (2) in the composition of the four gospels, and (3) of other early Christian literature, which for all practical purposes means our NT. It would be enhanced if one could identify (4) certain dominical teachings from the OT that were taken up in Acts and in the letters of the apostolic missions.

[p.60]

EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY VIEWS OF JESUS

At mid-century three axioms current in much of NT criticism ruled out an important role for the OT in Jesus' teaching and, consequently, in the theology of earliest Christianity. They were (1) the perception of Jesus as an apocalyptic preacher, (2) the interpretation of NT theology in terms of contemporary pagan religions and of a Judaism conceptually separated from its OT roots, and (3) a form criticism of the Gospels that, under these influences, regarded their biblical citations, dialogues, and controversies as secondary creations of the post-resurrection church. "The apocalyptic Jesus" of Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer was the prevailing view on the Continent² although it was challenged in England by the realized eschatology of C. H. Dodd.³ This view of Jesus allowed little place for his role as a teacher, especially as an interpreter of OT texts. It was reinforced in Germany by earlier anti-

* A paper read in the seminar on "Inhalte and Probleme einer neutestamentliche Theologie" at the meeting of *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*, Madrid, 27-31 July 1992.

¹ Cf. E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (5th ed., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991). In "A Note on Pauline Hermeneutics" (*NTS* 2 [1955-56] 127-33) I argued that the Apostle's *pesher*-type molding of certain OT quotations had affinities with the methods and the eschatological perspective found at Qumran.

² J. Weiss, *Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God* (reprinted, Decatur, GA: Scholars Press, 1985); A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1985) esp. 330-403.

³ C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Religious Book Club, 1942) 34-56.

Semitic attitudes that sought to distance Jesus from Judaism altogether,⁴ and by quasi-Marcionite attitudes that regarded the OT as redundant and unhealthy for a contemporary expression of the Christian faith.

A Marcionite approach is most clearly seen in the writings of Adolf Harnack:

[T]he rejection of the Old Testament in the second century was a mistake...; to maintain it in the sixteenth century was a fate from which the Reformation was not yet able to escape; but still to preserve it... as a canonical document... is the consequence of a religious and ecclesiastical crippling. [The Old Testament] will be everywhere esteemed and treasured in its distinctiveness and its significance (the prophets) only when the canonical authority to which it is not entitled is withdrawn from it... [The Gospel] requires no attestation by external authorities and proofs from prophecy.⁵

Members of the history-of-religions school, with which Harnack had his differences, reflected a similar disregard for the OT in their attempt to explain Christianity in terms of contemporary Jewish and

[p.61]

pagan culture and religions.⁶ Otto Pflleiderer, who is regarded as the father of the history-of-religions theology,⁷ treated Christian origins more as an increasing deliverance from the OT than as a fulfillment of it.⁸ William Wrede thought that "Paul signifies a very wide [theological] distance from Jesus" and that "Judaism, not the Old Testament, is the basis of Christianity in the history of religion."⁹ While Wilhelm Bousset recognized the importance of biblical exegesis in the Judaism of Christ's day,¹⁰ he interpreted the origin and development of NT theology as a radical departure from the OT and from contemporary Jewish thought.¹¹

⁴ E.g., writings during the Nazi period (1933-45) of those among "the German Christians," such as E. Hirsch and W. Grundmann. Cf. R. P. Erickson, *Theologians Under Hitler* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); W. Niemöller, *Die evangelische Kirche im dritten Reich* (Bielefeld: L. Bechtauf, 1956) 99-103.

⁵ A. von Harnack, *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God* (Partial Translation; Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1990) 134, 138.

⁶ Of course, not everyone related to the school was concerned with this question. For a brief biographical sketch of its members cf. G. Lüdemann and M. Schroder, *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule in Göttingen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), which identifies the core members as W. Bousset, A. Eichhorn, H. Gunkel, E. Troeltsch, J. Weiss, and W. Wrede (15). For an overview of their interpretation of Paul's thought cf. E. E. Ellis, *Paul and his Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 27ff.; for a critique, cf. M. Hengel, *The Son of God* (London: SCM, 1976) 21-56; J. G. Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947); H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1913).

⁷ Cf. W. G. Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972) 207.

⁸ Cf. O. Pflleiderer, *Christian Origins* (London: T. Fisher, 1906) 107: "[T]he germ of the new religion was present in the attitude of Jesus, but enveloped in the traditional forms of his nation and his day; the release of the germ and the realization of its independence was a development which remained for the apostolic congregation."

⁹ W. Wrede, "The Task and Method of 'New Testament Theology,'" *The Nature of New Testament Theology* (ed. R. Morgan; London: SCM, 1973) 108, 114.

¹⁰ W. Bousset-H. Gressmann, *Die Religion des Judentums* (4th ed., Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1966) 142-71; W. Bousset, *Jüdisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria and Rom* (reprinted, Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1975) 8-154 (Philo).

¹¹ W. Bousset, *Kurios Christos* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965) 101, 190-93. Cf. M. Murrmann-Kahl, *Die Entzauberte Heilsgeschichte* (Gutersloh: G. Mohn, 1992) 365-78.

Rudolf Bultmann, a convinced adherent of Weiss's "apocalyptic Jesus"¹² and heir of the history-of-religions school,¹³ rejected a salvation-history interpretation that understood the NT in terms of the fulfillment of OT promises¹⁴ and,

[p.62]

with his existentialist hermeneutic, he gave at most a very limited affirmation of the value of the OT:

...to the Christian faith the Old Testament is not in the true sense God's Word. So far as the church proclaims the Old Testament as God's Word, it just finds in it again what is already known from the revelation in Jesus Christ.¹⁵

From this perspective Bultmann contended that isolated (apocalyptic) proclamations of Jesus were only gradually developed by the post-resurrection church into biblically supported teachings and arguments, which were then put into the mouth of Jesus.¹⁶

In my view Bultmann read the development precisely backwards. The sayings of Jesus originally belonged to a context, often an expository (midrashic) context, and separate or clustered sayings and stories (parables) and quotations without a context were often disassembled midrash and represented secondary and tertiary stages in the history of the Gospel tradition.¹⁷ The Dead Sea Scrolls have helped us to see that Jesus' teachings, like those of other Jewish religious leaders of the time, had to do with inter alia instructions and controversies about the interpretation of Scripture, and they cannot be reduced to apocalyptic proclamations. Indeed, in the light of the Scrolls, which of course were discovered only after Bultmann was over 60 years of age, nothing is so foreign to the historical situation as the picture of Jesus wandering around Galilee uttering apothegms about wisdom and about the end of the world.¹⁸ Even John the Baptist exhibits in the Gospels some traits of a teacher-gathering pupils (μαθηταί)¹⁹ and informing them about their duties and

¹² Bultmann counted Weiss's book, *Jesus' Proclamation*, among a dozen that most influenced his life and thought (*The Christian Century* 79 [1962] 1483).

¹³ At Marburg, Bultmann studied under J. Weiss and W. Heitmüller and later wrote the foreword to the reprint of Bousset's *Kurios Christos*. His affinity with the history-of-religions approach is evident in his interpretation of Paul and John in the categories of the mystery religions and Gnosticism (e.g., R. Bultmann, *The Theology of the New Testament* [2 vols., London: SCM, 1955] 1:292-306; 2:6). Cf. W. Schmithals, *An Introduction to the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* (London: SCM, 1968) 4.

¹⁴ Cf. his critique of O. Cullmann's *Christ and Time* (London: SCM, 1953) and of L. Goppelt's *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982; German original, Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1939) e.g., R. Bultmann, "Heilsgeschichte und Geschichte" (1948); "Ursprung und Sinn der Typologie als Hermeneutischer Methode" (1950), *Exegetica* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1967) 356-80. But see E. E. Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 63, 141-57.

¹⁵ R. Bultmann, "The Significance of the Old Testament for the Christian Faith," *The Old Testament and Christian Faith* (ed. B. W. Anderson; New York: Harper & Row, 1963) 8-35, esp. 32.

¹⁶ R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963) 26-27, 47, 54, passim.

¹⁷ Cf. Ellis, *Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 100-101.

¹⁸ Jesus doubtless made apocalyptic proclamations (e.g., Luke 10:18; 19:41-44), some of which have lost their original context (e.g., Luke 13:34f. par), but they are a small element of the gospel tradition. Against G. Theissen's (*Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978] 8-23) thesis that Jesus and his followers were "wandering charismatics," R. Riesner (*Jesus als Lehrer* [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1988] 419-22) remarks that here Theissen "remains entirely in the grip of the classical form criticism" (420).

¹⁹ Matt 9:14 par; Luke 3:10-14; John 1:21-28.

[p.63]

about his own role and that of the Coming One.²⁰ In some respects Jesus is set in contrast to the Baptist,²¹ and he is certainly not analogous to Jesus ben Ananiah, the incessant oracle of woe against Jerusalem.²² Because the Jesus of the Gospels was so distant from Weiss's "apocalyptic Jesus," Bultmann was obliged, given his presuppositions, to assign the bulk of the gospel tradition to the creative activity of the post-resurrection Christian congregations. While he did recognize that "characteristics of a rabbi" were present in Jesus' ministry, "unless the tradition has radically distorted the picture," he did not connect this to a view of Jesus as a teacher of Scripture.²³

The views of Weiss and Dodd found a corrective in W. G. Kümmel's arguments that Jesus presented the kingdom of God as both a "present and future" reality,²⁴ a view that gained further support in subsequent investigations.²⁵ Furthermore, Jesus presented his message concerning the kingdom of God, and specifically his apocalyptic discourse, as an exposition of Scripture, as Lars Hartman rightly saw.²⁶ He is represented in the Gospels occasionally as *προφήτης*²⁷ but ordinarily and in all strata as *ῥαββί* = רַבִּי or its Greek equivalent *διδάσκαλος*,²⁸ and his close adherents are known as *μαθηταί*,

[p.64]

i.e., pupils.²⁹ The term rabbi does not, of course, indicate an official or ordained status as it did in (later) rabbinic circles. But, as Eduard Lohse rightly observed, "when Jesus is called

²⁰ Matt 3:11-12 Q; 11:2-19 Q; John 1:29-34. Cf. E. E. Ellis, "The Making of Narratives in the Synoptic Gospels," *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (ed. H. Wansbrough; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 324.

²¹ Matt 11:16-19 Q. Also, unlike the Baptist, Jesus taught in synagogues, which means *ipso facto* that he expounded Scripture. Cf. Matt 4:23 parr; 9:35; 12:9-14 parr; 13:54 parr. Mark 1:21 par; Luke 13:10; John 6:59; 18:20.

²² Josephus, *War* 6.300-309.

²³ R. Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word* (London: 1. Nicholson & Watson, 1935) 57-61, 61.

²⁴ W. G. Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfilment: The Eschatological Message of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1957); idem, "Futurische and präsensische Eschatologie im ältesten Urchristentum," *NTS* 5 (1958-59) 113-26.

²⁵ Cf., e.g., B. Chilton, ed., *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); W. Willis, ed., *The Kingdom of God in 20th-Century Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987) and the literature cited; O. Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (London: SCM, 1967) 172-73, 193-209, 230-36; E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 141, 239ff.; H. Hubner, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) 186ff.; J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* (London: SCM, 1971) 1.103-8; G. E. Ladd, *The Presence of the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 105-304; H. Merkel, "Die Gottesherrschaft in der Verkündigung Jesu," *Königherrschaft Gottes and himmlischer Kult* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991) 135-50.

²⁶ L. Hartman, *Prophecy Interpreted* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1966) 245-48. Cf. Matt 24:4-31; 21:33-46; 22:23-33, 41-45, and parallels.

²⁷ Matt 13:57 parr; 14:5; 16:14 parr; 21:11; Mark 6:15 par; Luke 7:16, 39; 13:33; 24:19.

²⁸ Cf. K. H. Rengstorff, "διδάσκαλος," *TDNT* 2.153-57, cf. 139-44; E. Lohse, "ῥαββί," *TDNT* 6.964-65. The equivalence of the terms is probably evidenced by a pre-AD 70 inscription; cf. H. Shanks, "Is the Title Rabbi Anachronistic in the Gospels?" *JQR* 53 (1963) 343ff.

²⁹ Cf. B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1961) 330: "[T]he Apostles' preaching had an essential complement in their teaching.... They ... bore witness to the words and works of their Teacher in a way which recalled—at least formally—the witness borne by other Jewish disciples to the words and actions of their teachers." K. H. Rengstorff ("μαθητής," *TDNT* 4.455) made the tasks mutually exclusive: The disciples' role is a "witness to Jesus and not the reception and transmission of His own proclamation."

ῥαββί by his disciples and others, this shows that he conducted himself like the Jewish [Scripture scholars]" (γραμματεῖς), whose role was to give authoritative interpretations of Scripture.³⁰ However, apparently influenced by existential theology and the classical form criticism, Lohse understood Jesus' word with ἐξουσία to exclude the task of having to establish his teachings from Scripture.³¹ But that is precisely the question, and in the context of first-century Judaism Lohse appears to fall into a false dichotomy. No one in the early church manifested more ἐξουσία than the Apostle Paul, and he is at his liveliest when expounding Scripture (Gal 3-4; Romans 1-4; 9-11; 1 Corinthians 1-4; 10). Jesus also is said to teach "with authority" precisely when he was giving biblical expositions, that is, in the synagogue.³²

NEW DIRECTIONS IN FORM CRITICISM

Form criticism became increasingly dominant but it experienced, in the words of Hans Conzelmann, a "certain stagnation"³³ and also failed to gain full acceptance either on the Continent³⁴ or in Anglo-American circles, where Jesus' role as teacher continued to be emphasized.³⁵ Two developments in the 1960s served to undermine the

[p.65]

assumptions on which the form criticism of the 1920s had been built and pointed the way to a redefinition of the discipline. The first addressed questions about the nature of the transmission of religious traditions in first-century Judaism, and the second discovered analogies between forms or patterns of OT exposition attributed to Jesus and those in contemporary Jewish writings.

Harald Riesenfeld³⁶ and more elaborately his pupil, Birger Gerhardsson³⁷ challenged the earlier assumption that the gospel traditions were transmitted like folklore in which various

³⁰ Cf. E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (3 vols. in 4; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973-87) 2.322-25.

³¹ Lohse ("ῥαββί," 6.964-65): "[Jesus'] teaching did not contain the explication and development of traditional material which had to be proved by Scriptural exegesis" (965).

³² Mark 1:21-22 par.

³³ H. Conzelmann in *VF* 7 (1956-57) 152; cf. idem, *Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973) 9ff.

³⁴ E.g., the criticisms of E. Fascher, *Die formgeschichtliche Methode* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1924) 206ff., and P. Fiebig, *Der Erzählungsstil der Evangelien im Lichte des rabbinischen Erzählungsstil untersucht* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1925) vii-viii, 1-2, passim. They are discussed and supported by J. W. Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1954) 177-78.

³⁵ Cf. C. H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity* (London: Collins, 1971) 53-79, from lectures given in 1954; E. J. Goodspeed, *A Life of Jesus* (New York: Harper, 1950) 76-133; T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus* (2d ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951; idem, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1950 [1937]) 11-15; Manson (n. 20) 51-76; R. P. Meye, *Jesus and the Twelve* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) 30-87, 192-209; H. E. W. Turner, *Jesus: Master and Lord* (London: Mowbray, 1957) 129-55.

³⁶ In a paper delivered at the Oxford Congress on "The Four Gospels in 1957" (= *Studia Evangelica*, TU 73 [1959] 43-65). It was thought significant enough to be given an independent publication in the same year: H. Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition and Its Beginnings* (London: Mowbray, 1957).

³⁷ Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, esp. 324-25; idem, *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1964), written in response to a critique of his book by, *inter alios*, M. Smith ("A Comparison of Early Christian and Early Rabbinic Tradition," *JBL* 82 [1963] 169-76). Further, cf. B. Gerhardsson, *Die Anfänge der Evangelien tradition* (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1977); idem, *The Gospel Tradition* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1986); idem, "...Narrative Meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels," in Wansbrough, *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, 266-309.

jackleg preachers or an amorphous "community" created and/or radically reshaped traditions about Jesus' words and deeds. They drew an analogy with the transmission of rabbinic tradition from master to pupil and argued that the Evangelists "did not take their traditions from [the contexts of preaching and debates]. They worked on a basis of a fixed distinct tradition from, and about, Jesus—a tradition which was partly memorized and partly written down..., but invariably isolated from the teaching of other doctrinal authorities."³⁸ In a word, for the earlier axiom, "Am Anfang war die Predigt,"³⁹ they substituted another: "In the beginning was the school." While the rabbinic analogy would need to be qualified,⁴⁰ their work represented a solid advance in our understanding of the formation and transmission of the gospel traditions.⁴¹

[p.66]

Rainer Riesner furthered the theses that the transmission of Jesus' words and deeds began in his preresurrection mission and was a "consciously preserved teaching tradition" of a "prophetic teacher," thereby qualifying (as I had done) Gerhardsson's rabbinic analogy.⁴² Indeed, the prophetic gifts of the apostolic traditioners best explain how and why "they not only preserved but also altered and elaborated the tradition of Jesus' teachings as well as the description of events."⁴³ That is, they treated the holy word of Jesus as they did the holy word of the OT, whose texts they likewise could handle with considerable freedom. In the latter case they had a precedent in the practice of Jesus and of the Qumran writers, who also used "charismatic exegesis"⁴⁴ or what D. I. Brewer called an "inspirational approach."⁴⁵

The classical form analysis had long been censured for its neglect of Jewish backgrounds in its classification of the "forms" and in its rationale for their organization and collection in the Gospels.⁴⁶ A second development in the sixties furthered that criticism. It was the discovery

³⁸ Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, 335.

³⁹ Fascher, *Formgeschichtliche Methode*, 54, with reference to M. Dibelius, *Botschaft and Geschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1953) 242; idem, *From Tradition to Gospel* (New York: Scribner, 1965) 10-15.

⁴⁰ They did not consider sufficiently the prophetic ἐξουσία, not unlike that seen at Qumran, which characterized the ministries of Jesus and of his apostles. Cf. E. E. Ellis, "Gospels Criticism," *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* (ed. P. Stuhlmacher; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983) 43ff.; R. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, 276-98, 291-92.

⁴¹ In spite of criticisms, e.g., M. Smith ("Comparison," *JBL* 82 [1963] 169-76); G. Widengren, "Tradition and Literature in Early Judaism and in the Early Church," *Numen* 10 (1963) 42-83. More appreciatively, W. D. Davies, "Reflections on a Scandinavian Approach to 'The Gospel Tradition,'" *Neotestamentica et Patristica* (ed. W. C. van Unnik; Leiden: Brill, 1962) 14-34; W. Wiefel, "Vätersprüche and Herrenworte," *NT* 11 (1969) 105-20.

⁴² Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, 276-98, 502, 297-98; cf. Ellis, *Prophecy*, 243-44; H. Schurmann, "Die vorösterlichen Anfänge der Logientradition," *Der historische Jesus and der kerygmatische Christus* (ed. H. Ristow; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961) 342-70.

⁴³ Ellis, "Gospels Criticism," 52.

⁴⁴ Cf. Ellis, *Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 116-21; idem, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1978; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993) 172; idem, "Pauline Hermeneutics."

⁴⁵ D. I. Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis Before 70 CE* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992) 187-98 (Qumran). He speaks only of copying "with some inspired creativity" (198) and does not sufficiently recognize that ad hoc variants created under inspiration were also regarded as valid forms of Scripture (216).

⁴⁶ Cf. P. Fiebig (*Der Erzählungsstil*, v-viii, 2), who argued that its classification, taken from Greek literature, was not cognate with the Jewish background of the gospels. Cf. Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics*, 23-24, 177-205. During postdoctoral studies at Marburg in 1961-62 another American student and I were kindly invited by Professor Bultmann, then retired, for afternoon coffee. I asked why he interpreted the Gospels from Greek rather than from Jewish backgrounds. He replied that the Gospels were a part of Greek literature. Of course, I was

in the Gospels of patterns of OT exposition that were similar to those found in contemporary Jewish writings and that were designated by the (later) rabbis as proem (פרוים) and *yelammedenu*

[p.67]

rabbenu midrashim.⁴⁷ Peder Borgen found a proem-like pattern in John 6:31-58 and in Rom 4:1-22; Gal 3:6-29 similar to both Philonic exegetical pieces and to Palestinian rabbinic expositions.⁴⁸ J. W. Bowker identified both proem and *yelammedenu* forms in Acts,⁴⁹ and I pointed to similar and different patterns in Matt 21:33-44 par⁵⁰ and in other NT books.⁵¹

In the past two decades further research brought a recognition that the gospel forms were reduced to writing much earlier than was previously supposed.⁵² However, the advances most significant for the present topic are (1) a careful and schooled transmission of Jesus' teachings by apostolic tradents and (2) the presence in those teachings of biblical expositions that provided the foundation for several theological motifs in the early church. If these studies are well-founded, one may conclude that NT theology began with the biblical expositions of Jesus.

[p.68]

posing a false dichotomy which, since the work of M. Hengel and others, we now can better see. Nonetheless, the Gospels reflect a Greek world that had been mediated through Judaism. To that extent the criticisms of Fiebig and Doeve still apply. Cf. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (2 vols.; London: SCM, 1974); idem, *The "Hellenization" of Judaea in the First Century After Christ* (London: SCM, 1989).

⁴⁷ As they appear in later rabbinic material, a variety of patterns have been conveniently defined and distinguished by W. G. Braude (*Pesikta Rabbati* [2 vols.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968] 1.3ff.). The *Pesikta* was a (later) collection of biblical expositions (midrashim) composed by Palestinian rabbis of the third and fourth centuries AD for use at special sabbaths and feasts. J. Mann (*The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue* [2 vols.; Cincinnati: Mann-Sonne, 1940, 1966] 1.105) identified one pre-AD 70 sermon as a proem form. Further, cf. S. Maybaum, *Die Entwicklung der jüdischen Predigt* (Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1901) 9-23.

⁴⁸ P. Borgen, *Bread From Heaven* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965) 47-58: "Since [this homiletic pattern] cannot have been brought into Palestinian midrash from Philo, John or Paul, the only reasonable deduction is that [it] was commonly used ... both within and outside Palestine in the first century of the Christian era" (54). Cf. Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics*, 35-51.

⁴⁹ J. W. Bowker, "Speeches in Acts: A Study in Proem and Yelammedenu Form," *NTS* 14 (1967-68) 96-111; cf. E. E. Ellis, "Midrashic Features in the Speeches of Acts," *Melanges Bibliques* (ed. A. Descamps; Festschrift B. Rigaux; Gembloux: Ducolot, 1970) 303-12 = idem, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, 198-212.

⁵⁰ E. E. Ellis, "Midrash, Targum and New Testament Quotations," *Neotestamentica et Semitica* (eds. E. E. Ellis and M. Wilcox; Festschrift M. Black; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969) 67 = Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, 194-95.

⁵¹ I.e., 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Jude in a paper given at the Society of Biblical Literature in New York, 1970, and published in revised form in E. E. Ellis, "Exegetical Patterns in 1 Corinthians and Romans," *Grace Upon Grace* (ed. J. I. Cook; Festschrift L. Kuyper; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 137-42 = Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, 213-20; cf. 221-36 (Jude).

⁵² E.g., the warning, "Let the reader [in worship] understand" (Matt 24:15 par), was probably placed in the Synoptic tradition at the time when the Emperor Caligula attempted to place his statue (under the name of Zeus) in the temple (ca. AD 40). Cf. Philo, *Embassy to Gaius*, 188-337; G. Theissen, *The Gospels in Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 159-65; E. E. Ellis, "The Date and Provenance of Mark's Gospel," *The Four Gospels* 1992 (ed. F. Van Segbroeck; Festschrift F. Neirynck; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992) 801-15; idem, "Gospels Criticism," 40; idem, "New Directions in Form Criticism," *Jesus Christus in Historie and Theologie* (ed. G. Strecker; Festschrift H. Conzelmann; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1975) 304-7 = Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, 242-47.

JESUS' USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

It is widely accepted that Jesus made messianic claims, if only implicitly, and that he expressed his understanding, at least in part, in terms of OT texts.⁵³ Given the conception of the gospel tradition argued above, he also accepted messianic⁵⁴ and divine⁵⁵ titles, although he redefined them in terms of the humble King,⁵⁶ the Suffering Servant and the mysterious figure of the Son of Man.⁵⁷ He was apparently the first to combine the conceptions of the royal Messiah and the Servant⁵⁸ and was certainly the first to interpret them in terms of the Danielic Son of Man, probably to be understood (also) as a divine figure.⁵⁹ But Jesus' use of the OT went further than that.

Jesus used exegetical formulas and methods⁶⁰ found in the OT, at Qumran and in rabbinic writings, and he employed at least four of Hillel's seven hermeneutical rules.⁶¹ More significantly, in his entry into Jerusalem⁶² and at the Last Supper⁶³ he acted out his

[p.69]

understanding of the messianic meaning of Scripture, and he also instructed his followers and refuted his opponents by means of biblical commentary, as may be seen in the transmitted summaries in the Gospels. These expositions (midrashim) were utilized in the congregations of four apostolic missions—Jacobean-Matthean, Petrine, Pauline, Johannine—and some were included in the four Gospels, each of which was initially produced for churches of those respective missions. In addition, those in the triple tradition episodes (T), i.e., those found in the three Synoptic Gospels, sometimes reveal in the agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark a (second) underlying tradition (Q) if one grants the independence of Matthew and

⁵³ Cf. I. H. Marshall, *Jesus the Saviour* (Leicester: SPCK, 1990) 134-49, passim; idem, *The Origins of New Testament Christology* (Leicester: SPCK, 1976) 43-62; O. Betz, *Jesus der Messias Israel* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987) 140-68; C. C. Caragounis, *The Son of Man* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1986) 168-243; S. Kim, "The 'Son of Man' as the Son of God" (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983). Otherwise: D. R. A. Hare, *The Son of Man Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 257-82; H. E. Tödt, *The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition* (London, SCM, 1965) 222-83, 293-96.

⁵⁴ E.g., Matt 20:30 T; cf. Matt 22:41-45 T + Q, in a midrash; Matt 21:9, 15 (Son of David); Matt 16:16 T + Q (Christ); Luke 4:18-21, in a midrash (Servant); Matt 4:3 Q; 26:63 T (+ Q) (Son of God). T = a text found in the three Synoptic Gospels; + Q = a (second) tradition evidenced by agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark.

⁵⁵ E.g., Matt 8:29 T; 27:54 par, Mark 3:11; Luke 4:41 (Son of God); Mark 1:24 par (Holy One of God); cf. W. Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (Cambridge: J. Clarke, 1971): "...it is not the human Jesus as such [that the demons know], but the supernatural Jesus equipped with the πνεῦμα—the Son of God" (25).

⁵⁶ E.g., Matt 21:7ff. T + Q. Cf. Kümmel, *Promise*, 115.

⁵⁷ E.g., Matt 9:6 T + Q; 26:64 T (+ Q).

⁵⁸ Cf. Matt 16:13-23 T + Q; W. Grimm, *Die Verkündigung Jesu and Deuterocesaja* (Frankfurt: Herbert Lang, 1981) 201-4, cf. 231-77 (Mark 10:45); C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: Nisbet, 1953) 102-10, passim.

⁵⁹ Matt 26:63f. T + Q. Cf. Kim, "Son of Man", 16-22, 87-94. Otherwise: M. D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark* (London: SPCK, 1967) 11-31, 126, 141. The issue rests in part on whether the Son of Man in Dan 7:13 is to be understood in terms of Ezek 1:26ff. and Gen 1:26a (Kim), of Ps 8:4-8 and Gen 1:26b (Hooker), or both (Ellis).

⁶⁰ οὗτος ἐστίν, used as an explanatory formula (e.g., John 6:50; cf. Matt 7:12; 11:14; 13:18-23 parr; 26:26 parr); ἀλλά δέ, used to qualify an interpretation (e.g., Matt 19:8); ἀλούειν, μανθάνειν, used with reference to understanding Scripture (e.g., Matt 9:13; 21:33; 24:32). Cf. Ellis, *Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 82-87.

⁶¹ E.g., inference from minor and major (1); from similar words and phrases (2); a principle inferred from the teaching of one verse (3); context (7). Cf. Ellis, *Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 87-91, 130ff.

⁶² Matt 21:1-17 T + Q + John. Cf. Kümmel, *Promise*, 109-21.

⁶³ Matt 26:26-29 parr.

Luke. Such midrashim lie at the bedrock of the Synoptic tradition; others are found only in one⁶⁴ or two Gospels.⁶⁵ All of them reflect some reworking and updating, but if the research cited above is valid, they were transmitted in an intentional manner by trained traditioners and Evangelists and retain the substance of the pre-resurrection teaching of Jesus.

The gospel traditioners organized, and thus explained, events in Jesus' ministry in terms of OT texts, and they did so in patterns similar to proem and *yelammedenu midrash*.⁶⁶ They presented Jesus' use of Scripture sometimes as allusions, in which the biblical reference can only be inferred,⁶⁷ sometimes as separate and isolated quotations⁶⁸ and sometimes as explicit midrashim. The allusions and the separate quotations appear at times to represent a summary or detached portions of original dominical expositions, and the retained expository patterns concern conduct (*halakah*),⁶⁹ messianic expectations⁷⁰ and last things,⁷¹ all of which were doubtless

[p.70]

important for theological issues in the apostolic church. But did they and other biblical allusions and quotations of Jesus become a source and foundation for these theological motifs in the rest of the NT literature?

EXPOSITIONS OF JESUS USED BY PAUL

Halakoth

Among his biblical debates Jesus gives an exposition in Matt 12:1-8 (T + Q) that relativizes Sabbath observance. He places it among the law's commands (*halakoth*) concerning rituals and regulations that could be disregarded for due cause even in the Old Covenant (4-5), how much more in the messianic age in which such regulations are superseded (6, 8). As he elsewhere condemns the churchmen-opponents for "ignoring the weightier matters of the law,"⁷² for tithing produce and neglecting "justice and the love of God,"⁷³ so here he subordinates the sabbath observance to his disciples' hunger and does so by applying an OT text (8; Hos 6:6).

When the Apostle Paul puts Sabbath observances among the adiaphora⁷⁴ and deplors a focus on such practices by Gentile believers,⁷⁵ he expresses a similar distinction between the

⁶⁴ E.g., Luke 10:25-37; John 6:31-58. Cf. Ellis, *Prophecy*, 158, 249ff.; Borgen, *Bread*, 59-98.

⁶⁵ Matt 11:7-15, 16-19 Q; 15:1-9, 10-20 par. Cf. Ellis, *Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 97-98, 136.

⁶⁶ I.e., the magi and flight (Matt 2:1-23); the Baptist and Jesus (Matt 3:1-17, T + Q); transfiguration (Matt 17:1-13 T + Q); shekel (Matt 17:24-27); entry and cleansing (Matt 21:1-17 T + Q). Cf. Ellis ("The Making of Narratives in the Synoptic Gospels," *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*) 317, 322, 324-25.

⁶⁷ E.g., Matt 11:5 Q; 20:28 = Mark 10:45. For a table of OT quotations attributed to Jesus by the Synoptic Gospels, cf. R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1971) 259-63.

⁶⁸ E.g., Matt 21:13; Mark 9:48.

⁶⁹ Matt 12:1-8 T + Q (sabbath); 15:1-9, 10-20 par (washing); 19:3-9, 10-12 par (divorce). Cf. Ellis, *Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 97f., 136.

⁷⁰ Matt 11:7-15, 16-19 Q (Jesus and the Baptist); 21:33-46 T + Q (wicked tenants); John 6:31-58 (true manna). Cf. Ellis, *Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 97-98; Borgen, *Bread*, 59-98.

⁷¹ Matt 22:23-33 T + Q (resurrection); 24:1-31 parr (this age and its end). Cf. Ellis, *Prophecy*, 154; idem, *Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 103; Hartman, *Prophecy*.

⁷² Matt 23:23.

⁷³ Luke 11:42.

⁷⁴ Rom 14:5-6.

"parking meter" aspects of the OT law whose enforcement time is past⁷⁶ and the moral aspects that abide.⁷⁷ It is reasonable to suppose that the Apostle derives such distinctions from Jesus, who had established them by biblical expositions like Matt 12:1-8 and 15:1-20.⁷⁸ But since he does not cite a dominical precedent, are there clearer examples?

In Matt 15:1-20 (= Mark 7:1-23) Jesus engages in a similar exposition in which he subordinates ceremonial washing to the fifth commandment to "honor your father and your mother" (4) and concludes the midrash with a vice list that is a contemporized rendering of almost all of the Second Table of the Decalogue (19). Paul cites a traditioned vice list that also consists of the fifth to the ninth commandments,⁷⁹ and 1 Peter and James and Revelation include (portions of) vice lists that have a considerable overlap with Matt

[p.71]

15:19.⁸⁰ They evidence a closer relationship to the Jesus-tradition than to the vice lists found in Judaism, which were also partly based upon the Decalogue.⁸¹ It is reasonable to suppose that they (or their traditions) depend in part on the biblical expositions of Jesus but, again, they do not cite a dominical precedent.

Jesus' teaching on divorce at Matt 19:3-9 = Mark 10:2-9 provides a clear example of a midrash whose extracted teaching was transmitted separately to Christ's followers. It may be so utilized by Jesus or by his apostolic traditioners in Matt 5:31-32.⁸² and Luke 16:18 and, more clearly, by Paul in 1 Cor 7:10-11. Paul cites a Jesus-tradition that "a wife not separate (χωρισθῆναι) from her husband but, if she separates, let her remain unmarried...; and that a husband not leave his wife." He is closer to the exposition in Matthew 19 = Mark 10 than to the other Synoptic divorce logia, both in the use of the term, "separate," and in the construction of an independent clause followed by a conditional clause (ἄν, ἐάν).⁸³ He is closer to Mark (10:12) in highlighting the wife and closer to Matthew (19:10ff.) in associating this instruction with the alternative of remaining unmarried and with a teaching on the corporate body formed in the sexual union (1 Cor 7:7; 6:16), a matter to which we shall

⁷⁵ Gal 4:9-10; Col 2:16-17.

⁷⁶ Gal 3:23ff.; 5:6. Cf. Luke 6:4 D.

⁷⁷ Gal 5:14-15; Rom 13:8ff.

⁷⁸ Cf. Matt 15:3 ("You transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition") with 1 Cor 7:19 ("Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but rather keeping the commandments of God").

⁷⁹ 1 Tim 1:9-10. Cf. E. E. Ellis, "Traditions in the Pastoral Epistles," *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (ed. C. A. Evans; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987) 242-43.

⁸⁰ E.g., Rom 13:13-14; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19ff.; Col 3:5-9; 1 Pet 2:1; 4:3-4, 15; Jas 1:21; Rev 9:20-21; 21:8; 22:15. The Pauline lists have about a 50 per cent overlap with Matt 15:19, the others less. Cf. E. E. Ellis, *The Making of the New Testament Documents*, forthcoming.

⁸¹ E.g., Philo, *De sacr. Abel.* 22, 27; Test. XII: Assher 2:5-10; 1QS 10:21ff. Cf. S. Wibbing, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament* (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1959).

⁸² G. Strecker (*The Sermon on the Mount* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1988] 11ff.) thinks that the Sermon was an intact composition when Matthew took it over. Similarly: H. D. Betz, "The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Interpretation," *The Future of Early Christianity* (ed. B. A. Pearson; Festschrift H. Koester; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 259-63. This may be right (but see U. Luz, *Matthew 1-7* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989] 213-14; R. A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount* [Waco, TX: Word, 1982] 33-36). Nevertheless, the sermon in Matthew 5-7 represents a redactional production in which certain of the Lord's teachings have been brought together from distinct contexts, some of them from expository contexts like Matt 19:3-9.

⁸³ Cf. E. E. Ellis, "Traditions in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 32 (1986) 486ff.; D. Wenham, "Paul's Use of the Jesus Tradition," *The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels* (ed. D. Wenham; *Gospel Perspectives* 5; Sheffield: JSOT, 1985) 7-15.

return. It is probable that in his teaching against divorce and remarriage Paul depends on the exposition of Jesus that was preserved in summary form in Matthew 19 and Mark 10.

Last Things

Jesus' eschatological discourse in Matt 24:4-31 (T + Q) represents a reworked commentary on a number of OT texts, especially from

[p.72]

Daniel.⁸⁴ It may be alluded to in a number of "antichrist" references in the Johannine letters⁸⁵ and, if the following parables were an application of or associated with the commentary, it may lie behind a number of references in 1-2 Thessalonians. However, whether the discourse is used by Paul in the Thessalonian letters is a matter of some debate.⁸⁶

Paul's use of Jesus-traditions here and elsewhere will depend largely on one's assumptions about the transmission of the gospel traditions. It will appear improbable to those who, following the classical form criticism, think that isolated sayings of Jesus floated about like leaves on a lake to be picked up here and there in passing. It will appear quite differently to those who are convinced that Jesus' teachings were carefully formulated in episodic units and designed from the beginning for an ordered transmission by apostolic leaders with whom, as Acts and the Pauline letters attest, Paul was in a close relationship.⁸⁷ Paul's knowledge of Jesus' midrash on Daniel and of other dominical parables attached to it (or to similar expositions) is also supported by the probability that by AD 40 it was being read in congregations of the Jacobean and Petrine missions.⁸⁸

In such a situation the cluster of parallels between the Synoptic apocalypse (Matthean form) and 1 Thessalonians 5 is hardly coincidental: the Lord's coming "as a thief," "when they are saying peace and safety," and bringing destruction;⁸⁹ the call to watchfulness; the warning against sleeping and drunkenness.⁹⁰ That the Thessalonians have a knowledge of Jesus-tradition(s) is strengthened when 1 Thess 5:2b-11 is introduced as something that they know (οἶδατε ὅτι, 5:2), that is, that had been traditioned to them earlier. Even if only the thief image is accepted as a reference to a Jesus-tradition (Tuckett, "possible"), it points not to an isolated saying but to a larger complex of dominical teaching on the subject, known to Paul and traditioned

⁸⁴ I.e., Dan (2:31-45); 7:7-27; 8:9-26; 9:24-27; 11:21-12:4, 13. Cf. Hartman, *Prophecy*, 235, 145-74. He identifies the original midrash with Mark 13:5b-8, 12-16, 19-22, 24-27.

⁸⁵ 1 John 2:18; 4:1-3; 2 John 7.

⁸⁶ Supporting such usage are, e.g., D. Wenham, *The Rediscovery of Jesus' Eschatological Discourse* (Gospel Perspectives 4; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984) 176-80, 295-96; Hartman, *Prophecy*, 178-205. Otherwise: C. M. Tuckett, "Synoptic Tradition in 1 Thessalonians?" *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (ed. R. F. Collins; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990) 160-82 (with the possible exception of 1 Thess 5:2); F. Neirynek who gives a good survey of the research. ("Paul and the Sayings of Jesus," *L'Apotre Paul* [ed. A. Vanhoye; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986] 265-321, 278-81, 308-11).

⁸⁷ Gal 1:18; 2:1, 9; 1 Cor 3:22-4:1; 9:5; 11:16, 23ff.; 15:3-7; cf. 14:33ff. and 1 Tim 2:9-3:1a with 1 Pet 3:1-7; Rom 15:25; Acts 11:29-30; 12:25; 15:6-35; 21:17-18; 2 Pet 3:15-16. Cf. Ellis, "Gospels Criticism," 45-46.

⁸⁸ See above, n. 52.

⁸⁹ 1 Thess 5:2b, 3; cf. Matt 24:43-44 Q; 24:38-42 Q.

⁹⁰ 1 Thess 5:5ff.; cf. Matt 24:45-51 Q.

[p.73]

to the Thessalonians. This follows from Paul's practice of transmitting a variety of traditions, including Jesus-traditions,⁹¹ in teaching his congregations, both the Thessalonians⁹² and others.⁹³ Probably 1 Thess 5:2b-11b is a pastiche summarizing traditions that Paul and Silas had taught them earlier, traditions that included expositions of Jesus known to us from the Synoptic Gospels.⁹⁴

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL TEMPLE

Jesus identifies himself with the eschatological temple in two images, the cornerstone of the temple and the temple itself.⁹⁵ In a midrash on Isaiah 5 at Matt 21:33-46 (T + Q) he implicitly speaks of himself as the rejected temple-stone in a citation of Ps 118:22, a psalm that celebrated the (anticipated) enthronement of the Messiah of the house of David.⁹⁶

The [temple] stone that the builders rejected
This one has become the head of the corner.

Jesus uses the passage as an "eschatological threat,"⁹⁷ but after his resurrection his apostles employ the same motif and text for Jesus' resurrection-victory. According to Acts 4:11 Peter does so in a sermon, and both he and Paul do so in a more elaborate manner in expositions in their letters. 1 Pet 2:4-10, which is probably a preformed midrash,⁹⁸ combines quotations of Ps 118:17; Isa 8:14; 28:16; and Rom 9:33 merges the two Isaiah texts, also within a commentary context.⁹⁹ As C. H. Dodd demonstrated, 1 Peter did not use Romans nor vice versa, but both Paul and Peter, writing independently, "made use of a twofold testimonium already current in the pre-canonical tradition..."¹⁰⁰ They used this messianic "stone" *testimonium*

[p.74]

because Jesus had already done so in a biblical exposition known to them. That is, in his citation of Psalm 118 Jesus identified himself as the cornerstone in God's eschatological temple. After his resurrection the apostolic tradition expanded this temple-stone motif with an understanding of Jesus as a corporate being including his followers. In this way it not only

⁹¹ 1 Cor 11:23ff.; 7:10-11; cf. Ellis ("Traditions," *NTS* 32 [1986]) 481-502, 488; Ellis, *New Testament Documents*; Tuckett, 160-82; esp. 171, 182.

⁹² E.g., 1 Thess 2:13; 4:1 (*παραλαμβάνειν*). On the technical connotation of the term cf. Ellis, "Traditions," *NTS* 32 (1986) 481-82. Cf. 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6.

⁹³ E.g., 1 Cor 11:2; 15:1; Gal 1:9; Phil 4:9.

⁹⁴ Cf. Ellis, *New Testament Documents*; T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1986) 209-10; J. Plevnik, "1 Thess 5:1-11: Its Authenticity, Intention and Message," *Bib* 60 (1979) 81-97.

⁹⁵ Cf. Mark 14:58 par, John 2:18-22. The temple in Jerusalem is only the type of the one with which Jesus identifies himself, as Matt 23:38 Q; 24:2 T + Q show.

⁹⁶ E.g., S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (2 vols.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1962) 75ff.; A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955) 114-18.

⁹⁷ Cf. J. Jeremias, "λίθος," *TDNT* (1967) 4.271-77, esp. 275.

⁹⁸ Cf. Ellis, *New Testament Documents*; W. S. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in First Peter* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1989) 130-38.

⁹⁹ Ellis, *Prophecy*, 218-19; idem, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 89ff.

¹⁰⁰ Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 43. Cf. Ellis, *New Testament Documents*.

added the Isaiah (8:14; 28:16) temple-texts but also identified believers as stones in God's temple¹⁰¹ and regarded them *pars pro toto* as that temple itself.¹⁰² But where did the tradition derive the conception of Christ as a corporate personality who included his followers within his own being?

THE CORPORATE CHRIST

Jesus gave two interpretations of the OT in which he underscored its teaching on corporate personality.¹⁰³ He cited Gen 2:24, "the two shall be one flesh," in his exposition against divorce.¹⁰⁴ In a Passover homily at the Last Supper¹⁰⁵ he interpreted the elements of bread and wine not only of his individual broken body and shed blood but also of his identification with his disciples and of their corporate participation in his sacrifice.

Paul refers to these dominical traditions at 1 Cor 7:10-11 and at 1 Cor 11:23ff. with full awareness of their corporate implications. Concerning the Last Supper he writes, "He eats and drinks judgment on himself if he does not discern the body" (11:29), that is, the corporate body of the Lord manifested in the congregation. This understanding of the matter is supported by Paul's earlier comment, which also may be a traditioned saying: "The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (10:16).

At Eph 5:14-6:9 the Apostle employs a traditional household code to express the same conception, drawing an analogy between believers as members of Christ's body (5:30) and the marriage union in which "the two shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:24). He cites Gen 2:24 also in 1 Cor 6:18, similarly drawing an analogy between an illicit sexual union and the believer's union with Christ: "Do you not

[p.75]

know (οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι) that your bodies are members of Christ?" (1 Cor 6:15). The formula, "Do you not know," indicates that this was a teaching that had earlier been traditioned to the Corinthians, a teaching not unlike that found in the household code at Eph 5:30ff. It suggests that the basis for the Corinthians' knowledge of their corporate unity with Christ's body was not only the tradition of Jesus' Supper teaching but also an eschatological exposition of Gen 2:24 that Paul had taught them, an exposition not unrelated to Jesus' own midrash on the passage in Matt 19:3-9.

CONCLUSION

M. Dibelius concluded that "collections which contained exclusively sayings of Jesus... were given to the missionaries orally or fixed in writing."¹⁰⁶ In his view they are presupposed by Paul's response in 1 Cor 7:25 and, one may add, they are also implied in the Corinthians'

¹⁰¹ Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:4-10.

¹⁰² E.g., 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19. Cf. E. E. Ellis, "Sōma in First Corinthians," *Int* 44 (1990) 138-44; C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 89-96.

¹⁰³ Further, cf. Ellis, "Traditions in 1 Corinthians," 485ff.

¹⁰⁴ I.e., Matt 19:3-9 = Mark 10:2-9. See above.

¹⁰⁵ Matt 26:26 parr. With Jeremias, I take the Supper to have been a Passover meal. It was probably observed in accordance with Essene practices. Cf. E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 249-50; J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (New York: Scribners, 1966) 15-88.

¹⁰⁶ Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 242.

inquiry, which apparently was not just for Paul's views but also for those of the Lord. However, they were not, *pace* Dibelius, limited to dominical "sayings," in the sense that the term was used in the classical form criticism. For they included at least a Last Supper narrative (1 Cor 11:23) and, if the above arguments hold, certain OT expositions of Jesus.

The use of the OT in creating the (complementary) theologies of the NT church was not limited to traditioned teachings of Jesus. It included other biblical expositions, some of them preformed pieces, that are found especially in Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Hebrews, 1-2 Peter and Jude.¹⁰⁷ However, if its use in Jesus' ministry was considered important enough to be retained by the Evangelists, often still in an original expository framework, and if such expositions also exercised an influence upon the apostolic writers, one cannot doubt the significance of the Scriptures for the church as a whole, a church that was seeking to understand theologically both the events she had experienced and the Lord whom she worshiped and served.

© 1993 Bulletin for Biblical Research. Reproduced by permission.

Prepared for the Web in December 2006 by Robert I. Bradshaw.

<http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/>

¹⁰⁷ I identify them in detail elsewhere. Cf. Ellis, *New Testament Documents*; idem, *Old Testament in Early Christianity*, 91-101, 130-38; idem, *Prophecy*, 213-53.