Jewish / Christian Conflict and Origen's Use of the Christian *Testimonia* Proof Text Tradition

By

Mark Nispel

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Mark D. Nispel, Ph.D.

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Adviser: John Turner

This dissertation investigates the development of the Christian tradition of using passages from the Jewish Hebrew scriptures to express and define the Christian faith, the interaction of this tradition with Jewish / Christian social relationships in the first, second, and third centuries, and finally, Origen of Alexandria's interaction with this *testimonia* tradition. The early Christian use of the Jewish scriptures to express and define their faith is an important element of continuity in the early history of Christianity. For the historian, this tradition can then serve as a point of reference for other issues of interest. In this dissertation I have used the issue of Jewish / Christian social relationships as such an issue, not only because it is of such interest in and of itself but because this relationship exerted significant influence upon the development of the tradition itself. In order for this reference technique to be successful the development of the tradition itself must be understood. This development is discussed for the second and third centuries. In the second century a variety of Christian authors and existing scholarship is examined. Finally, in the third century, Origen of Alexandria is used as an important mile post by which to measure the tradition as he experienced, used, and influenced it.

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Preface

As with any work that requires significant effort over an extended period of time there are many people involved who assist directly and who are affected indirectly. I would like to thank Dr. John Turner for his help, assistance, and guidance during this effort. I would like to thank my loving wife and family for the sacrifices made so that I could complete this work. And I would especially like to give thanks to and dedicate this work to my father, who long ago taught me to continue pursuing that which was important to me, even when it was difficult and when most other people did not share my interest.

Conventions for Citations and Abbreviations

All citations and abbreviations of primary and secondary sources follow the guidelines given in the 1999 edition of *The SBL Handbook of Style: for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Primary Greek patristic sources, including Origen, are quoted according to the texts included in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* Digital Library edition E (TLG E). Greek New Testament texts are quoted according to the *Novum Testamentum Graece,* Nestle-Aland, 27th ed. Hebrew Old Testament texts are quoted according to the text of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*.

Introduction

The primary goal of this dissertation is to discuss the development of the early Christian tradition of using *testimonia*[1] as proof-text exegesis of the Jewish scriptures, the criticism of this tradition by Jewish opponents, and the use and modification of this *testimonia* tradition by Origen, the great Christian teacher of third century Alexandria.

The Christian use of the Hebrew scriptures of the Jews is as old as the church itself. This dissertation will investigate the development of traditional groupings of proof texts and themes that occurred in the earliest years of Christianity. The development and trajectory of this tradition is an important part of the history of the earliest church and its transformation from a Jewish sect to a separate religion made up primarily of Gentiles. This tradition is closely related to the relationship between Gentile Christians, Jewish Christians, and Jews and is used here to trace some aspects of these relationships.

In addition, Origen the first great Christian exegete, is an important figure for estimating the status, use, and development of this tradition in the third century. Origen is known to have been well educated in Christian traditions. In addition, he had interaction with Jews of his day and held a variety of exegetical debates with them. In addition, Origen was well educated generally and spent his career explaining the Christian scriptures.

Origen was a complex and fascinating figure. He continues to be "great" in his influence upon the Christian exegetical tradition after 17 centuries and yet his greatness has repeatedly been questioned by the condemnations of multiple ecclesiastical councils and theologians. He is at once well-known for his non-literal allegorical exegesis of the Christian scriptures and yet is perhaps best-known for his overly literal application of a biblical text leading allegedly to an act

[1] The term *testimonia* here is used in a broad sense as any traditional proof-texts used by early Christian authors to prove particular Christian concerns. The term is not restricted here to those theories proposed from time to time about specific collections that may have existed and been used as sources by the New Testament.

of self-mutilation.[2] He is a figure of Christian history simultaneously admired and despised, quoted and refuted, but rarely ignored.

Origen first enters the stage of history at the beginning of the third century as a young man growing up in Alexandria in a Christian family. He received both a Greek and a Christian education at the behest of his father. Origen studied under Pantaenus and possibly Clement in the catechetical school of Alexandria. According to Eusebius, he studied philosophy with the Alexandrian Platonist philosopher Ammonius Saccas, teacher of Plotinus, but many scholars suspect that the Origen who studied with Ammonius Saccas was another figure, a pagan, or that the Ammonius with whom Origen Adamanitus studied was a Peripatetic.[3] It was in Alexandria that Origen apparently learned the contemporary methods of allegorical exegesis of the Alexandrian Platonists, which he later applied to the Christian scriptures. In this way, Origen received one of the best educations available in late antiquity.

On the other hand, Origen seems to have led a difficult and stress filled life. Although some of the details given by Eusebius may be attributed to a hagiographic spirit, we have no evidence to lead us to doubt the main lines of Eusebius' presentation. When Origen was a young man his father was martyred as a Christian. Afterwards Origen supported himself (and perhaps his mother and six younger brothers) by becoming a teacher of letters. Thereby he attracted a following of people who came to him to hear him teach not only philosophy but also the Christian faith. And soon he took over the catechetical school in Alexandria. Thus through his role of teacher of rhetoric, philosophy, and scripture he became a well-known public figure until

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[2] *Hist. eccl.* 6.8. Eusebius claims this was done in response to reflection upon the text, "there are eunuchs which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matt. 19:12). The reason given is that it was done in order to avoid any suspicion, since Origen was then an instructor of both men and women in Alexandria. Eusebius claims he took the biblical text aJplouvsteron kai; neanikwvteron. He further claims that Origen tried to keep the matter a secret, but it was made public and used against him later when he was ordained as a presbyter by the bishops of Jerusalem and Caesarea.

[3] Thus according to Eusebius, Porphyry, student, biographer, and editor of Plotinus, claimed as a young man to have met Origen. *Hist. eccl.* 6.14. On this see R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism* (London: Duckworth, 1972), 38; K.-O. Weber, *Origenes der Neuplatoniker* (1962).

ultimately he gave up the teaching of letters and devoted himself to the demands of the church. And if Eusebius is to be trusted here, Origen took up a type of "philosophic" ascetic life even while continuing his public role in the church. To some extent, then, he set a precedent for the Christian ascetic monks who several decades later caused such a stir in the Egyptian church and beyond.[4]

Ultimately Origen's fame led to many requests for him to travel and meet with various personages. Eusebius mentions trips to Rome, Athens, Antioch and elsewhere. Origen spent some extended time in Caesarea where he continued to teach at the request of the bishops there. But he was recalled by Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, and apparently the relationship between the two soon became strained. At this time also, Origen started to receive the patronage of a rich man by the name of Ambrose, who paid for Origen's living expenses and paid for men and women short-hand copyists to copy Origen's words as he made commentary on the Scriptures. In this way he was able to generate an enormous amount of literature.

Afterwards, sometime around 230, due to strained relations in the church of Alexandria, Origen left the cosmopolitan city permanently in order to reside in Caesarea. It was here that he produced many of his surviving works. Ultimately, Origen suffered torture in a mid-third century persecution of the church and although he was not killed, he did not survive much beyond the event and died around 251.

Origen was prolific in his academic work. He is said to have generated several thousand works, although only relatively few have survived. This legacy consisted of works of many differing types. His famous work *Against Celsus* was Christian apologetic against pagan

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[4] Origen apparently was not original in this choice. For as Eusebius points out while referencing Philo, there were a group of men and women called *Therapeutae* and *Therapeutrides* in Egypt, who lived an ascetic life. These people lived outside the city, shared everything in common, fasted regularly, and studied the "law and inspired oracles given by the prophets" (*Hist. eccl.* 2.17.7-11) via an allegorical method of interpretation. Eusebius believed that Philo was speaking of Egyptian Christians who lived in the 1st century in a manner similar to the Christian monks of the early 4th century. Clearly he is mistaken. Scholars have differed as to whether the work *On the Contemplative Life* is an authentic Philonic work, perhaps being the work of a third century Christian, or whether Philo was describing an ascetic Jewish sect in someway similar to the Essenes. If the later is in fact the case, then Origen may have had important Jewish precedent for his "philosophic" life.

criticisms of the Christian faith. This work is of particular interest to us here as it contains a variety of material that relates to the topic of his dissertation. His work *On First Principles*, on the other hand, is generally considered the first attempt at a positive systematic presentation of the Christian faith. But Origen was first and foremost an expositor of the Scriptures and he became one of the first Christians to produce true biblical commentaries, among which those on the Gospel of John, the Gospel of Matthew, Genesis, Hebrews, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Song of Songs, Psalms, the Twelve Prophets, and Philemon are extant.

Origen's theology and philosophy have been the subject of much discussion, both in antiquity and in modern times. In the middle ages, ecclesiastical figures looked back and either praised or criticized his work. Modern scholarship, too, regularly treats Origen from a *terminus a quo* point of view. For example, historians of philosophy regard him as an early innovator in a new brand of philosophy, Christian Platonism.[5] On the other hand, historians of theology usually view him as an innovator introducing new philosophical elements of Middle Platonism into the intellectual life of the church and Christian theology. Often, it is this innovation which is then observed as it played out over time. And so Origen is viewed as the backdrop for the Trinitarian and Christological controversies that came after his time and he is often judged in relation to the outcome of these events. This *terminus a quo* point of view is useful and valid in many ways in so far as Origen influenced the people and the times after him. However, an evaluation based upon this point of view can only evaluate or measure Origen by events which he himself could never have known, anticipated, or controlled. And thus his own context, experience, and goals are lost in the discussion of his work. A *terminus ad quem* approach, used here, attempts to view Origen in his own context and try to understand his work less as an independent innovation and more as a reaction to and product of the controversies and needs of his day.

As was stated previously, Origen was in the main a Christian exegete, both explaining and defending the Christian scriptures. It is generally recognized that this is especially true regarding

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[5] Thus Origen is regularly portrayed as the prime early example of the Alexandrian school's tendency to make use of allegorical textual exegesis patterned on effort to reinterpret Homer and the early Greek mythologies on the part of many philosophers.

his work on the Old Testament. For he not only produced many commentaries on Old Testament books but also spent enormous effort in order to produce a tremendous work known as the Hexapla. This text placed side by side seven different texts of the Old Testament along with a transcription of the Hebrew text. The magnitude of the work was enormous and borders on the incredible for one man. And yet modern scholarship struggles with the fundamental question of why? Why did Origen work so hard on this project?[6]

The fact that this question remains without a definitive answer is not attributable simply to a lack of sources. It is also an indication that the question is ignoring Origen's historical context. What is the context of Origen's work on the Old Testament? Was there a Christian tradition in regard to the contents and use of the Old Testament already established before Origen? How was this tradition challenged and criticized by non-Christians, especially the Jews? And finally, how did Origen's work conform to or alter this tradition in response to this Jewish criticism? These are the main questions to be investigated by this thesis.

But these questions require some comments in regard to the broader context in which the Christian tradition developed and operated in tension with the developing Jewish tradition. This context is social, religious, and intellectual. It is both Hellenistic and Jewish. It is the context of Jewish Palestine and Greek Alexandria.

Palestine has always had the misfortune of being a geographical crossroads between the Middle East and the Mediterranean. This situation caused various powers at various times to struggle to control it and thus the land often changed hands in antiquity. Its history in the Hellenistic age is no different. After the death of Alexander of Macedon, his generals fought among themselves for control over pieces of his kingdom. Palestine initially fell to Antigonus but was captured in 312 and 302 B.C.E by Ptolemy. After a 100 year period of peace, another period

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[6] "What rationale possessed Origen to devote the energy and effort to compose such a work? Various scholars have arrived at diverse answers to this question, ranging from a Hebrew primer to the restoration of the text of the LXX, meaning a "purified" LXX, revised to the MT tradition." John Wright, "Origen in the Scholar's Den: A Rationale for the Hexapla," in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy* (ed. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen; Nortre Dame, 1988), 49.

of struggle for the land started between the Seleucid and Ptolomaic kingdoms. Afterwards, a complicated series of political, social, and religious events led to the Maccabean revolt beginning in 168 B.C.E. This uprising led to some degree of political independence until Pompei took control of Palestine in the name of Rome (63 B.C.E).

During this Hellenistic period up to 30 Greek cities were established in Palestine, which served as a hellenizing influence in the land. Most of these were established along the Mediterranean coast and in the Transjordan.[7] However, even Jerusalem itself, just before the Maccabean revolt, was targeted to become a Greek *polis* and assume the name Antioch. But the Maccabean revolt put a stop to this and established instead a reactionary attempt to obtain Jewish independence from the political forces surrounding Palestine and to retain the traditional temple worship as the center of Jewish and Jerusalem life.

The Hasmoneans were able to take political control of Palestine and its Greek cities via military might. But in the process they constituted a new line of high priests, which was considered illegitimate by Jewish tradition because it limited the high priesthood to the line of Zadokites. This in turn led to more religious and social divisions among the Jewish population.

The result of all these events was an Israel that attempted to resist Hellenization and outside political control, while many different internal social and religious forces tore at the fabric of Jewish hopes and unity. Thus Palestine suffered in a life of resistance, rebellion, and fragmentation in the Hellenistic period.[8]

Alexandria, on the other hand, was quite different. It has a Greek history that is as rich with famous figures and events as any other urban center of late antiquity. The city itself was famous already before the Common Era having been founded by Alexander of Macedon in the

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[7] Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Hendrickson, 1959), 91-105.

[8] "The question, then, is not how thoroughly Jews and Judaism in the Land of Israel were Hellenized, but how strongly they resisted Hellenization. In other words, what was the power of Judaism that enabled it to remain strong despite the challenge of Hellenism and later of Christianity, and even to counterattack through conversion of non-Jews to Judaism?" Louis Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton, 1993), 44.

year 332 B.C.E. Within ten years Alexander was dead and Ptolemy received Egypt when Alexander's territories were divided among his generals. He also received Alexander's body and returned with it to Memphis to begin his new rule. But a few years later Ptolemy transferred his capital to Alexandria and took this valuable relic with him, building the famous tomb of Alexander to contain it. He also established Alexandria as the center of worship of the god Serapis, whom he established as a sort of national deity. Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, indeed people from all over the East came to the new city. The city became a center of Hellenistic culture containing a busy cosmopolitan population. Alexandria, seen against its Egyptian backdrop, was so distinctive that it was often referred to not as being "in Egypt" but as "*Alexandria ad Aegyptum*" or "next to" Egypt.[9]

In the years following, the city increased in status and grandeur. Magnificent monuments were constructed. The famous Alexandrian lighthouse was built on Pharos island. It projected light 30 miles out into the sea and is considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The Caesareum was started by Cleopatra and finished later as a temple to Augustus. The famous Serapeum was built as a grand temple for Serapis. In addition, the Ptolemies built the Museum and Library. It was considered the greatest library of the ancient world.[10] These institutions were the focal point of the rich intellectual life of the city, which in turn made the city a center for scholarly inquiry for centuries. Pagan figures of antiquity such as Euclid, Callimachus, and Eratosthenes worked there. The Jewish scholar Philo also lived in Alexandria. Some of the most famous works of antiquity in literature, medicine, mathematics, and astronomy were completed in the city.

The population of Alexandria in this period can be depicted in terms of three main social groups: the pagans, the Jews, and the Christians.[11] At the beginning of the third century C.E. the

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[9] W.L. Westermann, "Alexandria in the Greek Papyri," BSAA 38 (1949):36. See also E. Breccia, *Alexandria ad Aegyptum* (Bergamo: Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1922).

[10] Andrew Erskine, "Culture and power in Ptolemaic Egypt: the museum and library of Alexandria", *GR* 42 (1995): 38-49.

[11] Jews settled in Alexandria as early as the beginning of the third century B.C.E. Tcherikover, 284.

pagans were in a position of dominance in culture, power, and tradition. But by the end of the fifth, the city had largely become the "Christ-loving city of the Alexandrians." Thus Origen dwelled in the famous *polis* at the height of its glory and yet at the beginning of a period of dramatic change.

When the third century began, pagan religions formed an integral part of society itself and thus "pagan Alexandria" had no self-identity or definition apart from Alexandrian society at large. Religiously, Alexandria would have been very similar to other Greek cities spread throughout the East. The general religious context of the Greek cities of late antiquity is as complex and varied as the religions of the many kingdoms which fell before the armies of Alexander of Macedon. Religion was still made up in part by the traditional civic cults, known from antiquity, in which a *polis* found comfort, protection, and guidance from its specific deity. And the traditional household gods, whether spirits of ancestors or otherwise, still had their place and were addressed in private prayers and household rites.[12] But the old gods were often understood in new ways.

The dissemination of Greek urban culture and the Greek language in so many lands gave impetus to new ideas regarding the traditional deities. The religions from the Middle East were Hellenized in various ways. And the multitude of cults once viewed as more-or-less local in scope were altered in various ways in response to the new world experience. Many felt the need for the gods to become more global in nature so as to be relevant in a broad interconnected world. This in turn led to the reconciliation of the variety of deities. A common view developed which tended to focus religious concern upon a single supreme deity. This point of view generally recognized one main God, whom was worshiped in various places under various names (such as

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[12] For example, Greeks were accustomed to place a little food on the hearth before a meal as an offering to Hestia, goddess of the hearth, and pour a little wine on the floor of the house as an offering to the guardian of the house. Luther Martin, *Hellenistic Religions, An Introduction* (New York: Oxford, 1987), 36.

Zeus or Isis, or even Yahweh) as the chief and all-powerful ruling deity. Other deities were then considered as lower gods subservient to the One.[13]

In addition to traditional religions, a large variety of other religious practices and opinions became common in the Eastern Mediterranean. For example, there was a common acceptance of the idea that the heavenly bodies directly influenced the lives of those on the earth through the force of fate. Questions related to such cosmic forces as fate, fortune, providence, and destiny influenced every part of society, from the lower classes to the intellectual philosophical schools, in a powerful way. This interest in the movements and influences of the stars and planets led to the observation of, study of, and more accurate prediction of the movement of the heavenly bodies. This interest was especially pursued and advanced in Alexandria in late antiquity.[14] The idea of astrological fate was so pervasive that no philosophical school and no religion of the time could avoid addressing its questions and concepts especially in relation to ethics and morality.[15]

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[13] See the discussion of Hellenistic syncretism in Hemut Koester, *History, Culture, and Religion and the Hellenistic Age* (2nd ed., vol. 1 of *Introduction to the New Testament;* New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 156-162. Philo is very instructive when he comments on his view of contemporary Greek religion: "If he is, *whom all Greeks together with all barbarians acknowledge with one judgment,* the highest Father of both gods and humans and the Maker of the entire cosmos, ... then it was necessary for all people to cling to him and not as if through some mechanical device to introduce other gods into participation of equal honors." (*Spec.* 2.165). Philo, a monotheistic Jew, claims that the pagan Greeks too believe in one supreme God. He does not state that Jews are different from other people in antiquity because they believe there is only One God. Philo instead criticizes the Greeks because they do not restrict *worship* to only the One God. See Erwin R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus,* (2d ed., Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 81-82.

[14] The development of mathematics served the practical requirement of the need to calculate the movement of the heavenly bodies with more precision. And astronomy as the study of the movement and nature of the heavens was simply a part of the larger topic of astrology. Thus in late antiquity mathematics, astronomy, and astrology made up one composite area of investigation. Alexandria was the leading location for such scientific advances in this field.

[15] Zeno and the Stoics basically accepted and tried to work with the idea. The Platonists tried to resist the influence of the idea of astrological fate upon their system but unsuccessfully (Koester, 151). Josephus portrays the Jewish sects as having differed precisely because of what they taught concerning the questions of fate and responsibility (*Ant.* 13.171-173. Also see *Ant.* 18.11-25 and *J.W.* 2.119-166.)

Other more experiential religions were also popular in this period among the Greeks. The various mystery religions have been discussed often at great length along with the healing cults and other similar religions. But these are not particularly relevant to the main topic of this dissertation.

It was in this religious setting that Jews and Christians lived in Alexandria in the early common era. The Jewish material for this period includes the *Letter of Aristeas*, Philo, Josephus, Dio Chrysostom, and the so-called *Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs*. From these quite a lot is known about the Jews of Alexandria. Philo states that by his time two of the seven quarters of the city were basically Jewish although there were synagogues scattered throughout the city (*Legat.* 132). Thus the city was very much Jewish in its makeup in the first century.

It is difficult to know much detail about Jewish, Jewish Christian, and Greek Christian relationships in Palestine and Alexandria in the second century.[16] These relationships are difficult to discern at any place in late antiquity. But we can observe this relationship to some degree in the way the groups handled their common heritage, the Old Testament Scriptures. At the dawn of the Common Era, what was the status of the books now recognized as canon and collectively known as the "Old Testament"? What was the valuation and treatment of these books among the Jews? How did the Christian sect modify or make use of the Jewish scriptures?

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[16] Little is actually certain about Christianity in Alexandria up through the second century. In the second book of his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius traces the arrival of Christianity in Alexandria back to the early arrival of the evangelist St. Mark (*Hist. eccl.* 2.16). He gives the Alexandrian episcopal succession after Mark the Evangelist as follows: Annianus (62 – 85 C.E.) (*Hist. eccl.* 2.24), Abilius (85 – 98 C.E.) (*Hist. eccl.* 3.21), C.E.rdo (98 – 109 C.E.) (*Hist. eccl.* 3.21, *Hist. eccl.* 4.1), Primus (109 – 121 C.E.) (*Hist. eccl.* 4.4), Justus (121 – 132 C.E.) (*Hist. eccl.* 4.5), Eumenes (132 – 145 C.E.) (*Hist. eccl.* 4.11), Marcus(145 – 155 C.E.) (*Hist. eccl.* 4.11), C.E.ladion (155 – 169 C.E.) (*Hist. eccl.* 4.19), Agrippinus (169 – 181 C.E.) (*Hist. eccl.* 5.9), Julian (181 – 191 C.E.) (*Hist. eccl.* 5:22), Demetrius (191 – 234 C.E.) (*Hist. eccl.* 6.26), Heraclas (234 – 250 C.E.). Jerome comments that "at Alexandria, from Mark the evangelist to the bishops Heracles and Dionysius, the elders always elected one from among themselves, and placed him in a higher station, whom they called bishop, just as an army would make a commander for itself." (Jerome *Epist.* 146 (CSEL 56, 308-310)). Also see W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (chapter 2) = <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~humm/Resources/Bauer/bauer02.htm>.

Christianity began as a movement within the complex religious situation of Judaism in Palestine. Before there were Christians, there were followers and disciples of John the Baptist and Jesus. Both were primarily movements of the rural and even wilderness areas of Palestine. Jesus and his primary disciples were from Galilee and spent a large amount of time moving about the northern areas of the Land of Israel teaching and healing even in the synagogues. But after the crucifixion and resurrection the movement organized primarily in Jerusalem and grew in size. The Jewish authorities interpreted the religious innovation as a new Jewish sect (Acts 24:14, 28:22). And it was an unwelcome development in the eyes of some. Jewish religious authorities like Saul, attempted to persecute the new movement out of existence (Acts 8:1-7, Gal. 1:13f.). Struggle and conflict with established Judaism within and without Palestine is a constant theme in early Christian materials. Even so, the break with Judaism was slow to take place.

Thus Christianity first took form primarily as a Jewish movement. In Jerusalem and beyond, it continued to be primarily a Jewish sect for decades. As the movement spread outside of Palestine, the question of the place of the Gentiles in the church, their relationship to Jewish Christians, and the religious requirements to be placed upon the Gentiles, was a difficulty that troubled individual churches from Jerusalem to Rome for years.

Christianity made great use of the scriptures within this social and religious matrix. Thus Christianity could at first draw upon established Jewish usage of the Hebrew scriptures. In this way, Christianity inherited the wide spread Jewish conviction regarding the inspiration and authority of the Hebrew prophetic scriptures. But Christian convictions in regard to Jesus required new interpretations of those scriptures. Christian proof texts were found, tested, acknowledged, and passed on as tradition.[17] As time passed, new situations, such as the Gentile question, required new efforts to find answers within these authoritative scriptures.

In addition, during this period of development of Christian use of the Hebrew scriptures, the continuing conflict with Judaism affected both religions. Throughout the second century,

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[17] These “proof texts” were individual texts, generally drawn from the Old Testament and viewed as prophetic, and generally of limited length, that could be collected, learned, and repeated by individuals and served within the tradition as authoritative and defining expressions of Christian belief.

Jews criticized the Christian usage of the Greek translation of the Old Testament and criticized the usage of many individual Christian proof texts. Christian theologians responded with zeal. This conflict caused the tradition of scriptural proofs to expand and develop throughout the second century.

Origen, from his third century vantage point, could look back at this conflict both as a Christian and a scholar. He had the abilities, the training, and the resources, to evaluate this Jewish / Christian conflict and the traditional use of the Old Testament as he had received it. How did Origen make use of this tradition and how did he modify it? This dissertation intends to trace the development of the Christian tradition of Old Testament proof texts leading up to Origen and investigate how he treated this tradition in his own exegetical work.

Chapter 1: Prophecy and Interpretation: the Hellenistic Context

In the application of his discipline, the historian must always face the difficulty of where to begin and where to end, how to start and how to stop. In this case, some justification should be given for beginning with the idea of "prophecy" as opposed to something more broad or more narrow. However, this requirement can only truly be met in full after a complete presentation of the very data to be examined. Therefore, I will begin with the basic starting proposition that the fundamental characteristic of the "scripture" for first century Judaism and Christianity was that it is in essence "prophetic", that is, words spoken or written by true prophets inspired by God's Spirit.[18] This can be seen even from so crude a fact as that the word "prophets" occurs at least 90 times in the New Testament. And the continuity of this esteem for the prophetic scriptures from Jesus Himself to the second century fathers is more easily demonstrated than most other Christian concerns of the period. So from this beginning point one can place this concern for the Jewish scriptures as "prophecy" into context. A part of this context is the Hellenistic Greek idea of prophecy and the actual use of prophecy in Greek culture.

Divine prophecy, defined as the "inspired declaration of divine will and purpose"[19], is a religious concept shared by pagan, Jew, and Christian in the Hellenistic world. Prophet and prophetess are as well attested in ancient Greek literature as in the Hebrew scriptures. At times, such prophecy had to do with future events, at other times it had to do with the present, and at times the past. The act of prophesying always included a divine being and a human representative, a prophet, who spoke for the divine. But beyond these fundamental common elements there is great variation in the details of the form and function of prophecy and prophets in religion in antiquity. Likewise, there are fundamental differences in the manner in which the

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[18] It is true that the bipartite phrase "Moses and the prophets" or tripartite phrases such as "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms" are sometimes used to designate the entirety of the Jewish scriptures (Luke 16:29-31; 24:27; John 1:45; Acts 26:22; 28:33). And in this way the Law is distinguished in some fashion from the Prophets, and the Prophets from the Writings. But this distinction in no way denies that the most essential characteristic of the writings of Moses or David is that they were regarded as prophetic.

[19] *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co, 1981).

Jewish and Greek religions made use of their respective prophetic traditions. And all of these variations are part of the context in which the Christian tradition of *testimonia* exegesis of the prophetic scriptures formed.

In Greek religion, and Roman religion for that matter, there were a number of different institutions and/or practices that related to the declaration of the divine will and purpose. The philosophers treated this matter primarily as an "investigation of the future."[20] Cicero claims the Romans made an advance over the Greeks when they gave this discipline a comprehensive name, *divination.* But that which the Romans placed under this one heading, the Greeks categorized under two headings. In the *Phaedrus,* for example, Socrates makes a claim for ancient precedent in distinguishing between prophecy (mantikh;) and augury (oijnwnistikh;) as different modes of investigating the future (*Phaedr.* 244c-244d). A more precise terminology combined the insight of both and called augury *inductive divination* (or *artificial divination*) and prophecy *intuitive divination* (or *natural divination*).

Inductive divination from the Greek point of view was considered "a rational investigation of futurity." It was primarily a discernment of the divine will and purpose via interpretation of observed signs and portents of nature. The observation of the behavior of birds was one the main traditional means of inductive divination in antiquity. But the investigation of the liver and other entrails of sacrificed animals, the casting of lots, words spoken at opportune times, and the astrological observation of the heavens, all provided divine signs in need of formal interpretation.[21] And although this sort of seeking and interpretation of natural signs was a

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[20] *"id est praesensionem et scientiam rerum futurarum"* (*Div.* 1.1). Cicero says that the belief in the ability of some people to divine the future is "an ancient belief, going back to heroic times but since confirmed by the unanimous opinion of the Roman people and of every other nation." Even when the questions answered by the prophet or prophetess had to do with the past, the primary matter of concern was not history but what to do about the past going forward into the future, what action to take or what sacrifice to offer to affect the gods.

[21] Many of these different methods have formal names. Flacelière gives examples of hieromancy (divination by examining the entrails of sacrificial animals), ornithomancy (divination by observation of the flight of birds), pyromancy (divination by fire), hydromancy (divination by water), cleromancy (divination by lot), astrology, and catoptromancy (divination by mirrors). Robert Flacelière, *Greek Oracles* (Translated by Douglas Garmin; New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965), 12-19.

common part of life in antiquity, it had no direct impact on the development and practice of exegesis of the textual prophecies of the Old Testament in early Christianity.

Intuitive divination, on the other hand, designated what Plato called "prophecy". And Plato believed that prophecy was a divine gift of the gods, which was received only by specific individuals and only through "divine madness" (*Phaedr.* 244a-e).[22] He considered this madness to be "the source of the greatest blessings granted to men", and "more perfect and august than augury". He described this condition as being outside of a normal state of mind as if a person were possessed by the inspiring god. This divine madness was the main element of Plato's theory of divinely inspired prophecy. And in so far as this theory might have influenced the early Christian belief in the divine inspiration of the Hebrew scriptures, it does relate to the development of the early Christian tradition in regard to the Old Testament. But the main topic of this investigation is not Christian theories of divine inspiration.

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[22] Thus he pointed out here in the *Phaedrus* that "prophecy" (mantikh;) differs from "madness" (manikh;) only by one insignificant letter "t". And he distinguished between a "sane mind" (swfrosuvnh), from which comes augury, and "madness", from which comes prophecy, because the first comes from a human origin whereas the latter is of divine origin.

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato explicitly named the prophetess at Delphi, and the priestess at Dodona as actual examples of divine prophecy. Dodona[23] and Delphi[24] are examples of Greek oracles[25], which were often consulted in antiquity by cities and individuals with questions to be answered by the oracle's associated divinity. The oracles differed somewhat in their individual function. But generally a question was submitted to the oracle and the prophetess played a key role in making known the deity's answer to this question. Dodona and Delphi are but two of the most important of many Greek oracles known to have existed. After the conquests of Alexander,

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[23] The oracle at Dodona predates Homer and was considered the most ancient oracle in Greece. Achilles makes an unclear mention of it in *Il.* 16.220. It appears again in *Od.* 14.327. According to Parke, it was an oracle associated with Zeus, who was believed to speak through a large oak tree on the site. Achilles mentions a group of men who govern the worship of Zeus on the site, called Selloi. These "interpreters" or prophets are said to have to dwelt on the site, to have kept their feet unwashed, and to have slept on the ground. By Herodotus' day the cult at Dodona had evidently changed significantly. At his time it appears that the oak tree was no longer expected to speak, and the Helloi had disappeared or become insignificant. At that time, the place was attended by several prophetesses, who delivered the God's oracles (*Hist.* 2.52.). H.W. Parke, *The Oracles of Zeus. Dadona, Olympia, Ammon.* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1967), 1-76.

Plato refers to the state of mind of the prophetess of Dodona as she was delivering the oracles of Zeus as "madness". And he further claims that she only delivered oracles when in this state of mind, just like the prophetess at Delphi. But Plato may be presenting the prophetess at Dodona to be like the priestess at Delphi rather than presenting an accurate picture of what actually happened there (Parke, *The Oracles of Zeus*, 81).

[24] Delphi was originally the site of a cult dedicated to the Earth Goddess. But by Homer's time the cult of Apollo had been established there (*Od.* 8.79). There is no evidence to contradict the proposal that the oracle always made use of a female prophetess. She is first referred to in the mid-sixth century by Theognis and is named explicitly as the "Pythia" in Herodotus. Her ecstatic mode of prophecy was well known. When she spoke in the first person it was to be interpreted as Apollo speaking. H.W. Parke, *Greek Oracles* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1967), 42.

[25] H. W. Parke, Joseph Fotenrose, and Robert Flacelière have provided considerable modern scholarship regarding the Greek oracles. H. W. Parke *, Greek Oracles* (London: Hutchinson, 1967), *The Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor* (Dover, N.H.: Croom Helm, 1985), *The Oracles of Zeus: Dodona, Olympia, Ammon* (Harvard University Press, 1967). Also Joseph Fontenrose, *Didyma : Apollo's Oracle, Cult, and Companions* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1988), *The Delphic Oracle: Its Responses and Operations with a Catalogue of Responses* (Berkeley, 1978). Also see Robert Flacelière, *Greek Oracles* (tr. Douglas Garmin; New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965).

even more oracles proliferated but they were more local in nature. The Hellenistic kings of this period did not consult the oracles in political matters to the degree that the classical city-states once had.[26] By the Roman period, in the final centuries B.C.E., the classical oracles had become less popular and had almost completely ceased to have any influence in political matters. Thus the idea of the decline of the oracles became a commonplace by the first century C.E.[27] Even so, some of the newer oracles flourished as local centers of inquiry for individuals, especially in Asia Minor, and thus continued to play a religious role.[28]

The idea of prophecy was, therefore, a common one in the Hellenistic period. And the problem of interpretation of these prophecies was a problem keenly felt in antiquity. We have many reports in the historians and elsewhere of specific utterances of a prophet/prophetess which were discussed all over Greece with many disagreements as to their meaning. There were individuals in antiquity who claimed the ability to properly interpret prophecy. And at times there were even formal *seers* appointed to be the official interpreters of ambiguous oracles.[29] Though there seems to have been little doubt among Greeks that some individuals were specially gifted for interpretation of oracles, no system or traditional method of interpretation developed from this practice. Thus the problem of interpretation and application of ancient Greek oracles never received a formal solution.

In addition to this, there was never a formal element of Greek religion or a general practice connected directly with the oracles aimed at the creation of textual collections of the various prophecies of the oracles. There were individuals, called *chresmologues*, who did collect oracles

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[26] Robert Parker, "Greek States and Greek Oracles", in *Oxford Readings in Greek Religion* (ed. Richard Buxton; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 102.

[27] See Plutarch, *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* (vol. 5 of *Loeb Classical Librar;* Cambridge: Harvard, 1949).

[28] Parke, *Greek Oracles*, 137-41.

[29] Flacelière, 63-4. The chief example given here is that of Lampo of Athens, a friend of Pericles, who was named chief *exegetes.*

and used them to influence politics or otherwise to profit from them.[30] Sometimes these prophecies contained utterances of the official oracles. Sometimes they were anonymous. And at times it was claimed that they had been uttered by ancient prophets like the Muses.[31] In this way at least some of the prophecies of the oracles were written down from time to time and played a role particularly in contemporary politics. But these unique private collections did not survive into the Hellenistic period. Thus they had little or no direct effect upon the Christian use of Hebrew prophecy.

Besides the two famous Greek oracles mentioned in the text from the *Phaedrus,* Plato also mentioned the Sibyl as an example of divine prophecy at his time. And by the Common Era, the Sibyl was one of the most popular examples of a contemporary prophet/prophetess.[32] The origin of the Sybil is unclear.[33] There are a number of references to particular prophetesses in antiquity

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[30] For example see Herodotus *Hist.* 7.6.3 where Onomacritus is named a *chresmologue*, a collector and editor of the oracles of Musaeus, who influenced the decision of Xerxes through his oracles.

[31] Flacelière, 65-7.

[32] Virgil in book six of the *Aeneid* (6.70-84)*,* gives evidence of the fascination with the Sibyl as a figure of divine inspiration in the Roman period when he portrays a consultation of the prophetess projected back into antiquity:

> The Sibyl cried out: "Now is the time to ask your destinies!" And then: "The god! Look there! The god!" And as she spoke neither her face nor hue went untransformed, nor did her hair stay neatly bound: her breast heaved, her wild heart grew large with passion. Taller to their eyes and sounding now no longer like a mortal since she had felt the god's power breathing near. She cried: "Slow, are you, in your vows and prayers? Trojan Aeneas, are you slow? Be quick."
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> *The Aeneid* (tr. Robert Fitzgerald, New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 161.

[33] The Sibyl has been the focal point of a significant amount of early as well as modern scholarly attention. For the Sibylline tradition in general see William Lewis Kinter and Joseph R Keller, *The Sibyl: Prophetess of Antiquity and Medieval Fay* (Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1967), and H.W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity* (New York : Routledge, 1992).

assumed to be the original Sibyl but all appear to be more legend than fact.[34] Accordingly, the process by which the prophetess became the object of so much fervent collecting of oracles is also unclear. But collections of Sibylline oracles date well back into the classical period in the western as well as eastern Mediterranean. And by the Common Era, collections of sibylline oracles were well known. The importance of such a collection and the dangerous influence they could still exert upon contemporary Roman politics is shown by the fact that when Augustus became *pontifex maximus* in 12 B.C.E., he destroyed some 2000 prophetic verses keeping only the Sibylline Books. But he only preserved them after editing them, apparently to remove the most volatile texts. He also removed them from the temple of the Capitoline Jupiter and had them placed under the cultic image in the temple of Palatine Apollo to be kept under strict control (Suetonius, *Aug.* 31.1).[35]

If the potential political influence of the Sibylline tradition was a force to be reckoned with even by a figure like Augustus, it is not surprising that its influence was also felt in religion. We have already seen how Plato believed the Sibyl spoke by means of a "divine madness" whereby she spoke under the direct influence of a god. It was believed by some that she spoke under the inspiration of Apollo, the Muses, or Poseidon. But these were merely theories of inspiration.[36]

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[34] There were many prophetesses called Sibyls. Terentius Varro claims that there were 10 known Sibyls: "the Babylonian, the Libyan, the Delphic, the Cimmerian, the Erythraean, the Samian, the Cumaen, the Hellespointine, the Phrygian, and the Tiburtine." David Potter, *Prophets and Emperors: Human and Divine Authority from Augustus to Theodosius* (Harvard, 1994), 74-8. But there were others also including the important Hebrew or Jewish Sibyl. Clement in the *Stromata* reports knowledge of "a host of Sibyls", the Samian, the Colophonian, the Cumaean, the Phrygian, the Erythraean called Herophile, the Pythian, the Egyptian Sibyl, and the Italian, who inhabited the Carmentale in Rome, the Taraxandrian, the Macetian, the Thessalian, and the Thesprotian. (*Strom.* 1.21)

[35]Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture* (Princeton, 1996), 294-296.

[36] Among Christian works, Clement of Alexandria's *Exhortation to the Greeks* suggests the Sibyl is inspired with a type of "potent inspiration". The author explains this by appealing to Plato's theory of temporary possession by God, that is, divine madness. (*Coh. Gr.*, 37). Theophilus of Antioch considered the Sibyl to be inspired by the Holy Spirit as were the Hebrew prophets (*Autol.* 9). See also Clement of Alexandria's report of pagan theories in *Strom.* 1.15.

Aside from any particular theory of inspiration, the Sibyl was such a generally accepted figure of divine prophecy, that even the Jews and Christians attempted to make use of the prestige of the prophetess. [37] On the one hand, they could make use of some of the pagan Sibylline prophecies which lent themselves to the appropriate interpretation.[38] On the other, new collections of oracles were also presented under the name of the Sibyl, which were specifically Jewish or Christian in nature.[39] The collection of oracles still preserved and generally titled the

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[37] The Sibyl was so important to the Christian author of the *Exhortation to the Greeks*, that he visited Cumae, where one of the most famous Sibyls was said to have operated. He reported what he learned there, in the second century, as follows:

> She, they say, was of Babylonian extraction, being the daughter of Berosus, who wrote the Chaldaean History; and when she had crossed over (how, I know not) into the region of Campania, she there uttered her oracular sayings in a city called Cumae, six miles from Baiae, where the hot springs of Campania are found. And being in that city, we saw also a certain place, in which we were shown a very large basilica cut out of one stone; a vast affair, and worthy of all admiration. And they who had heard it from their fathers as part of their country's tradition, told us that it was here she used to publish her oracles. And in the middle of the basilica they showed us three receptacles cut out of one stone, in which, when filled with water, they said that she washed, and having put on her robe again, retires into the inmost chamber of the basilica, which is still a part of the one stone; and sitting in the middle of the chamber on a high rostrum and throne, thus proclaims her oracles. ... For we ourselves, when in that city, ascertained from our *cicerone*, who showed us the places in which she used to prophesy, that there was a certain coffer made of brass in which they said that her remains were preserved. (*Coh. Gr.*, 37).

But Pausanias, some time earlier, had been greatly disappointed at Cumae because of a lack of physical proof for the claims of the Sibyl having operated there. Potter points out that the great interest in the prophetesses caused different cities to fix up such shrines as proof for ancient Sibyl activity. This was a symptom of inter-city rivalry in late antiquity for the attention of tourists and fame. Potter, 79-80.

[38] The early fathers also occasionally appeal to other prophets like Hystaspes. For example, Justin *1 Apol.* 20.1. But the conclusions reached concerning the more common case of the Sibyl will also cover these rarer cases.

[39] Concerning the Jewish use of the Sibyl see especially John J. Collins, *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism* (Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature for the Pseudepigrapha Group, 1972) and *Seers, Sybils, and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (vol. 54 of *Supplements to the Journal for the study of Judaism*; New York : Brill, 1997). Also see John R Bartlett, *Jews in the Hellenistic World : Josephus, Aristeas, the Sibylline oracles, Eupolemus* (Cambridge, 1985).

Oracula Sibyllina appears to be an example of such a Jewish collection, which was accepted, used, emendated, preserved, and augmented by Christians.[40]

Among Christian authors, the most common uses of such Sibylline texts were to show that the prophetess taught specific Christian doctrines such as monotheism, the apocalyptic end of the world, and, occasionally, the very advent of Jesus Christ.[41] When the overall Christian use of the Sibylline texts by Christian authors is observed, the impression is received that these prophetic texts were given considerable attention by many authors beginning in the mid second century.[42] And it appears that some Sibylline oracles were occasionally lifted from their original collections and became part of Christian *testimonia* collections.[43] But such oracles are not explicitly used in the New Testament or in the earliest patristic texts thus indicating that the use of the Sibylline prophecies began in earnest only in the second century. This fact coupled with the observation of the actual uses of such prophecies, leads to the conclusion that the Sibylline texts were used in a secondary fashion by Christians. That is, they provided proof texts for doctrines already having established scriptural proof texts. The main purpose of the use of the Sibyl appears to have been to give the Christian message credibility among those pagan audiences who had no previous experience with the Hebrew prophets.

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[40] For a critical text of the preserved Sibylline Oracles see J. Geffcken, *Die Oracula Sibyllina*, GCS 8.1-226. For a modern English translation and general introduction see, "Sibylline Oracles" in vol. 1 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (tr. John J. Collins; Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1983), 317-472.

[41] For monotheistic proof texts see Justin *1 Apol* 20; *Coh. Gr.* 16; Theophilus *Autol.* 2.36; Clement. *Protr.* 2, 4, 6, 8; *Strom.* 5.14, 6.5. For apocalyptic references see Justin *1 Apol.* 44; Theophilus *Autol.* 2.31. For a Christological proof text see the claim that the Sibyl predicts "in a clear and patent manner, the advent of our Savior Jesus Christ" *Coh. Gr.*, 38.

[42] This was apparent in the second century to Celsus, who named some Christians "Sibyllists" because of their heavy use of the Sibylline texts. (Origen *Cels.* 5.61.) Celsus also accused the Christians of interpolating prophecies into the Sibylline texts that were then used as Christian proof texts. (*Cels.* 7.56).

[43] See Clement of Alexandria, C*oh. Gr.* 38. Here it is explicitly claimed that a particular Greek oracle has been preserved by Christians because it was believed to serve as a proof text of the creation of man by God as taught in Genesis.

In summary, it can not be said that the pagan theories of inspiration and the general Hellenistic religious and cultural interests in inspired oracles and prophecies did not affect the church or its development of teachings. They clearly did interact. However, rather than being primary and determinative influences, these oracles were subject to the Christian practices of collection and exegesis already established for the Jewish prophetic texts.

Chapter 2: Prophecy and Interpretation: the Jewish Context

Given the focus of this study upon the early Christian tradition of *testimonia* proof texts drawn from the Jewish scriptures, a survey is required of the status of the "Jewish scriptures" at the beginning of the Common Era. What books were considered authoritative among the Jews? And what Jewish exegetical traditions were in place in regard to these scriptures, which may have subsequently affected the Christian use of these books?

Judaism included the idea of prophets who received verbal divine communication to be preached or otherwise shared with Yahweh's people. And the actual designation of "prophet" was not restricted to the authors of those books traditionally named the major or minor Prophets. In the Pentateuch, for example, the first figure to be labeled a "prophet" is Abraham (Gen 20:7). More importantly, however, Moses is also referred to as a "prophet" (Num 11:29; Num 18:18). In fact, Moses is considered the prophet *par excellence*, to whom the Lord speaks directly and face to face, not in riddles as with other prophets. He is the greatest of all prophets (Num 12:6; Deut 34:10).[44] This broader concept of "prophet" created the context in which the entire collection of writings known as the Old Testament could be seen as prophetic oracles.[45] Thus Mt. 11:13 states that the Old Testament as a whole had prophesied until John the Baptist came.[46]

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[44] This conviction that Moses was the greatest of prophets is not only found in the Hebrew scriptures. It was a claim used frequently by the Judaism of the Hellenistic period to defend itself against the various attacks of the prevailing Greek culture. Hellenistic culture in general held to the conviction that people and ideas that were more ancient were more reliable and divine. Thus, in reaction to criticisms aimed at their unique religion, the Jews argued that their people in general and Moses in particular were more ancient than all the Greek authors and, therefore, to be honored. See the excellent presentation of Jewish claims and pagan recognition of the great antiquity of the Jews in the Hellenistic period in Feldman, 177-200.

[45] So Paul, speaking of the Jews, states o{ti ejpisteuvqhsan ta; lovgia tou` qeou`. Rom 3:2. In Acts 7:38, Moses is said to have received lovgia zw`nta in the wilderness. Also see Heb 5:12; 1 Pet. 4:11.

[46] pavnte" ga;r oiJ profh`tai kai; oJ novmo" e{w" ÆIwavnnou ejprofhvteusan.

The Jewish Scriptures

Ezra the Prophet is traditionally assigned responsibility for having brought the oracles of the Jewish prophets together into one text[47], which would become known as the scriptures, ai{ grafaiv.[48] However it came about, the Jews became a people of the book well before the Common Era. And as a result, traditions of textual use and interpretation developed among the Jews well before this time. At the same time, all the issues associated with written texts, such as copying, translating, and interpreting, came to affect the Jewish scriptures in important ways. All these issues thus affected the early Christian use of the same scriptural texts.

The first issue to be considered is the state of the scriptural books as a collection at the beginning of the Common Era. There has been much scholarly debate in regard to the state of the Jewish canon at the time of Jesus. Some scholars have claimed that there was no Jewish canon in place until certain decisions were made at a Synod in Jamnia in the late first century C.E. But we

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[47] There is evidence in the Old Testament itself of early written texts in the life of Israel. The books of the law written by Moses are said to have been put in the Ark of the Covenant (Deut 34:22-26). Yet in the late in 7th century these books did not play an important part in the daily religious life of Israel for they are said to have been lost and then found in the temple during construction work in the time of King Josiah (2 Kgs 22:8-23:24). There is also mention of many other written books: the Acts of Solomon (1 Kgs 11:41), the Annals of the Kings of Israel (1 Kgs 14:19) and of Judah (1 Kgs 14:29), the Annals of Samuel the seer, the Annals of Nathan the prophet, and the Annals of Gad the seer (1 Chr 29:29), the Annals of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer (2 Chr 12:15), the Annals of Jehu (2 Chr 20:34), the Annals of Hozai (2 Chr 33:18), the Book of the Wars of Yahweh (Num 21:14), and the Book of the Just (Josh 10:13, 2 Sam 1:18). 2 Chronicles 20:34 explicitly claims that some of these books were used as sources for the current canonical books of Kings. From the time of Isaiah onward there are canonical texts that mention scrolls upon which the words of any given prophet were recorded. This idea of the prophetic scroll was so common that the image of the scroll or book itself became important as a symbol (Isa 34:4; Zech 5:1-2.). The concept of the written word of God was powerful enough quite early to generate the idea of an idealized heavenly book of God. This book is a symbol of God's providence in Ps 139:16 (God's declaration of each individual's days of life) and in Ps 69:28 (the book of the living or the book of life). (cf. the heavenly tablets in 1 Enoch etc.)

[48] The Septuagint does not use the plural form of h[grafhv. And Josephus does not use this phraseology either. But the New Testament and Philo commonly refer to the Old Testament writings in this way. "We may thus conclude that the phrase aiJ iJerai; grafaiv perpetuates in the Church a Jewish and Hellenistic rather than a specifically early Christian usage." *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (ed. G. Kittel, G. W.Bromiley, and G. Friedrich; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans), 1.751.

do not have to be overly concerned here with the history of "canon" within Judaism. Aside from a strict "canon", evidence indicates that even in the first century B.C., when there almost certainly was no fixed list of canonical books, there was a fairly well defined grouping of Jewish books that were considered to be divinely inspired "prophecy" and therefore authoritative (at Qumran, there were fragments of all OT texts except possibly that of Esther). This general grouping of authoritative books was not fixed in all of its details before the Common Era. However, the grouping itself was already generally understood in overall extent and with enough precision that even parts of the whole could be designated by either bipartite or tripartite formulas.

The bipartite formulas found are generally some combination of "Moses" or "the law" along with "the prophets." For example, in the New Testament, the known prophetic scriptures are designated on the one hand by reference to Moses and the prophets in Luke 16:29-31, Acts 26:22, and 28:23. On the other hand, a reference is made to the law and the prophets in Matt 5:17, 7:12, 11:13, Luke 16:16, 24:44, Acts 24:14, 28:23, and Rom 3:21. Likewise, 4 Macc 18:10 states that a blessed father teaches his sons everything in the scriptures, that is, "the law and the prophets." In John 1:45, Nathanael combines the two saying that "we have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote."[49]

A tradition of a tripartite division within the collection of Jewish divine books was also known and being used well before the first century C.E. Evidence for this is found already in the *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira*, which was translated ca. 130 B.C.E. from Hebrew into Greek. This translation is part of the Greek Septuagint (LXX) and the prologue to this translation mentions "the Law, and the Prophets, and the other books of our ancestors."[50] Also, in Luke 22:44, Jesus states "that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." In this text, the threefold enumeration is explicitly equated with ai{ grafai.[51] This text

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[49] }On e[grayen Mwu>sh`" ejn tw`/ novmw/ kai; oiJ profh`tai euJrhvkamen.

[50] Sir 1:1: "ei[" te th;n tou` novmou kai; tw`n profhtw`n kai; tw`n a[llwn patrivwn biblivwn ajnavgnwsin".

[51] Luke 24:45: tovte dihvnoixen aujtw`n to;n nou`n tou` sunievnai ta;" Grafav~.

in Luke thus agrees with *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira* in having three divisions and in the precise naming of the first two categories. But the third partition is called "the Psalms" in one and "the other books" in the other.

Philo, too, presents a tripartite division of the scriptures, the third of which he calls "hymns and psalms" (*Vita contempl.* 25).[52] Josephus too speaks of three divisions, the five books of Moses, the thirteen books of the prophets, and the four books of "hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of human life" (*C. Ap.*1.38-40).[53] Finally, the *Halakhic Letter* (4QMMT) from Qumran, also provides a text that mentions "the Book of Moses, and the words of the Prophets, and David, and the chronicles of each and every generation."[54] Again the law and the prophets are consistent but the third partition seems somewhat fluid with the Psalms of David constituting the chief part. Thus, it appears safe to conclude that the idea of a scripture collection of prophetic books, which was traditionally divided into three parts, was very much a part of Jewish tradition by the first century B.C.E. Further, we can conclude that the third partition was not consistently named or completely defined but the Psalms were the most important book within this partition.[55]

Is it possible to get some idea as to the amount of agreement that existed in regard to which books belonged to these groupings? There is evidence that in the first century C.E. this collection of scripture was definite enough that the individual elements could be counted. But things were

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[52] Philo speaks of a Jewish sect in Alexandria that retires to their private shrines to study "the laws, and the sacred oracles of God enunciated by the holy prophets, and hymns and psalms, and all kinds of other things by reason of which knowledge and piety are increased and brought to perfection."

[53] Josephus states "For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another [as the Greeks have], but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life."

[54] Schiffman, 166.

[55] Craig A. Evans, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Canon of Scripture in the Time of Jesus" in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 71-73.

indefinite enough that there was more than one way to count the individual books. In the text from *Against Apion* just quoted, Josephus states that there are twenty-two books in the Jewish scriptures and even specifies the distribution of these twenty-two books throughout the tri-partite division of the scriptures. It is likely that this calculation is meant to correspond to the twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet.[56] In some manuscripts, the Book of Jubilees also states that there are twenty-two books in the Jewish scriptures (Jub. 2:23-34).

On the other hand, 4 Ezra, a text from the late first century C.E., records the Jewish tradition that there were twenty-four books of public scriptures put to writing by Ezra the prophet.[57] Likewise, in the Gospel of Thomas, the disciples tell Jesus, "Twenty-four prophets spoke in Israel, and they all spoke by you" (*Gos. Thom.* 52). But neither text describes how the number twenty-four was calculated, although, it is likely that the number 24 was intended to correspond to the 24 characters of the Greek alphabet.

In addition to these calculations of specific numbers, it is also known that in the last part of the first century C.E. there was still controversy among Jewish religious leaders over the canonical status of a few books, such as Esther and the Song of Solomon. All of this evidence, taken together, indicates that there was a fairly well defined collection of scriptural books for the Jews in the first

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[56] Vanderkam explains how the current 39 books of the Old Testament are counted as twenty-two. James C. Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 148.

[57] 4 Ezra 14:38-48. In this text, the Most High has Ezra drink a cup of water that looks like fire, which brought prophetic inspiration to Ezra. In this state, Ezra dictated to five scribes the full contents of the law, which had been lost, in 24 books over a period of 40 days and 40 nights. James Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (vol. 1 of *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments;* Garden City, NY: DoubleDay & Company, 1983), 555.

century C.E., even though the status of several individual fringe members continued to be questioned. Manuscript data from the Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran confirms this conclusion.[58]

The second major issue that affected the collection of Jewish scriptures, and thus also the early church's efforts at exegesis, was the state of the Old Testament text itself and its translations. There are two sub-issues of concern here. First, what was the state of the Hebrew text of the scriptures in the first century, which early Christians would have made use of? Secondly, what was the state of the text in regard to Greek translations of the original Hebrew text and what was its use by early Christians?

For many years previous to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, there were serious questions in regard to the state of the Hebrew text in the first centuries C.E. These questions were raised because the oldest physical texts that still survive of the Hebrew Old Testament are dated in the ninth and tenth centuries C.E. This means that they contain texts that were originally written well over a thousand years before the age of those manuscripts. There was some concern that the Masoretic tradition of the text, which is found in these late manuscripts, represented a significant editing of the text at a date subsequent to the first century C.E. and that the text before this date would never be able to be recovered.

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls many of these questions have been answered. In summary, it now appears that in the main period of Qumran activity, in the mid-second century B.C.E, the dominant form of Hebrew text was a proto-Masoretic text that was very similar to the text we have today printed in Hebrew bibles. However, there were a few texts that represented

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[58] Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 162-169. Every Old Testament book except Esther is represented in the fragments from Qumran. The most popular biblical texts seem to have been the Torah, Isaiah, and the Psalms. The *11 Psalms Scroll* has caused much scholarly debate in regard to the state of the canon of the third division of the scriptures. This scroll contains a mixture of selected Psalms, not in traditional order, and other poetic texts. Some scholars have argued from this that the canonical status of many of the Psalms and the entire third part of the scriptures was still very much in question in the late first century B.C. Schiffman argues that this one scroll is a liturgical text and not a literary scroll and so can not be used to question the canonical status of the third part of the scriptures, or of individual Psalms. See also Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today,* 149-157.

variations outside of the main textual lines. Therefore, Lawrence Shiffman concludes that the second century B.C.E. was a period where the differing textual traditions were purposefully being reconciled to form one main text type and that this process was largely complete by the mid first century B.C.E.[59]

Eugene Ulrich works from essentially the same data and gives a number of specific examples of variations from the Masoretic text in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible*.[60] Although he produces only a few significant variations beyond Shiffman, he states his conclusions in the opposite manner by describing the biblical texts as essentially "pluriform" in nature at the time of Qumran. He thus emphasizes the variation instead of the uniformity.

While scholars frame their conclusions with different emphases they agree that in the vast majority of texts, the Hebrew manuscripts found at Qumran are very similar or nearly identical to the Masoretic texts. The scholar, however, needs to be aware of the exceptions. In the end, the details of the history of the Hebrew text are not particularly important to this study. The important conclusion is that first century Christians would have been exposed to a Hebrew text of the scriptures that was very similar to the Hebrew text known today in the printed Masoretic text. Thus variations from that text in *testimonia* taken from the Old Testament should not generally be blamed upon an unsettled Hebrew text.

The second sub-issue in regard to the text of the Hebrew Scriptures is the status of translations of the text. Several centuries before the Common Era, the Jews in the Hellenistic cities outside of Palestine found it increasingly difficult to make use of the traditional Hebrew text of the Old Testament, as knowledge of the language became less and less common. This situation created a practical requirement for a translation of the scriptures into the Greek language.

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[59] Shiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 169-180.

[60] Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999).

The famous *Letter of Aristeas* claims that the Jewish scriptures were translated into Greek by Jewish scholars in Alexandria in the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.E.).[61] Although there are many legendary elements to the letter, the general claim that the Hebrew scriptures, or at least the Torah, was translated into Greek at that time, is generally conceded by scholars. Other books outside the Pentateuch were probably translated later and added to the first effort and eventually the entire collection came to be known as the Septuagint (LXX).[62] Again the details of this translation are not important at this point, except to note that the LXX was very popular among Jews in the first century and became very popular among Christians and is often quoted in the New Testament.[63]

First Century Judaism

The most important textual issue of the Jewish scriptures in regard to this study is the matter of Jewish exegesis or use of their own scriptural books. This is a very broad topic. And yet it can not really be usefully treated in isolation from the even wider context of Judaism in general at the beginning of the Common Era.

In the past, Judaism was often described in exclusive terms of Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism. But these categories have now largely been discredited as being misleading. The Hellenistic forces that affected Palestine have already been mentioned in the Introduction.

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[61] Moses Hadas, ed., *Aristeas to Philocrates: Letter of Aristeas*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951).

[62]The *New Bible Dictionary* relates further: "Josephus relates Aristeas' story and so is not an independent witness. Philo (*Vit. Mos.* 2. 5ff.) may perhaps be independent of Aristeas; he likewise attributes the translation to Ptolemy II's reign, but adds miraculous details to the story. Of the Christian fathers some soberly follow Aristeas' story, others follow Philo, and add yet more miraculous elements. Justin Martyr (*c.* AD 100-165) is the first to extend Aristeas' account to cover the whole OT; Augustine (AD 354-430) observes that it was customary in his day to call the translation 'the Septuagint'." J. Douglas, *New Bible Dictionary,* 2 ed. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1996), 1181.

[63] The extensive modern bibliography for the Septuagint is given in Cécile Dogniez, *Bibliography of the Septuagint*, (New York: E.J. Brill, 1995). An older bibliography can be found in Sebastian P. Brock, Charles T. Fritsch, and Sidney Jellicoe, *A Classified Bibliography of the Septuagint* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1973).

Likewise, the tendency to view Diaspora Judaism as a whole through the works of Philo of Alexandria, has had to be greatly modified as more and more has been learned through new archeological and textual finds.

But the Judaism that did affect Christianity can still be distinguished into two useful categories: pre-70 Judaism of Jerusalem where the temple and everything associated with it dominated, and Diaspora Judaism where the synagogue dominated. Palestinian Judaism *extra* Jerusalem clearly had close ties to the temple and yet by the first century C.E. had many active synagogues. Thus Palestine *extra* Jerusalem can be considered to be a mixture of the two other categories.

In Judaism the temple was the sacred center of Jewish religious practice and faith. But in Palestine and especially in Jerusalem, the temple was the center in practice as well as in theory. However, unlike the synagogue, the temple itself had almost no formal role in Judaism in regard to the reading and preserving of the text of the law and prophets. The temple was the holy place where various important ceremonies and rites of the law were performed. But there was nothing in the institution of the temple that specifically dealt with the text of the law or prophets.[64] Later Rabbinic literature suggests that annually on Yom Kippur and on the Sukkot festival, the high priest would read from the Torah in public in the temple. But Lee Levine concludes:

> This was the only formal liturgical activity not specifically associated with sacrifices (in contrast with the Levitical psalms, which were) that took place there. ... Such proceedings were clearly ancillary to the Temple's main agenda and, as such, were conducted in the Women's Court and not in the Priests' court.[65]

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[64] Even the unique Torah reading event in Neh 8:1 occurred not in the temple, but in the square before the Water Gate. Whether this was a city-gate or a gate serving the temple precincts is unknown. Lee I. Levine, The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Year (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 33.

[65] Levine, 40.

Thus the temple practice in Jerusalem with its priesthood and sacrifices played little direct role in the development of the Christian use of the Old Testament.[66] Direct influences upon the early Christian use of the Hebrew scriptures must be sought elsewhere in Palestinian Judaism.

The Jewish Sects

The Jews in Palestine, including Jerusalem, were affected by Hellenistic and counter-Hellenistic cultural forces as well as by various political forces in the last two centuries before the Common Era. And the disturbances caused by these forces led, among other things, to the formation of multiple religious sects among the Jews.[67] Indeed, the very idea of sectarian division became a fundamental part of the description of Jewish culture. The *Acts of the Apostles* explicitly calls the Sadducees and Pharisees "sects" of the Jews (5:17; 15:5, 26:5).[68] Josephus, in the first century, enumerated the specific instances of Jewish sects by stating that there were three "philosophical sects" among the Jews: the Pharisees, the Saducees, and the Essenes (*J.W.*

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[66] Obviously the temple and the sacrifices performed there served as points of reflection for early Christians and a number of themes within Christian exegesis were developed as a result. Indeed, the temple itself remained a part of personal piety for early Christians in Jerusalem. The claim here is merely that the temple practices *per se*, did not significantly affect the Christian method of using Old Testament *testimonia.*

[67] Alfred Edersheim points out (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* [Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1883], 1.310) that the Pharisees and Sadducees were not sects strictly speaking because they did not involve separation from the unity of the Jewish community. They instead represented "mental directions" that had hardened into schools of thought. Nevertheless, ancient Judaism certainly considered them ai{resei~. Thus the issue is more of one of translation rather than categorization.

[68] Thus the first Christian movement was naturally categorized as a new sect by the Jewish authorities. In Acts 24:5 Paul is accused by the High Priest of being "a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (kinou`nta stavsei" pa`sin toi`" Æloudaivoi" toi`" kata; th;n oijkoumevnhn prwtostavthn te th`" tw`n Nazwraivwn aiJrevsew~". In Acts 28:22, the Jewish leaders in Rome had heard of Paul's "sect" because it was "everywhere spoken against" (gnwsto;n hJmi`n ejstin o{ti pantacou` ajntilevgetai). Being called "the sect of the Nazarenes" was akin to being called "Christians" which was a name also probably given to the new sect by Jewish authorities who wanted to discredit the new movement and isolate it from main stream Judaism.

2.8.2-14).[69] In the second century, Hegesippus and Justin both stated that there were seven sects among the Jews, which included these three.[70] And the Jerusalem Talmud claims there were 24 such sects.[71] These sects had tremendous effect upon the religious life of the Jews in Jerusalem and to a lesser degree in Palestine *extra* Jerusalem.

The Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes were the major sects among the Palestinian Jews in the first century C.E. and each had its own doctrines and practices drawn from the scriptures. They first appear as historical entities in Josephus's account of the Hasmoneans (*Ant.* 13.171, 288-298). But his description of these groups in that period appears to be in part a reflection of the first century C.E. situation with which Josephus was familiar. This makes it difficult to determine the precise origin of the sects, their status, and their relationships to one another in the earlier period. But a survey of the sects and the primary results of their use of the scriptures is required here.[72]

Sadducees

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[69] See also *Ant.* 2.8.2. In *Ant.* 12.5.9 he describes how these parties differ in relation to the question of human freedom and fate. He does this in order to compare the differences among the Jewish sects to the differences among the various Greek philosophical schools. In *Ant.* 18.1.6 he mentions a "fourth" sect, founded by Judas the Galilean, but regards them as an extreme faction of the Pharisees with an emphasis on political freedom and revolt. For the Pharisees emphasis on Jewish freedom and civic disobedience to the Romans, see *Ant.* 17.2.4.

[70] Hegesippus names the Essenes, Galileans, Hemerobaptists, Mabotey (Masbotheans), Samaritans, Sadducees, and Pharisees. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.22.7. Justin mentions the Baptists, Galilaeans, Genistae, Meristae, Hellenists, Sadducees, and Pharisees. Justin *2 Apol.* 80.4. Also note the mention of the "seven sects" in Eusebius *Hist. eccl.*4.22. Apparently, the idea of seven Jewish sects became a Christian *topos.* Thus these reports can not be taken particularly seriously. Clearly, some of these named "sects" are ill-informed patristic constructs designed to contrast the ideal unity of the Christian ecclesia with the fragmentation of those religious movements considered to be *extra ecclesiam*. Hippolytus, on the other hand, names three main sects as with Josephus, Hipp. *Haer.* 9.13.

[71] Feldman, 43.

[72] The primary sources for information on the Jewish sects are the New Testament, Josephus, the Rabbinic writings, and the Qumran scrolls. The following summary is taken from Edersheim, 1.310-335, Feldman, 33, 39-41, Schiffman, 72-81, Tcherikover, 253-265, and *The New Testament Milieu,* 901-918.

The Sadducees originated in the late third or early second century B.C.E. From the beginning, the Sadducees were closely related to the Jewish aristocracy.[73] This relationship with the upper class is to be derived from the fact that the Sadducees were largely made up of priestly families and their relatives.[74] And these families held most of the religious and local political power among the Jews in that early period. This aristocratic basis exposed the Sadducees to the strongest forces of Hellenization, which generally affected the urban wealthy more than any other class of people. And so Hellenization seems to have affected the Sadducees more than the other Jewish sects.

When the Romans gained control of Palestine in 63 B.C.E, the powerful Jewish families lost their independent political power. But the Sadducees continued to wield significant religious authority through their relationship with the high priesthood, the temple, and the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1; 5:17; 23:6-8). Josephus suggests that even with their connections with the social elite among the Jews they had great difficulty carrying out decisions on their own because they did not have the support of the people.[75] Finally, the central pillar of the strength of the Sadducees was removed with the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. and afterwards the party itself no longer appears in the pages of history.[76]

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[73]So, for example, Josephus states that "the Sadducees are able to persuade none but the rich." *Ant.* 13.298. Again in *Ant.* 18.17 he states: "this doctrine is received but by a few, yet by those still of the greatest dignity."

[74] The name "Sadducees" is stated to be derived from the name Zadok, the family name of the high priest of the Jerusalem temple in the Second temple period.

[75] "They are able to do almost nothing of themselves; for when they become magistrates, as they are unwillingly and by force sometimes obliged to be, they addict themselves to the notions of the Pharisees, because the multitude would not otherwise bear them." *Ant*. 18.17

[76] Interestingly, it was long assumed that the priesthood itself was essentially destroyed with the temple. Basically, the priests were a religious elite who were no longer able to perform the functions that gave them that status. Recently scholarship has reevaluated this presumption and it is now realized that in some places those of priestly descent continued to wield influence in Jewish religion and society even in the synagogues. Levine, 491-500.

In regard to their approach to the Scriptures, the Sadducees have been described in various ways. Some scholars have described them as the conservative party that kept to traditional Jewish scriptures and doctrines. Others have described them as the most Hellenized of the Jewish sects. What is known comes from statements in the New Testament and Josephus.

The Sadducees, according to Josephus, did not accept the oral traditions of the fathers as binding interpretations of the law.[77] Tcherikover suggested that this developed, not out of a religious conservatism, but as a result of their political struggles with the Pharisees, who were learned scholars in interpreting the law. He proposed that in order to not be completely beholden to the Pharisees, the Sadducees resorted to a claim that the law of Moses was clear in and of itself and required no authoritative interpretation.[78] Whether this be true or not, the Sadducees were so closely connected to the priestly aristocracy and the temple that they probably were much more concerned with the Torah than with the prophets, although it is incorrect to suggest that they rejected the prophets.[79]

As for concrete doctrines taught by the Sadducees, Josephus claims they denied any idea of fate and emphasized instead the freedom of a person so that "to enact what is good, or what is evil, is at men's own choice."[80] But the Sadducees were most infamous among Christian authors for their rejection of any idea of a resurrection of the dead.[81] Apparently they did not believe in the immortality of the soul and therefore did not believe in punishments and rewards for the individual soul after death. They also did not believe in angels and demons. It seems that of all the Jewish

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[77] "The Sadducees reject them (the observances of the fathers) and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers." *Ant.* 13.297.

[78] Tcherikover, 263-4.

[79] As by Origen in *Cels.* 1.49, where he groups the Sadducees with the Samaritans.

[80] *Jud.* 2.164.

[81] Mark 12:28; Acts 4:1; 23:8. As an example of the fathers, see Irrenaeus *Haer.* 4.5.2; Tertullian *Carn Chr.* 1; 2; 36. The second century fathers often used the word "Sadducees" as an epithet to describe their Marcionite and gnostic opponents because they also denied the future resurrection of the dead. As for Josephus' comments on this doctrine of the Sadducees see *Ant.* 18.2; *Jud.* 2.165.

sects, the Sadducees had the least influence upon the new Christian sect and its use of the Old Testament.

The Gospels do provide one explicit example of Jesus in an exegetical controversy with the Sadducees in regard to these doctrines. In Mark 12:18-27 and parallel accounts (Matt 22:23-33; Luke 20:27-40), the Sadducees approached Jesus with a question regarding the resurrection of the dead that had to do with seven brothers who, one at a time, marry a particular woman and die in turn leaving her to the next brother. This was a bold attempt to use the Torah to prove the absurdity of the idea of the resurrection. For in the text, the Sadducees explicitly quote the Law of Moses, which proscribed that if a man dies childless his brother should take up his brothers duty and beget a child with his brother's wife. Thus they used Deut 25:5-10 as a proof text for their negative doctrine, which denied the resurrection from the dead. Jesus responded to them twice over. He told them explicitly that they did not know the scriptures or the power of God.[82] And he quoted the Law of Moses back to them to demonstrate that even the Law teaches that the soul does not perish with physical death, for God is not a God of the dead but of the living (Exod 3:1-15). Apparently this implied the reality of the resurrection as well. For Jesus also stated that the Sadducees had misunderstood that in the resurrection those who rise will not marry but rather will be like the angels in heaven.

Pharisees

Josephus explicitly contrasted the Pharisees with the Sadducees many times and in many ways. The origin of the Pharisees can not be pinpointed in time although they appear in the pages of Josephus in the second century B.C.E. along with the Sadducees, with whom they are already in conflict. It is speculated that the Pharisees originated as a class of scribes who became more and more influential in their role as learned interpreters of the law. However this group of scribes originated, it seems at some point the Pharisees became a sect that influenced the people more directly than the Sadducees and gained popular support. Josephus states that they had "the

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[82] Ouj dia; tou`to plana`sqe mh; eijdovte" ta;" grafa;" mhde; th;n duvnamin tou` qeou`.

multitude on their side (*Ant*. 13.298; 18.17)." Yet, they remained a powerful scholarly elite.[83] And although they numbered perhaps only 6000, they were the most powerful authorities in the daily religious life of most Palestinian Jews in the first century C.E. But after the destruction of the temple and the Jewish revolts of the second century, the Pharisees too disappeared or were absorbed into the growing party of the Rabbis.

The Pharisees were known especially for their zeal for the traditions of the fathers, which acted as so many obligatory interpretations of the law. Paul explicitly described himself as once being a Pharisee abundantly zealous for the traditions of the fathers (perissotevrw" zhlwth;" uJpavrcwn tw`n patrikw`n mou paradovsewn)(Gal. 1:14). Thus the Pharisees were known as a group supremely concerned with the correct observance of important religious rites or the punctilious performance of minutiae depending on the point of view.[84] This emphasis upon a tradition outside of the Torah and its use in interpreting the Torah itself brought the Pharisees into conflict with the Sadducees on a regular basis. It is unclear how the Pharisees made use of the writings of the prophets, although Josephus, who was a Pharisee, clearly accepted them. We also have no knowledge as to whether the Pharisees may have used *testimonia* type collections of proof texts from the law or the prophets in order to prove their doctrines.

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[83] As a group of educated scholars, the Pharisees obviously were not themselves part of an uneducated lower class. Anthony J. Saldarini has discussed the social position of the Jewish sects in *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1988). In this book he states that the Pharisees and Sadducees were educated or literate "servants" or "retainers" of the ruling class. Urban von Wahlde has also demonstrated that the Pharisees had significant influence in major religious decisions and often cooperated with the high priests, who were empowered to make some particular religious decisions. See "The Relationships Between Pharisees and Chief Priests: Some Observations on the Texts in Matthew, John and Josephus", *NTS* 42 (1996): 506-522.

[84] Paul says he was quite proud of his zeal for the traditions before his conversion. Apparently with this zeal he had quite a career going as he explicitly points out, ÆHkouvsate ga;r th;n ejmh;n ajnastrofhvn pote ejn tw`/ ÆIoudai>smw`/, ... proevkopton ejn tw`/ ÆIoudai>smw`/ uJpe;r pollou;" sunhlikiwvta" ejn tw`/ gevnei mou. On the other hand, the Pharisees and lawyers suffer the harshest of Jesus' criticisms including burdening of the people with insufferable laws (Luke 11:46).

But in regard to concrete doctrines, the Pharisees are said by Josephus to have taught a doctrine balanced between divine providence and personal responsibility (*J.W.* 2.162-3).[85] In this matter, Josephus considered them most akin to the Stoics among the Greek philosophical schools (Vita 12). However, in the New Testament they are instead contrasted with the Sadducees because they taught there would be a resurrection from the dead, the eternity of the soul with rewards and punishments after the physical life, and they believed in angels and demons (Acts 23:8). In these things they were more closely related to the doctrines of early Christianity than the Sadducees.

The concern of the Pharisees for ritual purity did affect the early church at least by way of controversy. On many occasions, Jesus criticized the manner in which they burdened the people with rules and acted toward others with excessive pride in the practice of their religion as if despising those who were not as perfect in performing the law. On the other hand, the Pharisees are often portrayed in the Gospels as opposing Jesus for violations of a variety of their concerns, especially violations of rules regarding work on the Sabbath and various purity codes. In one case, the Pharisees directly approached Jesus and asked him why his disciples did not keep the Law as they did (Mark 7:1-13).[86] In response, Jesus rejected their entire approach of exegesis of the Law via the oral traditions of the elders by quoting a text of the prophets against them:

> 6 "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:
> 'This people honors Me with their lips,
> But their heart is far from Me.
> 7 And in vain they worship Me,
> Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'
> 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men— the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

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[85] "These ascribe all to fate [or providence], and to God, and yet allow, that to act what is right, or the contrary, is principally in the power of men, although fate does cooperate in every action."

[86] "Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders (kata; th;n paravdosin tw`n presbutevrwn), but eat with defiled hands?" See also Matt 15:1-20.

> [9] He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.
> [10] For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'
> [11] But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban" (that is, a gift to God)',
> [12] then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother,
> [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do." (Mk 7:6-13, citing Is. 29:13)

After the Resurrection, there was continuing struggle with the Pharisees as Paul's early personal history demonstrates. This was undoubtedly residual conflict from the struggles that began with Jesus himself.

There were also struggles with a Pharisaic party within the church itself. Luke states that some Jews from Jerusalem came to Antioch and demanded that Gentile converts be circumcised, in order to be saved (Acts 15:1). It is often unnoticed, however, that Luke states it was specifically former members of the sect of the Pharisees who were voicing this concern (Acts 15:5).[87] There is nothing specifically Pharisaic in the concern for the Law of Moses or for circumcision. But it seems particularly in line with Pharisaic doctrine and the role of the Pharisees within Palestinian Judaism for them to be the individuals who raised such a concern so forcefully even to the point of traveling to Antioch in order to set the church there straight. The Jerusalem-centered mindset and the conviction of self-importance in maintaining a pure religion, so important to the Pharisaic character, is obvious in this action.

It seems rather safe to conjecture that the demands of these former Pharisees were made on the basis of their own exegesis of the Law of Moses regarding the conversion of foreigners to Israel and its application to the early Christian context. This was not a controversy over the oral traditions of the elders, which Jesus appears to have strongly opposed. This was a more

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[87] ejxanevsthsan dev tine" tw`n ajpo; th`" aiJrevsew" tw`n Farisaivwn pepisteukovte" levgonte" o{ti dei` peritevmnein aujtou;" paraggevllein te threi`n to;n novmon Mwu>sevw". Perhaps the fact that a Pharisaical party within the early Jerusalem church was stirring up these questions is why Paul so earnestly countered this movement by emphasizing his former life as a blameless Pharisee (Gal 1:13-14; Phil 3:5-6).

fundamental concern for the Law of Moses, the Torah. Undoubtedly, this was carried out as an exegetical controversy although we are unable to view the contest in its entirety because we only have sources from the victorious side.[88] This whole matter was part of the enormously important Jewish Christianity versus Gentile Christianity controversy that occupied the attention of the church for several decades as Gentile converts multiplied in the Diaspora through the work of Paul and others.

In summary, the Pharisees played an important, if mostly an antagonistic, part in the formation of the early Christian use of the Old Testament. They affected both the earliest period through controversies with Jesus and the disciples and then again later as Gentiles started converting to the Christian sect. These controversies and their precise affect upon the Christian use of the Old Testament will be considered in full later.

Essenes

The Essenes are the third major sect mentioned and described by Josephus. He speaks about them more than the other two sects as if fascinated by them as he details their community behavior (*J.W.* 2.119-61; *Ant.* 18.18-22). According to him, they were a sect in the strict sense of the word. Although there were some Essenes who lived in the cities and lived a married family life, most separated from normal Jewish society and gathered as ascetic communities in the wilderness. They were exceedingly concerned about ritual purity. They had many rules in this regard and took part in regular washing rituals. It appears that generally only men resided at Qumran, although there are graves containing the remains of women. They did not keep servants. Importantly, they did not take part in the festivals and sacrifices of the temple. Perhaps this is why they play no explicit role in the New Testament whatsoever.

In terms of doctrines, according to Josephus, the Essenes believed in an immortal soul and in punishments and rewards after death for what was done in life. They tended to ascribe all things to fate and God's providence and yet were well known for their efforts at virtuous living through a

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[88] Although we are not told explicitly, the Pharisaical party from Jerusalem probably made use of texts such as Gen 17:10-14 combined with Exod 12:48.

rigorously ascetic life. Josephus, therefore, compared them to the Pythagoreans (*Ant.* 15.371). They were also very critical of the Pharisees and their use of the tradition of the elders in order to interpret the Torah.[89]

Unlike the other sects, however, we are in a much better position to go beyond Josephus in evaluating the Essenes' use of Jewish scriptures. This is because of a tremendous manuscript find in the late 1940's and early 1950's in which thousands of remnants of ancient documents were found in desert caves near Qumran. These documents, now known collectively as the Dead Sea Scrolls, originally belonged to a community of Essenes who resided there.[90] And over the last fifty years an enormous body of scholarship has been generated in the study of these documents.[91]

Scholars now believe that the Qumran community in particular formed in the mid-second century B.C.E. as a type of counter reaction to contemporary practices in the Jerusalem temple, possibly the loss of the High Priesthood from the family of Zadokites. This criticism of the

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[89] Shiffman, 249-252.

[90] Here and in the following I have assumed the identification of the Qumran community as part of the Essene sect. This is currently the dominant working theory of most scholars. See especially the conclusions of Todd S. Beall, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). But on the basis of the Halakhic letter (4QMMT), Shiffman states: "The dominant Essene hypothesis, if it is to be maintained at all, requires radical reorientation. Those holding this theory must now argue that the term "Essene" came to designate the originally Sadducean sectarians who had gone through a process of radicalization until they became a distinct sect." Schiffman, 89. Norman Golb, in 1985, suggested that it was unclear that the community at Qumran was even responsible for the deposit of manuscripts found in the vicinity of that place. He suggests the manuscripts were deposited in the first century C.E. as the result of growing Roman threats throughout Palestine. So he questions that Essenes or any local community were responsible for the manuscripts found. See Norman Golb, "Who Hid the Dead Sea Scrolls", BA June (1985), 68-83.

[91] B. Jongeling, *A Classified Bibliography of the Finds in the Desert of Judah 1958-1969* (Leiden: Brill, 1971). Florentino García Martinez and Donald W. Parry, *A Bibliography of the Finds in the Desert of Judah 1970-95: Arranged by Author with Citation and Subject Indexes* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996). Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls : Major Publications and Tools for Study : With an Addendum*, (Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1977). Michael Yizhar, B*ibliography of Hebrew publications on the Dead Sea scrolls, 1948-1964* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

contemporary temple practice dominated their religious outlook and practice. But it is their ancient library that is so important to modern scholars.

The scrolls from Qumran have helped scholars immensely in the attempt to understand the Jewish milieu in which Christianity took form. The scrolls have led to particular insights for scholars who work with a wide variety of New Testament topics. For example, there are many

works which investigate the relationship between the Essenes and John the Baptist.[92] These studies suggest that there was probably some contact between the Essenes and the Baptist, although the extent is still up for debate. Pauline[93] and Johannine[94] scholarship has been significantly

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[92] See VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 168-170 for a brief overview. James Charlesworth, gives a good overview of the contacts and divergences between John and the Essenes in "John the Baptizer, Jesus, and the Essenes" in *Caves of Enlightenment: Proceedings of the American Schools of Oriental Research Dead Sea Scrolls Jubilee Symposium (1947-1997)* (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 1998), 75-103. Hartmut Stegemann considers the question of John and the Essenes in depth and generally emphasizes the divergences in *The Library of Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 211-227.

[93] For a recent overview of the points at which the scrolls shed light upon Pauline scholarship see James D. G. Dunn, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls", in *Caves of Enlightenment: Proceedings of the American Schools of Oriental Research Dead Sea Scrolls Jubilee Symposium (1947-1997)* (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 1998), 105-127. There are many specific topics that have been treated. In particular, the scrolls have provided some insight even on one of Paul's central themes, salvation by faith without "works of the law". See M. Abegg, "Paul, Works of the Law, and MMT", *BAR* 20/6 (1994):52-55, 82. See a response to this article in J.D.G Dunn, "4QMMT and Galatians", *NTS* 43 (1997), 147-153, M. Bachmann, "4QMMT und Galterbrief, hrwth yc[m und ERGA NOMU", *ZNW* 89 (1998), 91-113. See also related comments in N.T. Wright, "Paul and Qumran", *BR* 14/5 (1998): 18-54, esp. 54. Finally, see the recent update given by M. Abegg "4QMMT, Paul, and the 'Works of the Law'", in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 203-216.

[94] For a recent overview see James H. Charlesworth, "Reinterpreting John: How the Dead Sea Scrolls Have Revolutionized Our Understanding of the Gospel of John*" Bible Review* 9 (1993): 18-25. See also James H. Charlesworth, ed., *John and Qumran* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972).

affected by the material in the scrolls. And the scrolls have shed light on many different aspects of Jesus and his teachings recorded in the Gospels.[95]

The use of the Jewish scriptures by the Essenes is also an area of intense investigation by scholars. The importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the evaluation of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament before the Common Era has already been discussed. But the scrolls also provide a window through which we can view in part the use of the Jewish scriptures on a day to day basis at least within this Jewish sect.

The Essenes had several different basic techniques of working with the Jewish scriptures. It was well known that in later periods the synagogue had the practice of reading a text of the Old Testament in Hebrew and then of repeating the text in translation so the audience could understand the text. This translation was called a *targum* and is often treated by scholars as an element of the liturgy of the synagogue. It was not known whether this practice was already in place among the Jews in the first century C.E. until several *targumim* documents were found at Qumran, one from Leviticus (4QtgLev) and two others from Job (11QtgJob; 4QtgJob). These documents show that Hebrew readings were translated into Aramaic for the contemporary Jewish audience. This practice was apparently used generally among the Jews whether among the sectarian Essenes or in the synagogue.

The Essenes also used a variety of methods in order to explain biblical texts. Many of these techniques were common in Judaism and probably arose in conjunction with the first efforts to provide commentary on parts of the Torah. For the most part they are simply solutions to the common problems that arise in any situation where authoritative texts require explanation. Shiffman categorizes these methods as Plain Sense Commentary, Retelling the Bible, Harmonizing Interpretation, and Halakhic Midrash.[96] The first category involves a basic simple explanation of

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[95] J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Qumran and the New Testament," in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters* (ed. E.J. Epp and G.W. MacRae; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 55-71. For an update on this article see Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran Cave 4," in *Escatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls,* (eds. Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 91-100.

[96] Shiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 215-222.

questions raised by the plain sense of the text of the law. Shiffman only gives one example of this type of commentary, the *Genesis Commentary*. The second category involves the actual retelling of parts of the law in the process of which new details or explanations are given, which answer questions raised by the text of the Torah. The Harmonizing Interpretation technique involves the actual generation of new material that is intended to reconcile different texts that seem in themselves to disagree in some detail. And finally, the Halakhic Midrash commentary method also attempts to reconcile passages that seem difficult to reconcile. This technique calls for the explanation of one text in light of others, which are assumed to speak to the same topic. Sometimes the other texts are quoted explicitly, sometimes they are not but are rather strung together as a running commentary. Interestingly, unlike the later Rabbis, the Essenes often made use of the texts of the Prophets to explain texts of the Torah that were in question. These techniques reflect the attempted solutions to problems that arose along with the conviction that the books of the Jewish scriptures were an authoritative group of inspired prophetic texts.

Another technique of biblical commentary unique to the Essenes is called *pesher* by the Essenes themselves.[97] Among the scrolls of Qumran, the major texts containing *pesher* are: the *Pesher Habakkuk*, *Pesher Nahum*, three manuscripts containing a *Pesher Psalms*, and six different manuscripts containing fragments of a *pesher* on Isaiah, two fragments of a *pesher* on Hosea, and a *Pesher Micah*. It is clear from just the recitation of the different manuscripts that this method of interpretation was a popular one at Qumran and, by inference, among the Essenes.

Scholars have long disagreed on the details of what the determinative characteristics of this type of commentary are.[98] But some common elements are: 1- the interpretations of biblical texts are often introduced by the phrase *pesher ha-davar*, "the interpretation of the matter is," or *pishro*, "its interpretation is"; 2 – the interpretation of biblical texts is completely contemporary. The original historical setting of the texts is completely ignored and the text is treated as if it spoke

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[97] The following overview is taken from Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 223-241. For an earlier but more in depth treatment see Maurya P. Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books* (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1979).

[98] See George Brooke, "Qumran Pesher: Towards the Redefinition of a Genre", *RevQ* 40 (1981): 483-503.

directly and entirely to the contemporary setting; 3 – this type of interpretation is applied mostly if not exclusively to the books of the Prophets. Although the quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament can not summarily be called *pesher*, the similarity between these Qumran documents and the New Testament quotations is notable.

The *pesher* texts listed above are all continuous *pesharim,* or continuous commentary, upon a given scriptural book. In addition to these, there are several thematic *pesharim* which contain a series of *pesher* that deal with a particular theme. These are very interesting texts because they are used to provide running textual interpretations of biblical texts with a common theme, like the high priest Melchizedek of Genesis 14, or the Messianic hopes of the Qumran sect.

The Essenes of the Qumran sect have thus left us with much valuable material in regard to evaluating the formation of the early Christian traditions of interpreting the Old Testament. I will consider and refer to these materials as this study progresses.

Summary

In summary, all three of these Jewish sects were largely limited to Palestinian Judaism and to a large degree they received much of their vigor from controversies and relationships that were connected with or related to the temple and its priestly class. It was the Pharisees' particular interest in interpreting the Torah that survived the destruction of the temple in the development of rabbinical Judaism. In the Diaspora, it is not completely clear what influence these sects played in the life of the Jews. There was undoubtedly some contact. In Matthew 23:13-15, Jesus claims that the Pharisees traveled far and wide to find converts. And Paul himself, before his conversion, was given permission to travel in order to influence religious discipline in the Jewish synagogues of Damascus (Acts 9:1). But on the whole, there is little mention of the sects outside of Palestine. And after the destruction of the temple and the Jewish revolts, the sects ceased to play a significant role in the life of Judaism.

The Synagogue and the Scriptures

Outside of Jerusalem, in Galilee and especially in the Diaspora, it was not the temple and the sects but rather the synagogue that played the dominant role in the social and religious life of the community. Scholarship on the synagogue has been very active in recent decades. But scholars continue to debate even some basic questions such as the origin of the synagogue.

The term "synagogue" (sunagwghv) generally means "a gathering" or a "collection." In the earliest references, it refers as often to the people who gather as to the facilities or building in which they gathered.[99] In the earliest references, the building itself was most often called a "proseuch;", or place of prayer. Apparently, this indicated one of the main purposes for which the people gathered there.

It was long assumed that the synagogue was established as a result of the return of Jewish exiles from Babylon where they had not been able to make use of the Jerusalem temple. But recent scholarship has now pointed out that this is an assumption without a basis in evidence. Griffiths proposed a different theory when he showed that the earliest actual references to the Jewish proseuch; are in Egypt in the third century B.C.E. He proposed that the synagogue actually developed in Hellenistic Egypt and spread from there.[100] From this basis L.L. Grabbe and P.V.M. Flesher reevaluated the textual and archeological evidence for the presence of the synagogue in Palestine before 70 C.E.[101] They both argue for a relatively late introduction of the synagogue into Palestine. Lee Levine recently has given a thorough review of the older and newer theories for the

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[99] Howard Clark Kee, "Defining the First-Century C.E. Synagogue: Problems and Progress" in *Evolution of the Synagogue: Problems and Progress* (eds. Howard Clark Kee and Lynn H. Cohick; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999) 11-20. See Luke 7:5 for one exception.

[100] Gwyn J.Griffiths, "Egypt and the Rise of the Synagogue." *JTS* 38 (1987): 1-15. Reprinted in *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaelogical Discovery* (eds. Dan Urman and Paul V.M. Flesher; New York: E.J. Brill, 1995) 3-16.

[101] Lester L.Grabbe, "Hellenistic Judaism" in *Judaism in Late Antiquity* (ed. Jacob Neusner, New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 17-26. Paul V.M. Flesher, "Palestinian Synagogues Before 70 C.E.: A Review of the Evidence" in *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaelogical Discovery* (eds. Dan Urman and Paul V.M. Flesher; New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 27-39.

origin of the synagogue and has proposed yet another theory by suggesting an early but very gradual development of the synagogue from the ancient functions of the city-gate in Near Eastern cities.[102]

But for all their disagreement regarding the earlier origin and state of the synagogue, scholars are much more unified about their description of the synagogue in the first century C.E. The archeological and textual evidence for the synagogue increases dramatically in the first century. The synagogue had spread far and wide in the Diaspora and was common in many cities in Galilee as evidenced by Jesus' activities in the Gospels. There is some disagreement on how common the synagogue was in Judea and in Jerusalem, although most scholars agree that there were at least several synagogues in Jerusalem, as implied in Acts 6:9, in order to serve those Diaspora Jews who traveled to Jerusalem.

The New Testament claims that within Palestine the Pharisees and Sadducees interfered in the operation of the synagogues.[103] It was once often supposed that the connection between the Pharisees and the synagogue was very close and that the Pharisees even controlled the synagogue. But scholars now generally agree that the Pharisees had no formal power over the synagogue but exercised influence as learned interpreters of Torah.[104] The synagogue was a local institution with local authorities. For the average Jew, even in Palestine, the synagogue was the weekly center of religious life and the daily center of many social functions.

Part of the weekly religious routine was the gathering at the synagogue on the Sabbath for religious services, which included the use of the scriptures. The liturgy of the synagogue is a topic

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[102] Levine, 19-41.

[103] In the New Testament, representatives of the Pharisees are frequently portrayed as following Jesus all around Palestine. In one text (Matt. 12:9-14; Mark. 3:1-6; Luke. 6:6-11) the Pharisees appear in the synagogue as observers of Jesus. In Acts 9, we learn that the high priest had authority to deputize Saul to go to the synagogues in Damascus and arrest those who were part of the new Christian sect.

[104] Richard A. Horsley, "Synagogues in Galilee and the Gospels" in *Evolution of the Synagogue* (eds. Howard Clark Kee and Lynn H. Cohick; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1999), 61-64. Also see Levine 37-8.

of scholarly investigation unto itself.[105] In later periods, the liturgy of the synagogue included readings from the Torah, public prayers, sermons, a recitation of some form of the *Shema*, and other elements. But the paucity of early sources available leave the details of liturgical practice of the first century synagogue quite undetermined in details.

Scholars are fairly certain, however, that the reading of the Torah was the most basic and fundamental element of the synagogue's service even from its origins.[106] In addition, the New Testament suggests that there was also a reading from the prophets.[107] This practice would give a liturgical context for the bipartite description of the scriptures as the "law and the prophets", which was common in the first century. It is also very important in regard to the Christian use of the scriptures since it was so dependent upon the use of the prophets, as we will see.

There are many questions associated with these readings from the law and prophets, many of which come to affect the Christian use of the Old Testament. First, there is a question of language. It is far from certain what language the reading of scriptures may have used. It is very probable that this liturgical practice of readings had much to do with the formation of the Septuagint in the Diaspora, especially in Egypt, where many of the local Jews most likely had very limited abilities in Hebrew. But was the reading of the scriptures first in Hebrew followed by a translation into a vernacular language or was the initial reading in Greek?

Even more importantly, what was the state of affairs in first century Palestine? According to Levine, scholars generally assume that the scriptures were read in Hebrew and then given an immediate Aramaic translation, called a *targum*, so that the congregation could understand. [108] As stated earlier, there are several examples of collections of *targumim* among the Qumran scrolls, one from Leviticus (4QtgLev) and two others from Job (11QtgJob; 4QtgJob). These scrolls contain examples of rather literal translation of biblical passages from Hebrew into Aramaic.[109] They

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[105] As an overview, see Levine 501-560

[106] See primary sources: Josephus *C. Ap.* 2.175; Philo *Embassy* 156; *Hypoth.* 7.12; Acts 15:21.

[107] Luke. 4:14-24; Acts 13:14-15. See Levine 142-143.

[108] Levine, 147-151. See the many references there.

[109] Schiffman, 214-215.

demonstrate that the *targum* method of translating passages of scripture was known and used among the Jews even before the first century and was not restricted to the synagogue. On the basis of this and other evidence, scholars generally believe that the first century synagogue made use of *targumim* and that it is likely that a particular synagogue could draw upon traditions of *targumim* in their own locality.

But the evidence from the New Testament also indicates that the synagogue of the first century also had a practice of sermons as part of the Sabbath liturgy. In Luke 4:20-21, Jesus spoke after he had read the reading from the prophet Isaiah. The same is seen in Acts 13:15 where Paul is invited to speak after the readings of the law and the prophets. These passages seem to indicate that even visitors could make comments upon the readings. Philo, in a couple of texts, also describes the practice of the sermon within the synagogue as he knew it in Alexandria. But he states that it was the "ruler", "leader", or "elder" who generally did this instruction.[110]. This practice in the synagogue relates to the Christian use of the scriptures primarily because it clearly gave the Christians their most obvious opportunity to deliver the Christian message about Jesus, within the setting of a public exposition of the Scriptures.

Summary

In summary, the synagogue was an active Jewish religious institution in first century C.E. Palestine. It made active use of the Jewish scriptures in its liturgy having regular readings from the

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[110] Philo *Hypoth.* 7.13; *Moses* 2.215. Philo also describes the practice of the Jewish sect, the Therapeutae, in Alexandria, which also met on the Sabbath and listened to sermons on the scriptures:

"But on the seventh day they all come together as if to meet in a sacred assembly, and they sit down in order according to their ages with all becoming gravity, keeping their hands inside their garments, having their right hand between their chest and their dress, and the left hand down by their side, close to their flank; and then the eldest of them who has the most profound learning in their doctrines, comes forward and speaks with steadfast look and with steadfast voice, with great powers of reasoning, and great prudence, not making an exhibition of his oratorical powers like the rhetoricians of old, or the sophists of the present day, but investigating with great pains, and explaining with minute accuracy the precise meaning of the laws, which sits, not indeed at the tips of their ears, but penetrates through their hearing into the soul, and remains there lastingly; and all the rest listen in silence to the praises which he bestows upon the law, showing their assent only by nods of the head, or the eager look of the eyes." *Contempl.* 30-31.

both the law and the prophets every Sabbath. Further, the synagogue had traditions of translation to draw upon as it read and explained those scriptures. In addition, the synagogue had a practice of having a sermon given after the readings, which explained or related to the text just read. First century Christianity was very engaged with the synagogue, as we will see, so it was clearly a very important institution in regard to the formation of the early Christian use of the Old Testament.

Jewish Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal Literature

There are several other specialized topics that belong to the Jewish context of Hebrew scriptures. One of these topics is the extra-canonical literature current among the Jews at the beginning of the Common Era. This literature is complex and of many types. But generally two major categories have been used to speak of the majority of this material, apocryphal works and the pseudepigraphal literature.

Apocrypha

Apocrypha is not a completely defined category. But it generally includes inter-testament literature included in the Septuagint but not part of the Hebrew canon or the New Testament canon.[111] Some of these works have been referred to above in discussing the Jewish canon. These works do not generally shed much light on Jewish usage of their scriptures beyond what has already been noted. Thus they play a limited role in early Christian literature and in the early Christian usage of the Old Testament.

Pseudepigrapha

The term *Pseudepigrapha* comes from the Greek *ta pseudepigrapha*, meaning "falsely ascribed." This term indicates the manner in which these books were distributed. They are Jewish and Christian works written mostly from around 200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E. but falsely attributed to

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[111] For a precise discussion of terminology, content, and dating see Peter W. Flint, "Noncanonical Writings in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Apocrypha, Other Previously Known Writings, Pseudepigrapha" in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 83-88.

biblical figures from Israel's distant past.[112] These works clearly had no formal role in the official religious rites and practices of the temple or the synagogue. That is, they were not part of the publicly read scriptures. But just as clearly they played a large role in the religious life of first century Judaism within and outside of Palestine. This category is a broad one and is made up of a number of sub-categories, each of which varies in its value in regard to the first century usage of the Jewish scriptures. Testaments and apocalyptic literature will be given consideration here.

Testaments

There are a variety of testamental works among the Jewish Pseudepigrapha. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* includes the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,* the *Testament of Job*, the *Testaments of the Three Patriarchs*, the *Testament of Moses*, *The Testament of Solomon*, and the *Testament of Adam.* In general, these works purport to be recordings of the last words and works of Old Testament figures. They are part of a traditional Jewish type of literature that is seen already in Genesis 49 and the book of Deuteronomy. Often times these last words are made up of blessings, curses, and prophecies of the future. In order to explain at the turn of the millennium why a testament of a patriarch had only recently come to light among the Jews, these works generally claim in some way to have been hidden away in the distant past and then to have recently been discovered or revealed.

Although these works are based upon Old Testament characters, they generally focus upon the task of creating extra-canonical material consisting of interesting stories rather than upon the task of interpreting scriptural texts. They themselves demonstrate a manner in which the Old Testament was used as a basis upon which to create new material. They also give important witness to the state of various Jewish beliefs and practices. But with a few exceptions, they are generally of limited value in demonstrating how particular scriptural texts were interpreted. The

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[112] See Flint, 88-89 and Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* xxiv-xxxiv for discussion of terminology and content.

most important of the testaments for a discussion of early Christianity is the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*[113], which will be referred to later.

Apocalyptic Literature

Another important sub-category among the Pseudepigrapha is the Jewish apocalyptic literature. The apocalypse is a category created by scholars and its precise definition is a continuing point of debate. In general, however, these works contain descriptions of a variety of divine revelations given to particular individuals. This amounts to a divine revealing of heavenly mysteries and thus often includes the motifs of heaven and hell, prophecy, and the *eschaton*, that is the end time. It is not clear exactly what parts of Palestinian society found these works attractive. They were definitely known and popular among the members of the Qumran community.[114] On the other hand, we have no evidence that this type of material was particularly popular among the more elite of society, such as the Pharisees and the Sadducees. But their influence among first century Christians is well documented. [115]

There are quite a few surviving apocalyptic books that purport to be revelations given to Old Testament figures in distant antiquity. But the most important by far are the works that make up the Enoch literature. There are three surviving works that make up the apocalyptic Enoch

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[113] For a summary of scholarship on the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* through 1977, see H. Dixon Slingerland, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical History of Research* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977). In summary, this book has been very difficult to classify as scholars have tried to determine whether the composite work as it survives was originally a Jewish work that was interpolated later by Christians or whether it was originally a Christian work. Scholarship has been unable to determine the answer to this question. After reviewing a century of scholarship, Slingerland concludes that it was not either / or, but rather was early enough to be Jewish and Christian at the same time. Although he does not point this out, this generally agrees with the treatment of the book as a Jewish Christian work by Daniélou. (*The Theology of Jewish Christianity,* 14-15).

[114] Flint, 96-100. Amazingly 12 different partial copies of 1 Enoch were discovered at Qumran.

[115] For a full discussion of the influence of the Enoch literature among early Christians see James C. Vanderkam and William Adler, eds., *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 33-101. The most common example given is that the book of Jude in the New Testament quotes Enoch explicitly with a text from this apocalyptic work (Jude 14-15, 1 Enoch 1:9).

literature. The oldest surviving book is the Ethiopic Apocalypse of Enoch, known as I Enoch. In its present form, I Enoch itself is a composite work of up to 9 different earlier works or redactional efforts. But the earliest parts seem to have been created as early as the late third century B.C.E.

One of the most influential parts of the work is an exegesis of Genesis 6:1-4. 1 Enoch 6 and 7 explains this text of the Law such that the "sons of God" of the Genesis text are the Watchers, particular angels of heaven, who looked down upon the earth and lusted for the "daughters of men." They descended to earth and took women to be their wives, at the same time teaching them the evil arts of magic. These women are said to have become pregnant by the fallen angels and to have given birth to giants, who brought evil and destruction to the earth. This is an example of a contemporary explanation of an Old Testament text that early Christians certainly were exposed to.[116]

These apocalyptic works then provide opportunity to view how some contemporaries of Jesus were explaining particular Old Testament texts. Because of the nature of these texts they seem to have affected early Christianity to the greatest degree precisely in those points where it confessed its own eschatological beliefs.

Jewish Messianism

The Messianic explanation of texts from the Old Testament is a Jewish use of the Old Testament scriptures that had a critical influence upon the development of the Christian *testimonia* tradition. The term "Messiah" comes from the Hebrew term מָשִׁיחַ which was translated Cristov" (Christos) in the LXX. In general, the term means "anointed" and is used in reference to Old Testament kings, prophets, and priests, who entered their offices through rites of anointing. This term was to become a proper name for Jesus of Nazareth among the earliest Christians. It has

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[116] See also Gabrielle Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998). Boccaccini postulates that this Enochic explanation of the origin of evil in Book of the Watchers, Aramaic Levi, and the Astronomical Book, was characteristic of a strand of middle or second temple Judaism that stood alongside Zadokite and Sapiential Judaism.

been often assumed that first century Jews were actively looking for "the Messiah." However, recent scholarship has shown that the Messianic teachings and hopes of first century Judaism were not as unambiguous as is generally supposed from the reading of the New Testament.

James Charlesworth has vigorously argued that common presuppositions regarding the Messiah that the Jews supposedly expected in the first century are largely incorrect. Contrary to the common idea that the Jews were unified in awaiting a political Messiah figure to deliver them from the Romans, he states that the evidence shows that there were many different and even conflicting expectations among the Jews. He concludes that "it is impossible to define, and difficult to describe the messianology of the early Jews."[117] But he claims that scholars have come to broad agreement on several facts:

1. The term "Messiah," as a technical term does not appear in the Hebrew scriptures.
2. The Hebrew scriptures do contain some important passages that were "implicitly messianic"
3. These scriptures were interpreted and explained as messianic by the Jews during the two centuries before the 70 C.E. destruction of the temple.
4. The noun, term, or title "the Messiah" is quite rare in the Jewish literature from 250 B.C.E to 200 C.E. but the term is used more frequently than usual in the period of the first century B.C.E. to 135 C.E.
5. Jesus' sayings reveal that his message was not about the coming of the Messiah. His preaching focused on the coming of the Kingdom of God.
6. Jesus never proclaimed himself to be the Messiah.
7. The disciples are never portrayed as asking Jesus for his views about the Messiah.
8. In early Judean Christianity, "Christ" is a proper name used for Jesus of Nazareth.[118]

The difficult question, Charlesworth suggests, is how did the ambiguous and unclear title "Christ" become an accepted proper name for Jesus already by the earliest epistles of Paul.[119] But here we are less interested in describing the overall expectations of the Jews and the development

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[117] James Charlesworth, "From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects" in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 31.

[118] Charlesworth, "From Messianology to Christology", 11-12.

[119] Paul doesn't even consider this as a matter of controversy. It is completely settled by his time. Thus Charlesworth suggests that this had to have happened by 40 C.E. at the latest.

of Christology than in discovering how the Jews used the Old Testament to describe or explain their messianic hopes. As items 2 and 3 above imply, the Hebrew scriptures played an important role in the development of the messianic idea among the Jews. And the Jewish messianic proof texts quickly became Christological proof texts in the Christian *testimonia* tradition.

J.J.M. Roberts agrees with the scholarly consensus that "not one of the thirty-nine occurrences of מָשִׁיחַ in the Hebrew canon refers to an expected figure of the future whose coming will coincide with the inauguration of an era of salvation."[120] Nevertheless, he states, passages of the Hebrew scriptures were the ground from which the messianic idea arose. Robert's states that there is a body of passages that were traditionally used as messianic passages by the Jews before the first century C.E.. He suggests that Num 24:17, Gen 49:10, Psalm 2, Psalm 110, Isaiah 8:23-9:6, 11:10, 32:1-8, Hos 3:5, Amos 9:11-12, Micah 5:1-5, Jer 23:5-8, 30:9, 33:14-26, Ezek. 17:22-24, 34:23-24, and 37:15-28 were all texts that played a part in Jewish messianic expectations, though the term "Messiah" doesn't appear in any of them. Roberts claims these passages contain prophetic proclamations regarding the continuation of the rule of the family of David and also later prophetic responses to the concerns of the Hebrew people in regard to the continuation of the royal line of David, the priestly line of Levi, and the prophets themselves in light of the destruction of the first temple and the loss of control of the land of Israel. These passages were interpreted in the final centuries B.C.E. as speaking about figures still expected to be sent by Yahweh. But the passages were understood differently by different people and thus a variety of messianic figures were discussed.[121]

These comments by Roberts are very important. Some scholars have almost equated the relative lack of interest in the term "Messiah" as a particular single eschatological figure in the earlier Jewish material with a lack of interest in the various Old Testament texts that were

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[120] J.J.M. Roberts, "The Old Testament's Contribution to Messianic Expectations" in *The Messiah*: *Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 39.

[121] Roberts, 41-51.

understood as promises for the future of Israel, some of which speak of figures to be sent by Yahweh to Israel. But this would be an incorrect assessment.

In spite of this variation in messianic ideas, G. Scholem proposed that there were two fundamental types of messianism within Judaism.[122] One he called a restorative messianism and the other a utopian messianism. The restorative seeks to bring back a glory that is believed to have once existed. It looks backward in time to find its present goal. Utoipian messianism constructs a goal of a future better than anything previously experienced. It is often apocalyptic in nature looking for the ideal future to be built by traveling through the great destruction of a present evil.

Schiffman has traced these basic types of messianism through the biblical and early Second Temple literature.[123] He claims that these two basic types of outlooks are based upon two different biblical traditions. The idea of reestablishment draws upon the biblical ideas of the Davidic kingdom and the strength of ancient Israel, while the utopian messianism draws upon the biblical ideas of the "Day of the Lord" and other related themes. Schiffman states that "in the Hebrew Scriptures these ideas were still separate. It was their combination in the Second Temple times that unleashed the powerful forces that eventually propelled the Jews to revolt against Rome and led the Christians to embrace a messianic figure."[124]

But this categorization of two fundamental types, while important, is too abstract to account for the usage of specific biblical texts in the expression of Jewish messianic hopes. What then were the specific messianic beliefs held at Qumran? Vanderkam gives a near consensus working theory of scholars when he states that in the Qumran scrolls "a whole series of texts reveals that they anticipated two messiahs – one from Israel or David, the other from the line of Aaron, that is, a

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[122] G. Scholem, "Toward an understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism," in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1971), 1-36. Also see S. Talmon, "Types of Messianic Expectation at the Turn of the Era," in *King, Cult, and Calendar in Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem, 1987), 202-224.

[123] L.H. Schiffman, "The Concept of the Messiah in Second Temple and Rabbinic Literature," *RevExp* 84 (1987): 235-246.

[124] Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 318.

priest."[125] The *locus classicus* for proving this theory is a text from the *Rule of the Congregation* which does speak of two Messiahs,

> They shall depart from none of the counsels of the Law to walk in the stubborness of their hearts, but shall be ruled by the primitive precepts in which the men of the Community were first instructed until there shall come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel (1QSa 9:9-12).

But other scholars have pointed out that such a description of messianism at Qumran is an oversimplification. Schiffman has made use of the proposal of G. Scholem described above and traced out all the messianic references in the scrolls from Qumran that were specific to the community there. He concludes that Scholem's two basic strands of messianism are observed at Qumran but are not able to be separated or distinguished in time. Thus he believes conflicting messianic ideas were active at Qumran at the same time, reflecting the general state of messianic ideas in the Judaism of the time.[126] James Charlesworth also criticizes the consensus and explicitly notes his agreement with Schiffman's conclusions.[127]

4 Basic Messianic Figures and Their Texts (John J. Collins)

John Collins has recently successfully introduced a model based upon his study of the Qumran texts and other second temple Jewish literature that is, on the one hand, more complex than Scholem's simplification, and on the other, more conservative than the growing consensus that chooses to emphasize a bewildering variety of Jewish messianic beliefs. He states that "there are reasons to believe that the pendulum of scholarly opinion has swung too far" in emphasizing the

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[125]James C. Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 177.

[126] L.H. Schiffman, "Messianic Figures", 129. See also Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 321-327.

[127] Charlesworth, "From Messianology to Christology: Problems and Prospects", 25. See on the same page also n.72. Charlesworth notes his agreement with Schiffman and claims their conclusions were arrived at independently.

diversity of Jewish messianic beliefs.[128] He argues that the variation in Jewish messianic expectations was in fact limited.

According to Collins, there were four basic types of Messianic figures that various Jewish groups expected: a Davidic royal king, a Levitical priest, a prophet, and a heavenly messiah. He documents in detail the occurrences of multiple themes and titles and yet reduces them to these four basic paradigms, which, he grants, were at times merged and combined, but as the exception.[129] As he documents the various messianic passages in the Jewish texts, he documents the passages which served as regular proof-texts for these themes. These basic groupings of texts are quite useful for my investigation.

The Davidic royal messiah figure was probably the most common and wide spread messianic paradigm by the first century. Collins claims that this Davidic hope had been dormant for a long time during the exilic and post exilic periods but that it had revived with the reestablishment of a native non-Davidic Jewish kingship in the Hasmonean period.[130] This figure was expected on the basis of promises given to David in the Old Testament that his royal line would continue forever. But the most common proof-texts associated with this messianic figure in the Qumran documents and other Jewish materials from this era were Is. 11:1-5 and Num. 24:17.

> **Is. 11:1-5:**
> A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
> and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
> 2 The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,

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[128]John J. Collins, The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature (Doubleday: New York, 1995), 4. Further, he claims that "it is not helpful, however, to restrict the discussion of messianism too narrowly to occurrences of מָשִׁיחַ or its translation equivalents (*christos*, *unctus*, etc.).", 11.

[129] Collins, 195. "The use of the term "messiah" or "anointed" with reference to different kinds of figures in the sources has led to some confusion in modern scholarship, as if these various figures were interchangeable aspects of a messiah concept or *Messiasbild.* Jewish expectations around the turn of the era were not for a generic "messiah," but for a royal messiah who would be the branch of David, or a priestly messiah or Aaron, or a prophet like Moses."

[130] Collins, 49.

the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
3 His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
5 Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

Num. 24:17:
I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near—
a star shall come out of Jacob,
and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;

These texts are closely related to the messianic title "Branch of David", which is encountered several times in the Qumran texts. And the "Branch of David" is interpreted in other places with other texts, which form a consistent tradition of interpretive material for the Davidic messiah figure:[131]

2 Sam 7:10-14: 10 And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, 11 from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. 12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings.

Ps 2:1-2: 1 Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and his anointed.

Amos 9:11: 11 On that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen, and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old.

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[131] Collins 53-67. Note Collins points out that this tradition of interpretation does not mean that each and every verse was interpreted always and only one way. He gives examples of some variations. But he aims to demonstrate that there was a messianic tradition of interpretation that was based upon this basic cluster of texts.

Gen 49:10: [10] The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. (NKJV)

Isa 9:6-7: [6] For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. [7] His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this

Jer 23:5: [5] The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. [6] In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Jer 33:15: [14] The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. [15] In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. [16] In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Ezek 17:22-24: [22] Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. [23] On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it.

Ezek 34:23-24: [23] I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. [24] And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

Ezek 37:24-28: [24] My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes. [25] They shall live in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, in which your ancestors lived; they and their children and their children's children shall live there forever; and my servant David shall be their prince forever. [26] I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will bless them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary among them forevermore. [27] My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [28] Then the nations shall know that I the LORD sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is among them forevermore.

From these texts, the Davidic figure is assigned numerous titles besides the Branch of David.[132] In addition, these texts set the character of this messiah as a powerful warlike figure, who will smite the nations, slay the wicked, and restore the Davidic dynasty.[133] He is thus associated with the final eschatological war.

This messianic figure is also referred to as the "son of God" due to the influence of 2 Sam. 7:14, given above.[134] Psalm 2:7-8 also contributed to this concept, "You are my son; today I have begotten you." 4Q174 from Qumran, which quotes Psalm 2:7 in relation to the Branch of David, shows that this concept had a place in Jewish messianic piety.

The second major figure type is the priestly messiah, referred to as the Messiah of Aaron. Collins believes this figure is based primarily upon the "anointed priest" texts of Leviticus (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:15). He finds the priestly messiah figure to be less clearly defined in the Qumran scrolls and yet to be a consistent part of the messianic expectations of Qumran. A number of texts subject the Davidic royal messiah to the priestly authority, which Collins takes as a reference to the priestly messiah figure. Other supporting texts used for the priestly messianic figure include:

> **Deut 33:10-11 (Moses' blessing of Levi):**
> 10They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, And Israel Your law. They shall put incense before You, And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar. 11Bless his substance, LORD, And accept the work of his hands; Strike the loins of those who rise against him, And of those who hate him, that they rise not again."

From this text, the eschatological priestly figure was at times assigned a teaching function. So 4Q541, for example, speaks of a priestly figure who "will atone for the children of his

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[132] At Qumran such "messianic" typology based upon biblical texts was quite active. For example the "Branch of David" is a title used in 4 different texts (4Q161 (4QpIsa[a]) 7-10 iii 22, 4Q174 (Florilegium) I 1-13, 4Q252 V 3-4, and 4 Q285 frg. 5 3-4). The "Prince of the Congregation" appears in five documents (1QSb V 20-29, CD VII 18-21, 4Q161 (4QpIsa[a]) 2-6 ii 19, *The War Scroll* V 1, and 4Q285). Vanderkam, "Messianism in the Scrolls", 216. The appearance of these titles in other non-Qumran documents indicates that this was part of a more general Jewish outlook.

[133] Collins, 67-68.

[134] Collins, 163-169.

generation, and he will be sent to all the children of his people. His word is like a word of heaven, and his teaching conforms to the will of God."[135]

Collins' third figure type, is the prophetic figure. The messianic prophet is based upon the promise made to Moses, in Deut 18:15: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet." Otherwise, this figure is even less well defined than the priestly messiah. Nevertheless, this figure too has a number of associated proof texts that define its general role:[136]

> **Mal 3:1:** [1]See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.
>
> **Mal 4:5:** [5] Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.
>
> **Isa 61:1:** The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; [2] to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;
>
> **Isa 52:7:** How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."
>
> **Dan 9:25:** [25] Know therefore and understand: from the time that the word went out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the time of an anointed prince, there shall be seven weeks.

From the Qumran texts which make use of these biblical proof-texts, Collins concluded that "Elijah is the messiah whom heaven and earth obey, in whose time the sick are healed and the dead are raised."[137] He also found that in some texts where the Scepter and Star of Balaam's prophecy in Num 24:17 are interpreted as two distinct figures, the Scepter is considered the royal Davidic

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[135] Collins, 88.

[136] Collins 116-123.

[137] Collins, 121.

messiah, but the Star is equated with a figure called the "Interpreter of the Law".[138] He suggests this might be the priestly figure but could quite possibly also be the eschatological prophet.

Collins' final figure is the heavenly messianic figure. This figure is largely based off of the "Son of Man" text in Daniel 7:13. There has been large disagreement among scholars on the origin of this concept. And Collins does not believe that Daniel originated the idea. But he does believe that Daniel served as the literary source for most of the heavenly messiah ideas in the late second temple period.[139] This phrase appears repeatedly in the New Testament, which Collins assumes is a reference to Daniel. It also appears in other texts, namely, the *Similitudes of Enoch* and *4 Ezra*, and is identified there as the messiah. This figure is a preexistent figure of heavenly origin. He is also assigned characteristics and actions that are usually reserved for the deity. And he plays an active role in the destruction of the wicked. This heavenly pre-existent figure was supported with reference to other types of texts referring to transcendent objects, such as personified Wisdom.

> **Prov 8:22 (Personified Wisdom):** The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

Collins states that this figure was the least defined of all the major four messianic types. And this type was sometimes mixed with the Davidic royal type to make a composite messiah, a heavenly royal figure who was to come as a savior.

Collins himself, therefore, is forced to admit the variation in Jewish messianic expectation and approaches the conclusions set forth by other scholars in terms of such variation. One gets the feeling that both are simply describing nearly the same thing from two different points of view, one emphasizing the variety and the other the limits to the variety. Collins' main point is that the Jewish messianic hopes stemmed from a core of scriptural passages, which, in turn, gave a set of

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[138] In a famous passage the Damascus document equates the "star" and "scepter" of Num. 24:17 with the "interpreter of the law" and the "prince of the congregation. $4QD^a$ VII 14-21. Vanderkam, "Messianism in the Scrolls", 228-229.

[139] Collins argues that the figure in Daniel should be identified with one of the archangels, probably Michael, 176.

central ideas, upon which a variety of interpretations were built. These core passages, as the source of these ideas, also tended to limit the overall variety of ideas and caused Jewish messianic figures to follow a few main trajectories. All in all, Collins' work is quite useful and I will make use of these groupings of passages in the following chapters. Collins' four messianic figures and their associated proof texts are summarized in Appendix 1.

4QTestimonia

One manuscript from Qumran needs to be mentioned explicitly here because of its direct importance to study of the Christian *testimonia* tradition. This manuscript was discovered in Cave 4 at Qumran and is called 4QTestimonia (4Q175). It was first published in 1956 by J.M. Allegro as a text containing Messianic proof texts used by the Qumran community. The text consists of five different short quotations. The first four come from the Torah: Deut 5:28-29, Deut 18:18-19, Num 24:15-17, and Deut 33:8-11. The last quotation begins with words from Josh. 6:26 but ends with a quotation from a non-scriptural text found elsewhere at Qumran, named 4QPssJosh. The quotations follow one after another as if making up one text, with no introductory formulae.

When it was first published, Allegro claimed that it was a collection of Messianic or eschatological proof texts stating that "there can be little doubt that we have in this document a group of *testimonia* of the type long ago proposed by Burkitt, Rendel Harris, and others to have existed in the early church."[140] Other scholars have generally followed this identification.[141] In 1957, Fitzmyer reviewed the claims of Allegro and concluded that while the collection may not be a collection of "messianic" *testimonia* it still appears to be a collection of *testimonia* proof texts.[142] The importance of this document is that it demonstrates conclusively that there was a practice of

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[140] Allegro, 186-187.

[141] John Lübbe, on the other hand, argued against the text being Messianic in "A Reinterpretation of 4Q Testimonia", *RevQ* 46 (1986): 187-198.

[142] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971), 83-85.

creating written collections of proof texts among the Jews. This will be discussed in more detail when I consider the first century and the early Christian proof texts.

Summary

In conclusion, the messianology of Judaism at the beginning of the Common Era, was not nearly so neatly developed as is often supposed. However, there were many long standing ideas about the future of Israel that drew upon traditional themes within the Hebrew scriptures. These Jewish hopes for the future were thus built upon and expressed by a body of texts from the Old Testament. These ideas were being expressed occasionally with the concept "Messiah" by the first century C.E. Ultimately many of these Jewish proof texts came to be used within the Christian *testimonia* tradition.

Genesis Interpretation and Speculation

Another area of intensive activity of biblical exposition at the beginning of the Common Era was the interpretation of the book of Genesis with its account of creation. There were many biblical characters in Genesis that were a part of the regular attempts to interpret the Torah.[143] But the biblical account of creation received special attention as part of the overall intellectual and religious interest in two related questions: the origin of the cosmos and of evil.

The Greek poets gave the earliest written western attempts to explain the origin of the cosmos. Plato attempted to give a more contemporary and intellectual explanation when he wrote his *Timaeus.* This dialogue exerted much influence throughout the Hellenistic period even on to the Renaissance among the philosophers, intellectuals, and a variety of religious groups. In the *Metaphysics,* Aristotle's accounts of Plato's doctrines suggested the derivation of all things from a pair of opposed first principles, the One and the Indefinite Dyad. Xenocrates, the second after Plato's nephew Speusippus to head the Platonic Old Academy, made this dualism more explicit in

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[143] For an overview of the roles of several biblical figures in Jewish and Christian exegesis see Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergren, eds., *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible* (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1998).

his discussion of the Monad and the Dyad. This traditional dualism was a part of Platonic metaphysics up to the time of Origen and affected a variety of religious expressions in late antiquity.[144]

For many the concern to explain the origin of the cosmos was driven more by a practical ethical and religious concern of how to explain the origin of evil. This very old syllogistic argument held sway among certain parties: if God is good and he is all-powerful then he would be able to stop evil. But there is evil in the world therefore either God is not good or he is not all-powerful.[145] This sort of thinking drove some religious elements to go beyond Platonic tradition and build very dualistic expressions of their religion in which (an) inferior divine figure(s) is (are) subordinated to a superior divine figure who transcends all evil. This occurred among some Jews also. But such Jewish speculation had to involve some type of interaction with the book of Genesis and its explanation of the origin of the world. This activity seems to have played a large role in the formation of Jewish gnosticism and later Christian gnosticism.

The book of Genesis was therefore an object of a significant amount of exegesis by gnostic groups. The nature of this exegesis has been characterized by Hans Jonas as "turning upside down" the traditional Jewish exegesis of the Old Testament texts.

> It is as if the Gnostics had been speaking thus to the Jews: You say your god is the creator of heaven and earth? He is—and so yours is an inferior and obtuse god. He proclaimed himself to be the highest and only god? Proof of his presumption and ignorance. He made man in a likeness? A sly and blundering imitation of the envied, dimly perceived superior Godhead. He forbade the fruit of the tree? Sure, to keep man in darkness about his true being. He later issued the law? The better to secure his stranglehold over him. He rules the universe? Look at cosmic fate, the *heimarmene* of the planets, and you know what to think of this sinister tyranny.

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[144] John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977).

[145] See Bigg, 28-29 for references. Tertullian sums up the situation in discussing Marcion: "Now (like many other persons now-a-days, especially those who have an heretical proclivity), while morbidly brooding over the question of the origin of evil, his perception became blunted by the very irregularity of his researches; ... inasmuch as he had already concluded from other arguments, which are satisfactory to every perverted mind, that God is the author of evil." *Marc.* 1.2.

> He chose you for is people? By becoming it, you have cast your lot with unenlightenment.[146]

One example of this gnostic exegesis is the treatment of the basic Jewish confession, the Shema.[147] Jewish monotheistic faith was expressed by the Shema: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." And in Isaiah Yahweh states: "There is no other God besides me" (Isa 45:6). Yahweh was thus confessed to be the only true God, the creator of heaven and earth as narrated in the early chapters of Genesis. In the second century C.E., the Ophite, and Sethian traditions intentionally turned this proclamation of the Jewish creator into an empty boast of ignorance as Ialdabaoth, the figure representing Yahweh of the Old Testament, does not even know about the gods above him and imagines himself to be the highest god.[148] This makes him a fool by the Old Testament's own standards (Ps. 14:1). The Creator is thus portrayed as stupid and ignorant.[149]

Jonas' characterization of gnostic exegesis is instructive but somewhat extreme. It really only suits a limited number of the "Gnostic" texts. Scholars now generally explain these texts as attempted explanation of the cosmos based on a Platonic exegesis of Genesis in light of the *Timaeus*. Whereas Philo of Alexandria identified the Biblical creator God with the supreme Monad presiding over the transcendent world of ideas, the Gnostics identified that God with the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus*, who consults a divine paradigm beyond him as the model for his creation. The result of this is the supposition that there must be a God presiding over the ideal realm who is superior to the God of Genesis. In addition, the biblical stress on the sole godhead of the creator,

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[146] Hans Jonas, "Response to G. Quispels's 'Gnosticism and the New Testament'" in *The Bible in Modern Scholarship: Papers Read at the 100th Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature* (NY: Abindon Press, 1965), 279-293.

[147] kuvrio" oJ QeoV" hJmw'n eiJ" ejstin. Deut. 6:4.

[148] *Ap. John* 13:9; *Trim. Prot.* 44:1; *Hyp. Arch.* 86:30. See also the Valentinian use of this verse Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.5.4.

[149] The heresiologists condemn the Sethian parody of this passage (Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.29.4; 1.30.6; Epiph. *Pan.* 25.2.3). The content of the Jewish Shema had become a standard element in Christian language, doctrine, and creed very early. See "eiJ" oJ Qeo"" Vernon H. Neufeld, *Earliest Christian Confessions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963).

who continually asserts his sole supremacy, would cause Platonist exegetes to raise serious questions about a god who boasts in his supremacy (e.g., "I am a jealous God" in Dt 5:9 and "I am God and there is none other beside me" in Is 45:5-7, 18, 21; 46:9), but is known not to be supreme. The implication is that this demiurge is a faulty being, vainly boastful and ignorant of the God beyond him.

Although most of our primary material for observing this type of exegesis comes from the Nag Hammadi Codices and dates generally after the first century C.E., several scholars are now proposing that what we observe in that period is simply the later development of a gnosticism that had already developed among the Jews in the last centuries B.C.E. Therefore this type of exegesis was contemporary with the initial formation of the Christian *testimonia* tradition. This will be kept in mind. But an initial evaluation seems to indicate that this anti-Jewish exegesis has little in common with the Christian *testimonia* tradition.

Philo and the Allegorical Interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures

Philo of Alexandria is an important Jewish figure from the city of Alexandria.[150] He was born ca. 20B.C. and was active in Alexandria through the middle of the first century. He was important in his own time and perhaps more important later in his influence on the early Christian fathers of Alexandria.

Philo was important in his own time in that he came from a rich and powerful family in Alexandria. His brother, Alexander, was one of the richest men of the first century Roman Empire. Personally, Philo was an important leader of the large Jewish community of Alexandria.[151] Thus Philo complained of his many burdens caused by his public life including the difficulty of being a

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[150] For Philonic bibliography see David T. Runia and Helena Maris Keizer, *Philo of Alexandria: an annotated biliography, 1987-1996: with addenda for 1937-1986 by David T. Runia; with the assistance of the H.M. Keizer and in collaboration with the International Philo Bibliography Project* (Boston: Leiden, 2000).

[151] In the first century, the Jewish population of Alexandria was quite large, probably in the hundreds of thousands, and dominated 2 of 7 main sections of the city.

political leader of the Jews and maintaining peaceful relations with the Roman authorities (*Spec.* 3.1-6. *Somn.* 2.81-92).

But it is not on account of his powerful family or his political leadership of the Alexandrian Jews that Philo is remembered by history or is important here. Philo was also an important intellectual in an intellectually powerful city. He is best known for his attempts to reconcile the Jewish religion, the scriptures in particular, with Greek philosophy in general, and current Alexandrian Middle Platonism specifically. He did this through philosophical and exegetical writings, although his philosophy is generally expressed in the course of his discussions of scriptural topics. His philosophic doctrines are thus of great interest in regard to their influence upon later Alexandrian Christian theologians such as Origen.[152]

The incipient Middle Platonism of contemporary Alexandria heavily influenced Philo's philosophy. Philo wanted to show to his contemporaries that Judaism was not incompatible with the Greek philosophical thought he so admired. This required some reconciliation of Jewish monotheistic belief and dedication to the Mosaic Law with the general religious and philosophic outlook of the Greeks. In order to accomplish this, Philo often spoke with the language and ideas of contemporary Greek philosophy. In this manner, Philo expressed his thoughts regarding the nature of God, his relation to the cosmos, the idea of the divine Logos. However, none of these important matters had any direct affect upon the initial formation of the Christian *testimonia* tradition. They will be important later when considering their influence upon Origen and his use of this Christian tradition.

As part of his effort to reconcile Jewish religion and Greek thought, Philo spent a great deal of effort explaining the Hebrew scriptures, particularly the Torah, in such a way as to remove or explain those features that seemed unacceptable. Therefore he is an important example of Jewish scriptural exegesis outside of Palestine at the beginning of the Common Era.

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[152] See for example Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1968), 7-26. Yet he states, "It is only in a peculiar sense that Philo is to be called a Philosopher."

Philo is best known in this area for his use of the allegorical method of explaining the Hebrew scriptures. Well before Plato the Greeks had come to consider Homer as an authoritative text. But the Homeric poems spoke of the gods and their actions in ways that were unacceptable to later intellectual Greeks. So even before Plato, scholars treated Homer as an authoritative text to be explained as if it were largely made up of allegories. Many Greek scholars, especially Stoic thinkers, used this method of exegesis by the first century. But it had its critics among the Greeks as well. Philo was trained in the allegorical method of textual exegesis and he also knew that it was not without criticism.[153] He realized that some critics considered the method subjective. Yet he judged that it was a necessary tool for the explanation of the Torah.

Philo was undoubtedly not the first Jewish scholar to make use of allegorical techniques when working with the Torah. Most Jews with a good education certainly were aware of the technique. St. Paul for example shows his familiarity with allegory and his use of it in Gal 4:27-31. But Philo is the main example of a Jewish scholar who used the method as a primary technique in explaining the Mosaic Law. The question that remains is whether Philo is a unique case or whether Philo is simply an example of standard Hellenistic Jewish practice. On the one hand, Philo appears to be rather unparalleled in that he is from such a unique family, in a unique city, with a unique intellectual heritage. On the other hand, Philo gives witness that others in Alexandria, such as the ascetic Jewish group called the Therapeutae also made use of allegory to study the scriptures.[154]

However important the allegorical method of explaining the scriptures was for Jewish scholars and was to become for later Christian use of the scriptures, it had limited influence in the context of the formation and initial trajectory of the Christian *testimonia*. Indeed, there is no evidence that Philo or his written works were influential outside of Alexandria. Therefore we will

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[153] Chadwick, 18.

[154] "And the interval between morning and evening is by them devoted wholly to meditation on and to practice of virtue, for they take up the sacred scriptures and philosophise concerning them, investigating the allegories of their national philosophy, since they look upon their literal expressions as symbols of some secret meaning of nature, intended to be conveyed in those figurative expressions." *Contempl.* 28.

have to return to Philo's influence upon Origen after we have traced the formation of the initial *testimonia* tradition.

Conclusion

The Jewish context, in which the earliest Christian exegetical traditions formed, was very complex. There was a wide variety in emphasis and concern among those who regularly made attempts to make use of and explain the Hebrew scriptures. In the first century there was no official canon. However, there was a body of books that were generally recognized as prophetic and authoritative. These books were used and interpreted differently by the many different institutions and sects among first century Judaism. In addition, there was a growing body of extra scriptural books that related to the scriptures and were also used regularly by some of the Jewish parties. And some of these works had an observable influence upon the Christian use of the scriptures. However, the most important and influential Jewish method of interpretation for the earliest Christian exegesis was the typological and messianic readings of a variety of specific passages and themes that led to a variety of "messianic" ideas being current in first century Judaism. This body of passages and the ideas associated with them were the core material from which the early Christians started to form their own traditions of exegesis of the Old Testament.

Chapter 3: The Jewish Beginning of the Christian *Testimonia* Tradition

The intent of this chapter is to propose a development of the Christian *testimonia* tradition in its earliest period. As stated earlier, the term *testimonia* is used here in the broadest sense of an exegetical tradition of proof-texts taken from the Jewish scriptures and used regularly in Christian preaching, writing, or catechesis. I am not concerned about the long-debated existence of a single specific *testimonia* book, which in turn served as a source for the New Testament. Nevertheless, I will be attempting to lay out a proposed development of a Christian tradition of Old Testament proof texts. I will argue that this broad and varied yet fundamental tradition of using such proof texts within the life of the early Christian communities, is reflected within the pages of the New Testament. Whether such a tradition was written, oral, or liturgical, or all of the above, and whether it could even be said to compose a single tradition as opposed to many traditions, are details that are unimportant to the argument of this dissertation.

State of Scholarship

Martin Albl has very recently written an overview of the history of modern scholarship dealing with the question of Christian *testimonia*.[155] It is unnecessary to reproduce this all of this information here, but a brief summary will be useful.

In 1889, Edwin Hatch, as part of his studies on the Septuagint, presented a hypothesis that first century Jews probably made use of the practice of creating scriptural extract collections which served a number of different uses, such as *apologiae*, material for moral instruction, texts for worship services. He did not argue specifically for collections of proof texts. He proposed that Christians took over this Jewish practice.

In 1913, Arthur Freiherr von Ungern-Sternberg proposed that early Christianity had formed a common pool of Old Testament texts that served especially in Christian efforts to express their beliefs "*de Christo*" and "*de Evangelio*". This formed a tradition of *Schriftbeweis* that was drawn

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[155] Martin C. Albl, "*And the Scripture Cannot Be Broken": The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1-65.

upon by Christian teachers and bishops. In 1915, Wilhelm Bousset built upon this model and stressed that it was a school setting in which this tradition formed and was passed down. He did not discuss the precise structure or social setting of these schools or their activities.

In 1916, J. Rendel Harris published his *Testimonies*, which served to shape the 20th century debate regarding Christian use of Old Testament proof texts. He proposed that there was a very early and specific Christian Testimony Book that was divided into sections, made use of titles, and often made use of a question / answer type of presentation of its material. Harris thought that this book was anti-Jewish in nature and presentation. He also proposed that it was developed by the apostle Matthew and circulated under his name and was identical with the *logia* of Matthew mentioned by Papias.[156] He believed that this book formed very early and served as a source for some New Testament books. Harris also posited several important criteria by which *testimonia* could be discerned from simple direct Old Testament quotations. While some of these criteria are still used by scholars, his main proposal of a single written testimony book that served as a source for the New Testament has largely been dismissed by later scholars. But this very proposal served to focus much of the later testimony debate upon whether or not such testimony collections existed and whether they affected the New Testament or not.

In 1952, C.H. Dodd presented his important work *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology.* Dodd started from the contemporary interest in the early Christian *kerygma*, the proclamation of certain historical events – the life, suffering and death, and resurrection of Jesus. This early Christian preaching made use of Old Testament texts as a means of expressing and defining the meaning of these historical events to others outside of the community of faith. Dodd believed the early *testimonia* could be classified into four categories: 1 – Apocalyptic-eschatological scriptures, 2 – Scriptures of the New Israel, 3 – Scriptures of the servant of the Lord and the Righteous Sufferer, 4 – Unclassified scriptures. He suggested that these texts made up a simplified "Bible of the early church." Thus he envisioned an early oral tradition,

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[156] Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.

which served as a "substructure for all Christian theology and contains already its chief regulative ideas."[157]

Since Dodd, a number of other studies have attempted to explore and refine the understanding of the early Christian use of *testimonia*, especially its Jewish exegetical setting. The discovery of Jewish *testimonia*-like documents among the Dead Sea Scrolls, mentioned earlier, also served as objective evidence of the Jewish practice of extracting collections of scriptural passages. Finally, in 1999, Martin Albl published his work *"And Scripture Cannot Be Broken" The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections.* Albl gives an important presentation of the Greco-Roman and Jewish practices of creating collections of literary extracts. From this and fresh New Testament analysis he presents an argument for the existence of early Christian *testimonia* collections.

Thus, for the most part, scholarship in the 20th century addressed the topic of the Christian *testimonia* tradition largely with a focus upon how early such collections existed and whether they affected the formation of the New Testament or not. The solution to these questions has been sought from one of two directions, either with an argument of probability based upon the context of Jewish and Greco-Roman literary practices or by observing explicit evidence from later periods and arguing backwards through time with comparison to the New Testament data.

In addition, there have been a few works that have focused almost entirely upon the use of *testimonia* by the Christian patristic authors. In 1961, Pierre Prigent wrote a work that focused upon Barnabas. Jean Daniélou discussed Christian *testimonia* in this way both in *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* and his *The Origins of Latin Christianity.* Finally, a recent and important study was published in 1987 by Oscar Skarsaune, which investigated Justin Martyr's use of *testimonia*. In this impressive work, Skarsaune compares the long and short quotations of the Old Testament in Justin Martyr and finds a pattern of quoting the LXX in Justin's long scriptural passages and of quoting non-LXX forms of passages in the short clusters of *testimonia* found in Justin. With this

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[157] Dodd, C.H. *According to the Scriptures: The sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952), 127.

documented pattern of scriptural usage, Skarsaune provides nearly conclusive proof to the argument that Justin had access to and used already existing *testimonia* collections but that these were also being supplemented by the use of direct quotation from the LXX.

In light of the above scholarly work, I suggest that probability lies very much in favor of the very early use of "collections" of scriptural proof texts in the earliest years of Christianity.[158] By "collections" I merely intend to indicate that certain Old Testament passages and groups of Old Testament passages became traditional proof texts used by Christians in the presentation, communication, and proof of their faith in Jesus, whom they believed to be Christ and Lord. They were part of a broad multiple threaded tradition based upon the more basic traditional belief in the inspired and prophetic nature of the Jewish scriptures and the additional conviction that they spoke of Jesus as the Christ. There were probably oral and written segments of this *testimonia* tradition. And although it was multifaceted, nevertheless this tradition was extremely important, even fundamental, in the early preaching, teaching, and confession of Christianity. Along with the repetition of details of Christ's own teaching and life, and the traditional Jewish confession of one God, it formed one of the fundamental continuities in the development of Christianity in its transition from the first to the second centuries. These traditional proof texts were used by the New Testament authors and continued to be propagated as collections independent of the New Testament well into the patristic period. They significantly affected the theological and social aspects of the church throughout this period.

The importance of the *testimonia* tradition must be taken into account, therefore, in any reconstruction of early Christianity. Some scholars such as Dominic Crossan in *The Birth of Christianity* and Paul M. van Buren in *According to the Scriptures: The Origins of the Gospel and of the Church's Old Testament* have done so to some degree. But a comprehensive attempt in this direction remains to be seen.[159] It is not my purpose here to provide such a comprehensive

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[158] So Albl's conclusion: "The burden of proof now lies with those who would deny that Christians used written scriptural collections beginning in NT times." Albl, 287.

[159] So Albl: "Scholarship has yet to grapple with the full implications of this intense oral and written scriptural activity in its historical reconstruction of earliest Christianity." Albl, 236.

reconstruction. Nor is it even necessary to the final subject of this dissertation, Origen. However, in the interest of providing a starting trajectory for the rest of this dissertation, I want to provide a rough description of how it appears to me that the *testimonia* played a role in the origins of Christianity. In order to do this, I will treat several different phases in the development of the *testimonia* tradition, which correspond with major transition points in the history of the church itself. The first two phases consist of the period from John the Baptist to the martyrdom of Stephen, a period marked primarily by the Jewish context of the growing Christian *testimonia* tradition.

Phase 1: The Baptist, Jesus, and the first Christological Proof-texts (27 – 30 C.E.)

Tracing the first Christian use of the Old Testament must begin with the question of Jesus' own usage of the Old Testament and its application to himself and his teaching. But the sources available to investigate such a question come from at best 15 years and at worst several decades after Jesus' death. Thus many of the conclusions drawn regarding this topic are directly affected by the presuppositions one makes in regard to interpreting the gospels and their overall reliability. But instead of analyzing details of individual accounts given in the gospels, I want to approach the question from another angle, Jesus within a social and theological context of quoted prophecy.

The gospels generally reflect the importance of the scriptures in the religious life of first-century Jews and Christians on many levels. We have seen how the Torah was the fundamental and central part of the scriptures for the Jews, and was related to the authority and importance of Moses. The prophets as a group distinct from the Law had also become a part of the Jewish scriptures, and were probably read publicly in the synagogues. Nevertheless, when Jewish authors such as Josephus and Philo are examined, one can still sense the centrality of Moses and the Law above all other authority.

When one turns to the New Testament the prophets seem to come much more to the forefront and the Mosaic law recedes.[160] The prophets are promoted as examples of suffering (Matt 5:12).

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[160] The noun "prophet" and the verb "prophesy" together occur over 150 times in the New Testament.

Jesus singles out the persecution of the prophets as a great crime of the Jewish nation (Matt 23:29-37; Luke 11:47-50; 1 Thess 2:15). They are objects of special honor among Christians (Matt 10:41). And most important, the prophets are said to have specifically foretold the coming of Christ and the gospel (Rom 1:2; Rom 3:21; 1 Pet 1:10; et al.).

Was this merely a conviction of the later church imposed upon Jesus by the gospel writers? If so, how did it become so wide spread among Christians so fast? If not, how did Jesus make use of the prophets? Scholars have shown that the title "Christ" did not have much of a context in contemporary Judaism. So how would Jesus have been understood in his Jewish context and why did the Christians so quickly pick up on this important title, "Christ"? These are very large questions without many easy answers. However, I believe there is one additional question that can help to answer all these others, a question not sufficiently considered by recent scholars: What of John the Baptist's use of the prophets especially in relation to Jesus?

One critical test case for considering this question is Isaiah 61. The pericope of Luke 4:14-30 states that Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth. Most of the prophetic text given by Luke as read by Jesus comes from Isa 61:1-2.[161] Most importantly, Jesus points to himself as a fulfillment of the prophet's words (Luke 4:21).[162] Thus Luke states that Jesus himself claimed to be the one anointed by God with the Spirit as described by the prophet. This pericope points the way for further investigation.

We have already seen that by the turn of the era Isa 61:1 had played a part in Jewish messianic thought for at least 150 years. 4Q521 from Qumran speaks of the messiah whom heaven and earth will obey and seems to describe his work in terms of Ps 146 and Isa 61:1-2. Collins argues that this Qumran text shows that the Jewish hope for the eschatological prophet, who had been equated with *Elias redivivus*, was supported with reference to Isa 61:1-2. If this is correct, then it was this pre-existing connection between Elijah and Isa 61:1 that Matt 11:7-15/Luke

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[161] Interestingly, the passage here is composite. The phrase "to let the oppressed go free" has been inserted into the Isa 61 text from Isa 58:6.

[162] h[rxato de; levgein pro;" aujtou;" o{ti Shvmeron peplhvrwtai hJ grafh; au{th ejn toi`" wjsi;n uJmw`n.

7:24-28 sought to undo by forcing the anointed figure of Isa 61:1 and the expected Elijah of Mal 4:5 to be two different contemporary figures, Jesus and John.[163] This would be a Christian modification of Jewish messianic tradition, but shows the importance that Isa 61 played in reference to Jesus.

The weight of this traditional Jewish text from Isaiah in relation to the question of Jesus' identity is further revealed by its connection to an important interaction between Jesus and John the Baptist, reported by Matthew and Luke. These gospels report that when John sent two disciples to ask whether Jesus was the expected one, the Christ, Jesus stated: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them" (Matt 11:5; Luke 7:22). John is portrayed as clearly expecting and being concerned about the appearance of a figure called the Christ. But he is not sure whether Jesus is the man. Jesus answers John with words taken from a scriptural text, Isa 61. And, of course, the beginning phrase of the prophetic text is:

> The spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me,
> Because the LORD has anointed Me
>
> Pneu`ma kurivou ejpÆ ejme;
> oul ei{neken e[crisevn me

The verb e[crisevn, "he has anointed" leads to the noun "the anointed one", or Christ. Thus Matthew and Luke assign Is 61:1 a critical role in identifying Jesus as the Christ, the one anointed by God with the Holy Spirit. Without explicitly stating it, Isaiah 61 is pointed to as a main source of the Christ title.

How one interprets this presentation of the Gospel authors depends upon the reader's presuppositions. Many critical scholars would dismiss this as late first century Gospel authors

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[163] Collins, 117-122. He also mentions a parallel in 11QMelchizedek where Is. 61:1 is used with Dan 9:25, and Isa 52:7 to refer to the heavenly messianic figure.

writing back into the Gospels an explanation of why they themselves called Jesus the Christ. But perhaps overly critical presuppositions here have led scholars astray.

I have already presented the findings of scholars in regard to the title "Christ" within contemporary Judaism. In summary, there is concern for a variety of figures seen as promised by God, especially a royal descendent of David, a priestly figure, an eschatological prophet figure, and a heavenly savior figure, and combinations of these ideas. These figures are at times referred to as "messiah" but these early Jewish texts are not interested in assigning this as a primary title. It has been concluded that in general the Jews were in fact not waiting for one particular "Christ" figure, or even a "christos" at all, despite the data in the Gospels. It has perplexed scholars as to how, then, Jesus is routinely known as "Jesus Christ" in the earliest writings of Paul. By Paul's time the title has gone well beyond being a mere title and become a traditional proper name. Thus Charlesworth states that certainly by 40 C.E. Jesus was called "the Christ" by Christians, if not earlier. Even this leaves less than 10 years for it to have become a proper name in Paul. In addition, scholars have not even been able to understand what made Christians pick up on this particular title so readily in the first place since it was not, apparently, very important in contemporary Judaism.[164] Thus scholarship has been unable to make good progress and has become snagged on these basic questions.

Consider instead the proposition that it was John the Baptist and his followers who introduced a focus upon the title "Christ", in part or even especially by his own use of Isaiah 61. Each of the four gospels agree in portraying John as fulfilling the prophecy of Is. 40:3: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (NRSV)" (Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23). With this quotation they indicate that John, who in the eyes of his own followers had been influenced by the prophetic mission of Elijah, in addition to baptizing, must have, in some way, prepared the people for the coming of Jesus, whom

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[164] In addition to the scholars already discussed in the previous chapter, consider Marinus de Jonge in *Jewish Eschatology, Early Christian Christology and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), where the question is again discussed at length in two chapters and no satisfactory answer is discovered.

the Gospels consider the Christ. This is indicated again in John 1:30: "This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'" (NRSV)

In addition, although John is not directly portrayed as using Isa 61:1, on several occasions the question of the "Christ" is associated with incidents involving John. In John 1:19-28, the priests, Levites, and Pharisees asked John if he himself is the Messiah, which he denies. Luke 3:15 portrays the same question being asked of John by the crowds, who receive the same answer. Why are different parties portrayed as asking John this same question, in two very different gospels? We have also already seen the incident reported in Matthew and Luke in regard to John inquiring about Jesus' identity and Jesus' reply with an extended reference to Is. 61:1. In addition, each of the gospels report John's statement that he baptizes with water but the one coming after him will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. It seems reasonable to understand this as an echo of the anointing with the Holy Spirit of Isaiah 61:1, probably in combination with other passages.

Yet another piece of evidence in regard to John the Baptist playing a major part in the first century Jewish expectation of a Christ figure, is seen in John 1:35-51. Here we are told that two of John's disciples in particular heard John's teaching that Jesus was the Lamb of God. This designation itself almost certainly includes a reference to Isa 53:7, indicating again John's interest in prophetic texts and his taking titles from them. But after John's comment, we read in John 1:40-41.: "One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed)." (NRSV) This relates an early event before Jesus' public ministry really began. But already a disciple of John is looking for the Christ. Indeed, some of John's own followers seem to have found the fulfillment of that expectation in him.[165]

Another interesting clue comes from Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees regarding who's son the Messiah was to be (Matt 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44). Jesus states that the scribes claimed the Messiah was to be David's son. Apparently this claim was made on the basis of current Jewish interpretation of royal messianic texts. The gospel text presumes that both Jesus and

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[165] Thus John is said to have been explicitly asked if he himself was this figure, Lk 3:15, Jn 1:20.

the scribes agreed that there was to be a coming Messiah, as if this were a point of agreement. The disagreement apparently was over the idea of the Messiah being a "son", whether the "Son of Man", "Son of God", or "Son of David." This implies that the discussion of the Messiah was introduced before the recorded events of Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees.

One other fascinating point in favor of this proposal comes from an entirely different direction. The early Christian creeds found in the New Testament, such as "Jesus is Lord", "Jesus is the Christ", or "Jesus is the Son of God", have long been a subject of scholarly interest. And in general scholarship has concluded that these confessions are very early and reflect Christian piety toward Jesus. But J.N.D Kelly, in his study entitled *Early Christian Creeds* also found that in the New Testament creeds of a trinitarian nature are "deeply impressed upon the thought of primitive Christianity." He continues immediately:

> Explicit Trinitarian creeds are few and far between; where they do occur, little can be built upon them. The two most commonly cited are St. Paul's prayer at the end of 2 Corinthians (13, 14), "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all", and the baptismal command put by St. Matthew (28, 19) into the mouth of the risen Lord, "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit". These are not the only examples, however, of such formulae in the New Testament, although preoccupation with them has sometimes caused others which, while perhaps less obvious, are in reality no less significant to be overlooked.[166]

Kelly then proceeds to explicitly quote 1 Cor 6:11, 1 Cor 12:4-5, 2 Cor 1:21, 1 Thess 5:18, Gal 3:11-14, and 1 Pet 1:2, and refers to many others. Kelly then concludes:

> The impression inevitably conveyed is that the conception of the threefold manifestation of the Godhead was embedded deeply in Christian thinking from the start, and provided a ready-to-hand mould in which the ideas of the apostolic writers took shape. If Trinitarian creeds are rare, the Trinitarian pattern which was to dominate all later creeds was already part and parcel of the Christian tradition of doctrine.[167]

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[166] J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (New York: David McKay Co. Inc, 1972), 22.

[167] Kelly, 23.

Interestingly, Kelly does not offer an explanation for the genesis of this trinitarian phenomenon although it is visible from the earliest to the latest parts of the New Testament. But turn attention again to Isa 61:1, imagining it to have played an important role in the Christian identification of Jesus. Note the text: "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me." The text naturally reads as naming three distinct parties, the Spirit, the Lord, and "me". If, in fact, the text served as a critical proof-text for early Christological reflection, it likely also had a major effect upon its conception of a threefold manifestation of God.

One point to be made against the suggestion of an early adoption of Is. 61:1 is that if the text was so important, why does it not show up in the early Pauline corpus? And it is true, that no explicit quotation to this text occurs there. Possibly, such an absence can be explained by claiming that by Paul's time this verse was a common unstated presupposition, correlating with the fact that the "Christ" had become a proper name for Jesus among most of Paul's audience. This seems much more likely than claiming it was unknown by Paul as a Christian proof-text. This claim receives some support by examining the Trinitarian texts presented by Kelly. Among those texts 2 Cor. 1:21 stands out as a possible allusion to the Isaiah text. Paul's text is trinitarian in form and contains a statement regarding God's anointing, just as in Isa 61:1.

> But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment. (NRSV)
>
> oJ de; bebaiw`n hJma`" su;n uJmi`n eij" Cristo;n kai; crivsa" hJma`" qeov",
> oJ kai; sfragisavmeno" hJma`" kai; dou;" to;n ajrrabw`na tou` pneuvmato"
> ejn tai`" kardivai" hJmw`n.

If this overall proposal is correct, the general Jewish expectation of the Christ, which many have seen portrayed in the New Testament, is actually a response to the teaching found among the Baptist and his followers, drawn from the Old Testament, about a figure who some interpreted as being John himself, and who was understood by the followers of Jesus to refer to Jesus. This figure was to be anointed with the Holy Spirit, and would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Certainly this preaching would have drawn upon earlier Jewish traditions and exegesis but John may have

provided a new focus upon a specific title, and special emphasis upon Isa 61:1-2.[168] Thus instead of a general Jewish expectation, it would have been a local Palestinian idea popular among small baptismal groups like John's prior to Jesus' public ministry. The gospels then simply focus upon localized events and a small part of the Jewish population and thereby give the impression of a more general event. One could think of it as a Christian intensification of a particular theme found in Jewish tradition. In this case, although drawn from Jewish tradition, the title "Christ" would be a special matter of Christian concern and would not be reflected in the same way in earlier sources such as from Qumran, or even be expected to be a commonplace in sources such as Josephus and Philo.

If the above is generally accurate, the use of Isaiah 61:1 to refer to Jesus would be one of the earliest Christian *testimonia*, inherited from Jewish tradition, emphasized by the baptists, and used later by the Jesus' disciples and later the church. It becomes very clear in this scenario how and why Jesus' followers would have come to use the title and then the name "Christ" so quickly, and subsequently be called "Christians". It also explains the continuing importance of this verse in Christian allusions to God's anointing of Jesus.[169] In addition, it helps explain the general importance of signs and miracles in the Christian identification of Jesus as the Christ.[170] And finally, it establishes the essential role of Old Testament proof texts in the early development and practice of the Christian faith.

Isa 61:1 is only one example of Old Testament prophecies that are applied to Jesus in the context of interaction with John. Other critical passages are those associated with Jesus' baptism. Again, all four Gospels report Jesus' baptism and agree that it is closely associated with the identity

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[168] No one should doubt the impact and influence that John had in his short ministry. Josephus says that Herod feared that John was so popular with the people that he might start a rebellion. (*Ant.* 18.116). He reports that this was the real reason that Herod put John to death. Even over 25 years later Apollo and others far away in Ephesus had heard of or even experienced John's baptism but had not heard of Christian baptism (Acts 18:24 – 19:7).

[169] So Acts 4:27 combines an allusion to Isaiah 61:1 with an explicit quote of the Messianic proof text from Psalm 2. Also see Acts 10:38.

[170] John 3:2; 10:38; 20:30; Acts 2:22; Rom 1:2.

of Jesus as the "Son of God." Matthew, Mark, Luke all state that at the event a voice was heard from heaven which said, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."[171] (Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34). All the gospels agree also in the close connection of Jesus in his baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Part of the complex of ideas associated with the royal Davidic messiah figure was that this king would be called God's son. This was based upon the texts of 2 Sam 7:10-14 and Ps 2:7. This idea is reflected in the heavenly address at Jesus' baptism reported in the gospels. Yet the text of Isaiah 42 seems to be equally important. The Hebrew of Isa 42:1 reads:

> Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
> I have put my spirit upon him.
>
> wyl;[; yjiWr yTit'n: yvip]n" ht;x]r; yriyjiB] /BAJm;t]a,
> yDib][' ÷he

The idea of the "servant" of God in this text connects Jesus' baptism with the Servant Song of Isa 42:1-7. Also notice the trinitarian content of the verse: the subject, the spirit, and the servant. Thus the connection between Jesus, John, the question of Jesus' identity, and a concept of multiplicity within God's salvific activity, is extremely close.

In my proposed reconstruction, John and his followers made use of this type of text in his proclamation of an expected biblical figure. These prophetic texts helped form a fundamental grouping of ideas related to that figure. These ideas included that the figure would be anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and thus receive the title "Christ", the title "Son of God", the performance of a baptism in which the Holy Spirit would be active, and finally, a trinitarian concept of the manifestation of God. Some interpreted this to be John himself. It seems equally reasonable to accept that very early Christian use of this type of Christological *testimonia*, later gave rise to language in prayer, liturgy, and teaching that implicitly contained this entire grouping of ideas. Only in much later controversies, however, would these implicit ideas be explicitly explored in

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[171] Su; ei\ oJ uiJov" mou oJ ajgaphtov", ejn soi; eujdovkhsa

theological and metaphysical terms. Only after several centuries would the church work out intellectually and with more precise technical terminology what they found to be contained in these well worn proof-texts.

On the other hand, many scholars would disagree with the above. For example, John Dominic Crossan generally denies that the Gospels report much historically reliable information regarding Jesus. He argues that the gospels largely reflect late first century Christian circumstances and were created in order to justify their contemporary tradition. In other words, he believes that the gospels create and present a Jesus that is almost entirely determined by late first century Christian faith rather than by any historical reality. But he does not deny the importance of the Hebrew scriptures for the presentation of Jesus. Instead, he believes that certain Old Testament prophetic texts were so powerful in the life and faith of the church, that the passion narratives were, in large part, created in order to present these prophetic texts in a narrative form which could be read as a fulfillment history. He calls this "prophecy historicized" as opposed to "history remembered." In regard to the passion narratives, he states,

> The individual units, general sequences, and overall frames of the passion-resurrection stories are so linked to prophetic fulfillment that the removal of such fulfillment leaves nothing but the barest facts, almost as in Josephus, Tacitus, or the Apostles' Creed. ... In other words, at all three narrative levels – surface, intermediate, and deep – biblical models and scriptural precedents have controlled the story to the point that without them nothing is left but the brutal fact of crucifixion itself.[172]

The question then becomes: Did the church's later faith in Jesus, who by the late 40's had long been viewed as the divine Son of God and the Christ, lead to a new justification of this faith by reference to Old Testament prophecy? And in turn, did this *testimonia* practice then lead to the necessity of creating the Gospels in order to explain and justify the use of these texts through

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[172] John D. Crossan, The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 520-521. Crossan considers the gospel "updated good news." So the gospels rewrite the Jesus of the late 20s as the Jesus of the 70s, 80s, and 90s. In them "the words and deeds of Jesus were updated to speak to new situations and problems, new communities and crises. They were adopted, they were adapted, they were invented, they were created.", 524.

narratives designed essentially to be fulfillment texts? Or, did the very early use of Christological texts such as these, motivated by the teaching of John and Jesus, lead to a series of related concepts, including the identity of Jesus as the Christ? I propose the latter is in line with the available historical evidence.

Phase 2: Jerusalem, The Way, and *Testimonia* (30 – 40 C.E.)

Luke 24:27 and 24:45[173] explicitly claim that it was Jesus, after his resurrection, who enabled the disciples to understand the scriptures that spoke about him. John 15:26 and 16:13 instead point to the Holy Spirit, who was to come after Jesus, as the one who would lead the disciples into all truth, including presumably, an understanding of the scriptures. Acts 1 points in this direction also with the report of the Holy Spirit coming upon the believers at Pentecost. These texts indicate an enhancement or deepening of understanding of the scriptures within the church in regard to Jesus' death and resurrection as events scripturally proper to the Christ. There is no mention here of becoming convinced that Jesus was the Christ. This was already well established in the minds of Jesus' followers. Instead the concern internal to the church was how Jesus' death, and the resurrection accorded with that conviction. Only after the resurrection did the disciples come to understand "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures."[174]

This is what I am calling the second phase in the development of the *testimonia* tradition, the "passion apologetic". This phase extends from the period of Jesus' death / resurrection to the time

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[173] Luke 24:27: "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures." Luke 24:45-48: "Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

[174] 1 Cor 15:3-4. "parevdwka ga;r uJmi`n ejn prwvtoi", o} kai; parevlabon, o{ti Cristo;" ajpevqanen uJpe;r tw`n aJmartiw`n hJmw`n kata; ta;" grafa;" kai; o{ti ejtavfh kai; o{ti ejghvgertai th`/ hJmevra/ th`/ trivth/ kata; ta;" grafa;""

of the first gentile controversies within the church, roughly from 30 to 40 C.E., although the end point is not a sharp break. It is a gradual transition into a third phase. During this second period the individuals who confessed belief in Jesus were not even called Christians. The entire movement was considered a new Jewish sect that some called "the Way." In order to emphasize the primitive nature of this period, I will use this term in the following analysis.

For the sake of accuracy, it should be noted that there were people who took part in Phase 1 and did not transition to Phase 2 for some time, if at all.[175] Whether such early "disciples" of Jesus or John fit the definition of "Christian" or not is unimportant here. But, the fact of their existence implies that there were groups of people who had heard of Jesus and even accepted that he was the Christ, but did not immediately learn about or perhaps did not accept the message about his death and resurrection. In some places, apparently, such disciples did not know about or accept baptism in Jesus' name.[176] The most important point for the matter at hand, is that in these cases, there was little or no known development in regard to the *testimonia* tradition. Even its use and existence among these groups is not supported by any existing evidence.

This second phase in the development of the *testimonia* tradition is dominated by the church in Jerusalem, the twelve, and the necessity to prove from the scriptures that the Christ had to die for our sins and be raised again. In this period, the conviction that Jesus was the Christ was already a presupposition within the church alongside the Jewish Shema. To those outside, the argument that Jesus is the Christ formed one part of a two pronged argument: 1 - that Jesus is the Christ, as testified by God who worked great signs through him, including the resurrection, and 2 – that the scriptures predicted that the Christ must suffer and die. In this period, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary, became Jesus Christ to those inside the church.

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[175] As late as 55 C.E. Paul met "some disciples" in Ephesus who had not received a Christian baptism but had only been baptized with "the baptism of John." They had not heard that there was a Holy Spirit. (ÆAllÆ oujdÆ eij pneu`ma a{gion e[stin hjkouvsamen.)

[176] In Acts 28:24-28, Apollo came to Ephesus apparently some time in the early to mid 50's and he also only knew about the baptism of John.

Events in this period occurred entirely within a Jewish context in which the Hebrew scriptures were accepted as authoritative by all sides.[177] This context helped fuel major development in the *testimonia* tradition as the initial Gospel message regarding Jesus' death and resurrection took form, was delivered, and received its initial reaction in Jerusalem. Here the Way was able to gain converts from the Jewish educated classes.[178] These people, well versed in the Law and Prophets, probably helped articulate and create the Scriptural proof-text tradition that supported the Christian message and confession concerning Jesus. What was not part of this period, the lack of which thus characterizes it in the main, was the Gentile question, which became so important after 40 C.E.

There are few materials from this period with which to work. We have the reports of Luke in Acts, which some scholars call into question. At the very least it is to be granted that Luke is very selective in his reporting regarding this period. We also have hints and glimpses of traditional themes, language, confessions, and even hymns in Paul's early material but only a few important explicit references to earlier historical events. We will have to make do with this.

Luke spends Acts 1 – Acts 8 reporting early events in Jerusalem. He portrays the Way as basically led by "the twelve." The generic group designator "the twelve" used frequently by Luke in Acts, by the Gospel writers, and by Paul, plus the obvious lack of detail reported regarding almost all the disciples shows two things: 1 – the "twelve" was a shorthand slogan for a group of individuals that the church of the later-first century knew very little about, a few major events excepted; 2 – the idea of the "twelve" was an extremely important symbol that represented the

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[177] There were significant differences in details upon this point between the Jews and the Samaritans but both accepted Moses and the Law as authoritative.

[178] Acts 6:7 states that "and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith." And Acts 15:5 mentions that there were believers "who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees."

legitimacy of the Christian message, well before Paul. [179] And so the church remembered that Jesus had chosen the twelve (Matt 10:1-4; Mark 3:7-12; Luke 6:12-16) and had appeared to them after his resurrection (1 Cor 15:5). Thus they were considered to be the primary eye-witnesses of this pivotal event.[180]

It is, therefore, significantly important to notice the role of *testimonia* texts used in the earliest reported sermons in Acts, which are generally given by one of the apostles.[181] The question at hand for us is whether Peter and the other eleven made use of, developed, or reformulated, such traditional *testimonia* as early as this period. Are the *testimonia* supported in the early church with apostolic authority? If so, the fundamental nature of *testimonia* passages in the development of

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[179] Harnack makes mention of this but questions whether the "twelve" ever actually held this position of authority even in Jerusalem. "There was a theory operative here regarding the special authority which the twelve enjoyed in the Church at Jerusalem, a theory which was spread by the early missionaries, including Paul, and sprang from the *a priori* consideration that the tradition about Christ, just because it grew up so quickly, must have been entrusted to eye-witnesses who were commissioned to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world, and who fulfilled that commission. The *a priori* character of this assumption is shewn by the fact that –with the exception of the reminiscences of an activity of Peter and John among the e]qnh, not sufficiently clear to us - the twelve, as a rule, are regarded as a college, to which the mission and the tradition are traced back. That such a theory, based on a dogmatic construction of history, could have at all arisen, proves that either the Gentile Churches never had a living relation to the twelve, or that they had very soon lost it in the rapid disappearance of Jewish Christianity, while they had been referred to the twelve since the beginning. But even in the communities which Paul had founded and for a long time guided, the remembrance of the controversies of the Apostolic age must have been very soon effaced, and the vacuum thus produced filled by a theory which directly traced back the *status quo*, of the Gentile Christian communities to a tradition of the twelve as its foundation." Harnack 1.161. However, Paul's letters would seem to confirm the role, at the very least for leading individuals such as Peter and John, who were called "acknowledged leaders (ajpo; de; tw`n dokouvntwn ei\naiv ti)" (NRSV) and "acknowledged pillars (oiJ dokou`nte" stu`loi ei\nai" (NRSV) (Gal 2:4-9).

[180] See Acts 1:8 –22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39-41; 13:31; 22:15; 23:11; 1 Cor 9:1; 1 Pet 5:1; 2 Pet 1:6.

[181] Some scholars dismiss these chapters of Acts as unreliable. And the common literary practice of historians in antiquity of placing created speeches into the mouth of important figures as if they were literal word for word quotations should make us pause and consider the literary style and precision of Luke's reports. Nevertheless, there are numerous primitive elements in the Lukan speeches that lend credence to them. And in light of what is seen in Paul only 25 years later there seems very little reason to argue against the general use of the Old Testament by the Jerusalem church as portrayed by Luke.

Christian theology and their contribution to continuity in the development of the church in the following decades will be strongly supported.

At first glance, Chapters 1 – 8 of Acts, which report the early Jerusalem activities of the apostles, are very interested in the prophets and the fulfillment of prophecy. Taken together they are mentioned 17 times in these chapters.[182] There are many themes and proof-text passages that appear in these chapters, which are key *testimonia* passages in later authors. Thus it is certain that the nature of early Christianity as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy was very important, at the least, to Luke. The problem for historians is the fact that Acts was written at least 40 years or so after the first events being reported. What is accurately reported and what reflects the nature of things in the last quarter of the first century? The data drawn from Acts will be compared in the next chapter to what is seen in Paul, who wrote only 25 years or so after the events. We can then draw at least some conclusions even if they are imprecise.

In Acts 2, Peter's speech makes use of Joel 3:1-5 as a prophetic text that was being fulfilled by the Spirit coming upon the disciples "in the last days". Peter then moves on from this text and argues that:

> Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law.

The claim that Jesus was a man attested "with deeds of power, wonders, and signs" ties into the passage from Joel just quoted, but also ties into messianic texts such as Isa 61:1. The emphasis upon the predestined plan of God is a reflection of the conviction that Jesus' death and resurrection fulfilled prophecy. It was commonly believed in antiquity that whatever is proclaimed beforehand and comes to pass was obviously preordained. So Peter is arguing: Jesus is a man of signs and thus he is the Christ. God has now raised him as foretold in the scriptures. Psalm 16 is next used as a proof-text of the resurrection, which refers to Jesus as God's "Faithful One". Then Psalm

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[182] In 2:16, 17, 18, 30, 3:18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 7:37, 42, 48, 52, 8:28, 30, and 34.

110:1[183] is used to prove that: 1 - the Christ had to ascend to God's throne, and 2 - the Jesus is to be called "Lord". So Peter concludes, "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

In Acts 3, Peter gives a speech to the crowd at Solomon's Portico after the healing of the beggar.[184] Peter starts his address by saying that "the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant (to;n pai`da) Jesus" (3:13). This is a clear allusion to the servant chapters from Isaiah, especially Isa 52:13 where God states his servant will be "glorified greatly."[185] Peter's speech then refers to Jesus when he tells the gathered crowd that they "rejected the Holy and Righteous One" and "killed the Author of life", "whom God raised from the dead" (3:15; 3:26). Again we hear the theme of rejection.[186]

The title oJ divkaio" (Righteous One) may be related to Isa 53:11: "The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities." It appears again in Acts 7:52, and 22:14.

The title of "Holy One" is more difficult to pinpoint. It is applied several times to Jesus. oJ a{gio" is used in Mark 1:24 / Luke 4:34 by the demon : "I know who you are, the Holy One of

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[183] The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.' Matt 22:44 claims Jesus himself had used this text to discuss the coming Christ figure by pointing out that David had called him "Lord."

[184] Albl studied this speech and concluded that Luke was making use of a *testimonia* source when he composed the text and inserted these quotations. Albl, 190-195.

[185] The Hebrew here is daom] Hb'gÉwÒ aC;nIwÒ µWry: yDib][' lyKic]y" hNEhi. In the LXX this is translated: jIdou; sunhvsei oJ pai`" mou kai; uJywqhvsetai kai; doxasqhvsetai sfovdra. See also Isa 55:5 where the prophet says to God's appointed witness: "he has glorified you."

[186] See George Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, immortality, and eternal life in intertestamental Judaism*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1972).

God."[187] It is also used in Acts 13:35 and in Rev. 3:7. And the title "Holy Servant" appears in Acts 4:27 and 30.

Traditional translation might lead to Psalm 16 as the source of the title. Ps 16:10b, a resurrection proof-text seen earlier, has traditionally been translated, "Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." (KJV; NIV; Vulgate: "*sanctum suum*"; Luther: "dein Heliger"). But the Hebrew here is dysij; , which is never translated in the LXX with a{gio". The LXX has: oujde; dwvsei" to;n o{siovn sou ijdei`n diafqoravn. It is to be noticed that in the Acts text the title oJ a{gio" appears in the same text as LXX quotations from Psalm 16:10, which contains o{sio" (Acts 2:25-28; 31; 13:35). This indicates that the Psalm was probably not the source of this title and that the traditional rendering is somewhat misleading. Thus it is unclear where the title derives from or even if it has one primary source.

The title to;n de; ajrchgo;n th`" zwh`" (the Founder of life) is also not obvious but has a specific biblical source. This Greek term originally referred to a founder of a Greek city and was a title of very high honor. In the LXX it is used frequently of a leader of the people.[188] But it is not used to refer to any messianic figures.[189] In Hebrews 2:10, Jesus is called the Founder of Salvation and in 12:2 the Founder and Perfecter of faith.[190] So it also appears to have been one of those regular titles applied to Jesus by first century Christians. But the object of Jesus' action of "Founding" was supplied by a variety of genitival phrases.

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[187] oi\dav se tiv" ei\, oJ a{gio" tou` qeou`

[188] As in Num 14:4: "So they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader, and go back to Egypt."

[189] Interestingly, in the LXX it occurs in one of the best known Jewish messianic passages in a different sense, Num 24:17: "a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the borderlands of Moab, and the territory of all the Shethites." Where the English has "it shall crush the borderlands of Moab", the Hebrew has ba;/m ytea}P' Åj'm;W, but the LXX has "kai; qrauvsei tou;" ajrchgou;" Mwab."

[190] Heb 2:10: to;n ajrchgo;n th`" swthriva". Heb 12:2: ajforw`nte" eij" to;n th`" pivstew" ajrchgo;n kai; teleiwth;n ÆIhsou`n.

But there is good reason to believe that "Founder" is not a precise translation of what was intended by this title. Instead, the title is likely a masculine translation of the original Hebrew title tyviare (Beginning), which was often translated by the feminine "hJ ajrch;".[191] This version of the title is used elsewhere of Jesus (Rev. 3:14, 21:6, 22:13). This translational discrepancy indicates that the original *testimonia* was the Hebrew or Aramaic and not the Greek, indicating its very early adoption as a Christological title. This title probably derives from the Christian use of Proverbs 8:22, which literally declares that "the Lord created me (as) the beginning of his way."[192] This verse applied to Jesus stated that he was the beginning of God's way.[193] The continuing Christian use of this verse led to the idea of Jesus as the "Beginning" of many different things. Eventually, with reflection upon Genesis 1:1, he was even called the Beginning of Creation (Rev. 3:14).

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[191] ajrch and ajrchgo;" are both common translations of tyviare in the LXX.

[192] MT: /Kr]D' tyviare ynIn:q; hw:hyÒ LXX: kuvrio" e[ktisevn me ajrch;n oJdw`n aujtou`. This verse had a long and important history in the following centuries of development of Christian theology. The Prologue of the Gospel of John starts with "ÆEn ajrch`/", which is often assumed to derive from Gen. 1:1. But it is historically more likely that the prologue reflects Gen. 1:1 as mediated by Pr. 8:22-23, where 23 states: "Ages ago I was set up, at the first" (pro; tou` aijw`no" ejqemelivwsevn me ejn ajrch`/). In addition, the Greek translated the Hebrew of 8:22 with e[ktisevn and thereby this verse played a crucial part in the controversies three centuries later at Nicea. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, vol. 1 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 186: "In fact if we concentrate on the entire body of Christian literature rather than on the apologetic corpus, it becomes evident that the basis for the fullest statement of the Christian doctrine of the divine in Christ as Logos was provided not by its obvious documentation in John 1:1-14 but by Proverbs 8:22-32 (LXX) – which may, for that matter, have been more prominent in the background of the Johannine prologue than theologians have recognized." Pelikan references the LXX but does not realize that the earliest use of the passage as a proof-text came even before the use of the Greek text.

[193] Is it possible that the phrase "his way" here could also be the source of the name used for the early Christian sect, "the Way" (Acts 9:2, 18:26, 19:9, 23, 22:4, 24:14, 22)?

Finally, Peter goes on to claim that Christ's death fulfilled the prophecies that the Christ must suffer. He proceeds to quote a composite text of Deut 18:15-20 and Lev 23:29 and shortly thereafter quotes Gen 22:18, an important text from the story of the sacrifice of Isaac.[194]

In Acts 4, Peter gives a brief speech to the "rulers, elders, and scribes" and the high priestly family. Here again is the fundamental phrase "whom God raised from the dead." But here the text picks up a new theme, the theme of rejection of Jesus by his own people. And he quotes Psalm 118:22:

> This Jesus is
> 'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;
> it has become the cornerstone.'

Interestingly, the main verb of the LXX Psalm, ajpedokivmasan ("they rejected") is replaced by ejxouqenhqei;" ("rejected with contempt"). Albl and Crossan follow Lindars[195] here in suggesting that this derives from a non-LXX translation of Isaiah 53:3, representing an alternate Palestinian translation in the first century.

Excursus: The early Christian conflation of Is. 53:3 and Ps. 118:22:

Let's consider this possibility in some detail as it provides a very good example of how in the very early Christian setting of Jerusalem, *testimonia* were created by the conflation of Hebrew / Aramaic Old Testament texts.

For Is. 53:3, the MT has:

vyai µyviyai ld'j}w" hz²b]nI

WNM,mi µynIP; rTes]m'k]W ylijo ['Wdywl t/baok]m'

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[194] Paul too applies this text as a messianic text, Gal 3:15.

[195] Barnabus Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961). John D. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 126-127. Albl, 270-271.

WhnUb]v'j} al¿wÒ hz²b]nI

The LXX translates:

ajlla; to; ei\do" aujtou` a[timon ejklei`pon para; pavnta" ajnqrwvpou",

a[nqrwpo" ejn plhgh`/ w]n kai; eijdw;" fevrein malakivan, o{ti ajpevstraptai to; provswpon

aujtou`, hjtimavsqh kai; oujk ejlogivsqh.

The NKJV translates:

He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (NKJV)

The Niphal form of hzÉB; is translated "despised" here in the first and last phrase. Ldej; is an adjective coming from ld'j;, meaning to "cease" or "come to an end". The phrase µyviyai ld'j}w" is traditionally translated "and he was rejected by men" and the entire phrase vyai µyviyai ld'j}w is literally, he was "a man rejected of men/by men". Thus considering only the first and last phrases of the text, we have:

He was despised and a man rejected by men.
...
He was despised and we held him of no account.

Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion used ejxoudenwvmenon for נִבְזֶה, "he was despised" in the final phrase where the LXX has hjtimavsqh. Symmachus also used ejxoudenwvmenon to translate נִבְזֶה in the first phrase. This would not have been unusual because ejxouqenovw otherwise regularly translates both the Qal and Niphal forms of hzÉB; in the LXX. But all of these translations as complete texts are later than the text of Acts.

All of this indicates that independent of the LXX, the Hebrew / Aramaic form of Is. 53:3 provided two key phrases to the Christian *testimonia* tradition:

1. He was "despised"
2. Jesus was a "man rejected by men"

Next, the "rejected by men" (חָדַל) theme of this text was apparently correlated to the "rejected by the builders" (sa'm;) theme of Ps. 118:22 in order to connect the two texts. The text of Psalm 118:22 is:

אֶבֶן מָאֲסוּ הַבּוֹנִים הָיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פִּנָּה׃

livqon, o}n ajpedokivmasan oiJ oijkodomou`nte", oulto" ejgenhvqh eij" kefalh;n gwniva"

The stone *which* the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

Is. 53:3 thus provided Christians a more generally applicable agent "men", while Ps 118:22 provided a more explicit and clearly applicable verb sa'm; or ajpedokivmavzw in its LXX and popular Christian Greek form. After this connection between texts was made, the idea of Jesus as despised (ejxoudenwvmenon) was closely connected to the "rejected" theme as in the text of Acts 4.[196]

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[196] Also note the other uses of ejxouqenovw in early Christian literature where "despised" or "treat with contempt" is much more suited than "rejected":

> Mark 9:12: How then is it written about the Son of Man, that he is to go through many sufferings and be despised?
>
> Luke 23:11: Even Herod with his soldiers despised him and mocked him.
>
> *Barn*. 7.9: They will see him in that day wearing the long scarlet robe about his flesh, and will say, 'Is this not he, whom we once crucified and despised and spat upon.'

Note, then, how Luke portrays Herod, a leader of the Jews, as fulfilling the prophecy of Is. 53:3 without quotation of the text. And Mark and Barnabus are explicitly set in the context of prophecy and eschatology.

Thus Luke's text of Acts 4:11: "the stone that was despised by you, the builders", is a composite non-LXX text containing themes from Psalm 118:22 and Is. 53:3. One text speaks of the rejected cornerstone. The other speaks of the despised and rejected servant of God.[197]

Later in the chapter, Peter and the others are released by the authorities and return to the rest of the church. Then the church prays in accordance with the theme of rejection using the words of Psalm 2:

> 'Why did the Gentiles rage,
> and the peoples imagine vain things?
> The kings of the earth took their stand,
> and the rulers have gathered together
> against the Lord and against his Messiah.'

Then the prayer is completed: "For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.[198] Here again we hear echoes of ideas from of the "anointed servant" of Is. 61:1 and Is. 42:1, plus the title "Holy One", all put together in one composite phrase.

In Acts 5, Luke relates that the Jewish authorities had "the apostles" arrested and put into prison. When they were questioned as to why they were still preaching about Jesus in Jerusalem when they were commanded not to, the apostles replied:

> We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.

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[197] The synoptic gospels and the *Gospel of Thomas* (Mark 12:1-12; Matt 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-19; *Gos. Thom.* 66) portray Jesus as having already used this theme of the rejected stone in his Parable of the Wicked Tenants. There Jesus makes use of Psalm 118 to elucidate his parable which portrays the evil tenants who reject and kill the son of the owner of the vineyard. The theme of the stone was very popular in later *testimonia*.

[198] ejpi; to;n a{gion pai`dav sou ÆIhsou`n o}n e[crisa".

In this brief speech, a couple of new themes appear. The theme of "the tree" is a very common one in later *testimonia*. Clearly this is related to Jesus' death on a cross which led the early Christians to search the Hebrew scriptures for related texts. The word "cross" is often replaced by "tree" or "wood" because of the influence of the Old Testament. One of the main proof-texts related to the cross is Deut 21:23: "anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse."[199]

The phrase: "God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins", is again loaded with Old Testament references. The reference to the right hand of God is from Ps. 110:1, as seen earlier. Jesus is again referred to as ajrchgo;n, which is the "Beginning" rather than "Leader". And here for the first time he is called "Savior", which could be taken from any number of Old Testament passages. The themes of sin and forgiveness are also tied closely with the servant chapters of Isaiah.

Finally in Acts 7, Stephen gives a speech before the high priest shortly before he is killed. This event is generally dated to be around 37 C.E., some 7 years after Jesus' death / resurrection and very near the time of Saul's conversion. This speech is different from the others in that it generally follows the literary style of Retelling the Bible, that is, Stephen retells the history of Israel in order to make his point. In doing so, Stephen makes reference to several proof-texts. Deut 18:15 is quoted again in 7:37. And in 7:52, we hear the now familiar theme of hardened hearers. Jesus is called "the Righteous One" again from Is. 53:11.[200] This speech is important, as Stephen is not one of the twelve. He is one of the Hellenists of Acts 6:1 who was selected to be one of the deacons of the Jerusalem church. But he had a reputation as an able defender of the faith, apparently able to skillfully debate from the scriptures about Jesus, including the use of traditional proof-texts.

There has been abundant debate about Stephen and his speech recorded in Acts. Part of this derives from the great uncertainty of who the "Hellenists" are in Acts 6:1. Some scholars feel that

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[199] kekathramevno" uJpo; qeou` pa`" kremavmeno" ejpi; xuvlou.

[200] See Acts 3:14 and 22:14.

Stephen might have been a Samaritan or at least have made use of Samaritan ideas.[201] At any rate, Stephen seems to be an example of the diversity within the early Jerusalem church. And his speech in part reflects a different style from that previously recorded by Luke. Yet his speech makes use of the same traditional *testimonia* themes indicating a common basis of faith even among diverse parties within the Way.

Conclusion

From the above brief analysis, the impression is given that, in the first years of the Way in Jerusalem, the apostles and others were active in the city preaching and teaching that Jesus was the Christ, who had to suffer and be raised, in the last days as predicted by the prophets. Further, these claims were proven with key proof-texts from the Hebrew scriptures that were used again and again. Some of these were drawn from traditional Jewish messianic tradition, while others were original Christian messianic texts. And further, ideas from these texts were combined in a variety of ways to create new composite proof texts, or titles, or other useful theological statements. The *testimonia* identified were taken largely from Deut 18 and 21, Gen 22, Isaiah, the Psalms, and Proverbs 8.[202] Luke states that this preaching caused the apostles to get into trouble with the leading Jewish authorities. And then, a new theme was applied, namely, resistance to the Christian message. This theme also soon had its own prophetic proof-texts, Psalm 118:22 and Isa 53:3.

Luke intends to show the reader that the Christian *testimonia* were closely connected to apostolic authority and were critical to the early presentation of the Gospel message. The earliest *testimonia,* coming from the first two periods of development, had almost entirely to do with the expected figure of the Christ. The proof-texts observed here pointed to his being anointed with

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[201] For discussion about Stephen and various theories about the "Hellenists" see: Nikolaus Walter, "Apostelgeseschichte 6.1 und die Anfänge der Urgemeinde in Jerusalem", *NTS* 29 (1983): 370-393; L.W. Barnard, "Saint Stephen and Early Alexandrian Christianity", *NTS* 7(1960): 31-45; R.J. Coggins, "The Samaritans and Acts", *NTS* 28 (1982): 423-434; "Zwischen Jesus und Paulus: Die "Hellenisten," die "Sieben" und Stephanus", *ZTK* 72 (1975): 151-206.

[202] We have seen Gen 22:2, 18; Deut 18:15-20, 21:23; Deut 18:19/Lev 23:29; Ps 2:7, 16:10, 110:1, 118:22; Prov 8:22; Isa 42:1, 53:3, 53:11, 55:4, 61:1; Joel 3:1-5.

God's Spirit, his working of miracles, his being God's Son, his predicted suffering, death, and resurrection, the resistance and rejection of the people, and spoken of as the Christ of the last days as well as the Christ as the Beginning. In only the few texts examined, quite a few titles for Jesus have been observed as being linked to the Christian use of these texts: Christ, Son, Holy One, Righteous One, and Beginning, The question as to whether this was a Lukan construct or whether it reflected actual historical events is another question. Without further sources, the historian can only attempt to correlate this information with other data.

There are a number of other pieces of data that support the general picture of what I have proposed thus far. First, *a priori* several considerations that support the general picture Luke paints. The entire Jewish and Jerusalem context of the second phase of Christian *testimonia* development required that any type of Jewish religious movement, such as the Christian sect, would have had to come to come to terms with the Jewish scriptures. It would have had to justify itself from the Law and the Prophets if it were to achieve any type of mainstream hearing. The Christian movement went beyond any minimum requirement and actually made the proof from the scriptures a central point in its presentation.

This same context makes it likely that early followers of Jesus, who wanted to talk to other Jews about their new faith, would have done so in places appropriate to such discussions, such as the temple and in the synagogues. Such activity, which included claims as fantastic as the Christian claims, would almost certainly have caused a reaction from those in authority as something disturbing to the *status quo*. The idea that Jesus and later his followers regularly taught in the temple in Jerusalem or in synagogues elsewhere in Palestine is deeply embedded in the New Testament. Jesus taught in the synagogues (Mark 1:21; 1:39; 6:2 etc.) and in the temple (Mark 14:49), as did Stephen (Acts 6:9), Paul (Acts 9:20; 13:5; 14f.; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8), and Apollo (Acts 18:26). The difficulties these men aroused for themselves with their fellow Jews by speaking the Gospel message in these places is a theme which is repeated often. It seems quite likely that in such a setting a Christian theme of rejection and appropriate proof-texts for it could have arisen.

Second, it has already been noted that scholars largely agree that many of the early Christian Christological claims had to have been in place by 40 C.E., at the latest. The early confessions of Jesus as Lord, Christ, and the Son of God, are well worn and traditional by the time that Paul began his ministry in the mid-40's. The "how" or "why" of this situation has thus far proven difficult for scholarship to explain other than the effect of Jesus himself upon his followers and the genuine conviction of the reality of his resurrection on the part of his disciples. But there must be more to it than that because the movement rapidly moved beyond just those who personally knew Jesus. It is impossible to explain the Christian movement simply as a personality cult when the main personality was no longer present in the movement. The missing element in this picture is given by the reconstruction above.

Early Christians based their initial message upon texts taken from a scripture accepted as authoritative by their fellow Jews. The early confessions of Jesus as Christ and Lord were taken from and based upon specific passages of the Old Testament also. This simply followed the analogy of the Shema, with which every Jew was familiar. The Shema was a confession based upon a particular passage of scripture (Deut 6:4). Yet at the same time it summarized many passages of Jewish scripture. This basic Jewish confession so infiltrated everyday Jewish thought and speech, that it was not only a presupposition of the Jewish and Christian religions, but subtle verbal allusions to it commonly occur even in the New Testament. We see precisely the same process with the early Christological confessions. They did not exist in a vacuum. They came into existence and were used in a vigorous atmosphere of scriptural reflection, debate, and oft-quoted proof-texts. Isa 61:1 showed that God was sending this Christ whom he had anointed. Ps 110 showed that he was to be called "Lord." Ps 2 showed that he was to be called God's Son. Scripture could then be searched and many other passages found that could be read as agreeing with these conclusions. This reference to scripture gave the confessions an immediate authority they otherwise could not have had. The Old Testament passages served as the catalyst to their acceptance. And by Paul's time, they were already Christian presuppositions, not generally requiring argument or explicit proof.

Finally, the writings of Paul, which are the earliest writings in the New Testament, contain earlier traditional elements which support the conclusions reached thus far. Scholars have spent much effort in identifying textual elements in Paul that are traditional already at his time, that is, their origins belong to a period earlier than Paul. Recently Albl has analyzed Paul's writings in this way in order to investigate the apostle's use of *testimonia* traditions. He pointed first to the famous Pauline passage regarding the Gospel tradition, 1 Cor 15:3-8:

> For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

In this text, Paul refers to the tradition he had received which included the articles that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures".[203] But what texts specifically does Paul mean by "according to the scriptures"? Or does he have specific texts in mind at all? Many different scholars have studied this question without firm resolution. However, the main point here is that Paul makes it clear that an appeal to the scriptures was an essential part of the presentation of the Gospel even before himself.

Any reconstruction of the early years of the Way must include the "scriptural" atmosphere in which it took place. The influence of the Hebrew scriptures, read with the particular presupposition of Jesus as the Christ, played an enormously important role in the development of the Christian message and primitive confessions. Most of the earliest *testimonia* were Christological in nature and a few still exhibit hints that they were originally used in a non-Greek language, indicating their very early adoption and use.

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[203] o{ti Cristo;" ajpevqanen uJpe;r tw`n aJmartiw`n hJmw`n kata; ta;" grafa;" kai; o{ti ejtavfh kai; o{ti ejghvgertai th`/ hJmevra/ th`/ trivth/ kata; ta;" grafa;".

In conclusion, the first Christian *testimonia* were taken from Jewish tradition and the preaching of the baptist sect, which taught about an expected figure called the Christ on the basis of Is. 61:1 and other texts. Other passages were used by John and Jesus and were later taken up by the church, which built upon and elucidated this basic theme of the identification of the Christ. As can be seen from the table in Appendix 2, early Christians drew their *testimonia* from all the major strands of Jewish messianic speculation, and created their own themes, applying them all to Jesus of Nazareth. The apostles and other early Christian leaders in Jerusalem made regular use of these *testimonia* texts as well as titles and themes derived from those passages as they presented the Christian message within a Jewish context. In this way, a core of traditional distinctively Christian material started to form, which was used and expanded in the following decades.

Chapter 4: The Gentiles and the Development of the *Testimonia* Tradition

The next phase in the *testimonia* tradition occurred during the expansion of the Christian movement into the Gentile world up to the first part of the second century. This period is complex but the sources are more numerous, including the books of the New Testament and some extra-canonical works, including the first of the patristic authors. The goal of this chapter is not to provide a detailed development of the *testimonia* tradition but again to outline a general trajectory and identify some main themes and proof-texts within those themes. The main goal is to identify continuity and development within the Christian *testimonia* tradition through the first century.

Acts informs us that it was the martyrdom of Stephen (ca. 37 C.E.) and following events that caused early members of the Way to disperse from Jerusalem and take their new faith abroad. In this way, Luke explains the spread of the early faith in Jesus to Samaria, further north to Antioch, and after the conversion of Saul, to the Greek speaking regions north of the Mediterranean. During this period the Way became the "church", and the matter of Gentile believers and associated questions became the most important issues among the believers themselves. In accordance with this setting, the *testimonia* tradition expanded with new themes and proof-texts in this period even as the older themes continued to develop.

The period from 37 – 45 C.E. represents the beginnings of the broadening of the makeup of the church, first through the conversion of non-Jerusalem Jews and Samaritans, and then primarily through the conversion of Gentiles. Early in this period, by his own testimony, Saul experienced his conversion from persecuting Pharisee to believing Christian and evangelizing apostle. And around 40 C.E. he traveled to Jerusalem and visited the disciples, seeing Peter and James, who were among the main leaders of the Way at that time (Gal 1:13-24). But this was still a period of development for Paul, not of significant contribution to the movement as a whole.

On the other hand, Luke reports that those who were dispersed from Jerusalem spread the message about Jesus in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (Acts 9:31). Samaria's most famous figure in early Christian history is that of the Simon the magician (Acts 8: 9 – 24), from whom later church writers tried to derive heresies of all kinds. Aside from this it is remarkable how little is actually

known about Samaritan Christianity. Philip is said to have preached the Gospel in the region and gained converts. Afterwards Peter and John were sent there to lay hands on the new believers that they might receive the gift of the Spirit (Acts 8: 14-17). And Peter spent additional time traveling in the region visiting believers (Acts 9:32). Little more is known from later authors. This in itself combined with Luke's statement that this was a period of peace and growth in the church (Acts 9:31) indicates that Samaritan conversions did not create much of a controversy within the new movement even though there was a traditional animosity between Jews and Samaritans.[204]

Thus we know nothing about what was required of such early Samaritan converts in regard to the temple cult and other Jewish laws that the Samaritans did not traditionally share with them. With no indication of controversy it seems reasonable to suggest that in some way these early converts accommodated some demands of the Jerusalem leaders although these would likely have been much less challenging than requiring Gentile converts to follow the Law. This peaceful accommodation of Samaritan converts may have set a precedent that led to similar expectations by some leaders of the Way for the Gentiles.[205]

Luke reports some activities of Peter in Acts 9:32-10:48, which specifically indicate that at this same time even the main leaders of the Way were struggling with the matter of conversion of Gentiles. Some questioned whether the Gentiles could even become members of the church. So

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[204] Scholars have disagreed on whether the Jews viewed the Samaritans as Gentiles or fellow Jews. See R.J. Coggins, "The Samaritans and Acts" *NTS* 28 (1982): 431–433, where a reasonable moderating view is presented. He points to Acts 9:31 where "Judea, Galilee, and Samaria" are all mentioned together. Yet in Luke 17, the Samaritan leper is called an ajllogenhv". In *Ant.* 9, 291. Josephus reports that when the Samaritans "see the Jews in prosperity, they pretend that they are changed, and allied to them, and call them kinsmen, as though they were derived from Joseph, and had by that means an original alliance with them: but when they see them falling into a low condition, they say they are no way related to them, and that the Jews have no right to expect any kindness or marks of kindred from them, but they declare that they are sojourners, that come from other countries (metoivcou~ ajlloeqnei`~ ajpofaivnousin aujtouv~)." As an example, in *Ant.* 12.261, he reports that in the mid 2nd century B.C.E. the Samaritans, fearing Antiochus Antiphone's anger against the Jews, portrayed themselves as "aliens from their nation and from their customs (hJmw`n kai; tw`/ gevnei kai; toi`~ e[qesin ajllotrivwn uJparcovntwn).

[205] See Raymond Brown, *The community of the beloved disciple* (New York : Paulist Press, 1979)

when Peter reported his personal experience of Gentile conversion and reception of the Holy Spirit, the Jerusalem church was surprised. But the evidence of their conversion was accepted.[206] The legitimization of Gentile conversion to faith in Jesus, however, led to many difficult practical questions. What was the place of the Gentiles in the Way as compared to Jews? And what was to be demanded of them in regard to the practice of Jewish law? These questions were not faced immediately or even most directly in Jerusalem, where diversity was experienced mostly in the form of believers coming from the various Jewish sects.[207] Gentile converts are not even recorded there. Instead, it was the work of Peter and others outside of Jerusalem and the development of Gentile converts in Antioch that forced the matter to center of attention. Unfortunately, we have almost no material from the beginning of the Gentile conversions. Only with Luke's record of the beginning of Paul's career ca. 45 C.E. and then especially with Paul's epistles commencing in the early 50's C.E. do we have materials to observe the state of the *testimonia* tradition.

The questions related to the Gentiles made up one of the largest problems to be dealt with by the early church. It was becoming an issue already when Barnabas fetched Paul from Tarsus and brought him to Antioch in the early 40's. It was exacerbated and brought to a head with Paul and Barnabas' first journey and the new geographic spread of the church and the corresponding increasing number of Gentile conversions. Paul and Barnabas's travels from Seleucia to Cyprus on the island from Salamis, to Paphos, and then to various cities in the northeast region of the Mediterranean, are recounted in Acts 13 – 14. As throughout his career, Paul first approached the

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[206] Acts 11:18: "They were silenced. And they praised God, saying, 'Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.'"

[207] Here I will use the term in its widest possible sense and include the Hebrew (-speaking) group as well as the Hellenist (Greek-speaking) group, whose identities continue to be uncertain to scholars.

synagogues and the local Jews (Acts 13:5; 14-15, 43; 14:1). There he found Jews and God-fearers.[208] This latter group provided many of the first Gentile converts.

Uncertainty over the requirements to be made of such converts and a zeal for the Law among the early Jerusalem Christians led to clashes between the leaders of the Way and the Antioch ambassadors. Representatives from Jerusalem, and from James in particular, came to Antioch and tried to enforce Jewish dietary laws upon the Jewish Christians of Antioch, leading to a separation of Greek Christian and Jewish Christian. Even Peter and Barnabas followed this practice briefly. Paul reacted vigorously against this particular disturbance (Gal 2:11–21) and continued to argue against the division of Jewish and Gentile Christians throughout his career demonstrating that the issue remained a lively one for quite some time.

Even more serious trouble was caused in Antioch when representatives from Jerusalem claimed that Gentile Christians had to be circumcised in order to be Christian at all (Acts 15:1; Gal. 5:6, 11; 6:15). This was equivalent to saying that the Gentiles had to become full Jews in order to be saved, for whoever is circumcised "is obliged to obey the entire law" (Gal. 5:3). According to Luke, this disturbance led to the a council of Christian leaders, held in Jerusalem in ca. 48 C.E., which dealt with this matter and declared that Gentiles were not obliged to keep the whole Jewish law. But the matter continued to be one of controversy and of practical concern for the individual churches. Thus Paul continued to address the issue of the relationship between the law and the Christian gospel, between Jewish believer and Gentile believer.

It was with this burden of controversy that the church spread out into the Greek world. It was these circumstances that helped fuel further reflection upon the Old Testament to help answer these difficult questions. Thus one could *a priori* expect that the *testimonia* tradition would expand

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[208] These God-fearers were probably Gentiles who had some level of commitment to Judaism, many of whom attended the synagogues (Acts 13:16, 26). The entire controversy and evidence in regard to the god-fearers was reviewed recently in detail by Feldman, 342-382. Feldman concludes that there was a broad category of people he terms Jewish "sympathizers". But he claims that the term "god-fearers" was not a technical term *per se*. This group of people consisted of a spectrum of people, including those who followed only a few Jewish practices, such as the ever-popular Sabaath, all the way to those who were more serious and attended the synagogues and yet remained just short of actually converting and becoming full Jews.

in breadth during this period, as more themes related to this controversy were added to the exegetical tradition. One would also expect that the older themes, would receive additional proof texts as embellishments to the tradition, but that these older traditional themes would be well established and taken for granted by this time if they were not subjects of controversy within the movement. Finally, as more and more of this reflection on the scriptures was done by Christians who were unfamiliar with Hebrew, one might expect that certain proof texts would be accepted and arguments made that depended upon a certain translation or text that differed from the original Hebrew / Aramaic text.

Thus far I have made use of some material from the Gospels and from Acts to discern the broad outline and a few specific themes of the earliest Christian *testimonia*. More extensive and dissimilar material is found in Paul's epistles, which probably began with 1 Thessalonians in ca. 52 C.E. In these epistles we have new and independent material that actually originated before Acts and the Gospels were written. These materials give us the earliest look at the use of the Old Testament in the Christian churches. These materials reflect specifically the work of Paul himself, and not necessarily the more general state of the tradition at this time, especially as it existed in Jerusalem. So care must be taken in the analysis of the evidence. Nevertheless, this early material is extremely valuable. There are two main questions that are of interest in turning to Paul's epistles, 1 – what is the evidence of Paul's direct use of earlier *testimonia* collections in his works, and 2 – what is the evidence for development of the *testimonia* tradition in Paul's works.

Martin Albl has summarized current views of scholars regarding Paul's use of *testimonia* collections and done his own analysis of Paul's epistles in regard to the use of proof-texts traditional before Paul's time.[209] He specifically identifies Rom. 4:25, 11:25-27, and 15:12 as examples of Paul's use of earlier Christian and Jewish messianic traditions. He also points to the collection of texts presented by Paul in Rom 3:10-18. This collection of extracts is drawn from the LXX. The entire collection appears as a complete text after Ps.13:3 in the oldest manuscripts of the LXX and several of the versions. Albl suggests rather convincingly that this collection was a

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[209] Albl, 159-79.

Jewish composition that had gained some position of authority and that Paul made use of this pre-Christian text.[210] He thus concludes that Paul knew and made use of Jewish and early Christian *testimonia* collections.

Albl's conclusions and comments are based upon examination of explicit usage of *testimonia* texts. But equal support for his conclusions can be reached by considering Paul's presuppositions or the traditions with which he works. His contemporary concerns, such as the Gentile question, are clearly addressed from a point of view based upon a tradition already firmly placed. The monotheistic confession of the Shema and reverence for the authority of the Hebrew scriptures, for example, are part of his Jewish presuppositions. But by the time of Paul's first missionary journey, the first layer of Christian tradition has already been firmly laid and is observable in his letters. The confessions of Jesus as Lord and Christ are already presuppositions and commonplaces of Christian terminology, piety, and liturgical life. Paul builds upon this previously established foundation.

Development of the Earlier *testimonia* themes

The Exalted and Glorified Jesus as Lord:

The gospels and Acts report that Psalm 110:1 was used as an early proof that Jesus was much more than David's son.[211] Psalm 110:1 reads:

> The LORD says to my lord, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool."

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[210] Albl, 171-177. He rejects the alternative suggestion that Paul's own composition of the LXX Psalms became so influential that it was incorporated into the LXX manuscripts as a new Psalm. He cites the fact that this text of Paul is very rarely quoted in later ecclesiastical authors indicating its relative lack of importance to later Christians, as well as the general tendency seen in the Hebrew Psalms and in the Qumran Psalm texts to compose new Psalms out of already existing Psalms.

[211] For a comprehensive review of the use of Psalm 110 in early Christianity, see David M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville/NewYork: Abingdon, 1973). See also Albl's summary in Albl, 216-236.

According to Acts and the Gospels, this text was used to prove that Jesus was made Lord by Yahweh Himself, having seated Jesus at his right hand. And Jesus was to be confessed as Lord on this basis (Matt 22:41; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34). This theme of exaltation or glorification and the idea of sitting at the right hand of God could be supported and expanded by reference to other texts such as Isa 52:13 or Isa 55:5, which speak of God glorifying and exalting his Servant. But it is Psalm 110:1 specifically that provided particular details of the exaltation: Jesus at the right hand of God, the title Lord addressed to Jesus, and Jesus reigning until his enemies have been subjected to him. The gospels report that Jesus interpreted the text as referring to himself. Acts gives examples of very early use of the text in Jerusalem. But does examination of earlier Christian materials correlate with this suggestion? If this text was so important in the earliest days of Christianity, why doesn't Paul explicitly quote it as authoritative The probable answer is that it has already become so commonplace by Paul's time that it is a presupposition and hardly needs repetition. In addition, it has been so mixed with themes from other texts that it is more commonly used in conflation and in altered form than as a direct quotation. This can be demonstrated from several examples.

Scholars have often pointed out that in Philippians 2 Paul quotes an early Christian hymn that reflects early Christian liturgical language and most likely predates Paul. This hymn uses the themes of Christ's heavenly divine pre-existence, his coming in the form of a man, his obedient death on the cross, and his exaltation by God. The verb "exalted" is uJperuvywsen here and probably reflects the וְגָבַהּ מְאֹד of God's Servant in Is. 52:13.[212] The hymn concludes with a combination of ideas taken from the zealously monotheistic text of Is. 45:23 and from the contemporary Christian practice of confessing that Jesus is Christ and Lord (o{ti kuvrio" Ælhsou`"

[212] And this use correlates with the occurrence observed earlier, in a speech of Peter, given in Acts 3.

Cristo;"), most likely as a prerequisite for baptism.[213] Although not explicitly used, Psalm 110:1 appears to lend the hymn its interpretive framework. Yet there is no explicit quotation of Psalm 110:1.

The influence of Psalm 110:1 can be explicitly observed in Paul's epistles in several verbal allusions. First, the theme in the hymn of Philippians 2 that God "highly exalted" Jesus, most likely was intended to include the ideas of Jesus being raised from the dead and his subsequent ascension to the right hand of God. That these ideas go together can be seen from Rom. 8:34, where they are explicitly stated in sequence using phraseology from Psalm 110.

> It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God (o}" kaiv ejstin ejn dexia`/ tou` qeou`), who indeed intercedes for us.

The reference to the "right hand of God" comes from the influence of Psalm 110:1.[214] Paul makes another allusion to the Psalm in 1 Cor 15:25-27:

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[213] This hymn is early enough to still reflect the importance of confessing Jesus as the Christ. This reflects a Jewish milieu, perhaps the synagogues. It was much less meaningful to a Gentile to confess Jesus as "the Christ" and thus it quickly became for all practical purposes a proper name rather than a descriptive title, even already in Paul's letters.

On the other hand, Paul reflects the early liturgical practice of confessing Jesus as "Lord" in several places. In Rom. 10:9, Paul states that whoever confess "Jesus is Lord" and believes that God has raised him from the dead, will be saved. In 1 Cor 12:3 Paul mentions the confession of Jesus as Lord apparently in a worship setting. In 2 Cor 4:5, Paul states that they do not preach themselves but Jesus, Christ and Lord (ajlla; ÆIhsou`n Cristo;n kuvrion) and he states that the Colossians had received Christ Jesus, the Lord (parelavbete to;n Cristo;n ÆIhsou`n to;n kuvrion).

[214] Albl points out that whenever the Psalm is explicitly quoted by Christian authors "at my right hand" follows the LXX form of "ejk dexiw`n" whereas most of the allusions, as here, use ejn dexia"/, th/" dexia"/, or ejpi; dexia"/.

> [25] For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. [26] The last enemy to be destroyed is death. [27] For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet."

In verse 25, the idea of all enemies being placed under Christ comes from Psalm 110, except that the phrase "as a footstool for your feet" in Psalm 110 (Heb: òyl,gÒr'l] µdoh; Gk: uJpopovdion tw`n podw`n sou) has been altered here to "under his feet (uJpo; tou;" povda" aujtou)." Why was this done? The purpose of the alteration was that the text would connect together with Psalm 8:6 (7), to which Paul turns next. In verse 1 Cor 15:27 Paul continues his argument: "For 'God has put all things in subjection under his feet (uJpo; tou;" povda" aujtou`')." The phraseology "all things under his feet" is definitely from Psalm 8:6 (7).

> You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.

But the LXX version of this text, which reads uJpokavtw tw`n podw`n aujtou`, has also been changed in order to match the altered text of Psalm 110:1.[215] So both texts have both been altered in order to bring them together into a combination *testimonium*. Or, more likely, the original source for the Paul's *testimonium* was not the LXX but the Hebrew which was translated in a way to bring the texts together.

That this combination wasn't simply created for the context of 1 Cor 15 is shown by the fact that Eph 1:22 makes use of this combination of texts again. Just after stating that God "raised him (Christ) from the dead and seated him at his right hand (ejn dexia`/ aujtou)" by reference to Ps. 110:1, this epistle references Ps. 8:6 (7) stating that "he has put all things under his feet and has

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[215] The LXX translation of the text is quoted accurately, however, in Heb. 2:8.

made him the head over all things for the church." Again here the text reads uJpo; tou;" povda" aujtou.[216]

Returning to Psalm 110, what we observe then is a particular passage that yielded several useful themes to the zeal of early Christian exegesis. Once Psalm 110:1 had been applied to Jesus as Lord, the other themes of the "right hand of God" and subjection of Christ's enemies could be used in their own right. These themes took on a life of their own through correlation with other texts that contained similar key words or themes. We have seen the strengthening of the correlation between two proof-texts via an alteration in the texts themselves. The development and influence of this proof-text effort is seen already in Paul's letters and even in earlier material contained in Paul's letters.

Further speculation upon Psalm 110:1 can be observed in its combination with other themes not explicitly contained in the Psalm. For example, the question could be asked, what functions did Jesus perform at the right hand of God? Romans 8:34 reports that Jesus "intercedes for us." Acts 2:33 states that at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit and now pours out this Spirit upon his disciples. Other passages use the exaltation to the right hand of God to emphasize Christ's superiority to the angels or the demons (Heb 1:13; *1 Clem.* 36:5-6).

Another fascinating interaction is the conflation of Psalm 110:1 with the Son of Man theme from Daniel 7:13.[217] The accounts of Jesus' answer to the high priest at his trial (Mark 14:62, Matt 26:64, and Luke 22:69) all include the idea of seeing the Son of Man seated at the right hand (here ejk dexiw`n is used) of the Power returning on the clouds of heaven. Likewise, Stephen gazed up

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[216] Notice, on the other hand, the quotation of Psalm 110:1 in Mark 12:36 and Matt 22:44 where the "as a footstool for your feet" has been replaced instead by "under your feet" in the LXX phraseology of Ps. 8:6: "uJpokavtw tw`n podw`n sou", indicating a Greek milieu for the origin of this combination. Further, note that manuscripts belonging to the Byzantine text type and the Latin tradition attempt to correct this back to the LXX Psalm form, uJpopovdion, in Mark and to a lesser extent in Matthew (NA27).

[217] Albl, 228-231.

into the heavens and saw the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God (ejk dexiw`n tou` qeou). This provided a second link to Psalm 8, where the Psalmist mentions the "son of man."[218]

Thus the effect of this proof-text activity was the generation of ever more complex matrices of themes and related texts in Christian literature. It helps to portray these relationships graphically. This particular cluster of connected themes drawn from Ps. 110:1 can be mapped as in Figure 1.

[218] Already in Paul, the "son of man" in Psalm 8:4 must have been understood as a reference to Jesus because as we have seen Ps. 8:6 is explicitly applied to Jesus in several Pauline texts (Rom 8:31-39; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:22-24). It is read the same way in Heb 2:6-8. Albl points out that it is a matter of disagreement among scholars as to whether Paul was aware of the Christian eschatological Son of Man traditions, based upon Dan. 7:13, which are found in the gospels. Albl, 228-229. He suggests instead that there are two separate exegetical traditions that make use of the phrase "son of man." The first is a Christ-as-representative-human tradition, which leads to the well-known Adam-Christ typology in the New Testament. He believes that the "son of man" in Ps. 8:4 belongs to this tradition. The other son of man tradition is the eschatological Son of Man, based upon Dan 7:13. Even if this differentiation is correct, the two traditions are clearly connected via the mediation of Ps. 110, which is conflated with them both.

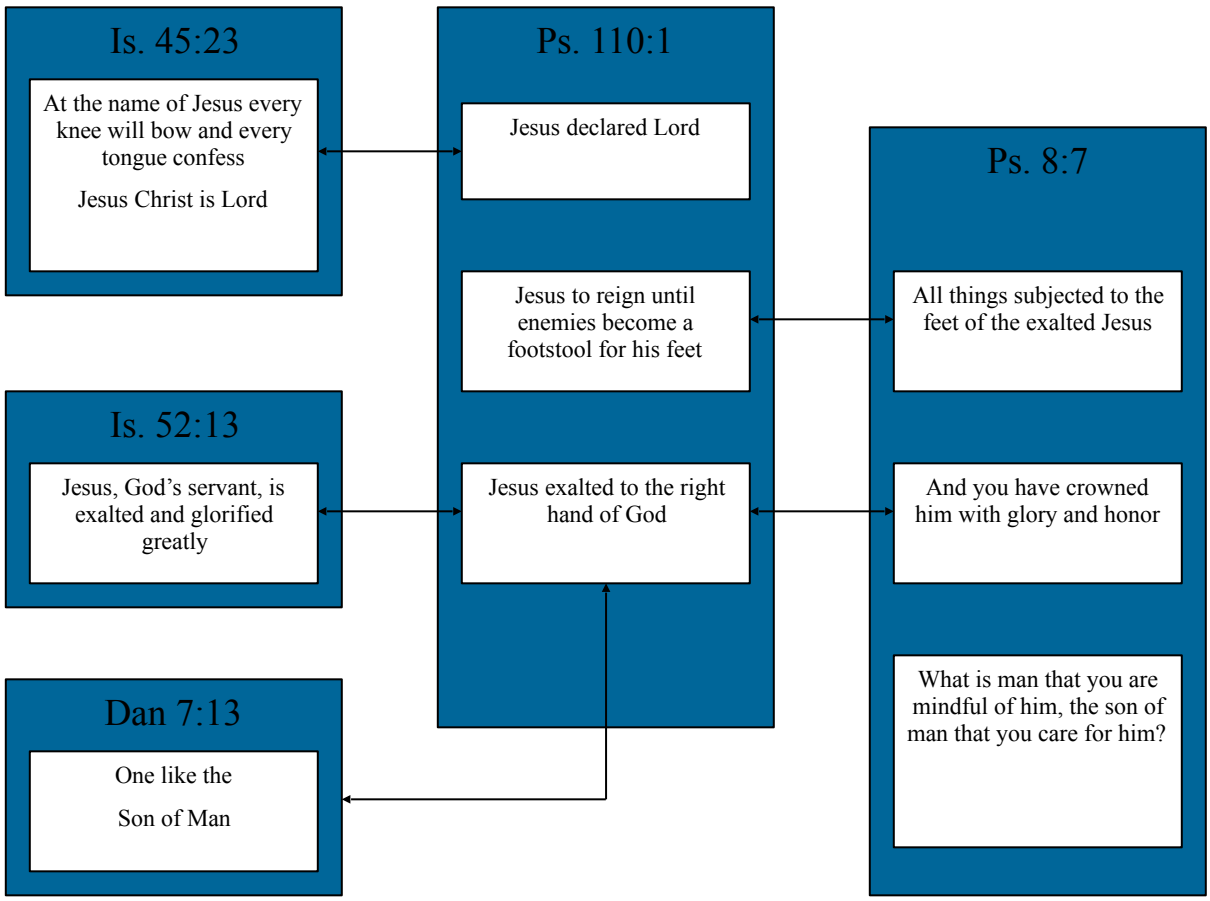

Figure 1: *Testimonia* structure depicting the exalted and glorified Jesus as Lord of all things

Harnack claimed that Origen "created the ecclesiastical dogmatic", suggesting that he was the first Christian to succeed in generating a completed system of theology.[219] While this may be true, perhaps it is at the same time biased by an expectation of what systematic theology ought to be. Certainly these matrices of intertwining themes and verbal elements, generated by this vigorous first-century Christian exegesis, in themselves formed a system of theological ideas, as imperfect as it was.[220] Granted, it managed to proceed little farther in organization than the relation of multiple themes based upon groupings of prophetic proof-texts drawn from the pages of the Jewish scriptures. And it could only proceed but little in terms of precision, being limited to the words of scripture itself. But the strength of this system was the powerful common conviction that the scripture and its prophecies were trustworthy and authoritative. And thus it became one of the basic resources from which Christian theology built upward through the following decades and centuries. The results of this uncoordinated exegetical effort would dominate Christian theology until the time of Origen.

Albl has also examined several other themes, which he demonstrates served as *testimonia* traditions in the first century and beyond. I will not rehearse all the data here them here but will make use of Albl's work and expand upon it where deemed useful.

Christogical Title Traditions

The Old Testament proved to be a rich source for mining titles which could be applied to Christ. Some of these proved to be theologically important while others were not so important but served rhetorical and typological purposes.

In regard to the second group, I have already mentioned Jewish traditions, as seen for example at Qumran, where the coming messianic figure(s) could be referred to with titles derived from Old Testament passages. The title "Branch" was especially popular, taken largely from Isaiah

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[219] Harnack 2, 332-333.

[220] It was these matrices of theological ideas that Dodd referred to as the "sub-structure" of the New Testament.

and Jeremiah. The title "Prince" was quite common coming from Ezekiel and Isaiah 9. The "Star" and "Scepter" from Num 24 were also popular. Many of these Jewish traditions were picked up and applied to Jesus in the first century. Others were added. A table of some of these titles can be compiled as such:

Christological Title	CE References	BCE Reference
Servant (db[, paißß~, dou¤lo~)	Acts 3:13, 4:27; 4:30	1. Servant Songs of Isa (paißß~) 2. Promised Davidic figure of (Ezek 34:23; 37:24) (dou ¤lo~)
Faithful One (dysij, o{sio")	Acts 2:27	Ps. 16:10
Righteous One (qyDix', divkaio")	Acts 3:14; 7:52, 22:14	Is 53:11
Holy One (a{gio")	Mk 1:24/Lk 4:34 Acts 3:14; 13:35 Rev. 3:7	
Beginning (tyviar, ajrchgov")	Acts 3:15; 5:31; Heb. 2:10; 12:2	Prov. 8:22
Savior	many	many
Son of Man	many	Daniel 7 Ps. 8:4
Son of God	many	Gen. 22 2 Sam 7:10-14 Psalm 2:7
Lamb	Jn 1:29; 36; Acts 8:32 1 Pet 1:19 Rev. 5:6 etc.	Is. 53:7
Prince (aycin:, a[rcwn)	Rev. 1:5	Promised Davidic figure of (Ezek 34:24; 37:25)

Lion of Judah	Rev. 5:5;	Num. 24:9
Root of David Branch of David	Rom. 15:12 Rev. 5:5; 22:16	Is. 11:10 Jer 23:5; 33:15
Christ	many	Is. 61:1 etc.
Lord	many	Ps. 110:1
East (Daystar, spring) (ajnatolhv)	Lk 1:78; Heb. 7:14 (verbal form ajnatevtalken)	Zech. 6:12 Jer 23:5
Star	Rev. 22:16	Num 24:17
Light	Mt. 4:16; Lk 2:32; Jn 1:4-9; 8:12; 9:5; 11:10; 12:35-46;	Is 42:6; 49:7; Is 9:2
Shepherd	Mt. 2:6 Mk 14:27/Mt. 26:31 John 10 Heb 13:20 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4 Rev. 7:17	Promised Davidic figure of (Ezek 34:24; 37:25) Ezek. 13:7

Although this is only a representative sample, a couple of important items become rather clear from the table. There are just short of 20 titles listed. Just short of half were used in pre-Christian Judaism to refer to expected coming figures. Of these, only "Christ", "Son of Man", and "Son of God" could really be classified as "important" to the development of Christianity. Otherwise, these titles are not found in the New Testament gospels or epistles, but rather tend to be found specifically in Revelation, the early chapters of Acts, or in Hebrews. The use of the "Root of Jesse" in Romans 15:12 is an exception, and it occurs as an explicit quote rather than functioning as a true title. All the other titles seem to be specifically Christian or at least unimportant in pre-Christian Judaism. This seems to correlate with the table in Appendix 2, which shows that many of the most important early Christian *testimonia* do not correspond to earlier Jewish tradition, although a few do. Likewise, correlating the table in Appendix 1 with the table in Appendix 2 shows that many of the most important Jewish messianic texts had a very limited role within Christianity. Finally, the titles "Christ" and "Son of God" certainly had an importance within

Christianity that they did not have in Jewish tradition. All of this points to an early discontinuity in the migration from the Jewish *testimonia* tradition to the quickly formed inner-Christian *testimonia* tradition.

The other interesting thing to note in regard to the above table is the exception of Romans 15:12. Other than this one passage the Pauline material is completely missing. Other than the fundamental titles of "Christ" and "Son of God", why are all the other Jewish/Christian and Christian-only titles missing from Paul? Is this a historical phenomenon or did Paul just tend to avoid this indirect manner of referring to Jesus? This is not a question that can be settled here. But it can be pointed out that this observation from the above table coincides with the same observation made by other scholars in their own research. Skarsaune has suggested that this is a historical phenomenon and that only in the last part of the first century did Christians liberally take over traditional Jewish *testimonia*.[221] Recently Albl has replied that this is not a necessary conclusion pointing especially to the implicit use of Gen. 49:10, Num 24:1, and Is. 11:1, 10 in Revelation 5:5, 22:16, and Hebrews 7:14.[222] However, Albl's evidence is taken from books authored well later than Paul. Skarsaune's point is well taken, with Rom. 15:12's "root of Jesse" providing evidence that certain Jewish titles might have been invoked at earlier stages. However, I will offer another explanation later.

One Christological title tradition not in the table provides evidence that some Jewish traditions were taken over very early by Christians, one uniquely popular in the first century and beyond, namely the theme of Christ as a stone. The background to this language seems to be the

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[221] He states: "At a later stage, and in a milieu still in living contact with Jewish Messianic expectations, one should expect that Christians tried to make their proof-text dosier more "complete" and comprehensive by including the traditional Jewish testimonies. It seems it is this process which can be discerned in late strata of NT literature: the infancy narratives, Hebrews, and Revelation.", 261.

[222] He replies: "Skarsaune comments that the influence of Isa 11:1, 10 and Num. 24:17 on these Christological titles in Revelation represents a "later stage" in which Christians added traditional Jewish *testimonia* to their proof-text collections. But this appeal to a later stage is hardly necessary: the familiar use of these titles in Revelation, together with an already traditional use of Isa 11:10 in Rom. 15:12 ... suggests that Jewish messianic *testimonia* were applied to Jesus from the beginning states of scriptural reflection on him."

Old Testament references to God as the "rock" in at least forty places.[223] This seems to have given rise to at least a limited amount of messianic speculation among some Jews of the messiah as a rock in the second temple period based upon passages such as Isa 28:16 and Dan 2:34.[224]

At a very early period, these ideas were applied to Christ and this tradition became very popular. And as we have seen, Acts 4 states that Peter used this *testimonium* theme already in the earliest Christian sermons making use of material taken from Ps 118:22 and Isa 53:3. The synoptic gospels and the *Gospel of Thomas* (Mark 12:1-12; Matt 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-19; *Gos. Thom.* 66) report that Jesus used this theme of the rejected stone in the Parable of the Wicked Tenants. Luke and Matthew[225] complete their report of this parable with the following phrase

> Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.
>
> πᾶς ὁ πεσὼν ἐπ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν λίθον συνθλασθήσεται· ἐφ' ὃν δ' ἂν πέσῃ, λικμήσει αὐτόν

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[223] Interestingly, the LXX does not literally translate the Hebrew "rock" in any but one of these places thus effectively removing the metaphor of God as a "rock" from the Greek Old Testament. See Staffan Olofsson, *God is My Rock: A Study of Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis in the Septuagint* (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 1990). This helps provide additional circumstantial evidence to the early origin of this tradition being non-LXX and Hebrew/Aramaic in nature.

[224] See Albl, 266-269. See especially the interpretation of Daniel 2:34, 44-45 in 4 Ezra 13:32-36.

[225] The text of Matthew is in question as part of the Old Latin and the Syriac versions are missing this verse in agreement with the Western Greek Text (D). It appears the verse may have been added in order to complete the parallel with Luke 20:18. But ℵ, B, and the Byzantine text as well as many other mss. and versions have the verse.

This phrase itself is a *testimonia* comprised of material taken from Isa 8:14-15a[226] and Dan. 2:34; 44-45.[227] Thus Ps. 118:22, Is. 8:15, and Dan. 2:34, 44-45 formed a complex of ideas that portrayed Jesus as rejected by unbelievers (applied often to the Jews), and that Jesus is a sanctuary to those who believe but a stone of stumbling to those who don't, and those who stumble will be crushed by this stone.

Unlike many of the Christological titles in the above table, Paul makes regular use of this exegetical tradition. For example, in Rom 9:33, Paul states:

> "See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

This text is a conflation of Isa 28:16 and Isa 8:14 with some non-LXX elements, especially the ÆIdou; tivqhmi ejn Siw;n livqon.[228] Interestingly, Paul's non-LXX quotation is followed almost exactly in 1 Pet. 2:8 indicating a common pre-Pauline tradition for this quotation. And this quotation is also introduced in 1 Pet 2:6, by reference to Ps. 118:22's "rejection" (ajpodedokimavzw) of the cornerstone theme.

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[226] Is. 8:15a: "And many among them shall stumble; they shall fall (pesou`ntai) and be broken"

[227] For Dan. 2:44, the MT and LXX (Theodotian) have:

וְתָסֵיף כָּל־אִלֵּין מַלְכְוָתָא וְהִיא תְּקוּם לְעָלְמָיִן

kai; likmhvsei pavsa" ta;" basileiva", kai; aujth; ajnasthvsetai eij" tou;" aijw`na"

it shall crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever

kai; likmhvsei here is a translation of the Aramaic ¹yset;wÒ, "and it will bring to an end". In the LXX this is the only case of this particular translation of ¹Ws, and other than these two cases in Luke and Matthew, likmavw does not appear in the NT. Thus, this text surely provides the likmhvsei for Luke and Matthew. See also Harris, *Testimonies* 2, 96.

[228] Instead of the LXX: jIdou; ejgw; ejmbalw` eij" ta; qemevlia Siwn livqon. In addition, in Ephesians 2:20, Christ is referred to as the cornerstone (ajkrogwniai`o") of the church, taken from Is. 28:16.

Already by Paul's time, the theme of the stone / rock had broadened and become applied to other theological topics. The theme of the church as the temple of God (2 Cor 6:16), built with living stones upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, with Christ as the cornerstone (Eph 2:20-22; 1 Pet 2:5; Ignatius *Eph.* 9.l), is a metaphor that must have been operative already in the middle of the first century. The associated vocabulary is impressive: oijkodomevw, oijkodomhv, livqo", pevtra, ajkrogwniai`o", qemevlio" are all associated and common in the NT and serve to build an imagery, of which Christ as the cornerstone is a chief part.

Thus the idea of the messiah as a stone was adopted from some elements of Judaism at a very early stage. It was applied to Christ, associated with other texts, and soon formed a cluster of proof texts which became a Christian *testimonia* tradition. This can be diagrammed as follows:

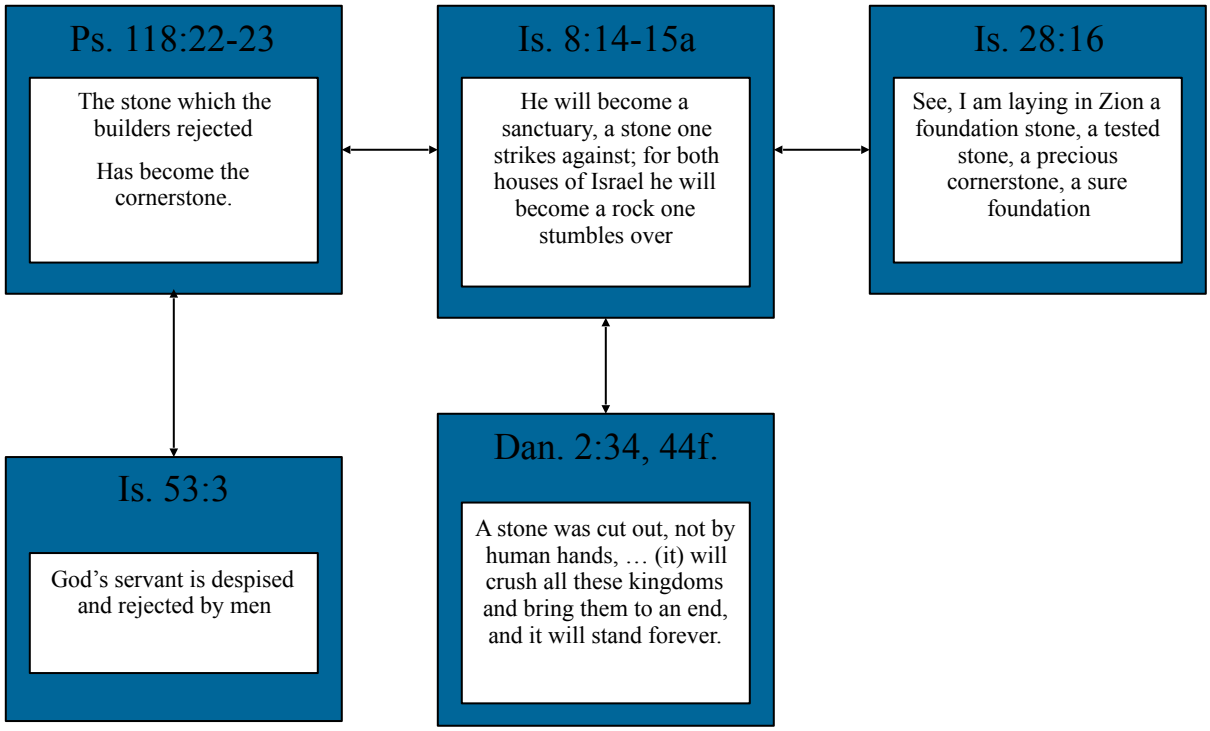

Figure 2: The Christ as a Stone *testimonia*

Theme of Crucifixion/Suffering Upon Wood/Tree

The Christian attempt to develop a *testimonia* tradition useful for explaining the crucifixion started rather early and continued to be developed with other texts as the first century progressed. Paul claimed that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3). But the very means of death, the crucifixion, also became an important element of Christian *testimonia.*

Deut 21:23[229] serves as a proof text for Gal. 3:10, which explains at least one of the functions of Christ's death on the cross. This verse, whether used before Paul or not, introduced the words "curse / cursed" (katavra, ÆEpikatavrato") and "tree") as keywords of the *testimonia* tradition. Paul ties the word "cursed" with the same word in Deut 27:26: "Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law." But this theme was not expanded much further in the NT or other early Christian materials.

Instead, the identification of the cross (staurov") as the "tree" (ξύλον) of Deut 21:23 appears to have been much more influential. We have already seen the accusation in Acts 5:30 that the Jews hung Jesus "on a tree." Luke repeats this language of Christ dying upon the "tree" in Acts 10:39, and 13:29.[230] It is seen again in 1 Pet 2:24.[231]

By the time of the Epistle of Barnabas, (whether in the late first or early second century), this idea was commonplace. The author of this epistle uses the idea of the "tree" 8 times, yet never quotes Deut 21:23 directly. He gives ample evidence of the flourishing growth of this "tree" tradition as it was combined with other key words and *testimonia* themes. In 5.13, the epistle produces several proof-texts which serve to prove that it was necessary, because it was prophesied, that Christ should die on the cross. But these prophetic "proof-texts" actually deal with Christ's

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[229] Deut 21:23 "anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse."

[230] Acts 10:39: "They put him to death by hanging him on a tree." Acts 13:29: "When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb"

[231] 1 Pet. 2:24: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree"

sufferings in general and are connected to the "tree" theme only by the one phrase that reads "fasten my flesh (kaqhvlwson) with nails" taken from the LXX Ps. 118 (MT: 119:120).

Excursus: A New *Testimonium* Constructed Upon the Greek LXX

Barnabas gives the texts which prove it was necessary for Christ to suffer upon the cross as follows:

1. "Spare my soul from the sword, fasten my flesh with nails; for the assemblies of the wicked have risen up against me."
2. "Behold, I have given my back to scourges, and my cheeks to strokes, and I have set my countenance as a firm rock."

The first proof-text is a conflation of Ps 22:20, 119:120 (LXX Ps 118:120), 22:16, and 3:1. The first phrase comes from a non-LXX translation of Ps 22:20, where the LXX uses rJu`sai and Barnabas uses fei`sai, and the word order is different. The second phrase comes from Ps. 119:120 where the Hebrew reads: "My flesh trembles for fear of you (yric;b] òD]j]P'mi rm's;) but the LXX reads: "kaqhvlwson ejk tou` fovbou sou ta; savrka" mou". Kaqhvlwson was then understood as "fasten on with nails" and the Psalm was edited to read: "kaqhvlwson ta;" savrka" mou" ("Fasten my flesh with nails"). In this way, it became a Christian prophetic text foretelling the crucifixion.

It seems very likely that this could only be done in a post Jerusalem, Greek-speaking context where the Hebrew was not generally consulted. But there is a noun in Christian Palestinian Aramaic sources, rmes]m,' which means "nail" and a late Hebrew verb rm's, which means "to nail".[232] So possibly the LXX translation is based upon early use of this word group and then the *testimonium* could have arisen in a Hebrew / Aramaic context. Another fascinating possibility is that the use of the LXX translation as a Christian *testimonium* was early and very influential so as to cause this word to be introduced back into Christian Aramaic.

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[232] *The Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems: 2000), 702.

The third phrase from Barnabas' first prophetic proof-text, comes primarily from Ps 22 (22:16) "a company of evildoers encircles me" but is conflated with Ps 3:1: "Many are rising (ejpanevsthsan) against me".

The second of Barnabas' proof-texts does not prove that Christ must suffer on the cross at all. But is a proof text regarding Christ's sufferings in general. In content it is a shortened version of the LXX text in Isa 50:6-7.

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Ps 119:120 must have been used fairly early as a proof-text. For although, the verb kaqhlovw is not used in the NT, it is seen already at the beginning of the second century in Ignatius *Smyrn.* 1.1. Ignatius, while reciting a creedal formula, applies it to Jesus, who "was truly, under Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch, nailed for us in His flesh."[233] And then in 1.2, with a clever turn of phrase, he applies what must have already been common language applied to Christ, to the Christians themselves: "For I have observed that you are perfected in an immovable faith, as if you were nailed to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in the flesh and in the spirit."

Another text that Barnabas used as a "tree" proof text is found in 12.1. Here it is stated that:

> In like manner He points to the cross of Christ in another prophet, who says, "And when shall these things be accomplished? And the Lord says, When a tree shall be bent down, and again arise, and when blood shall flow out of wood."

The phrase "tree shall be bent down, and again arise", quoted as if a prophetic text, is actually an unidentified Christian *agraphon*. The phrase "blood shall flow out of wood" comes from an eschatological text found in *4 Esdras* 5:5. Clearly, in Barnabas the "tree" tradition is being expanded with texts from many different sources than were observed in the earliest period.

Another "tree" related theme is given by Barnabas in chapter 12, the type of the brazen serpent created by Moses in order that Israel might be saved from the poisonous snakes. This is the same interpretation given for the event in John 3:14 indicating its widespread use.

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[233] kaqhlwmevnon uJpe;r hJmw`n ejn sarkiv

Yet another sub-theme was being developed by the time of the epistle of Barnabas in relation to the "tree", that of the spreading of hands as a type of Christ's death. Barnabas discusses this sub-theme in chapter 12 of his epistle. There he first gives the example of Moses in Ex 17:8-13. In this text, Moses spreads out his hands and holds them up so that the Israelites might defeat the Amalekites. After this example Barnabas quotes an explicit proof text that speaks to this sub-theme, Isa 65:2: "I held out my hands all day long to a rebellious people." Interestingly, this text was used by Paul in Rom 10:21 as a proof-text of the Jews' rejection of God and his promises.

Thus we are able to observe how the key word taken from Deut 21:23 very early on, lead to the development of an entire grouping of related themes as the first century progressed. This can not be mapped in entirety. But a partial mapping is given below.

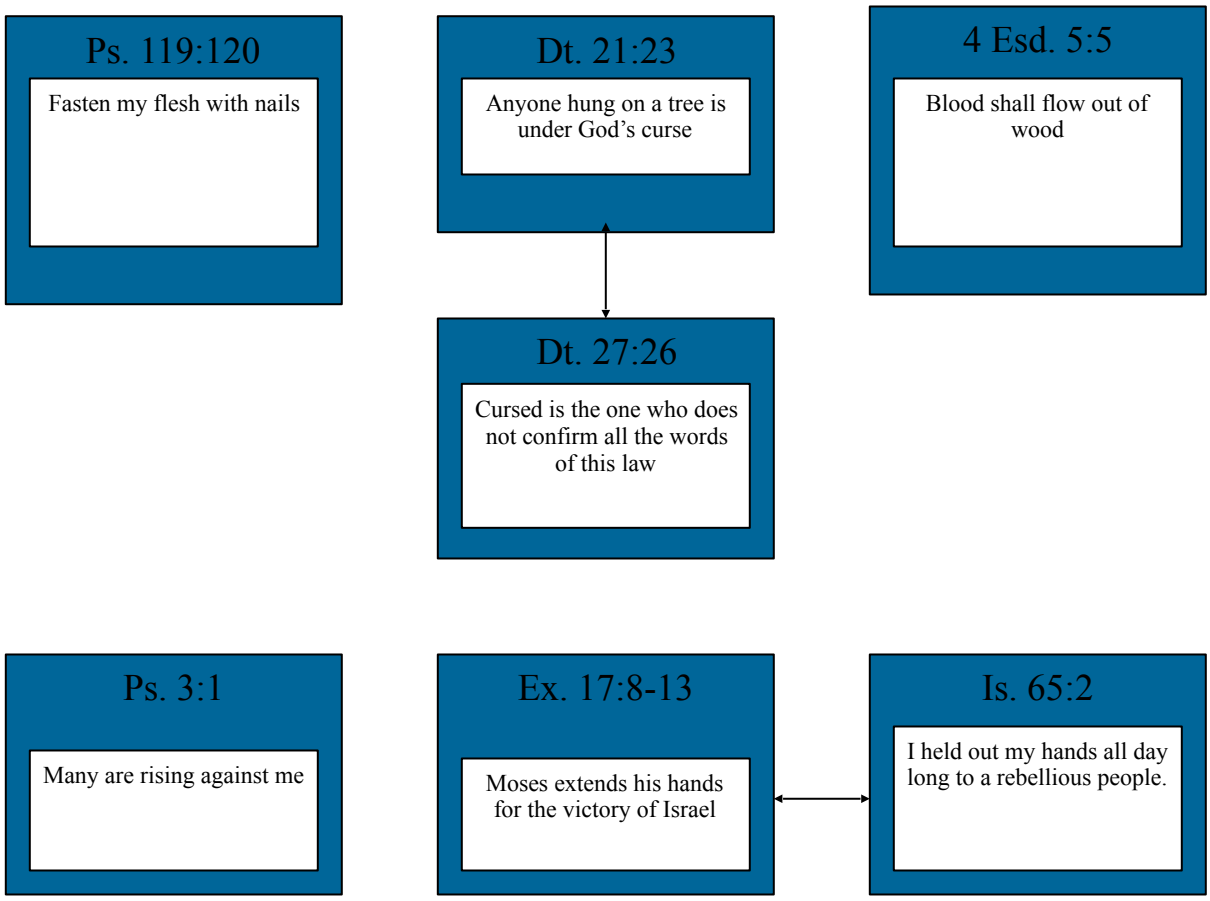

Figure 3: T*estimonia* regarding the cross and sufferings of Christ

Summary

In summary, these three themes are examples of early Christian *testimonia* traditions that provided some definition of what it meant to be Christian in the first century. They are a source of continuity across this time frame. They represent the first efforts of Christian exegesis. On the other hand, the theme of Christ's suffering and crucifixion gives very good evidence for the continuing development of various Christian *testimonia* themes. So while the early *testimonia* provide a thread of continuity across the first century into the second, there is a simultaneous development of the proof-texts used. As the second century approached, it is apparent that some *testimonia* traditions were being expanded with texts derived from specific LXX translations. These must have originated within the Greek speaking Christian communities rather than Jerusalem. This indicates that the *testimonia* practice itself and certain parts of the tradition were a connection between Christian communities in space and time. But development of the themes continued, based upon the continuing common presuppositions about Old Testament prophecy and its relevancy to Christ's life and death.

We can not examine all of the various themes at this point in time. We will limit ourselves to the above three examples. And now turn to the themes related to the Gentile question within the church.

Jews and the Gentiles

With the increasing number of Gentiles who became Christians, the early dynamic of the Way as another Jewish sect was inexorably changed. The fact of increasing Gentile converts increased tension among Jewish and Gentile Christians. Many theological and practical questions arose that required answers for the communities to function. The communities themselves continued to experience conflict with Jews outside of the Christian communities (e.g. Phil. 3:2). And finally, the Jewish and Christian communities continued to experience conflict with Graeco-Roman society at large. All of these social relationships had an effect upon the *testimonia* tradition, either in its content, its application, or both.

Theme of Hardening:

One of the very early *testimonia* themes that relate to these social conditions appears to have developed during the first phases of the development of the Christian *testimonia* traditions. This is the theme of hardening. It appears that this theme developed while the Way was still in day to day conflict with its fellow Jewish sects. But the theme provided ammunition to be used in other ways later when social conditions had altered.

Albl closely examines the theme of hardening, which we have already observed as part of the earliest *testimonia* tradition.[234] He shows that there was a tradition of hardening texts already in the Old Testament period. He begins with an examination of Isa 6:9-10 and shows that it contains a challenging picture of God himself hardening his people so that they are unable to understand, hear, or see and thus turn and be healed from their sin:

> And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed."

This theme of God hardening people is seen in other texts such as Exod 9:12, Deut 29:4, Isa 29:10, and Isa 63:17. Yet other texts discuss a hardening of hearts or minds without mentioning God's causation of the hardening, such as Jer 5:21 and Ezek 12:2-3.[235]

Albl shows that this theme was picked up very early by Christians and became a part of the *testimonia* tradition. As we have seen, the gospels report that Jesus himself used the theme against those who opposed him, and Acts records it as a part of the early Christian sermons.[236] The broad influence of the theme is indicated by the 8 occurrences in the New Testament of pwrovw or

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[234] Albl 237-253.

[235] Some translations and reproductions of Isaiah 6:9-10 (e.g. 1QIsaiah[a]) soften God's causative role through change in language. The LXX translates the MT Hiphil imperatives with a passive construction: "The mind of this people is dulled (ejpacuvnqh ga;r hJ kardiva tou` laou` touvtou). This appears to have been done in order to soften the picture of God's complete rejection and judgement.

[236] This seems related also to the repeated reports in the gospels, especially Mark, of the lack of faith on the part of Jesus' disciples.

pwvrwsi~ to convey a hardening of heart or mind.[237] This is more impressive when it is noted that these words only occur twice in the LXX and neither time in the context of a hardening of heart or mind. In addition, the NT makes use of other terminology such as sklhruvnw / sklhrovth~ / sklhrokardiva (Mt. 19:8; Mk 10:5; 16:14) and a[pisto~ / ajpistiva (Matt 13:58; 17:17; Mark 6:6; 9:19-24; 16:14; John 20:27; 2 Cor 4:4; 6:14-15; Rom 3:3; 4:20; 11:20-23; Heb 3:12-19) in conjunction with this theme. All of this activity points to the early adoption of the theme among Christians and its widespread use. Observation of several texts in the New Testament, which deal with this theme at length, will give an indication of what proof-texts served as *testimonia* for this theme and how they were used.

In Rom. 9-11, Paul discusses the gentile question at length. In chapter 11, he specifically discusses Israel and their condition in relation to salvation. There he states that "the elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, as it is written." Paul then proceeds to quote a composite *testimonium* made up of Isa 29:10/Deut 29:3:

> God gave them a spirit of deep sleep, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.

He then quotes a second proof-text from Ps 69 (68): 23-24:

> Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and keep their backs forever bent.

Neither of these texts appear elsewhere explicitly as proof-texts in the NT. In John 12:36b-40, the fourth gospel also presents two *testimonia*, which are intended to serve as proof-texts for the hardening tradition. This text points out that the unbelief of the people was predicted by the prophets. First the gospel states that "this was to fulfill the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah", and then proceeds to quote Is 53:1: "Lord, who has believed our message, and to whom

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[237] Mark 3:5; 6:52; 8:17; John. 12:40; Rom 11:7; 25; 2 Cor 3:14; Eph 4:18.

has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Then the gospel provides another proof-text by quoting a modified Is 6:10:

> and so they could not believe, because Isaiah also said, 'He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not look with their eyes, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them.'

Though they do not overlap, these two New Testament texts indicate that Deut 29:3, Isa 6:9-10, 29:10, 53:1 along with Ps 69:23-24 formed a complex of texts that served as *testimonia* for the hardening theme introduced by various NT authors with the pwrovw / pwvrwsi~ vocabulary. This has been confirmed by at least one other independent study.[238] And Albl gives further analysis of texts from Acts and Mark, which agree with these conclusions.[239] This cluster of texts can be diagrammed as seen in Figure 4. Interestingly, there is less conflation between individual texts than what was seen with the theme dealing with the glorification of Christ. However, Is 6:9 is quoted in many variant forms indicating its popularity as a proof-text for the hardening tradition.[240]

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[238] Albl refers to Carol Kern Stockhausen, *Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant: The Exegetical Substructure of 2 Cor 3:1-4:6* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1989).

[239] Albl, 248-250.

[240] Matt 13:14-15 and Acts 28:26-27 quote Is 6:9 explicitly and give a form of the text only slightly modified from the LXX. John 12:40 indicates it is quoting from Isaiah but gives a highly modified text, introducing the pwrovw / pwvrwsi~ vocabulary within the introductory sentence: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart". Mark 4:11-12 does not state it is quoting from the prophet but gives a highly condensed version of Is 6:9-10.

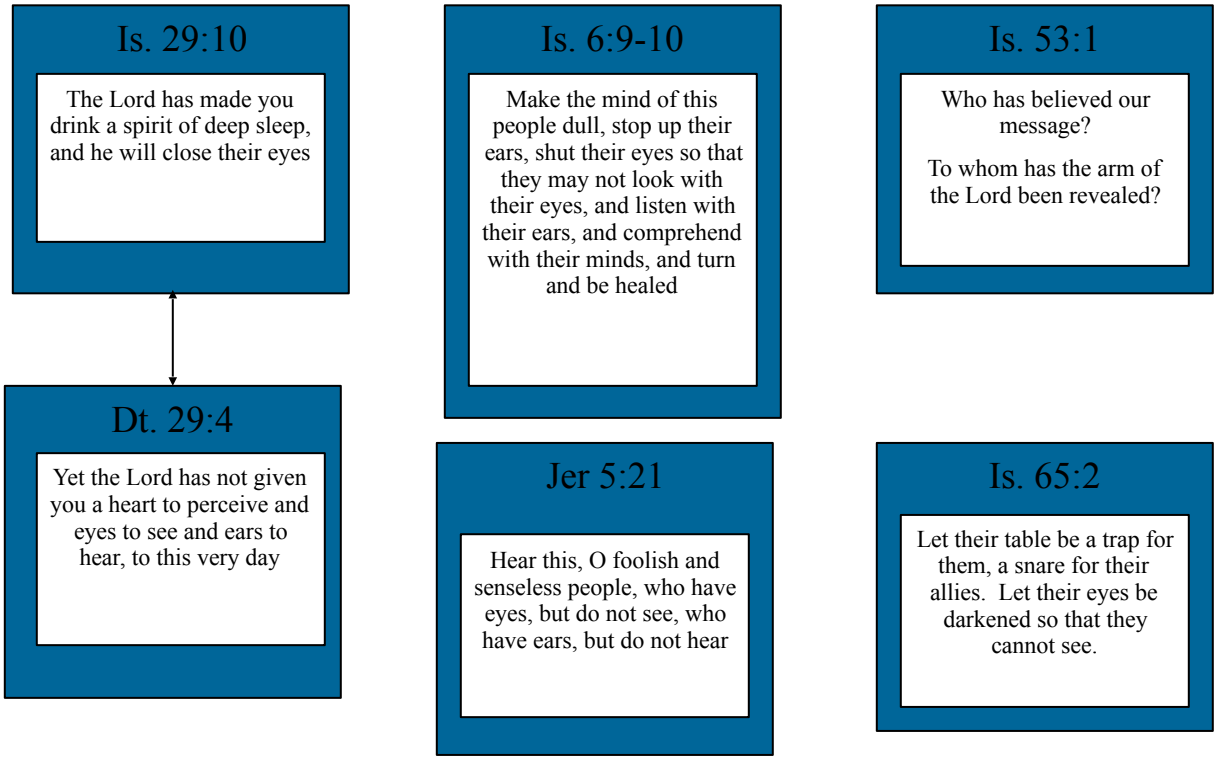

Figure 3: T*estimonia* regarding the hardening of the Jews

This theme was first applied to fellow Jews who did not respond to the Christian message concerning Jesus. And this polemical use of the text was not motivated simply by a lack of confession of the Christian faith on the part of their fellow countrymen. But in part it appears to have been fueled specifically by Christian dismay that their *testimonia* exegesis of the scriptures, which claimed Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises of God given in the prophets, was not accepted by their Jewish brethren. Acts 28:23, for example, explicitly points out Paul's frustration at the lack of results from his efforts to explain Moses and the prophets to the Jewish authorities in Rome. In reaction, Paul is portrayed as quoting Isa 6:9-10 against them.

The application of this theme toward Jews continued to be a part of the Christian exegetical tradition in the centuries that followed. However, the language derived from it was also applied to unbelievers in general. Eph. 4:18, for example, decries that the Gentiles "are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart (dia; th;n pwvrwsin th`" kardiva" aujtw`n)." Although no explicit quotation is made here, it is essentially a new application of a proof-text theme already in regular use.

Theme of Gentile Believers

The theme of hardening was originally applied to explain the lack of response on the part of many Jews to the early Christian message.[241] This theme is then related to the subsequent Christian effort to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.[242]

The first Gentile converts are said by Luke to have been in Caesarea. This occurred in the presence of Peter but Acts claims it was a direct intervention of God that caused the event rather than any effort of the leaders of the Way in Jerusalem. These conversions were soon followed by others in Antioch. Here, "some men of Cyprus and Cyrene" are given credit for speaking the gospel to the Gentiles, rather than the apostles or other Jerusalem leaders who seem to have "spoke

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[241] The Gospel of Mark also applies this theme to those within the church who, in Mark's view, did not properly recognize the true nature of Jesus' messiahship.

[242] The idea of Jew first, then Greek (Gentile) can be observed explicitly in Acts 3:26; Rom. 1:16; and 2:9-10.

the word to no one except Jews".[243] Although Luke reports some initial resistance, including criticism of Peter himself by "the circumcision" group (Acts 11:2), the initial question of whether Gentiles would be allowed into the church at all seems to have been answered fairly quickly. The rapidity of this development, happening even before the beginning of Paul's career, has not left much evidence as to the earliest scriptural debates that must have occurred among the members of the Way in Jerusalem over this topic. Luke only states that Peter's own testimony as to a divine revelation given to him and the evidence of the Holy Spirit given to the gentile believers was part of the initial evidence. After this, the Jerusalem church responded to Gentile believers in Antioch just as they did the first believers in Samaria, by sending representatives, although the Samaritans received two apostles in Peter and John (Acts 8:14), and the Gentiles in Antioch received only Barnabas (Acts 11:19).

On the other hand, the question not so easily answered was what should be required of Gentiles to be recognized as Christians. Some in Jerusalem wanted to require full conversion to

[243] Acts 11:19.

Judaism, including circumcision.[244] Some of these were recognized as a party within the Way and

[244] For context, this entire episode and controversy should be compared to a couple of episodes in Josephus.

First, *Ant.* 20.2, where in the middle of the first century Helena, Queen of Adiabene and her son Izates, appointed to become king, are instructed separately by two different Jews and decide independently to follow Jewish customs (toi`" Jloudaivwn ejqesin). Izates wanted "to embrace them entirely (eij" ejkei`na metaqevsqai); and as he supposed that he could not be thoroughly a Jew unless he were circumcised." But his mother was afraid of the anger of his subjects if he were to do this. So his Jewish instructor, Ananaias suggested that he should "worship God" without circumcision even though he would not be completely following the law in this way. Ananaias left the king, being afraid for his own safety, lest the king's subjects should imagine he was responsible for the conversion of the king. But later a learned Jew "out of Galilee", named Eleazar came to the king and found him reading the Law of Moses. He said to the king:

> Thou dost not consider, O king! that thou unjustly breakest the principal of those laws, and art injurious to God himself, [by omitting to be circumcised]; for thou oughtest not only to read them, but chiefly to practice what they enjoin thee. How long wilt thou continue uncircumcised? But, if thou hast not yet read the law about circumcision, and does not know how great impiety thou art guilty of by neglecting it, read it now." When the king had heard what he said, he delayed the thing no longer, but retired to another room, and sent for a surgeon, and did what he was commanded to do. (William Whiston, A.M., *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson: 1987))

Also in the first century, it is reported (Josephus *Vita* 23) that several uncircumcised soldiers came to join Josephus and his men. A group of the Jews wanted to force the newcomers to be circumcised if they were to remain, but Josephus persuaded "the multitude" that no one should be forced to worship God in a particular way. It is not related how afterwards the Jewish soldiers interacted with these Gentiles.

This is the social context in which the Jerusalem church and Paul were working out their disagreement. One can imagine Eleazar-like Jewish-Christians appearing in Pauline congregations and making just such a speech to which Paul felt he had to respond.

may have been referred to as "the circumcision".[245] And their continuing influence as a sect among the Way, can be observed in Paul's regular attempts to refute their demand for Gentile circumcision (e.g. Gal. 5:6-11; Rom. 2:25-29; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11). But the main leaders of the Way, including Peter, James, and John, ultimately did not think it necessary to require the Gentiles to undergo conversion to the Law via circumcision in order to be Christians (Gal. 2:9; Acts 15:12-29; 21:25). Nevertheless, the influence of the circumcision party must have remained strong among Jewish believers in Jerusalem and other places, judging by the geographic locations where Paul's counter-arguments were sent.

Further, it must be recognized, that even if the main leaders of the Way, agreed with Paul that conversion of the Gentiles to the Law was unnecessary, there were still more subtle questions over which they appear to have disagreed. One of the most important of these has to do with the relationship between circumcised Jewish believers and non-circumcised Gentile believers within the Christian communities. Since the Gentiles who converted to Christianity were not clean according to Mosaic law, how were Jewish believers who kept the law to relate to their fellow believers who lived as Gentiles? Specifically, Luke records James' claim that there were thousands of Jewish believers in Jerusalem who were zealous for the law (Acts 21:20). And their main problem with Paul was the report that he was teaching Jewish Christians in the Diaspora to abandon Moses, not that he was refusing to circumcise Gentiles. This, along with the continuing

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[245] Acts 11:2: oiJ ejk peritomh`"; Gal. 2:12: tou;" ejk peritomh`"; Tit. 1:10: oiJ ejk th`" peritomh`". Luke states that some of this party, probably some of the leaders, were Pharisees (Acts 15:5). The phrase could also be used as a general reference to the Jews, as in Col. 4:11. Then by means of the Christian supersessionist doctrine, Paul can say to his fellow Christians: "it is we who are the circumcision." Neither the phrase ejk peritomh`" or ejk th`" peritomh`" occur in Josephus or Philo. On the other hand, in the second century, in Justin *Dial.* 1.3, Trypho introduces himself as "a Hebrew of circumcision (ejk peritomh`")." On the basis of the above, it is possible to argue that the phrase does not specifically name a Jerusalem party in any of the above cases and always refers generally to "the Jews." Even if this is the case, the existence of a group of strict followers of the Law among the Jerusalem Christians who demanded Gentiles be circumcised, and the existence of a more moderate party, which wanted Jews to continue to be zealous for the law without requiring such for the Gentiles, is sufficiently indicated.

agitation from the circumcision party, was a problem that lingered for the duration of Paul's ministry.

On the one hand, perhaps in Jerusalem, with few Gentiles, the solution seemed clear. A practical ecclesiology was developing in Jerusalem that took its starting point with the assumption that Jewish Christians would be zealous in the keeping the Mosaic law and that Gentile believers would be recognized as Christians and not required to keep the Law in its entirety. The separation of clean and unclean was supported by every aspect of Jewish tradition and by the infrastructure of life within Jerusalem. How could it be otherwise within the Way? On the other hand, how could the congregations outside of Palestine function, being made up of more equal proportions of Jew and Gentile, if Jews observed the law strictly and thus were very limited in their interaction with unclean Gentile believers? For here there could be no compromise, either one remained clean by dividing the church and separating from Gentiles, or one compromised the law and became ceremonially unclean.

Paul reports that Peter lived and ate with Gentiles when he came to Antioch. And yet when some came from James in order to observe the congregation, Peter quit eating with the Gentiles and kept to the Jewish tables (Gal 2:11-14). Even Barnabas, long a resident among the Gentiles, joined the Jews and separated from the Gentiles. In the end, Paul could not let the Jerusalem ecclesiology stand uncontested with its destructive division of the church into Jew and Gentile parts. And so he reacted strongly against the dualistic nature of the church implied by the Jerusalem Christians. And it greatly affected his theology. His practical demands that Jews not practice the law in a way that divided the church gave him the bad reputation with Jewish believers in Jerusalem and elsewhere. Further, his teaching came to emphasize many teachings that otherwise may not have received nearly as much attention. For example, Paul's teachings that the works of the Law, such as circumcision, were unimportant to a believer's status with God[246], that the church had superseded the Jews and become the true Israel along with its corollary that the practice of the law was thus

[246] 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 6:15

unnecessary for salvation[247], the equal position of Jew and Gentile over against the demands of the law and their equal need for God's forgiveness[248], and the unity of the church, are all related to this conflict regarding the relationship of Jew and Gentile within the church.

What role then does the *testimonia* tradition play in this important conflict? Given the above, one would not expect the first phases of *testimonia* development to have contained much explicit content in regard to the Gentiles. It is true that proof-texts we have observed already have mentioned the "nations" but this did not play any important role in the function of the early texts which we have observed so far. The question must be asked whether this is by scholarly construct or whether this is a historical phenomenon.

Paul's letters are the earliest documents of the New Testament and are exactly where we would expect to find any proof-texts having to do with Gentile converts. And yet, when we examine Paul's most intense sections of argumentation regarding this conflict there are surprisingly few *testimonia* type proof-texts used.

The primary Old Testament proof for Paul in regard to the Gentiles consists of various arguments taken from the Genesis stories of Abraham. These texts were fundamental to Jewish self-identity and also served as important proof-texts for the Jews in regard to the necessity of circumcision. Thus Paul must have felt it necessary to address these Genesis texts in order to present a new description of salvation itself by playing off "faith" against "works of the law". From here he could make numerous arguments in favor of the unity of the church, the equal participation of Jew and Gentile in salvation etc.

Thus in Galatians 1-3 and in Rom. 3-4, Paul argues that it is not by the works of the law that a person is justified before God, but rather by faith in Christ. That this is the case can be proved by the example of Abraham, who "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Gen 15:6; Gal 3:6; Rom 4:3). Paul adduces a variety of Old Testament texts to support his doctrine of salvation by faith versus salvation through the law. As has been pointed out, in Rom 3:10-18, Paul

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[247] Gal 5:6; 1 Cor 7:19; Phil 3:3; Col 2:11.

[248] Rom 1–3; Gal 2:16.

makes use of a traditional Jewish conflation of texts taken from the Psalms in order to prove that all have sinned before the law and thus no one can be justified by it. And he can appeal to other Old Testament texts as well.[249] But neither this text nor Paul's other proof-texts dealing with "faith" and "law" involve the Gentiles directly. He is constructing the framework of his argument.

After this reconstruction of the traditional Jewish understanding of Genesis 12-18, Paul can finally make his appeal to prophetic scripture regarding the Gentiles from this very same section of Genesis:

> [8]And *the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith,* declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All nations shall be blessed in you." (Gal 3:8 quoting Gen 12:3; 18:18)
>
> and
>
> [16] For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us,
> [17] as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.
> [18] Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." (Rom 4:16-18 quoting Gen 17:5)

It is not certain that Paul was the first to use the Genesis texts in this way, but it seems likely to be original Pauline exegesis. In the course of explicating his doctrine, Paul set forth a new understanding of the Abraham tradition. And then he was able to pick out several texts with the keyword "nations" (Gentiles) and demonstrate thereby that the Gentiles had always been included in God's promises to Abraham, even when proclaimed by the prophets long ago. It was the law that excluded them, not the promise. Thus in order to exterminate any Jew/Gentile dichotomy within the contemporary church, Paul had to posit a dichotomy between Law and promise, between two different testaments.

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[249] So in Gal 3:10 Paul can prove his understanding of the law by appeal to Deut. 27:26: "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law."

Paul probably was original in his argumentation regarding the Abraham texts in Genesis and their meaning for Christian soteriology. He was also one of the first to produce proof-texts regarding the salvation of the Gentiles by keying on the word "nations." This was not of interest to the Jerusalem church and there is no evidence that *testimonia* touching this topic were current among the members of the Way before the controversy started. In fact the only proof-text associated with the Gentiles observed thus far as being used by the Jerusalem church is found during the controversy at the climax of the Jerusalem council recorded in Acts 15. There James reported that the Jerusalem church would not impose circumcision upon Gentile converts. The basis for this decision was the special revelation given to Peter and an appeal to the prophets, because it is written:

> [16]After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen;
> from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up,
> [17]so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—even all the Gentiles over whom my
> name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things
> known from long ago. (Acts 15:16-17)

This quotation is interesting in several respects. First, it comes from Amos 9:11. This is a very well known Jewish Messianic passage of the Davidic King messianic tradition, as has been seen earlier (see Appendix 1). I will say more about this shortly. Secondly, it is the only explicit occurrence of this passage in the New Testament. But here it is used not for its messianic reference specifically but because of the key word "nations" within it that allow it to be applied to the controversy at hand. It does not say anything about circumcision but is used to prove that God was looking to the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. And according to Acts, Jerusalem did not want to interfere in God's work by requiring circumcision of the Gentiles.

Other than this text, other "Gentile" proof-texts are found largely in the Pauline epistles as we would expect. But these other proof-texts appear generally to be secondary to Paul's main arguments taken from the Genesis Abraham stories. A grouping of such proof-texts is found in Romans 15:9-12. Here Paul reproduced a collection of *testimonia* connected together via the keyword "nations" and the idea of the nations praising or glorifying God for their opportunity to

join in his salvation. It is possible that this collection is Paul's own work. Paul reproduces 2 Sam 22:50, Deut 32:43, Ps 117:1, and Isa 11:10. Both the Deut 32 passage and the Isa 11 passage are completely LXX in form and differ somewhat from the MT. Again these are the only places that these verses are explicitly used in the NT, except for a reference to the title "Root of Jesse" in Rev. 5:5 and "Root of David" in Rev. 22:16. Once again, Isa 11:1-5, 10 is a well-known Jewish messianic text of the Davidic King tradition (see Appendix 1). This in combination with the use of Amos 9:11 above brings up some interesting questions.

Why is it that two of the best known Jewish messianic texts, which certainly were influential in the second-temple Judaism of Jerusalem when the Way first began, have little place in the New Testament in speaking about or defining the Christian understanding of Jesus as the Christ? Yet suddenly, and roughly in the third quarter of the first century, they both appear in LXX form in full quotation in order to support the argument that the prophets foresaw that the Gentiles would be part of God's salvation based upon Jesus Christ. The odds are very much against this being coincidental. So what does it mean?

1. It means that in the middle of the first century, despite the lack of other NT evidence, some Christians generally recognized Jesus as the "Root of Jesse" and as the new leader of the "Booth of David".[250] Otherwise the quotations would be meaningless.
2. It means that in the middle of the first century, older traditional proof-texts were already being recycled, as it were, to address new controversies. These passages were already important in the definition of Christian faith, and now they were being applied to new questions.
3. The LXX form of these verses indicates that new proof-texts that were being added to the various themes or strands of the testimonia tradition were now being added by Greek

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[250] It is possible that the following uses of "root" in the New Testament are distantly tied to the Isa 11 designation of the Messiah as the "Root", although this would be hard to prove:

1. Jesus' comments regarding the seeds without "root" in Mark 4:3-20 / Matt 13:6-23 / Luke 13:4-15.
2. The ax at the "root" cutting off fruitless trees in Matt 3:10 / Luke 3:9
3. Paul's comments about the "root" and branches in Rom 11:16-18

The "Booth (Tabernacle) of David" (th;n skhnh;n Dauid) is even more obscure in the NT. It is likely that John 1:14 is an allusion to this verse when it says: "the Word became flesh and tabernacled (ejskhvnwsen) among us", although this would not be from the middle of the first century.

Another intriguing avenue for investigation would be to investigate how far σκηνή and naov" were synonyms in reference to the temple (see Heb 9, for example). In this way, can Amos 9:11 be connected with the accusations brought against Jesus at his trial that "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.'" (Mark 14:58)? The gospel of John states that this was said by Jesus during the cleansing of the temple and interprets this by saying: "he was speaking of the temple of his body." (John 1:21). Does this ultimately tie Amos 9:11 to the "temple" talk within Paul's ecclesiology and also to all the stone *testimonia* with their building of the church as with "living stones"?

I think the above leads to a credible possibility that these very traditional Jewish proof-texts were used in Christian circles at a very early date but they were "Christianized", that is, they were reinterpreted and given a non-traditional meaning. *A priori* it seems likely that those early Jewish Christians would have had to do this as soon as the Way had given up on any literal idea of the reestablishment of the Davidic throne and kingdom in order to explain their understanding of such traditional proof-texts to fellow Jews. These traditional texts thus were reinterpreted within the framework already developing around Jesus' teaching and other prophetic texts that at least implicitly were given normative authority by the Christian movement, such as the servant songs of Isaiah.

> speaking Christians, already in the second half of the first century.[251] One should also note how little conflation of multiple prophetic texts is observed here.

We may conclude from the foregoing, that new themes were added to the *testimonia* tradition when the question of the Gentile membership and the many practical problems it raised were being addressed. The older theme of hardening was already in place but served as a launching spot for the Gentile question to be addressed. Paul addressed the Gentile question primarily by reinterpreting the fundamental texts from Genesis regarding God's promises to Abraham and the covenant of circumcision. After this was done, these Genesis texts as well as a variety of other prophetic texts could be drawn upon that spoke of the "nations (Gentiles)".

Conclusion

In this way and in others, the Christian *testimonia* tradition continued to develop throughout the first century. Only a few of the major themes are still able to be traced and only some of these have been traced above. The earliest themes appear to have been Christological in nature. And these proof-texts continued to be used throughout the first century. Conflated Christological proof-texts appeared very early, within the Jerusalem community, and became traditional in their own right as the Christian faith spread. Other new texts were added and joined to previous groupings.

Meanwhile, developments in the life of the church, especially the limited conversion of the Jewish people to Christianity and the new unexpected conversion of Gentiles to the Christian faith caused disturbances in the Christian communities. The *testimonia* tradition developed in accordance with the social conditions of the church. Some broad outlines of this development can still be traced. The Old Testament theme of hardening of the Jewish people quickly became a traditional Christian theme. With the conversion of Gentiles, a new theme had to be developed. A sophisticated theology was developed by Paul, first to indicate why keeping the Law was

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[251] It is also possible that Amos 9:11 might have been used in Aramaic in any kind of Jerusalem deliberations that occurred and Luke simply composed his book with the LXX version. But we have already seen use of non-LXX *testimonia* in Acts so Luke clearly had other options. But Paul's quotation of Isa 11:10 is key in this regard. Certainly to Paul's readers the proof-text was going to be read in LXX form.

unnecessary for Christian salvation, and from there to indicate why converting Gentiles did not need to be circumcised or perform other works of the law. A *testimonium* theme was created by this effort and would continue to develop through the second century.

Thus the *testimonia* tradition was very much involved in the dynamics of relationship between Jew and Gentile within the church and between Christians and Jews outside of the church. Rendel Harris grasped only a part of the truth when he suggested there was a Book of Testimonies that existed in the first century and was dedicated to the theme "Against the Jews." As we have seen, the *testimonia* tradition was much broader in content and form than his description and served as many internal needs as external needs for the Christian communities. In this regard he was incorrect. But the above does demonstrate that there was an early, significant, and ongoing Christian exegetical effort aimed at expressing faith in Jesus and defending this faith against rivals, including non-Christian Jews, through Old Testament proof-texts.

By late in the first century the LXX was being used directly to find original proof-texts and some texts were taken from books at the very margins of what would later be considered canonical. Even some *agrapha* were being accepted as valid parts of the prophetic *testimonia* tradition and became as influential as the earlier *testimonia* before them.

Chapter 5: *Testimonia* in the 2nd c.: The Great Church and Other Christians

As we have seen, the first century saw the early development of a Christian exegetical tradition consisting of multiple themes each made up of multiple interrelated texts taken from the Hebrew scriptures. The main themes within this tradition were related to the Christian confession of faith in Jesus and the social stresses that such a confession created, whether between Christian and non-Christian, or between Christians themselves. This tradition continued to be used and expanded throughout the second century right up to the time of Origen. It can therefore help give insight into Jewish / Christian relations during the second century.

Before this can be done, we must take note of some terminological issues that particularly trouble the end of the first through the second century. It has been common, even among scholars, to speak of this document or that institution as either Christian or Jewish as if the two were exclusive categories.[252] But in recent decades some scholars have pointed out that these either/or categories are not completely satisfactory for the first and second centuries when there were still a significant number of Christians, who considered themselves Jewish. Therefore some scholars have tried to define another category between these first two, namely, "Jewish-Christian", in order to designate such early Christians and their communities. However, consensus on particular examples of documents, figures, or communities, that were "Jewish-Christian" has proven very difficult to achieve.

Gabriele Boccaccini has criticized scholars' use of the terms "Christian" and "Jew" as opposed to one another as if they each designated a separate *genus*. He suggests instead that Christianity should be viewed as a *species* of Judaism as is Pharisaism and Essenism. Thus a document should not be considered as either Jewish or Christian, but rather Christian, or Essene, or

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[252] For example, consider the ongoing debate discussed earlier in this dissertation as to whether the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* is originally a Jewish document with Christian interpolations or a Christian document.

Rabbinic.[253] Boccaccini's comments have much to be said for them, especially when applied to the situation of the first and second centuries. And I have tried to take this point of view into account in my description of the early Jerusalem church as the Way, a Jewish sect among many.

Both the traditional and the proposed terminologies represent points of view of people who lived in different periods as Christians and/or Jews. The Christians of Jerusalem in 40 C.E. along with Paul with his colleagues considered themselves Jewish and as belonging to a particular Jewish sect (only later called Christian). The Sadducees of Jerusalem of that period probably agreed. By the third and fourth centuries, certainly most Christians did not consider themselves Jewish and most Jews (belonging to Rabbinic Judaism) did not consider themselves Christian. Furthermore, most people on both sides saw the categories as exclusive.[254] At least the common language that developed indicates this. Christians who observed Jewish law or attended the synagogues and thereby crossed the terminological boundary thus established were not "Jewish-Christian" but

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[253] Gabriele Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought, 300 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 7-25. Boccaccini suggests that Christianity and Rabbinism are simply the two species of Judaism that survived into the modern era. He seems to suggest Christianity should still be considered a part of Judaism. But even in the Forward to Boccaccini's book, James Charlesworth questions whether this is a useable idea in the modern age, xviii.

[254] If such categories were still unusual in the early third century, with the rise of Constantine in the fourth century, the terminology and use of the law would have made such categories clear and exclusive at least in a legal sense. But this did not start first in the fourth century. Already in the second century with the decree of Hadrian, the Jews were legally singled out by Roman law as distinct from Christians, probably on the basis of circumcision (Justin *Dial.* 16). But legal terminology too could be confusing in this regard. Consider the legal privileges granted to the Jews "to live by their ancestral laws" throughout much of the Mediterranean in the final centuries B.C.E. (Tcherikover, 301-314; Josephus *Ant.*14.213; 242; 244-246) At what point did members of Jewish society, who were Christians, forfeit these privileges by no longer being legally considered "Jews"?

rather Judaizing Christians.[255] It is this point of view, found in the centuries after the third, that scholars have mistakenly operated with even when discussing the first and second centuries C.E.

The above thus indicates that the late first through possibly the early third centuries were a time of transition in the popular estimation of Christianity as a *species* of Judaism to a *genus* opposed to Judaism. This implies that there is no black and white answer in regard to terminology as the entire period was one of change and variation. Undoubtedly the rate of transition was different in different places. I will, therefore, keep to the imperfect traditional terminology, of Jews, Christians, and Jewish-Christians since there does not seem to be a clear alternative for discussing the second century. But this will be done with the above reservations in mind.

The Great Church and the *Testimonia* Tradition

I have already demonstrated the conviction of the first Christians in regard to the relationship between the Hebrew prophets and the Gospel. Every indication is that the early Christian missionaries made it one of their primary arguments that Jesus was the Christ, whose coming had fulfilled the promises of God given through the prophets. The "good news", that is the Gospel, was itself the proclamation that God had fulfilled his promises in Jesus. Paul, for example, repeatedly points out that the Gospel was a mystery purposed by God before the ages, witnessed by the prophets, and only now was being completely revealed by Christian preaching based upon those prophets.[256] And if the postscript of Rom 16:25-27 is accepted as Pauline, the apostle explicitly

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[255] The verb is ijoudai?zw. So see Josephus *J.W.* 2, 454 where Metilius promises "to become a Jew" by being circumcised. But note *J.W.* 2, 463, where Josephus distinguishes between "Jews" (jIoudaivou"), who were targeted for death in the Roman war, and "Judaizers" (ijoudai?zonta"), who were merely held in suspicion. So Paul uses the verb in Gal 2:14 in the sense of following the Jewish ceremonial law, such as dining separate from Gentiles. In like manner, Ignatius says that it is "out of place" for a Christian to ijoudaizei`n, which he equates with kata; novmon zei`n, which specifically includes observing the Sabbath instead of the Lord's Day (*Magn.* 8-10).

Acts 13:32-33: "And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus."

[256] Rom 1:2; 3:21; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 2:20; 3:5; 3:9;

states that the gospel is manifested through the prophetic writings (fanerwqevnto" de; nu`n diav te grafw`n profhtikw`n).

This conviction, as we have seen, is not uniquely Pauline. It is witnessed by Paul in the 50's, but almost certainly was passed on to him by the Jerusalem leaders of the Way, where they had been acting under this conviction for almost 20 years, since the resurrection of Jesus. It is witnessed also by all the later documents of the New Testament explicitly or implicitly, from the most Jewish book of James, to the apocalyptic book of Revelation, to the most properly Greek book, Hebrews.[257] When Ephesians 2:20 assigns the prophets as part of the foundation of Christianity, it is expressing a conviction that all the authors of the Great Church agree upon.

This conviction did not disappear or lessen with the passage of the first century. Almost every author explicitly makes mention of the prophets and their foretelling of the Gospel. It will be useful here to give a general overview simply to get a better feel of how large a role the prophets played among Christians who were part of this continuing tradition at the start of the second century.

At the end of the first century, Clement invokes the prophets as examples as well as sources of oracles concerning Christ: "Let us be imitators also of those who in goat-skins and sheep-skins went about proclaiming the coming of Christ; I mean Elijah, Elisha, and Ezekiel among the prophets, with those others to whom a like testimony is borne [in Scripture]." (*1 Clem.* 17)

Just as Ephesians 2:20 mentions the apostles, prophets, and Jesus Christ as the foundation of the church, Polycarp includes the same three within another formula: "Let us then serve Him in fear, and with all reverence, even as He Himself has commanded us, and as the apostles who preached the Gospel unto us, and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Lord [have alike taught us]" (Pol. *Phil.* 6)

The Epistle of Barnabas, as is well-known, makes abundant use of Christian prophetic *testimonia.* At the beginning of this epistle, the basis for this practice is given in the sentence:

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[257] For example: Matt 26:56; Luke 1:68-80; 24:27; John 5:39; 1 Pet 1:10; James 5:10.

> For the Lord made known to us by the prophets both the things which are past and present, giving us also the first-fruits of the knowledge of things to come, which things as we see accomplished, one by one, we ought with the greater richness of faith and elevation of spirit to draw near to Him with reverence."

At the beginning of the second century Ignatius of Antioch too made regular use of proof taken from the prophets. He states that those who don't believe Jesus possessed true human flesh are those whom "neither have the prophets persuaded, nor the law of Moses, nor the Gospel even to this day" (*Smyrn.* 5.1). This indicates that prophetic testimonies were being used as a regular part of the defense of the Christian faith in Antioch. In another place, he admonishes the Christians in Philadelphia saying, "let us also love the prophets, because they too have proclaimed the Gospel, and placed their hope in Him, and waited for Him; in whom also believing, they were saved." (*Phld.* 5.2). Having to make such an admonishment might indicate that the prophets weren't esteemed properly by the Philadelphians in Ignatius' view. But there is evidence that Ignatius had to deal with just the opposite problem. In the same epistle he writes:

> And I exhort you to do nothing out of strife, but according to the doctrine of Christ. I heard certain persons saying, "If I find it not in the archives (ajrceivoi"), I believe it not in the Gospel." And when I said to them, "It is written", they answered me, "That is the question." But as for me, my archive (ajrcei`a) is Jesus Christ, the inviolable archive (ajrcei`a) is His cross and his death and his resurrection, and faith through him.[258]

Although the passage is somewhat obscure, the reference to the "archives" is probably a reference to the Hebrew Scriptures either directly or by reference to a place where these writings

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[258] *Phld. 8.2.* Translation from J.B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* (1891; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, reprinted 1984), except for the word "archives" which Lightfoot gives as "charter".

were stored.[259] The main point is that some Philadelphians opposed the written Scriptures (including the prophets) to some aspect of the verbal preaching of the Christian Gospel.[260] When Ignatius made presentation of Christian proof texts via "it is written", these individuals continued to question the presented claims. In the end, Ignatius indicates that Jesus was his ultimate "archive" but that the prophets were a very important part of the presentation of the Christian gospel and its defense.[261]

Likewise, at the start of his defense of the Christian faith in the mid-second century, Justin Martyr states "whatever we assert in conformity with what has been taught us by Christ, and by the prophets who preceded Him, are alone true, and are older than all the writers who have existed." Assuming the apostles are implicitly intended to be included in the phrase "what has been taught us

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[259] The term ajrcei`a has caused confusion and thus has been corrected by some to ajrcai`a (ancients / ancient things) and used to refer to the Hebrew scriptures. See for example the translation in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* series. But this is conjecture. The text given by Lightfoot and much more recently in the *Sources Chrétiennes* contain the word as given above.

As to meaning, Theophilus of Antioch (*Autol.* 3.22) has a text where he mentions the "archives" of Tyre, where writings are preserved (kaiv ejn toi`" ajrceioiv" aujtw`n pefuvlaktai tav gravmmata). Josephus also mentions the "archives of Tyre" (ejn toi`" ajrceioiv" ajnagevgraptai), and provides some material therefrom claiming that it comes from the *Chronology* of Menander (*Ant.* 9.14.283-287). He mentions the "archives of the Phoenicians" (*C. Ap.* 1.143), which he claims to have searched, as well as the royal archives of the city of Sepphoris (*Vita* 39). He also mentions the royal archives (tav ajrcei`a) of Jerusalem, which were destroyed in the Roman war (*J.W.*. 2.427), and the royal archives of Antioch that were also destroyed (*J.W.* 7.55). So the meaning of tav ajrcei`a as a public archive for public records is quite clear. What exactly this means in the context of a Christian congregation at the beginning of the second century is less clear. Perhaps it refers to some place where the community kept its copies of the scriptures and by *synecdoche*, Ignatius refers this to the scriptures themselves. (cf. Valentinian Exposition (NHC XI 28,31-38): [It is a great and] necessary thing for us to [seek with] more diligence and [perseverance] after the scriptures and [those who] proclaim the concepts. For about [this] the ancients ("archives") say, "[They] were proclaimed by God.").

[260] This seems similar to the report in Acts 17:11, where the Beroeans tested Paul's message against the scriptures "to see whether these things were so."

[261] This agrees with another statement of his to the Smyrnaeans: "give heed to the prophets, and above all, to the Gospel, in which the passion [of Christ] has been revealed to us, and the resurrection has been completed." (*Smyrn.* 7.1)

by Christ", we again have the tripartite foundation of authority of the Christian faith including the prophets.

These types of general statements regarding the importance of the prophets could be multiplied. But these examples already demonstrate continuity from the end of the first century through the mid-second, and geographically they cover at least from Antioch to Rome. This remarkable agreement in sentiment and phraseology is explained by the inheritance of a conviction of fundamental nature from the earliest Christians, which has already been demonstrated. There is, therefore, a fundamental continuity in this tradition from Jerusalem of the 30's C.E. to Rome of the mid-second century, at least in the basic conviction of the authority of the prophets and, as we will see, in many of the specific *testimonia* used. On this basis, this tradition, its use, and its modification can be a powerful tool for the evaluation of relationship of the Great Church to other religious groups, figures, and texts.

Jewish-Christian Use of the *Testimonia*

The topic of Jewish Christianity is an area that has received significant scholarly attention in the last fifty years.[262] This conceptual category is an attempt to overcome the weakness of an excessive dualism found in an "either Jewish or Christian" model. Scholars agree generally that particularly for the first hundred and fifty years of the Common Era these categories can not be made exclusive because there were still significant numbers of Christians who considered themselves Jewish. And yet, despite basic agreement on this fact, there is no clear consensus regarding a precise definition for "Jewish Christian" or "Jewish Christianity."

Jean Daniélou in his work, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, offered three different possible references for the term "Jewish Christianity". Essentially he identified two categories of religious movements, the orthodox and the unorthodox, into which he placed known religious

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[262] H. J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums* (Tübingen, 1949). Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (Chicago: The Henry Regnery Company), 1964.

groups. In addition, he defined a third reference, which was not made up of specific religious groups at all but was a definite type of thought that went beyond any specific group of people.[263]

Orthodox Jewish-Christians

Daniélou's "orthodox" category of Jewish Christianity consisted mainly of the Jerusalem community led by James and those outside of Jerusalem who submitted to Jerusalem's authority. These Christians were orthodox, according to Daniélou, in regard to their beliefs about Christ, but continued to practice the law and on this account some were very limited in their interaction with Gentile believers.[264] As we have seen, there were some in this community who were highly critical of Paul and believed he taught Jews of the diaspora to turn away from Moses (Acts 20:17-26). The practice of the Mosaic law and this criticism of Paul were carried forth by some Jewish Christian groups well into the second century. But the core of the Jerusalem Christian community largely disappeared from history after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.[265] Jewish Christians outside of Jerusalem appear to have continued independent activity up through the middle of the second century.

Daniélou attempted to identify the literary remains of this orthodox Jewish Christianity. He found that there were numerous texts that represented the doctrine taught by this group of Jewish Christians although few, if any, actually go back directly to Jerusalem. He claims that the *Ascension of Isaiah, 2 Enoch,* parts of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and the *Sibylline Oracles,* and parts of several works such as the *Gospel of Peter,* the *Gospel of James,* the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*, the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, the *Gospel of the Egyptians,* the *Gospel of Thomas,* the

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[263] Daniélou, 7-9.

[264] In *Dial.* 47, Justin mentions types of Jewish-Christians who hold "the confession of the Christ of God". First, are those who will interact with the Gentiles and not try and force them to live according to the law, although they themselves do. Second, are those Jewish Christians who demand that the Gentiles keep the law in order to be saved. If Justin is accurately reporting contemporary opinions he is familiar with, these differences are simply continuations of the differences of opinion already observed in the mid-first century in the Jerusalem community.

[265] Eusebius claims that the Christians of Jerusalem fled to Pella of Perea in the Transjordan sometime before the siege of Jerusalem. *Hist. Eccl.*. 3.5.

Apocalypse of Peter, the *Epistle of the Apostles*, the *Odes of Solomon*, the *Didache, Barnabas*, *Hermas*, *1 Clement,* and the epistles of Ignatius, all contain material important for the study of Jewish-Christianity. From his study of these documents he was able to identify a number of characteristic themes and ideas that identify Jewish-Christian material.

One of the main characteristics of this material is its use of traditional Jewish methods of exegesis including targumim, midrashim, and *testimonia*.[266] It is actually this line of Jewish-Christian tradition, started and supported in Jerusalem, that was inherited by the early Gentile Christians, both those of Pauline congregations and those not of Pauline congregations. It is largely this main line of tradition that we have already traced in the foregoing pages. From the materials just mentioned, Daniélou shows that this tradition remained an important element in Jewish-Christianity and the *testimonia* formed a common tradition that these Christians shared with the growing Gentile churches. Thus some of the works just mentioned were held in very high regard among the second-century Gentile churches, some even being used in public worship. They probably inherited some of these from ancient Jewish-Christian congregations.

Ebionites and Elkesaites

Daniélou's "unorthodox" category included many groups, some known only from patristic sources. These groups have some common characteristics and yet differ significantly. The first subset among these groups were those who were most close to the theology of the Great Church, the Ebionites and the related sect, the Elkesaites. Daniélou considered both of these to have been heavily influenced by the Essenes. Both of these Christian sects were monotheistic in that they confessed one primary God who created all things. But from the point of view of later Christian orthodoxy they were unorthodox in their Christian confession in that they acknowledged Jesus as a great prophet or other messianic figure, but they did not recognize him as the Son of God. It was a common theme among these two groups that the Spirit or some divine power descended upon Jesus at his baptism and in this way Jesus became the "Christ" or especially empowered, rather than attributing this to his nature. That is, they held an adoptionist Christology, which claimed that

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[266] Daniélou, 88-107.

Jesus was born of a natural union between Joseph and Mary. The Ebionites and Elkesaites also demanded that their disciples continue to live according to the law, clearly revealing their continuing Jewish orientation.[267]

In regard to scripture, these two groups had a number of interesting doctrines. The Ebionites only made use of the Gospel of Matthew.[268] Both groups rejected the apostle Paul, considering him to have been a false prophet.[269] In regard to the Old Testament, the Ebionites seem to have had a doctrine of "false pericopes" by which they considered certain parts of the scriptures to have been falsehoods added to the prophets when their prophecies were written down.[270] In this way they removed offensive passages from the Hebrew Scriptures. Origen states that the Elkesaites followed a similar method.[271]

There is not enough information to know with precision how these groups dealt with the *testimonia* tradition. They clearly could not have accepted many of the Christological conclusions drawn from a number of the Christological *testimonium* themes. In one case, this can be explicitly demonstrated. We are told explicitly that the Ebionites rejected the doctrine of the virgin birth as taught by the Great Church, which was supported especially with reference to Is. 7:14.[272] The first Christian work to explicitly reference this passage is probably the Gospel of Matthew. And these

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[267] Epiph. *Pan.* 19.3.5-6. For example, Elkesai required believers to be circumcised and to pray while facing Jerusalem.

[268] Irenaeus. *Haer.* 1.26.2.

[269] Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 6.38; Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.26.2.

[270] See Daniélou, 60. This follows from the conclusion that the Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies* represent Ebionite doctrine. These texts in several places enunciate the principle that the Hebrew Scriptures contain falsehoods that should be rejected. Irenaeus states that "as to the prophetical writings, they endeavor to expound them in a somewhat singular manner." 1.26.2.

[271] Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 6.38.

[272] Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.26.2; 5.1.3. Origen states that there was a disagreement among the Ebionites on this topic in his day. Some taught the virgin birth but others rejected it. *Cels.* 5.61. Thus he speaks of the "two sects" of the Ebionites. *Cels.* 5.65. According to Eusebius, the Ebionites that taught the virgin birth, nevertheless, denied that Jesus existed before his birth, that is, was the pre-existent, eternal Son of God. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.27.2-3.

groups made use of material from that gospel.[273] But apparently they rejected the interpretation Matthew made of that *testimonium*. For Irenaeus pointed out that the Ebionites of the late second century followed the translations of Theodotion and Aquila [274] in rejecting the translation of Is. 7:14 found in the Septuagint and accordingly rejected the traditional Christian exegesis of that text.[275] So the Ebionites, who comprised a Christian community of the second century, are explicitly documented as making use of Jewish exegesis and translation, most likely itself created in reaction to earlier Christian *testimonium* activity. In so doing, Irenaeus says that they were "setting aside the testimony of the prophets which proceeded from God."[276] That is, they were rejecting a part of the *testimonium* tradition that the Great Church considered divinely revealed.

Cerinthus, Carpocrates, the Gnostics

Daniélou included several other groups, traditionally considered "gnostic" schools, in his "unorthodox" Jewish-Christian category. Recent scholarship continues to make use of the terminology "gnosticism", although this general abstraction is considered to have less and less heuristic value.[277] Unfortunately, because of past usage, there has been an implicit bias in

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[273] Irenaeus states that they make use of the Gospel of Matthew. *Haer* 1.26.2; 3.11.7. But Eusebius states that they only made use of what he knew as the "Gospel According to the Hebrews". *Hist. Eccl.* 3.27.4. Assuming the sect had not completely changed scriptures in the time between these two authors, the Gospel used exclusively must be basically the same in both cases. Epiphanius, agreeing with Eusebius, claimed that the Ebionites called their Gospel "According to the Hebrews" and claimed it was a mutilated version of Matthew. *Pan.* 30.13.1-8. Further, Hegesippus is said to have explicitly quoted from a Hebrew original of the "Gospel According to the Hebrews" in the second century. *Hist. Eccl.* 4.22.7. All in all, it seems that the Ebionites used a Gospel text they called "According to the Hebrews" that was very similar to the canonical gospel of Matthew and dates back at least to the second century.

[274] Aquila published his translation of the Old Testament around 130 C.E. Theodotian published his translation in 181 C.E.

[275] The Septuagint used parqevno", a virgin, whereas the other two Jewish translators used nea`ni", a young woman.

[276] Ir. *haer.* 3.21.1.

[277] Michael A. Williams**,** *Rethinking "Gnosticism" : an argument for dismantling a dubious category*, (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1996).

scholarship that sees Jewish and gnostic as separate categories, the one a bastion of monotheistic confession, the other a fundamentally Hellenistic pagan form of religion.[278] But more recent scholarship has discovered that these categories too can no longer be considered exclusive. Patristic authors, if carefully observed, allow us to observe some transitional figures in a trajectory from Jewish heresy to Christian gnostic heresies.[279]

Cerinthus is one of these transitional figures. He was a Jew, perhaps educated in Egypt, and later supposedly active in Asia Minor by the beginning of the second century.[280] Like the Ebionites and the Elkesaites, Cerinthus taught that Jesus was a man born from the union of Mary and Joseph, and was thus only human, having received power from heaven at his baptism.[281] But he differed from the former in that he held that the world was not created by God but by angels who were lower than God. He is not said to have developed any sophisticated creation myth.

Cerinthus revealed his Jewish background in that he required the keeping of some aspects of the law such as circumcision. He is also known in later authors specifically for his physical millenarianism in predicting a 1000 year kingdom of Christ on earth. And on this basis, Daniélou

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[278] Some scholars have characterized "gnosticism" as a hyper-Hellenized form of an original Christianity, and others as a Hellenistic pagan religion that took on some Christian elements.

[279] Most critical scholars have dismissed much of the testimony of the heresiologists when they present their theories on the origins of the gnostic schools. Part of this comes from what is believed to be a highly oversimplified, or even patently incorrect, presentation of all Christian gnostic schools as deriving from Simon Magus the Samaritan (To the contrary however, see Harnack, 1, 246 n.1, where he states that there is nothing improbable in the basic assertion of the influential figure of Simon in Samaria in the mid first-century. He claims it was a "serious mistake of the critics to regard Simon Magus as a fiction"). This critical dismissal of the heresiologists seems to have also led some scholars to not take sufficient note of certain Jewish transitional figures. This has occurred even as modern scholarship is coming to similar conclusions in regard to the underlying Jewish nature or origin of the Christian gnostic schools.

[280] Irenaeus *Haer.* 3.3.4. There he is reported to have had a famous face to face encounter with the Apostle John in the public baths of Ephesus. Irenaeus repeats this story and he claims it to have been told by Polycarp. There are no other independent sources for the report and due to its nature is at best uncertain.

[281] Irenaeus H*aer.* 1.25.1

considered him to have been specifically influenced by the Jewish zealotism of the mid-first century.[282]

In regard to the scriptures, the Cerinthians are reported to have used a mutilated form of the Gospel of Matthew like the Ebionites. This correlation with the Ebionites / Elkasaites is very interesting and can hardly be passed over as coincidence.[283] However, in regard to the Hebrew Scriptures, nothing specifically is known regarding Cerinthus. He must have voiced some criticism of the received interpretation of the Old Testament in order to defend his position regarding the creation of the world by lower powers.[284] But how was this criticism reconciled with the demand that the Mosaic law should be followed? This we do not know. And we also do not know how he reacted to the Christian *testimonia* tradition, however, it most probably had to yield to the same critical theory.

Cerinthus was a circumcision practicing Jew, who no longer taught the traditional Jewish doctrine of monotheism, which identified the supreme deity as the creator of the world (demiurgical monotheism). Apparently the question of the origin of evil in the world had driven him and his fellow Jewish followers to believe that a lower power had created this world.[285] Yet he must have continued to believe that the law of Moses, found in the scriptures, was divinely revealed from the highest God. It is unlikely that his notions regarding creation and the law came from Christian influence. It is much more likely that Cerinthus represents the Christianization of a

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[282] See Daniélou, 67-68.

[283] It must be noted that in addition to these parties outside of the Great Church, other texts of the Great Church, which bear undeniable Jewish marks, such as the *Didache,* also make chief use of Matthew among the gospels. The same can be said of Ignatius, a very early author. The question as to why this is or what it implies is outside the scope of this paper but remains an important historical point.

[284] Is it possible that this position is related to the Enochic Judaism postulated by Boccachini, as related earlier? This general school of thought emphasized the corruption of the world through the fallen angels of Gen. 6. The importance of these ideas are seen at Qumran.

[285] See Alan Segal**,** *Two powers in heaven : early rabbinic reports about Christianity and gnosticism* (Leiden : Brill, 1977).

Jewish party that had already rejected traditional Jewish monotheism and its usual corollary, the creation of a once good world. Cerinthus represents a Christianized Jewish heresy.

Carpocrates is a another figure who traveled along the same road, but is even further separated from traditional second-temple Judaism. His Jewish background can be observed only more dimly. First, like the Ebionites and Cerinthus, he taught that Jesus was born of the natural union of Mary and Joseph, following well-known Jewish opinion.[286] Further, like Cerinthus he taught that the world was created by angels below the supreme God. In this matter he also reveals a Jewish frame of mind in that he taught that the Devil was the chief among the angels who created the world. In this way he had started to create a model of dualism of good and evil. In addition, Carpocrates taught that Jesus had despised the law of the Jews since his soul had remembered the things he had seen in the sphere of the supreme God. Souls who were like Jesus' could do likewise.[287] This justification for the rejecting the Mosaic law demonstrates that Carpocrates operated in some environment near Judaism in which it was important to state a position regarding the law.

Again we have little specific information of how Carpocrates dealt with the Hebrew scriptures. However, given his attitude toward Jewish (demiurgical) monotheism and the law, he must have had some type of critical theory to justify this attitude toward the scriptures. Again, this must have severely reduced the importance of the Christian *testimonia* to him. This can be observed explicitly in the texts found at Nag Hammadi which represent the teaching of many of the sects that came after Carpocrates.

Groups known from the mid-second century such as the Valentinians, and Sethians, are often referred to as "gnostic". While the doctrines of these groups had by the mid-second century greatly diverged from Sadducean and Pharasaic Judaism and the mainstream Christian *testimonia* tradition, patristic authors demonstrate that these groups used language, rites, and creeds common in the

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[286] Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.25.1; Hippolytus. *Haer.* 20.

[287] Thus Carpocrates was known for licentious behavior. And while character assassination through accusations of moral laxity was a commonplace in antiquity and should not generally be taken seriously, here there seems to be a theoretical and systematic basis for such an attitude and practice.

Great Church. Irenaeus reports, for example, that the Valentinians "do indeed confess with the tongue one God the Father" and "do with their tongue confess one Jesus Christ."[288] This indicates that this group made a conscious effort to portray themselves as Great Church Christians.[289] Some other related groups appear to have celebrated the Christian sacraments of baptism and the eucharist.[290] Such groups often operated in large metropolitan settings alongside congregations of the Great Church and at times won converts from it. All of this, according to Irenaeus, made them outwardly "appear to be like us".[291] And even some highly educated people considered all these groups simply competing forms of the same religion.[292] Yet leaders of the Great Church considered these groups non-Christian due to divergent doctrines especially in regard to the nature of God, Jesus, and the cosmos. And they considered them dangerous precisely because they were having success at gaining converts from the Great Church.

Analysis of these groups, their origins, and their relationship to the Great Church has proceeded in many different directions. Various scholarly theories have been produced which attempt to explain the origins of this complex Gnostic movement. One of the earliest was put forth by Harnack, who viewed orthodoxy and gnosticism as simply two different levels of Hellenization of an original Christian movement. Similarly, Walter Bauer (*Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*) proposed that from the outset there was a variety of Christian groups, that in many places the majority were part of groups later called "gnostic", and only in the second century was

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[288] Irenaeus *Haer.* 3.16.6 and 4.33.3.

[289] Elaine Pagels mentions these passages but relates them only to the first article of the creed (Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 32. But the Valentinians also confessed the second article, "one Lord Jesus Christ". According to Irenaeus, this confession was immediately contradicted by the Valentinians when they divided the earthly Jesus from the heavenly Christ who descended upon him.

[290] The five seals of the Sethians are well known. And Marcus is explicitly said to have administered a form of the sacrament among his followers. Hippolytus *Haer.* 6.35. Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.13.2.

[291] Irenaeus *Haer.* 3.16.8. Likewise, Justin explicitly states that the Marcion's followers were called "Christians" *1 Apol.* 26.

[292] And so Porphyry characterized the gnostic schools as some among "many Christians." *HTR* (1964): 259-61.

an "orthodoxy" gradually imposed upon the church through the agency of Rome.[293] This thesis was generally accepted though slightly modified by Helmut Koester and those who followed him. The weaknesses of this theory in explaining the full gnostic sects of the second century have convinced other scholars to turn in other directions.

Another possible explanation for gnostic origins was sought in the Greek philosophical schools. The influence of Platonism on the gnostic texts is obvious. They clearly are influenced by Plato's doctrine of the forms and his general outline of creation written in the *Timaeus*. But the question of origins must go beyond demonstration of influence. A.J. Festugière suggested in the Greek Hermetica that one could trace two basic lines of thought found in gnosticism back to Plato. One is an optimistic line of thought, in which the world is regarded as beautiful and well-ordered, and a broader pessimistic line of thought, in which the world is considered evil, a place of corruption and chaos.[294] Festugière further suggested that these two lines of thought could be traced back to Plato's own development, the pessimistic being earlier and the optimistic being his later doctrine found in the Timaeus.[295] Modifications have been made to this theory by A.H. Armstrong, who accepted the argument for the optimistic line of thought but looked to other sources for the negative line of thought.[296] Other modifications have been suggested by Abraham P. Bos, who proposed that the major channel for the influence of Greek philosophy on the gnostics was Aristotle's lost works, his dialogues and *exoterikoi logoi*.[297]

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[293] See the summary in Edwin Yammauchi, "Gnosticism and Early Christianity", in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World,* (Wendy E. Helleman, ed.; NY: University Press of America, 1994), 41-44.

[294] *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*. IV. *Le Dieu inconnu et la gnose*, (Paris: J. Gabalda/Librairie Lecoffre, 1954).

[295] Abraham P. Bos, "Cosmic and Meta-cosmic Theology," in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World,* (Wendy E. Helleman, ed.; NY: University Press of America, 1994), 23-29.

[296] "Gnosis and Greek Philosophy" in B. Aland, ed., *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978, 87-124).

[297] Bos, 9-13.

To others, the philosophical origins of gnosticism have seemed at best only a partial solution.[298] In 1965, G. Quispel expanded upon the arguments of Gershom Scholem that scholarship should look to Judaism as the main source for gnostic origins. He suggested that anti-Pauline Jewish communities of Syria can be demonstrated to have been the source for Syrian Christian asceticism and books such as the *Gospel of Thomas*.[299] In like manner, he suggested that gnosticism arose out of a Jewish background shared with Christianity and was progressively Hellenized and Christianized by each new gnostic teacher such as Basilides and Valentinus. He pointed to the esoteric traditions of Palestinian Pharisees as a likely source for the original content of the gnostic myths. In his response to Quispel's comments, Hans Jonas actually intensified the argument, and referring to Scholem's work suggested that the developed gnostic mythology not only arose on the fringe of Judaism but claimed that it is actually a parody that reveals an essential anti-Jewish animus within gnosticism.[300] He argues that the gnostic use and exegesis of the Old Testament shows an intent to turn Jewish orthodoxy completely upside down, and moreover, that this is the heart and soul of the gnostic faith. He leaves it an open question whether or not this anti-Jewish movement began within Judaism itself.

In a similar vein, Daniélou considered it obvious that such Christian gnostic groups had their origin in Jewish heresy.[301] The main question that fueled the development of their religious systems was the question of the origin of evil and how one could explain evil in this world and the individual's relationship to it. They shared a common conviction that matter was full of evil and

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[298] William Arnal points out that "Bos's argument only allows us to add Aristotle to the already-long list of influences on Gnosticism." "Aristotle and the Jewish God: A Response to A.P. Bos," in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response within the Greco-Roman World,* (Wendy E. Helleman, ed.; NY: University Press of America, 1994), 24.

[299] Makarios Gilles Quispel, *Das Thomasevangelium, and das Lied von der Perle* (Leiden:1967). "The Syrian Thomas and the Syrian Macarius", *VC* 18 (1964) 226-235. "Gnosis and the New Sayings of Jesus," *Eranos Jahrbuch,* 1969, vol. 38, p. 269ff.)

[300] "Response to G. Quispel's *Gnosticism and the New Testament*: 1. The Hymn of the Pearl. 2. Jewish Origins of Gnosticism", in: J. P. Hyatt (Hrsg.), *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, Nashville 1965, 279-293.

[301] Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (London: Darton, longman & Todd: 1964), 69-85.

that the divine soul is essentially trapped in a material body and needs to find its way back to the divine realms in the heavens. This lead to a common conviction that the world was somehow defective and created imperfectly, which called for an explanation.

These fundamental convictions shaped the gnostic systems and also motivated their use of the Old Testament. Amazingly, in all of Bentley Layton's *The Gnostic Scriptures*, there is not one reference to any of the traditional Jewish Messianic proof-texts identified by Collins and listed in Appendix 1. And further, there is not one independent reference to any of the earliest Christian *testimonia* listed in Appendix 2.[302] Similarly, it has been noted in another place by this author that although the two chapters of Psalm 22 and Isa 53 are quoted or alluded to in the New Testament in total over 60 times, they are not referred to at all in the *The Gnostic Scriptures*.[303] This is certainly remarkable simply from a statistical point of view. In light of the importance of the messianic proof-texts within contemporary Judaism and of the *testimonia* in the Great Church's tradition, this must be taken as a very significant statement in regard to their common origins. This statement can be amplified by considering other uses of the Old Testament which are not the focus of this paper, such as the use of Old Testament typology. The gnostic traditions are simply not concerned in any way with Jewish Messianic theology or the defense of the Christian faith through the *testimonia* tradition. This silence, therefore, must be considered a primary feature of the relationship between the literature of the Great Church and the gnostic religious texts.

One unique text in this regard should be noted, *The Exegesis on the Soul* discovered at Nag Hammadi.[304] This text also does not reference any of the traditional *testimonia* that have been documented thus far. But the text does apparently make use of testimonia collections which contain texts taken from the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament, and pagan literature. These

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[302] The closest thing to such a reference appears to be the use of the stone *testimonia* in the Parable of the Wicked Tenents reported in the *Gosp. Thom.* 66. And there is significant reason to doubt that this gospel should be considered a primary "gnostic" document at all.

[303] Mark Nispel, *The Old Testament in Sethianism and Orthodox Christianity*, 8. Unpublished paper prepared for John Turner's Gnosticism class at the University of Nebraska in 1998.

[304] *The Nag Hammadi Library*, (James M. Robinson, ed.; (San Francisco: Harper), 190-198. This document is discussed in Albl, 144-146.

texts are applicable to its subject matter, namely, the fall of the soul, its repentance, and return to the Father. Interestingly, the text quotes an *agraphon*, which it attributes merely to "the prophet", which is also found in patristic texts such as *1 Clem* 8:3. This implies that the developed gnostic schools of the mid to late second century also made use of *testimonium* collections. But the content indicates that although it may share some common material with the Great Church, it most likely witnesses to a tradition that is similar in *genre* but is largely independent in content.

In agreement with this, Irenaeus points out that these groups were not completely uninterested in the Hebrew scriptures. He states that some did engage in the interpretation of the scriptures and adduced proofs from them. In *Haer.* 1.3.4-6, he gives a number of examples of short passages from Paul and the gospels which the Valentinians used. They very much seem like isolated proof texts taken from a Valentinian *testimonum* collection. Irenaeus states that that they also interpreted the prophets in this way.[305] Further, in *Haer. 1.19.1* he gives numerous examples of passages from the prophets that the Marcosians used. So it is not as if the gnostic groups did not make use of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Indeed, they made use of them at times and even used the same textual technique used by the *testimonium* tradition of the Great Church. But the primary use of these books was to use them in explanation of the gnostic cosmology and soteriology. Thus, material from the book of Genesis was quite popular. And when use of the prophets did occur, at least as it is reproduced by the heresiologists, it was in search of proof-texts for the gnostic creation/salvation doctrines. This was much more an engagement of the Jewish/

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[305] Irenaeus summarizes his view of their use of scripture: "to use a common proverb, they strive to weave ropes of sand, while they endeavor to adapt with an air of probability to their own peculiar assertions the parables of the Lord, the sayings of the prophets, and the words of the apostles, in order that their scheme may not seem altogether without support. *In doing so, however, they disregard the order and the connection of the Scriptures, and so far as in them lies, dismember and destroy the truth. By transferring passages, and dressing them up anew, and making one thing out of another, they succeed in deluding many through their wicked art in adapting the oracles of the Lord to their opinions*" *Haer.* 1.7.1.

Christian monotheistic confession of one God, the creator of all things, than it was a reaction to or engagement of the uniquely Christian *testimonium* tradition.[306]

Marcion

In regard to Marcion, it should be noted that he should not be grouped blindly with the Valentinians and Sethians, as he was not very interested in cosmological speculations. Indeed it is unlikely that he can be considered a "gnostic" at all. Nor does he seem to be Jewish-Christian even in a heretical sense. But he is included here because of his importance and his explicit stance regarding the prophets and their use in Christian theology.

Marcion created a system of dualistic theology that confessed an evil creator god and a higher god of good and mercy. He believed the Hebrew scriptures were a product of the evil creator god and thus made them an object of his scorn. Thus he taught that Jesus was the Christ of the highest god not the Jewish Christ. He believed Jesus had come into the world from this highest god and had abolished the law and the prophets. Marcion is well known for his select canon of scripture that included a modified version of Luke and the Pauline epistles. Interestingly, Irenaeus reports that Marcion removed all the passages from Paul's epistles which quoted the prophets in the interest of showing that they had pronounced the gospel beforehand.[307] Thus Marcion completely rejected the Great Church's use of the prophets and its *testimonia* tradition. This is probably one of the reasons that he was so quickly identified as a heretic and excommunicated from Rome and

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[306] Another example of this is the treatment of the monotheistic proof-texts of Dt. 5:9, Isa 45:5 and Isa 46:9 where Yahweh, proclaims, "I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me." In *Ap. John* 11.19-21, this text is used to show that the archon Yaltabaoth (equated with the Jewish Yahweh of the Hebrew scriptures) is impious, arrogant, and ignorant, not knowing those gods above him. Here again the monotheism of Judaism (and thus also Christianity) is turned on its head via parody. That this was a commonplace among some gnostic schools like the Sethians and Valentinians can be deduced from the popularity of the idea in the Nag Hammadi texts. See *Hyp. Arch.* 86.27-30; *Gos. Eg.* III.58.23-24. Irenaeus too takes note of this parody in H*aer.* 1.5.4, 1.29.4 and *Haer.* 2.9.2.

[307] H*aer.* 1.27.2. Cf. Ps-Tert. *Hear.* 6.

written against by Justin already by the mid-second century. Nevertheless, this did not stop him from having great success in building his own following.

Conclusion

In the foregoing, it has been demonstrated that the proof-text tradition played an important role in how leaders of the Great Church evaluated and treated other groups. This was not simply a matter of a general opinion regarding the Old Testament as scripture. For example, although Marcion's rejection of the prophets was a logical conclusion of his general attitude toward the Hebrew scriptures as a whole, he was criticized as much for his specific rejection of the prophetic proof-texts used by Paul and the *testimonia* tradition. The teachers and bishops of the Great Church realized that a significant part of their faith rested upon proof taken from the prophets, proof which they traced back to the teaching of Jesus himself. A rejection of the prophets was a direct assault upon their rule of faith.

Just as the *testimonia* played such an important role in intra-Christian relationships and such relationships can even be measured to some degree by the use and rejection of this tradition, so also the proof-text practice of Christians continued to play a vital role in the relationship between the Great Church and the Jews of the second and third centuries. We must now turn to the specifics of the relationship between Christians and Jews in the second century and the extent to which this affected the exegesis of both groups. In this way we will be able to appreciate the context in which Origen became the first Old Testament scholar of the Christian church.

Chapter 6: Christians and Jews in the 2nd Century

In the previous chapters, I have demonstrated the continuity and importance of the *testimonia* exegetical traditions that drew upon specific passages of the Hebrew Scriptures to express and define fundamental Christian tenets of faith. In the last chapter, it was seen that this tradition can be used to evaluate the relationship of different groups to one another, each of which claimed the name Christian against one another. In this chapter, I want to attempt to demonstrate that this *testimonia* tradition also played a significant role in the social and religious relationship between Christians and Jews in the second century.[308] Ultimately, I will investigate how this inherited social and exegetical tension affected Origen's use of the Old Testament in the third century C.E.

Relative Populations of Jews and Christians in the Second Century

One of the first things to consider in regard to Christian and Jewish relations is the relative sizes of the groups. By the first century, Judaism had spread throughout the empire. In terms of numbers, scholars have generally upheld Philo's statement that the Jews were too numerous for Palestine to support.[309] Estimating populations in antiquity is notoriously difficult and imprecise. However, Feldman, in reviewing scholarly opinion, reports that scholars have estimated that there

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[308] In order to discuss the general social relationship between Christians and Jews we must first pay attention to what these terms mean. There is no doubt that a variety of groups laid claim to the name "Christian" in the second century, as was demonstrated in the last chapter. The same can be said of those who claimed to be "Jews." In regard to "Christian", I will be concerned here largely with the Great Church and Jewish Christianity as opposed to the variety of other groups that claimed the name Christian. The reason for this is that it is these main segments of Christianity that made so much use of the *testimonia* tradition received from the first century. In regard to the nature of second century Judaism, more will be said below.

[309] See Philo, *Flacc* 45. Similar statements can be found attributed to Strabo referring to the period of 85 B.C.E. (cited in Josephus *Ant.* 14.115). Also Josephus *J.W.* 2.398, 7.43. See Tcherikover 269-295 for a discussion of the development of the Diaspora population in various regions.

were on the order of 1 million Jews in the Land of Israel itself [310] and between 4 and 8 million Jews in the empire as a whole in the middle of the first century C.E.[311] When this is compared to an estimated population of the entire empire on the scale of 25 - 50 million people, it is seen that Jews made up a surprisingly large 5% - 10% of the Roman population. It is thus not hard to agree with Tcherichover's claim:

> that the Jewish population was quite considerable in the Graeco-Roman world, especially in the eastern half of the Mediterranean. Greeks and Jews met at every turn, especially in the large cities, but also on the countryside, in the camps of the armed forces, in the small provincial towns, and elsewhere.

These figures indicate that the Jews rapidly grew in population from the end of the first temple period to the first century C.E. in spite of the regular social and political instabilities of their homeland.[312] It is likely that the overall Jewish population decreased somewhat in the period from

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[310] See Feldman, 23. He cites estimates from Harnack, Juster, and Baron, varying from 700,000 to 5,000,000. Tcherichover (292-294) refers to scholars who have made use of the Jewish population in that region at the time of the British mandate in the 20th c. in order to estimate that the Jewish population in the first century C.E. was as low as 500,000 people. I have chosen 1M as a round number representing scale rather than precision, in general indicating a preference for the smaller rather than larger numbers.

[311] Feldman, 293. Estimates are cited from Baron (8 million) and Harnack (4 million). Josephus claims that there were 2.7 million Jews in Jerusalem who partook of the Passover lamb in 66 C.E. when the Roman war began *J.W.* (6.425). Philo (*Flacc.* 43) estimates there were a million Jewish men in Egypt. But this must be an exaggeration. Josephus states that the entire population of Egypt was only 7.5 million (*J.W.* 2.385). See Feldman, 555, n.20 for further discussion. He cites there a statement made by a 13th century Christian writer, Bar-Hebraeus, that a census taken by the Emperor Claudius reported a number of 6,944,000 Jews in the empire.

[312] Scholars have noted that the known Jewish population at the end of the first temple period must have been less than 200,000 people, isolated in the Land of Israel. This raises a serious question as to how the Jewish population grew so rapidly in the following five centuries. Scholars have proposed a variety of solutions (e.g. see Tcherichover, 293 for a discussion of various theories). Feldman uses this increase in population as an argument to support his thesis that the Jews were effective at proselytizing in this period and afterwards. Refer to the Introduction for a brief summary of the political and social forces at work in the Land of Israel in the Hellenistic period.

66 – 135 C.E. due to the three major uprisings that occurred.[313] Nevertheless, even if the Jewish population decreased somewhat, even drastically in some regions around Jerusalem and Alexandria, it has little effect upon the overall discussion here.

Keith Hopkins has compared these Jewish population figures with estimated Christian population figures. Scholars, such as Harnack, working with the meager data at hand have estimated that the Christian population of the empire was a maximum of 6 million at the start of Constantine's reign in the 4th century. Hopkins then begins with another estimate that in the year 40 C.E. there were approximately 1000 Christians.[314] If we take that as a lower boundary and use Luke's number of 5000, taken from Acts 4:4 as an upper bound, we can then use a constant growth curve to estimate the Christian population in the empire between the years 40 – 310 C.E.[315] These charts are on the following pages.

The numbers tell us that in the year 100, there were probably between 7,000 and 25,000 Christians in the empire. By the year 200, the number is between 175,000 and 332,000. Thus even with the highest number of Christians taken against the lower estimate of Jewish population (of 4,000,000), the numbers indicate that there could not have been much more than .5% as many Christians as Jews in 100 C.E. and only 4.3% to 8.3% in 200. This clearly indicates that during the second century, Jews far outnumbered Christians in the empire, and that Christians were a completely insignificant proportion of the Roman population at large.

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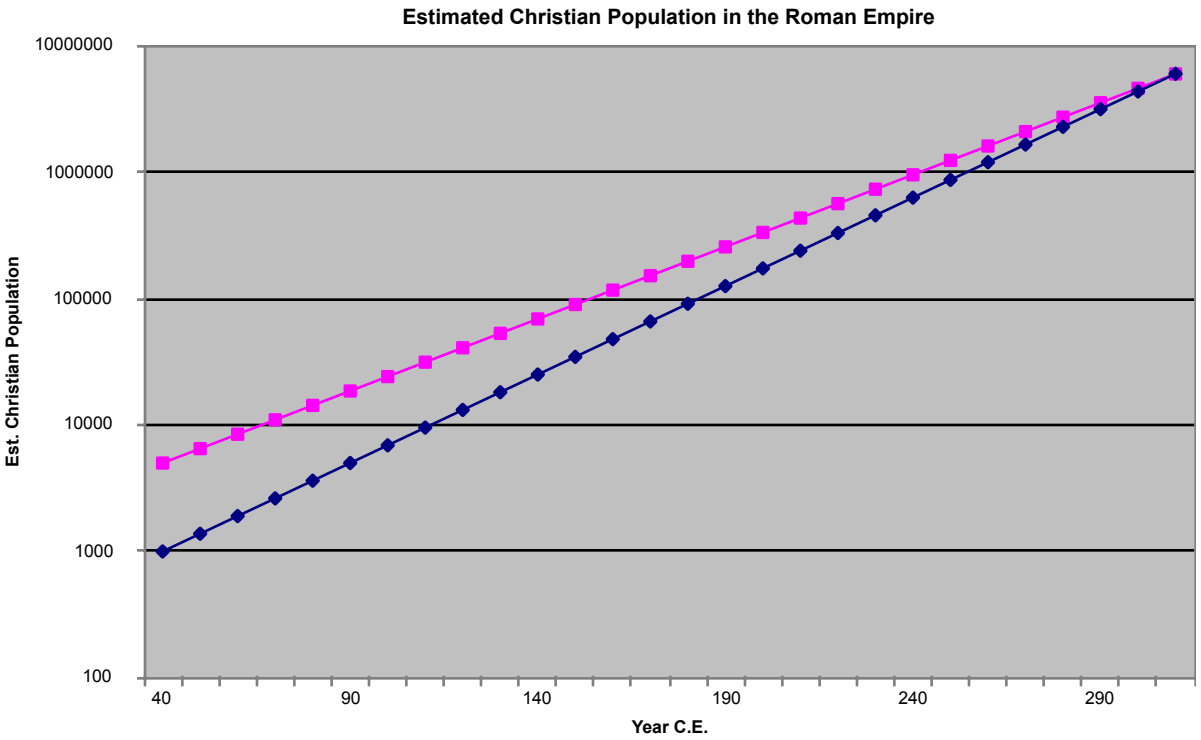
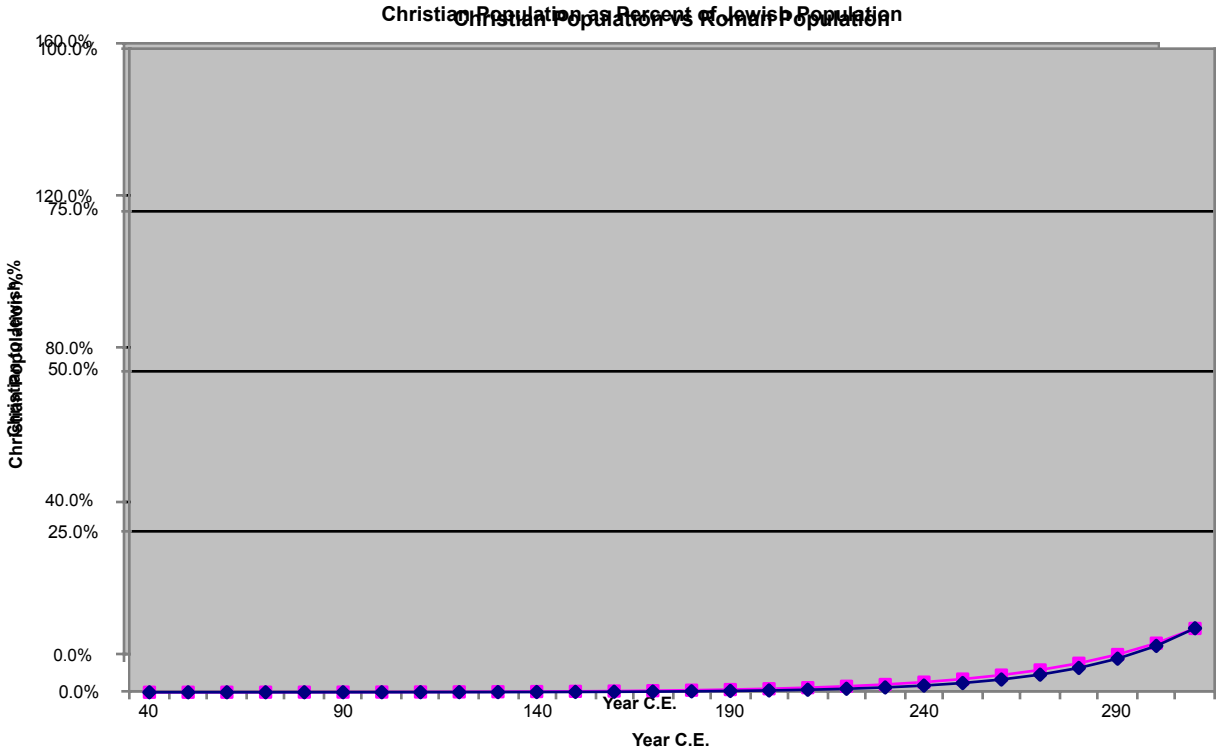
[313] Josephus reports that over 1 million Jews were killed during the siege of Jerusalem in the first war with Rome (*J.W.* 6.420). This is probably a gross exaggeration. Nevertheless, it indicates a large percentage of Jews living in the Land of Israel at the time.

[314] Hopkins, Keith. "Christian Number and Its Implications." *JECS* 6.2 (1998), 192. Also see Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997).

[315] This assumes the empire's population remained constant, which scholars are pretty sure is incorrect. But there is no use trying to be too precise in this matter. The numbers must remain guidelines only. It is the magnitude of the numbers that is important here.


Estimated Christian Population in the Roman Empire
10000000
1000000
100000
10000
1000
100
Est. Christian Population
40
90
140
190
240
290
Year C.E.


Christian Population as Percent of Jewish Population
Christian Population vs Roman Population
160.0%
100.0%
120.0%
75.0%
80.0%
50.0%
40.0%
25.0%
0.0%
0.0%
40
90
140
190
240
290
Year C.E.
Year C.E.

These numbers indicate that Judaism was not threatened in a numerical sense by Christianity until well into the third century. Only a very small percentage of Jews had to hear of Christianity and convert in order to account for the Christian population in the early second century. In addition, it is quite certain that Jews only made up a small percentage of the Christian population by 150 C.E. In agreement with this, Justin Martyr, in a rare explicit comparison, claims that in the mid second-century Gentile Christians far outnumbered Jewish Christians.[316] At that time, the total Christian population was probably only between 25,000 and 75,000. Even if we take Justin's comments to indicate a ratio of only 5:1 of Gentile to Jewish Christians, this would place the Jewish-Christian population at only 5,000 to 15,000 Jews. Even if one were to go beyond this and say that the Jewish-Christian population reached 25,000 at some point, a majority of these must

[316] *1 Apol.* 53.

have been in the geographic region from Jerusalem to Antioch. This leaves very few Jewish-Christians to be spread out in Asia Minor, Italy, and Alexandria.[317]

Nevertheless, it is quite likely that the Christian movement had an impact upon Judaism beyond its sheer numbers. This is likely because the Christian movement was very active already in the first century in important centers such as Jerusalem and Rome. In addition, we know that there were Christian groups active in many of the main urban areas of Asia Minor. Paul's letters and Acts indicate that the arrival of Christians into a city often caused a disturbance in the local Jewish population. Christians, even if not very numerous, were probably a loud and potentially annoying minority in many of these places, which required at least some minimal response by Jewish leaders.[318]

Judaism in the Second Century

In order to investigate this possibility, we need to ask: what sort of Judaism was it that nascent Christianity was in conflict with as is spread into the Empire in the second century? How different was it from the Judaism of Palestine of the first century, which I have already reviewed?

On the one hand, the Jewish Diaspora community was recognized by Greek and Roman laws and granted to live according to its ancestral laws.[319] This legal protection allowed the Jews to observe such things as the Sabbath and other festivals, to be exempt from military service, to

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[317] This must account for why so early in the second century the patristic material only knows a Jew versus Christian dialectic and takes so little account of Jewish-Christians, who observe the law. (See Justin, *Dial.* 47 as an exception. Justin did know of Christians who observed the law although they did not require other Christians to do so.) These types of numbers also largely account for why there is so little explicit Jewish-Christian material which survives. Ultimately, the impact of Christianity upon the population of Judaism was exceedingly small for a very long time. Likewise, the internal influence of Jewish Christians upon Gentile Christianity became small very quickly. But the influence of the initial Jewish-Christians, especially the congregation of Jerusalem, far outweighs their actual population through the transmission of the Christian exegetical traditions of the Hebrew Scriptures.

[318] Based upon early Christian patristic materials that labored with great energy to distinguish Christian faith and practice from Jewish faith and practice.

[319] See Tcherichover, 306-332 for an extended discussion.

collect money and send it to the temple (while it still stood), and, in some places, to organize and administer their own courts in order to judge community matters by their own laws. But in the Greek cities of the Diaspora, such special privileges often brought about the envy and criticism of fellow non-Jewish citizens and thus frequent local conflicts arose.

Even more importantly, Judea and the Jews in proximity to this region were in regular conflict with the Roman government in the late first and early second centuries. A growth in nationalistic fervor led to war with Rome in 66 C.E. At that time Vespasian and his son Titus conquered Judea, laid siege to Jerusalem, and burned the temple.[320] As additional punishment, Vespasian, founded the *fiscus Judaicus*, the "Jewish tax", throughout the empire as an ironic punishment, in order to fund the rebuilding of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome. This tax was a matter of social shame since

> it marked the Jews as a dangerous and seditious people. In this way the last hope of 'emancipation' was frustrated. We can imagine that now wrath and hatred were the dominant feelings of Jews towards the Graeco-Roman world.[321]

The cycle of rebellion and crushing defeat was repeated in 115-117 C.E. when the Jews of northern Egypt, Cyrene, and Cyprus rebelled against their Greek neighbors, even destroying pagan temples.[322] The end result was intervention by the Roman legions and a crushing defeat for the Jews. This war resulted in destruction and depopulation of some areas in Egypt that could still be

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[320] Many gruesome details of the suffering of the Jews are given by Josephus in the *Jewish War*. For a modern discussion of the development of the rebellious parties within Palestinian Judaism, see Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations Into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period From Herod I Until 70 A.D.* (David Smith, tr.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989).

[321] See Tcherikover and Fuks, 1, 80-82.

[322] See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 4.2 for a report of this conflict. A modern summary can be found in Tcherikover and Fuks, 1, 85-93. Appian reports that the Jews destroyed the temple of Nemesis nearby Alexandria. (*Bell. civ.* 2.90). In turn, the Talmud reports that the great Synagogue of Alexandria was destroyed at this time (*Sukkah* 5.55b). Although it is not firmly established, Tcherikover concludes his opinion that this rebellion was motivated by a rise in messianic spirit.

felt even 35 years later.[323] Shortly after this revolt, Judea was transformed into a consular province and an additional Roman legion was stationed there, in order to help keep the Jews of Palestine under control.[324]

In spite of this increased Roman presence, in 132-135 C.E. the cycle repeated again in Palestine with the messianic Bar-Kochba revolt, which ended with yet another crushing defeat. The Romans at this time outlawed many Jewish practices including, apparently, circumcision. And such restrictions stayed in place for several years.[325] Adding insult to injury, the Jews were expelled from their traditional homeland, being forbidden to enter Jerusalem under penalty of death.[326] As a result of these events and the continuing instability in the region of Palestine and Egypt, Jews started to flee to Asia Minor, where there was already a strong Jewish community.[327] And as a result of all these political and military disturbances, the general attitude of the Romans toward the Jews in the second century generally soured.[328] Thus even if religious reasons had not

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[323] Papyrus 449. Tcherikover and Fuks, 2, 257.

[324] Bowersock, G. W. "A Roman Perspective on the Bar Kochba War" in vol. 2 of *Approaches to Ancient Judaism* (ed. William Scott Green; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980), 132-133. Archeology has definitively answered the question whether the second legion was present before 120 C.E. and thus belongs to the context of the Trajanic revolt.

[325] There is some uncertainty as to whether the specific ban on circumcision came before the rebellion and was a cause of the rebellion, or was a result of the rebellion. Further, it appears the aim of the ban on circumcision was the practice in general, not Jews in particular. Such restrictions were eased in the reign of Antonius Pius.

[326] Justin *Dial.* 16; *1 Apol.* 47.

[327] Thus, the setting for Justin's debate with Trypho, who is said to have just escaped the war (*Dial.* 1), is Ephesus. Also, Rabbi Jose ben Halafta is said to have fled there after the revolt. Feldman, 71.

[328] Marcus Aurelius is reported to have said of the Jews: "O Marcomanni, O Quadi, O Sarmatians, at last I have found a people more unruly than you." See Feldman, 100-101.

been sufficient enough, these political and social realities gave Christians in the Empire significant motivation to distinguish themselves from the Jewish community.[329]

However, as important as these disturbances were, the Jews of the second century can not simply be characterized as rebellious.[330] But an accurate and complete picture of second century Judaism is hard to come by. Attempts to create such a picture have run into a serious lack of sources. But some things are known.

After the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E., the relative strengths of the Jewish sects in Palestine changed dramatically. Without the temple, the priestly families declined in importance and the associated party of Sadducees essentially disappeared. The Essenes too seem to have lost any coherence as a movement or organized sect although individuals or small groups may have persisted for long periods of time. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were most able to adapt to the great changes of the period. But even they were transformed.

The Pharisees, with their emphasis upon the strict observance of the oral and written law formed into a type of Proto-rabbinic movement. Few details are known with certainty. But there appears to have been some type of organization which formed in Palestine out of which Rabbinic Judaism grew. The well-known Synod of Jamnia is often mentioned by scholars but details of its activities are uncertain. Ultimately there was the creation of a figure of some authority, the patriarch, who regularly sent representatives to various locations in the Diaspora to influence Judaism. But even at its peak importance, centuries later, this system's actual ability to significantly change Diaspora Judaism is highly questionable. And in this early period, little to no centralized influence from Palestine upon Diaspora Judaism should be imagined.

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[329] This raises an interesting question as to how Christians who still considered themselves Jews, dealt with these difficult situations. On the one hand, there were the Jewish privileges and the strengths to be gained by belonging to that community. On the other hand, there were the suspicions of Gentile fellow believers as well as the conflicts with Rome that must have made many aspects of life for such Jewish believers difficult.

[330] In fact, although often criticized, Jews were at the same time also admired by pagan writers. See Feldman, 177-287 for an extended discussion of this topic.

Jack Lightstone has thus argued that it is a mistake to think of the early second century Christian fathers as being in direct conflict with the rabbis, as many scholars have done. He points out that this idea conflicts with the fact that there are few identifiable references to Christians and Christianity in the earliest Rabbinic material.[331] Lightstone argues that almost all scholarship on Christian and Jewish relations in the first and second century either explicitly or implicitly work with the notion that pharisaic-rabbinic Judaism "defines the normative stream of Israelite religion in the first Christian century and beyond."[332] Instead, he argues that in the early second century Rabbinic Judaism had not yet completely formed or become a powerful force, and did not become so in places like Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, North Africa, Greece, and Italy until several centuries later.[333]

He suggests instead that the Jewish milieu that second-century Gentile Christians would have been most exposed to and familiar with ought to be determined from other documents and archeology, even though scarce. He believes the Hebrew document *Sefer HaRazim* and some of the Greek magical papyri that seem to be quite Jewish (although scholars have generally categorized them as "pagan") should serve as our guides to what Hellenistic Judaism was like.

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[331] Lightstone, Jack. "Christian Anti-Judaism in its Judaic Mirror: The Judaic Context of Early Christianity Revised" in vol. 2 of *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity* (ed. Stephen G. Wilson; Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), 105-106. For one attempt to find references to Christianity in the Rabbinic materials, see Alan Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven : Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977). Segal argues that Rabbinic references to the heretics who teach there are "two powers in heaven" refer to Christianity. Albl argues that these "two powers" references were in part a reaction to a Christian testimonia tradition consisting mainly of Ps. 110:1, 45:7, and 102:25, which in turn was based upon earlier Jewish speculation. Albl, 204-207; 232-233.

[332] Lightstone, 107.

[333] So he summarizes: "In short, the early church everywhere cohabited with Jews, but never with rabbinic ones.", 110.

Thus Lightstone argues that Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity shared a conceptual milieu that was heavily affected by Hellenistic culture.[334]

Lightstone makes some good arguments in favor of his thesis that it was Hellenistic Judaism and not Rabbinic Judaism that provided early Christianity with "an antecedent model for syncretizing biblical and Hellenistic religious constructs."[335] Nevertheless, in spite of his examples, it is questionable whether the *Sefer HaRazim* document and the magical papyri, however important, are the best indicators of mainstream thought of Judaism in the Diaspora. Against this assertion, for example, can be brought the argument that in spite of all the criticism the Christian fathers of the second century bring against Jews, they do not accuse the Jews of practicing magic or worshiping multiple gods.[336]

So what did Hellenistic Judaism look like? This is a good question but one that seems to have no simple answer.[337] One can look at documents like the *Sefer HaRazim,* discussed by Lightstone, which portray a Judaism highly influenced by Hellenistic magical and astrological speculation. Similar evidence is brought forward by Goodenough. In his *Jewish Symbols in the Graeco-Roman Period*, he demonstrates that Hellenistic Judaism from Rome to Palestine to Dura-

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[334] Lightstone claims that this conceptual framework emphasized a basic two-tiered cosmological outlook of heaven and earth. And further, he claims, both religions, at least at the popular level, looked to various sources to bridge the gap between the two, especially the holy man (whether Rabbi, prophet, or martyr), the cult of the dead, and mystery rites.

[335] Lightstone, 112. Archeological remains of several Hellenistic synagogues offer further supporting evidence to the general outline of this argument if not necessarily the specific details.

[336] So Robert S. Maclennan in his review of early Christian anti-Judaism in *Early Christian Texts On Jews and Judaism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), makes no reference to accusations of magic or polytheism made against the Jews. Yet the early Christian authors do not hesitate to repeatedly make such accusations against the pagan religions and the gnostic sects.

[337] For a recent bibliographical summary of the topic of Hellenistic Judaism see: "Hellenistic Judaism", Lester L. Grabbe, in *Judaism in Late Antiquity* (ed. Jacob Neusner New York: Leiden, 1995), 53-83. The main works referenced by Grabbe which apply to this time period are: Emil Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*; V.A. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*; A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization*; E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*; and P. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor.*

Europos not only used artistic images but had actually borrowed some pagan Greek art, especially religious art and figures, in order to express their own religious tradition and concerns. This is something that scholars at one time never believed could have been the case because of a general focus upon Rabbinic literary materials and a great lack of Hellenistic Jewish literary remains.

Goodenough has demonstrated the Jewish inheritance of some pagan religious art by examining specific symbols and by examining specific archeological remains. The synagogue of Dura-Europos, in particular, makes repeated use of pagan themes and images.[338] Jews here, as well in other places like the catacombs of Rome, made use of pagan symbols but interpreted them, apparently, in accordance with their own Jewish traditions. Images of the goddess Victory for example are not uncommon. Mosaic representations of the circle of the zodiac have also been found in four ancient synagogues, Beth Alpha, Yafa, Naaran, and Isfiyawith. These all seem to have had the image of the god Helios depicted in the center of the zodiac with the Seasons represented in the four corners of the zodiac of at least two of the mosaics. Signs of the zodiac are likewise found on Jewish amulets where, for example, symbols for Helios and Chnoubis are explicitly labeled *Iaô*.[339] Verbal Jewish charms have also been found which demonstrate the same thing. One example of a prayer by a Jewess goes:

> Hail Helios, hail Helios, hail thou God in the heavens. Thy name is omnipotent ... Make me ... beautiful as Iao, rich as Sabaoth, blessed like Liliam, great as Barbaras, honored as Michael, distinguished as Gabriel, and I will give thanks.

and another:

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[338] See his extended discussion of the Dura-Europos synagogue in Erwin Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period: Edited and Abridged by Jacob Neusner* (ed. Jacob Neusner; Princeton: 1988), 177-265.

[339] See Goodenough, 116-122. These mosaics may date from a slightly later date than our main period of interest but the point to be taken is how different Hellenistic Judaism was from expectations created by a singular focus upon the rabbinic materials.

> Hail Helios, hail Helios, Hail Gabriel, hail Raphael, hail Michael, hail all of you.
> Give me the authority and power of Sabaoth, the strength of Iao.[340]

Such amulets and charms, along with the magical papyri probably represent a crude form of popular Judaism where Jewish tradition was mixed with the very strong cultural interest and focus on the stars, the heavens, and their influence upon the lives of people on earth. But the sheer number of examples proves that such influence was widespread and strong. In addition, the synagogue and sarcophagus art demonstrates that this influence, though probably more restrained, also affected the rich and even the leadership of the Jewish community to some degree. Such influence in the second century and later, however, should actually not be too surprising, as already in the early Jewish apocalyptic material from before the Common Era, there is a strong interest in astral and heavenly speculation. And even among groups such as the Essenes, concern for the calendar and proper dating of festivals was extremely important.[341] And allegorical interpretation, long in use among the Greeks, offered alternative abstracted meanings for images representing Helios, Dionysius, and Orpheus of the pagan poets. And such abstracted meanings, which seemed

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[340] Goodenough, 120-121.

[341] See the Enoch material discussed in the first chapter. A recent introduction to the concerns for the calendar and the calculation of time among the Essenes is given by martin G. Abegg, Jr., "The Calandar at Qumran", in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, vol.1 of *The Judaism of Qumran: A Systemic Reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds. Alan J. Avery-Peck, Jacob Neusner, and Bruce D. Chilton, Boston: Brill, 2001), 146-165. This concern for proper calendar dating was inherited by Christianity and manifested itself most powerfully in the early controversy over the dating of the Christian Easter celebration and the fast associated with it. See Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 5.23-24.

attractive, could be explained and expressed in biblical terms and yet portrayed with the same pagan images.[342]

Such extreme examples should, on the other hand, be balanced with another example, the synagogue of Sardis in Asia Minor.[343] The Jews of Sardis enjoyed a synagogue placed prominently in a very important Hellenistic city. They clearly interacted regularly in commercial and social ways on a day to day basis with the pagans of the city. Almost all the inscriptions of the synagogue are in Greek indicating that they made use of the language of the society around them.[344] Here images have also been found. About a dozen menorahs have been found in stone, on pottery, in bronze objects, and on glass. And images of Lions, doves, peacocks, fish, and dolphins have been found, some of which seem to be pagan images used widely by the Jews. A stone relief of Artemis and Cybele was found. But apparently the builders of the synagogue were simply making use of materials as they placed the stone face down so that those who used the synagogue walked on the stone in ignorance of what was below.[345] Otherwise, the synagogue of Sardis is free of those sensational pagan images and characteristics, which have been discussed above. The Jews of

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[342] So Goodenough, 49. "The new religion will give new explanations of the symbol, precise verbalizations in the vocabulary of its own literal thinking. ... Orpheus could become Christ because he had ceased to be the Orpheus of Greek legend before the Christians borrowed him and had come to represent mastery of the passions by the spirit – a role in which he had no specific name or mythological association. Helios driving his chariot through the zodiac could be used by Jews to represent their cosmic Deity because in the thinking of the day, especially the sort of thinking associated with Neoplatonism, this figure had come to stand not for the traditional anthropomorphic god at all, but for the Supreme Principle – a concept borrowed and used by all sorts of religions at the time. Thus its presence, to our knowledge, on the floors of three synagogues in Palestine would seem to indicate that the Jews had in their Judaism not Helios, the pagan god, but the value of that figure in contemporary life."

[343] See the archeological report given by George M. A. Hanfmann, *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times: Results of the Archaeological Eploration of Sardis, 1958-1975* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 168-190. Four different stages of building have been identified. Stage 2 has been dated to the late second / early third century. The final stages are dated to the fourth century.

[344] Only two Hebrew inscriptions are legible in the remains, out of over eighty inscriptions found. Hanfmann, 171.

[345] Hanfmann, 176.

Sardis apparently did not find the use of such symbols appropriate or useful to their place of worship.

These examples indicate that there must have been a broad spectrum of practices in Hellenistic Judaism. And even Goodenough is careful to point out that that even accounting for a place like Dura-Europos, the Jews were in no way indiscriminate in their use of pagan images, but rather "the vocabulary of symbols the Jews borrowed is on the whole extremely limited. ... (The Jews) favored some pagan symbols, (and) definitely avoided others." And further he points out that that even those images that were accepted tend to be used in particular applications and even in particular geographic regions.[346]

The Jews of the Hellenistic world were thus active citizens of their society. They influenced it and were influenced by it. But their survival as a distinct people and religion testifies to the conviction of their own special identity and obligation to live in some way separate from the nations. They built synagogues and gathered regularly there to pray and hear the scriptures read and interpreted. In such interpretation they were influenced by their own exegetical traditions as well as by the methods of interpreting religious texts common among the pagans. That such forces had been at work for a long time can be seen from the best literary example we have of the influence of Hellenistic paganism on Jewish thought, Philo of Alexandria.

Philo is our chief example of the intellectual side of Hellenistic Judaism. His attempts to use allegory to interpret the Jewish scriptures have already been discussed. Although it is still a matter of debate, it is most likely that Philo, while certainly original in many aspects, would not appear so unique among Jewish authors if we only had more material and were familiar with more Jewish authors in this period and setting. In that case, his use of Greek learning in the attempt to explore and explain the Jewish scriptures would not stand out so remarkably when compared with the later Rabbinic materials. If, then, this is the case, second century Christianity was exposed to and able to draw upon a Judaism Hellenized in language and to some degree in appearance, that nevertheless within Hellenistic society maintained its own unique identity and traditions. And it

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[346] Goodenough, 57-58.

was this Judaism that, if Philo is any measure of the situation, went to extensive efforts to maintain, use, and defend its own authoritative scriptures.

The Jews of the Diaspora made heavy use of the LXX translation of the scriptures during the first century. We can not be sure whether the scriptures were read in many synagogues first in Hebrew or not. But that Greek was the only language in which the scriptures were able to be read by most non-Palestinian Jews is clear. And the LXX was the only widely known translation at that time.

In the second century, however, Jewish attitudes towards this traditional text began to change. An effort began to create a formal definition of the Jewish canon, probably due to the conflicting number of books between the Hebrew scriptures and the LXX, which included several additional books. In addition, it appears that there was a conscious, energetic, and multi-faceted effort by some Jewish leaders to turn their fellow Jews away from the LXX. A need was felt to replace the LXX with a new Greek translation more literal in its translation of the Hebrew. Thus Aquila published his new Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures ca. 130 C.E., and Theodotion published another in 181 C.E.[347] Origen states that by his day Aquila's translation was the most popular Greek version among the Jews who did not know Hebrew.[348] Thus a remarkable change occurred in the Jewish attitude toward the LXX during the second century.

It has been suggested by many scholars that this change was motivated by Christian exegetical use of the LXX. It is difficult to prove this beyond doubt. But aside from polemic associated directly with the *testimonia* tradition, there is significant literary evidence of awareness and reaction to one another from both the Jewish and the Christian communities. A spirit of animosity was expressed by both sides. For example, some Jews came to curse Christians, and

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[347] The first mention of these translations is in Irenaeus H*aer.* 3.21.1.

[348] *Ep. Afr.* 2.

perhaps Jesus specifically, in their synagogues.[349] And some Christians considered the second-century suffering of the Jews at the hand of the Romans to be just punishment for their having crucified the Messiah.[350] Some specific questions, such as whether Justin's literary dialogue with Trypho portrays an actual dialogue or whether it is a literary construction representing conversations of such a type that occurred from time to time, will likely never be answered with certainty. However, there seems to be little reason to doubt that some Jews and Christians did interact from time to time. And when the interaction progressed beyond the exchange of commonplace and trite accusations and insults, it appears the exchange focused most often on the topic of biblical interpretation, especially the Christian use of proof texts taken from the Hebrew Scriptures.[351]

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[349] See Justin *Dial.* 16 & 42. See David Rokéah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 16-17 for a recent summary of scholarly debate on this topic. For example, see R. Kimelman, "*Birkat Ha-Minim* and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity" in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (eds. E.P. Sanders et al.; Philadelphia, 1981), 235-236. L.H. Schiffman, "At the Crossroads: Tannaitic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism", in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (eds. E.P. Sanders et al.; Philadelphia, 1981), 149-155. D. Flusser, "Miqzat Ma'asei ha-Torah and the Benediction of the Heretics", *Tarbiz* 61 (1992), 333-374. L.M. McDonald, "Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers", C.A. Evans and D.A. Hagner, eds., *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith* (Minneapolis: 1993), 247.

[350] Justin *Dial*. 16:

> For the circumcision according to the flesh, which is from Abraham, was given for a sign; that you may be separated from other nations, and from us; and that you alone may suffer that which you now justly suffer; and that your land may be desolate, and your cities burned with fire; and that strangers may eat your fruit in your presence, and not one of you may go up to Jerusalem.' For you are not recognized among the rest of men by any other mark than your fleshly circumcision. For none of you, I suppose, will venture to say that God neither did nor does foresee the events, which are future, nor fore-ordained his deserts for each one. *Accordingly, these things have happened to you in fairness and justice, for you have slain the Just One, and His prophets before Him; and now you reject those who hope in Him, and in Him who sent Him—God the Almighty and Maker of all things—cursing in your synagogues those that believe on Christ*

Thus Justin even states that this situation is a fulfillment of prophecy, namely Isa 1:7 (See *1 Apol.* 47). The Christian accusation of deicide and the idea of just punishment for it also applies here. See the discussion in MacLennan, 89-116 of Melito's *Peri Pascha*.

[351] But there were other areas of exchanges and influence as well. For example, see Goodenough, 26-30, for a discussion of the influence of some Jewish images upon early Christian art. Also see Claman, 9-40 for a discussion of the early church and the use of images from the Old Testament.

Chapter 7: The 2nd c. Jewish and Christian Scriptural Debates

Christian and Jewish arguments in the 2nd century regarding the Old Testament scriptures can be organized into four main categories: arguments over the correct interpretation of specific texts, arguments over the correct translation of a text, text critical arguments over the correct text, and finally general claims about who had the right and ability to correctly interpret the scriptures. In all these cases we can view the Jewish side of the arguments only from the comments of their Christian opponents. Nevertheless, the general trajectory of these debates can be reconstructed with some confidence. We have no way to determine all the texts that were in controversy between the Jews and Christians in the second century C.E. However, the all of these general types of issues can be observed through particular examples.

Controversial Textual Exegesis

Controversy of the interpretation of particular scriptural texts between Christians and Jews was not new to the second century. As we have seen, this type of debate goes back to the beginning of The Way. But in the second century, we are able to explicitly observe negative Jewish reactions to Christian attempts to find prophecies regarding Jesus in so many Old Testament texts. Many times this consisted of a denial that the passage in question was messianic at all combined with alternate claims for a known historical figure to whom the text should be applied. The following are just a few examples.

Ps. 110:1-2

1 The LORD said to my Lord,"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."
2 The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.
Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

Psalm 110 was a text, which, as I have already demonstrated, was critical to the earliest Christian argument for the divine in Jesus Christ. It is unclear how Jews of the first century responded to such claims. But Justin indicates that some Jews in the second century were responded with the claim that Psalm 110 could not be applied to Jesus or the Christ. The text, they countered, referred to Hezekiah. Christians, in response, denied this by pointing out that Hezekiah was not a priest, and certainly not "forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4).[352]

Psalm 72

Verses 1-7 of the Psalm are as follows:

1 Give the king Your judgments, O God,
And Your righteousness to the king's Son.
2 He will judge Your people with righteousness,
And Your poor with justice.
3 The mountains will bring peace to the people,
And the little hills, by righteousness.
4 He will bring justice to the poor of the people;
He will save the children of the needy,
And will break in pieces the oppressor.
5 They [He in LXX] shall fear You
As long as the sun and moon endure,
Throughout all generations.
6 He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing,
Like showers *that* water the earth.
7 In His days the righteous shall flourish,
And abundance of peace,
Until the moon is no more.
8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.
9 Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him,
And His enemies will lick the dust.

Psalm 72 was also an object of similar controversy. Here the Jews claimed the Psalm referred to Solomon and should not be applied to Jesus. Christians, of course, responded with

[352] Justin *Dial.* 33. Tert. *Marc.* 5.9.

particular parts of the Psalm that they claimed could not have applied to Solomon. Only Jesus Christ, they claimed, fulfilled these prophecies.[353]

Isaiah 7:14

> [14] Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14 was a text disputed in several different ways as we will see shortly. But one aspect of the controversy involved matters of interpretation. Some Jewish teachers claimed that Christians misapplied the text of Is. 7:14. They denied that the verse should be understood as a messianic prophecy at all. The text, they claimed, originally applied to Hezekiah and not to some distant future event.[354] Christians countered with details from the text as to why it could not refer to the Jewish king and could only apply to Jesus as the Christ.

In summary, Christians had always made use of Old Testament proof-texts that many Jews could not accept. But by the second-century we are able to observe in some detail a wide spread "historicizing" Jewish reaction to the Christian tendency to apply so many Old Testament texts to Jesus as the Messiah. To many, Christian exegesis seemed wildly messianic. In response Jewish exegesis attempted to dispute Christian claims by interpreting texts as applicable only to their original historical context and as having fulfilled their purpose in that setting.

Controversial Textual Translation

We have already seen several examples of additions to the *testimonia* tradition that were taken specifically from the Greek text of the LXX. This must have occurred outside of the context of Jerusalem and the Way in places where Greek was the main language of religious practice. Not

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[353] Justin *Dial.* 34. Tert. *Marc.* 5.9. In both this case and Ps 110 above, it seems likely that Tertullian is dependent upon Justin. So his testimony must not be weighed as an independent witness to the contemporary state of affairs. See Skarsaune, 442-443.

[354] This claim is mentioned in Justin *Dial.* 43, 68, and 71. Trypho makes the argument explicitly in *Dial.* 67 and 77.

unexpectedly, issues of translation became part of the ongoing controversies between Christians and Jews.

Isaiah 7:14

We have already seen Is. 7:14 as a controversial text in regard to interpretation. But in other ways this text was one of the classic texts which were debated between Christians and Jews in the second century.

Excursus: The Earlier Christian use of Isaiah 7:14 in the First Century

By 70 C.E. Christians were using Isaiah 7:14 to demonstrate that Jesus had been born miraculously without a human father from the virgin Mary.[355] The doctrine itself appears first in the early chapters of the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Among the early patristic authors, Ignatius contains the doctrine repeatedly. It appears explicitly in *Smyr.* 1.1, *Eph.* 7.2, 18.2, 19.1 and *Tral.* 9.1, even in proto-creedal form. But other early writings such as Clement, Barnabas, Polycarp, and the Didache do not mention it. It is found many times in Justin, Irenaeus, and later authors. From this data, it appears that the virgin birth and the use of Is. 7:14 was not critical to the earliest stratum of the Christian *testimonia* tradition. Whether it was used at all must remain uncertain. But in the second half of the first century it came into use and during the next 100 years it became a very important part of the presentation of the faith of the Great Church.[356]

The rapid increase in importance of this doctrine is demonstrated by the fact that by the mid-second century many Christian sects responded to the doctrine. The Sethians or a related sect, worked the virgin birth directly into their own mythology, according to Irenaeus (*Haer.* 1.30.11-12). And the Valentinians had disagreements on how to make use of this Christian doctrine but they couldn't ignore it (*Haer.* 3.11.3). Likewise, as previously discussed, Cerinthus, the Ebionites, and the Elkesaits all rejected the virgin birth in order to deny that Jesus was the Son of God, while admitting that he was an inspired prophetic figure. The Gospel of Philip, too, explicitly denies the doctrine.[357] This evidence combined with the texts in which the

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[355] See Matt 1:23. There is no earlier evidence for the use of this proof-text in Christian exegesis.

[356] The rapid increase in importance of this doctrine can be seen in the continued development of the doctrine as seen in a document like the *Gospel of James*, largely produced in the second century, where the birth of Mary has already become a matter of speculation brought forward as supporting evidence of the miraculous birth of Jesus.

[357] Gospel of Philip, 17.

doctrine is presented and the proto-creedal form in which it appears, all imply that it was more important and had more general authority by the beginning of the second century than can be demonstrated simply by tallying instances of the doctrine in existing early patristic texts.

But how then did this concern for the virgin birth of Christ and the *testimonium* of Is. 7:14 become so important to late first-century Christianity if it was not so in Paul's time and earlier? [358] Scholars have long considered this an obvious and simple matter of Hellenistic influence.[359] This thesis is unable to be demonstrated or refuted with any detailed evidence. But it is certain this explanation does not adequately explain the mechanism by which the doctrine and Is. 7:14 so quickly became such an important part of the Christian *testimonia* tradition. I propose that this happened by its incorporation into an earlier fundamental Christological model.

Consider for a moment, the proto-creedal uses of the birth of Jesus from Mary found in Ignatius:

Smyr. 1.1 :

> being fully persuaded with respect to our Lord, that He is truly *of the race of David according to the flesh*, (and) *the Son of God according to the will and power* of God; that He was truly born of a virgin.

Eph. 7.2:

> There is one Physician who is *possessed both of flesh and spirit*; both made and not made; God existing in flesh; true life in death; *both of Mary and of God*; first possible and then impossible — even Jesus Christ our Lord.

Eph. 18.2:

> For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, *conceived in the womb by Mary, on the one hand of the seed of David, on the other of the Holy Spirit*.

Compare these texts with Paul's use of traditional Christological formulae in Romans 1:

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[358] The conclusion just presented states that the doctrine of the virgin birth is not represented in existing early second-century patristic texts in proportion with its authority and acceptance at that time. This leads to the conclusion that, although generally accepted, it did not belong to the fundamental presentation of the Christian faith in the way that the crucifixion and resurrection did. This further raises the possibility that the idea was known and accepted in Paul's time but simply does not appear in existing texts. But this theory too can not proceed beyond the realm of speculation.

[359] This doctrine has long been considered by many scholars a prime example of a pagan Hellenistic influence upon Christian teaching. See David R. Cartlidge and Adavid L. Dungan, eds., *Documents for the Study of the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 129-136 for examples of miraculous birth tales for heroic figures such as Plato, Alexander the Great, and Augustus.

> the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David *according to the flesh* and was declared to be Son of God with power *according to the spirit* of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

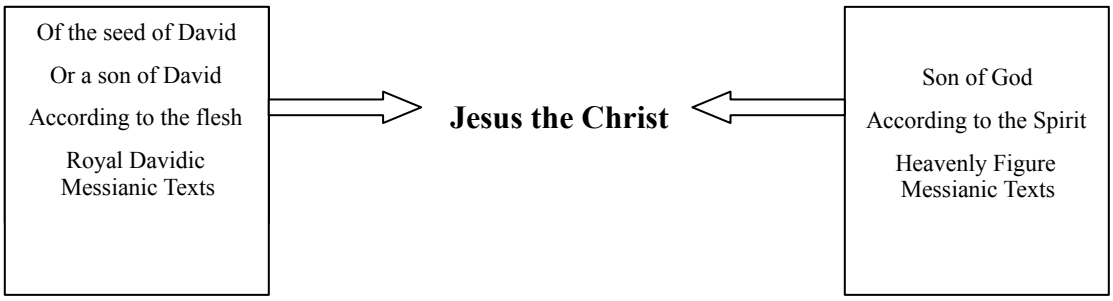
This very early Christological model of "according to the flesh" and "according to the spirit", which is operative in all these texts, has been called "the foundation datum of all later Christological development."[360] By saying this, scholars are pointing out that this was perhaps the most primitive formulaic expression of the human and divine in Jesus Christ. But where did this come from? What motivated it? Upon closer examination, there is yet an earlier stratum of use for the language that is not completely obvious at first glance.

As can be seen above, the "according to the flesh" half of this primitive Christological equation was very often combined with the statement that Jesus was a descendent of David. But being of the line of David specifically has little to do with being "human" generally and so seems pointless here. But this probably points us back to the earliest days of concern for confessing that Jesus was the promised Davidic messianic figure expected by the Jews. This messianic concern within the more sophisticated Christological model was often expressed by variations of the formulae that Jesus, according to the flesh, was "ejk gevnouõ Daui;d" or "ejk spevrmatoõ Daui;d". For example:

Rom. 1:3:	ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα
2 Tim. 2:8:	ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυίδ, κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου
Ign. *Eph*. 18.2:	ejk spevrmatoõ me;n Daui;d, pneuvmatoõ de; aJgivou
Ign. *Rom*. 7.3:	{{o ejstin savrx Ihsou Cristou` tou` ejk spevrmatoõ Dauivd
Ign. *Eph*. 20.2:	tw`/ kata; savrka ejk gevnouõ Daui;d
Ign. Smyr. 1.1 :	ejk gevnouõ Dauei;d kata; savrka
Ign. Trall. 9.1:	tou` ejk gevnouõ Daui;d, tou` ejk Marivaõ,Ôoõ ajlhqw`õ ejgennhvqh

[360] F. Loofs as quoted by Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (SanFrancisco: Harper Collins, 1978), 138. For an overview of the "Spirit" Christology as the most popular primitive model, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600),* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971, 184-190.

To all appearances, then, these expressions of the proper Davidic lineage of the messiah were a critical part of the original flesh / spirit bipolar formula. The second part of the formula was provided by reference to the primitive title "Son of God". Accordingly, it appears most likely to me that the original intent of this bipolar formula was not to address the human and divine in Christ. Instead, it was intended to explain the primitive confession of Jesus as the "Christ", a title, we recall, that was full of ambiguity among the Jews. Thus Jesus was expressed at once to be the expected Davidic Messiah according to the flesh, and at the same time the divine Son of God according to the spirit. And in this way the original bipolar model was a formulaic way of applying to Jesus several titles and many of the different messianic testimonia of the Old Testament all at once. This can be conceptualized as follows:



In its original intent, then, the bipolar formula was more of a formula of messianic explanation applied to Jesus than it was an existential formula intended to express ideas about Jesus' divine and human natures. The formula probably originated in the early exegetical efforts in Jerusalem. It was created in a context where Jesus was well known as a man but the concern was to show he was much more than that by reference to the prophecies of scripture. This formula was used to confess that Jesus was the Davidic messiah who was also the son of God. We would expect such a primitive formula created in Jerusalem to have become quite authoritative in form just as the title "Christ" came to be a proper name for Jesus. It may

have even been a badge of orthodoxy.[361] But just as the missionary need to show Jesus to be the Jewish Messiah was less important among the Gentiles, so also this formula was quickly modified to serve another purpose outside of the context of The Way.

In its original Jewish context, the emphasis in the phrase "from David according to the flesh" was upon on the "from David." But already starting in Paul's day, and certainly by the beginning of the second century, the emphasis transitioned so as to be squarely upon the significance of the words "according to the flesh." That is, it became a confession that was concerned to say that Jesus had true human flesh, that he was truly human.[362] And in this way the bipolar formula could now be taken as a statement concerned primarily with the divine and human in Jesus Christ.[363] It was no longer primarily a statement that Jesus was much more than a holy man or a mere prophet. This effort from the leaders of the Way and by Paul had been very successful. Now the concern for Christ's true humanity replaced the concern for proper messianic lineage. The authoritative formula was now intended primarily to connect and balance two existential opposites.

Somehow during this process of transition a reference to Mary, as the mother of Jesus, came to substitute for or be used along side the traditional reference to David. Thus Jesus could be said to be "from Mary" according to the flesh. Such a reference was usefully ambiguous. It could at once supply the now less

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[361] Thus Paul's use of it in his self-introduction to the Roman congregation, which he had never previously met personally.

[362] The concern for the true humanity of Christ can be seen already in many places in the New Testament, for example, in John's portrayal of Jesus being physically touched after the resurrection (John 20). The same concern is expressed in polemical form in 1 John 4:2-3.: "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God." Similar concerns are seen in Ignatius and other early patristic authors.

[363] The transition process of these ideas can be observed in action in *Barn.* 12:

> "It is Jesus, not a son of man, but the son of God, and he was revealed in the flesh in a figure. Since then men will say that Christ is the son of David, David himself prophesies, being afraid and understanding the error of sinners: "The Lord said unto my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies for a footstool under your feet.'"… See how David calls him Lord, and does not call him son."

In this text, Barnabas teaches that Christ was the heavenly Son of God, but struggles with how to explain his flesh. Notice all the themes here at work: the title Christ, the Davidic lineage of the Christ, the very traditional proof text of Psalm 110:1, used to prove the divinity of Christ, all within the confines of a text trying to relate the human and divinity in Jesus.

important Davidic lineage, but more importantly, it provided proof that Jesus was truly human.[364] This reference to Mary as the mother of Jesus naturally related to the "according to the flesh" half of the confession, just as the reference to David had done earlier. Mary became the guarantor of Christ's true humanity. But with additional claims of Mary's status as a virgin, God's special activity in the conception, and a reference to Isaiah 7:14, Jesus' birth also came to relate directly to the other half of the bipolar formula, Jesus as the Son of God.[365] And at this point, Mary and the birth of Christ come to be at the very center of a powerful Christological model of Jesus the Christ, the true human son of Mary "according to the flesh", and the son of God "according to the spirit." This can be conceptualized as follows:

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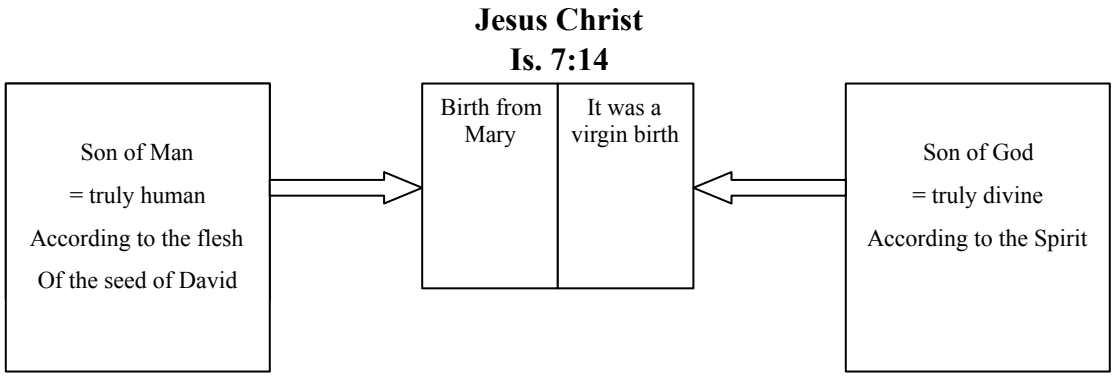
364 The importance of the idea of Jesus' humanity is even seen already in Paul: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). Notice here that the title "Son of God" is side by side with a reference to "made of a woman" or the true humanity of Christ. Paul uses this to point out that this true humanity of Christ placed him under the law and this enables him to redeem us from the law. The true humanity of Christ is also a concern experienced indirectly in the Adam / Christ typology found in Paul although the main concern is the contrast between the "earthly" and the "heavenly".

365 This is explicitly stated in Luke 1:34 by the angel.



In this way, Isaiah 7:14 rapidly became critically important. At one time it was both a prophetic *testimonium* related directly to a traditional Christological confessional form and it served as a powerful self-contained proof-text that encompassed the entire Christological model of the human and divine in Christ. It did this by simultaneously proving that Jesus, as the Christ, was prophesied to be physically born as the human son of a virgin, and that he was thus the Son of God. This conceptual model was already in use by the time the gospel of Matthew was written. And Is. 7:14 rapidly increased in importance within the *testimonia* tradition thereafter. Thus it was included in other proto-creedal statements by the early second-century. It is no surprise then that the later second-century fathers fought so earnestly for this text with the Jews, who dismissed it as a misguided Christian use of the Hebrew scriptures.

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Second century Greek speaking Christians read the text of Isa 7:14 from the LXX as:

> διὰ τοῦτο δώσει κύριος αὐτὸς ὑμῖν σημεῖον, ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Εμμανουηλ
>
> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the virgin is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

The actual Hebrew text of the passage was not in dispute. But one of the major points of dispute was the Greek translation of the text. The Greek word παρθένος of the LXX, meaning "virgin", was a critical part of the Christian use of this text. It was the key word that connected the text with the virgin-birth story.[366] The LXX used this word to translate the Hebrew word עַלְמָה (Alma). It was this translation that was one of the chief Jewish criticisms of the Christian use of this text. Some Jewish authorities claimed that the Hebrew word did not mean "virgin" but simply "young woman", thus making no statement as to the sexual status of the lady. This Jewish argument is reported repeatedly, in Justin *Dial.* 43, 67-74, Irenaeus *Haer.* 3.21.1-6, and Tertullian *Praescr.* 3.13.[367] Christians responded that the translation was not theirs but was the inspired translation of the 70 Jewish scholars who everyone believed worked on the LXX originally.[368]

Apparently this argument over the text was so intense and well-known that it affected the new Greek translations created by Jews in the second century. For Irenaeus reports that both

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[366] And it is thus picked up and used explicitly in the gospel nativity pericopes. Mary is explicitly called a παρθένος in Luke 1:27. The fact that she and Joseph had not engaged in intercourse is explicitly claimed in Matt 1:18 and Luke 1:34. And, finally, the birth of Jesus is explicitly stated to be a fulfillment of Isa 7:14 in Matt. 1:23. It is also generally the key word used in the proto-creedal type forms found in Ignatius.

[367] Justin indicates this criticism was wide spread among the Jews by saying that Trypo and "his teachers" made this argument (*Dial.* 43).

[368] Justin *Dial.* 84. Irenaeus *Haer.* 3.21.1. The story of the LXX, which claims 70 Hebrew scholars all translated the original text independently and yet miraculously came up with the same translation word for word, is given in the Letter of Aristeas. Scholars no longer give much credence to the story given there. But Christians of the second century took the story at face value and considered it a miracle that confirmed the trustworthiness of the LXX.

Aquila and Theodotion, in their translations, changed the text of Isa 7:14 from parqevno~ to nea`ni~ ("young woman").[369] Christians, finally, responded to this translation debate by making an argument from the context of the word by pointing out that the text of Isaiah predicted that the Lord would give a "sign". How, they asked, could a young woman giving birth be in any way considered a "sign"? Whereas a "virgin" giving birth would be a great "sign."[370] And Jews then could counter by pointing out that Christian claims of a virgin birth for Jesus were just like claims that pagans made for some of their heroic figures and that, as such, the entire doctrine was shameful and foolish talk.[371]

In summary, the debate over Isa 7:14 was intense and wide spread in the second century C.E. Many different arguments were involved in the debate indicating its length, complexity, and intensity. Some of the arguments, according to Tertullian, were even picked up by Marcion. Likewise, many other Christian sects reacted to the claims of the Great Church in regard to Isa 7:14. So the text was at once very important to Christian teaching regarding Christ in the second century and also highly controversial.

Controversial Textual Sources

Another very important category of controversial texts consisted of those Christian proof-texts that were questioned as having any textual basis at all. A number of these proof-texts were very strong within the *testimonium* tradition and were used regularly by Christian exegetes. These passages were often defended with vigor even when the evidence weighed heavily against

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[369] Irenaeus *Haer.* 3.21.1. Even if one argues that these changes are justified on the basis of linguistic concerns alone, the timing and publishing of the corrections were certainly affected by the context of the ongoing controversy.

[370] This argument is found in Justin *Dial.* 84, Irenaeus *Haer.* 3.21.6, and Tertullian *Praescr.* 3.13.

[371] Again, it is impossible to judge how general such arguments were. But in *Dial.* 67, Trypho compares the virgin birth of Jesus with the pagan fables of Perseus. The likelihood that this was a common argument is increased by the fact that Justin also points out the same thing in *1 Apol.* 21-22 and 54, where, outside of the context of an argument with the Jews, he admits the parallel. Justin's only response is the theory that the devil has made such parallels by emulating the truth through the generation of such fables.

Christian claims. If Justin is any example of the general opinion, Christians were at that time even accusing the Jews of having deleted key messianic passages from the Hebrew scriptures simply to confound Christian claims of Jesus as the Christ.

Psalm 96 (Ps. 95 LXX)

As was demonstrated in an earlier chapter, by the turn of the first century, the *testimonia* tradition had a thread that dealt with the theme of the crucifixion as a prophesied event. The key words "wood" and "tree" were very important in gathering texts that applied to this theme. Psalm 96:10 in a Christianized form became a part of this tradition: "The Lord reigns *from the tree*." There is no evidence for the words "from the tree" ever existed in the Hebrew text or the Greek text of the LXX. There are no manuscripts in existence that contain these words.

It is difficult to determine how important this text was for the Christian *testimonia* theme that proved the Christ had to die on the cross. There is surprisingly little use of the text before Justin. Surely the letter of Barnabas would have used the proof-text if it had been commonly known.[372] Justin, on the other hand, made use of it in both his *Apology* and in the *Dialogue.*[373] His actions demonstrate that the text is very important to his tradition, as he accuses the Jews of having removed the text from the LXX.[374] Yet importantly, Irenaeus does not even use it in his *Against All Heresies* despite much discussion of the cross and use of the typology of the Tree of Life. This is a strong indication of a lack of continuity. On the other hand, when we look at later Latin authors we find that it is used several times by Tertullian.[375] And authors as late as Augustine and even Leo

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[372] In chapter 8, while explaining the type of the cross and the scarlet wool, Barnabas makes the statement that "The kingdom of Jesus is from a cross." Obviously this idea is closely related to the proof-text based upon Psalm 96. But wouldn't Barnabas have incorporated such an important text if he knew of it? And further, whereas the variant of Ps. 96 reads "ajpo; tou ' xuvlou" Barnabas instead has "ejpiv xuvlou" indicating dependence upon Deut 21:23: "Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree (ejpiv xuvlou), which is a known early crucifixion *testimonia*. Is it possible that this idea of Christ's kingdom being "from a cross" came first, based upon other texts, and then later this proof-text was generated from Psalm 96?

[373] *1 Apol.* 41. *Dial.* 73.

[374] Justin *Dial.* 73.

[375] Tert. *Adv. Jud.* 10; 13; *Marc.* 3.19, 21.

the Great were still using the text with this addition.[376] From this evidence, I conclude that this proof-text was generated at some point in the early second century in the West, quite possibly in Rome, where Justin spent some time. The Greek East seems to know little of it. But it appears to have been rather authoritative in the West.

Despite this regionally limited usage, the *testimonia* is important as an example of how a text could become authoritative and continue to see use as a proof-text even though the text did not even exist in current copies of the scripture in use among Christians. There are several other examples of this type of *testimonia*.

The Sayings of Jeremiah

In *Dial.* 72, Justin quotes an important *testimonium* which he claims comes "from the things said by Jeremiah":[377]

> 'I [was] like a lamb that is brought to the slaughter: they devised a device against me, saying, Come, *let us put wood on His bread*, and let us blot Him out from the land of the living; and His name shall no more be remembered.'
>
> 'The Lord God remembered His dead people of Israel who lay in the graves; and He descended to preach to them His own salvation.'

The first of these texts is from Jer 11:19 and follows under the category of Controversial Exegesis.[378] But the second *testimonium* is not drawn from any known text and yet Justin claims that it is "from the sayings of the same Jeremiah."[379] This same text is repeated by Irenaeus four

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[376] Aug. *Ps.* 96. Leo *Serm.* 55.2.

[377] ajpo; tw`n dia; jIeremivou lecqevntwn

[378] The strange phrase that Justin gives as "Come, let us lay wood on His bread" (ejmbavlwmen xuvlon eiv" tovn a[rton), is taken directly from the LXX and was understood as a type, as if the bread in the verse was Christ's body and the wood was the cross. This does not appear to have been a critical *testimonium* in terms of early and wide spread use. Clearly, it was added to the tradition from the LXX. It is used and explained in Tert. *Adv. Iud.* 10 and Lactantius *Inst.* 4.18.

[379] ajpo; tw`n lovgwn tou` oujtou` jIeremivou

times, in *Haer.* 3.20, 4.22, 5.31, and *Dem.* 78. In the first instance he quotes it as coming from Isaiah, in the second and last as if coming from Jeremiah, and in the third simply as coming from "the prophet." Clearly there was confusion in regard to this text and its origins.[380]

The importance of this text is that it is almost the only explicit proof-text offered in second-century Christian literature for the primitive conviction that Jesus, while in the tomb between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, descended to Sheol. Early Jewish-Christian theology considered this descent as Christ's opportunity to preach the gospel to the deceased of Israel, who resided in Sheol, that they might believe and be saved.[381] So in the Gospel of Peter, as Christ emerges from the grave, he is asked from heaven, "Have you preached to them that sleep?" (41-42). In this way, the doctrine of the descent into hell answered the question that was probably raised very early among Jewish Christians, 'What of the righteous that lived before Christ?' The Elder quoted by Irenaeus in *Haer.* 4.27.2, expresses the same sentiment as this spurious text attributed to Jeremiah.[382] The same thought is found in the *Sibylline Oracles.*[383] This concern for the salvation of the saints who are "sleeping" through Christ's descent and preaching is quite early. The idea seems to have consisted of two parts, a resurrection event that occurred at Christ's resurrection (Matt 27:52-53; Ignatius *Mag.* 9.2) and a later eschatological resurrection.

A parallel explanation of the descent that developed among Christians is found in other texts such as 1 Pet 4:6, where the theme of victory over the devil and the demons is tied in with the

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[380] Daniélou suggested that Justin used a *testimonia* manuscript or tradition that contained sayings attributed to Jeremiah, which Daniélou called the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah*. In support of this idea, it should be noticed that elsewhere sayings are falsely attributed to Jeremiah. For example, in *Dial.* 12, a conflation of hardening texts are wrongly attributed to Jeremiah. "'For your ears are closed, your eyes are blinded, and the heart is hardened,' Jeremiah has cried; yet not even then do you listen." This seems closely related to traditional "hardening" texts such as Deut 29:4, Is. 6:9-10, and Jer 5:21, yet is not the same as any of them.

[381] Daniélou has demonstrated that this was a defining characteristic of early Jewish-Christian theology. See *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 233-247.

[382] "It was for this reason, too, that the Lord descended into the regions beneath the earth, preaching His advent there also, and [declaring] the remission of sins received by those who believe in Him."

[383] 8.310-312.

descent into hell. This idea is also found in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*.[384] Later these two themes would become combined as the descent to Sheol became a victory over death and the devil, as well as a deliverance of souls there.[385] (cf. Ps 30:3; 49:15; 86:13; 116:3-4; 139:8)

After careful consideration, Daniélou concluded that these themes and the various explanations are all parallel developments of the primitive Christian use of Ps 68:18 combined with themes taken from other *testimonia* such as Ps 107:16.[386] If this general picture is correct, the text assumed by Justin to be from the *Sayings of Jeremiah,* was an early gloss or explanation of even earlier *testimonia* texts used among first-century Jewish-Christians. This piece of exegesis then became authoritative in itself as a *testimonium*, probably in some written form, and somehow came to be included within a collection of *testimonia* attributed to Jeremiah.[387] In the second century it was often quoted as scripture by Christians such as Justin.

Summary: The 2nd-c. State of Biblical Controversy and Textual Transition

Example texts, such as those just observed, indicate that by the middle of the second century there were many scriptural controversies ongoing between Jews and the Christians of the Great Church. Part of this tension was due to use of proof-texts for fundamental Christian claims concerning Jesus, which went back to the beginning of the Way in Jerusalem. But as we have seen, as time progressed, by early in the second-century, elements had been added to the *testimonia* tradition that depended entirely upon the Greek text of the LXX, or even worse, upon no available text at all. Nevertheless, Christian authors maintained the authority of even the most questionable elements as being as great as that of any other established *testimonium*. In other words, already by

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[384] See Daniélou, *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 239-244.

[385] See the *Odes of Solomon*, 17.8-11; 22.1-7; 42.15-26.

[386] Ps. 68:18: "You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive." This text is used in Eph. 4:8-9 to speak of Christ's descent to earth, not Hades, and his ascension back to heaven. Ps. 107:16: "For He has broken the gates of bronze, and cut the bars of iron in two."

[387] Skarsaune has demonstrated that Justin in particular was very much limited in his use of the prophet Jeremiah. He used only a set of texts known to be traditional *testimonia*. This implies that Justin's main source for the prophet was an excerpt source of such traditional texts. Skarsuane, 465.

the mid-second century, the *testimonia* tradition, which was used as a basic system of proof and organization for the presentation Christian faith, had grown to include elements that were very doubtful from textual and linguistic points of view. And these elements helped to fuel the fire of controversy between Jews and Christians. A complete description of the controversies can not be reconstructed due to the nature of existing sources. However, a sufficient summary overview can paint a sufficient picture for our purposes.

Christians had started to make use of the Greek language as soon as their religion had spread beyond the narrow confines of Palestine, probably even before. These Christians inherited a tradition of proof-texts that they continued to build upon with the resources available to them, the existing tradition and the Greek LXX. Sometimes, due caution was not exercised. But they continued to be bold in their claims to a correct understanding of the Jewish scriptures. A great time of political and social transition began for the Jews in 70 C.E. and lasted till almost the middle of the second century. In the middle of this period, more and more Jews were becoming uncomfortable with the Christian use of the LXX. Though the Christians were a small minority in population, judging from the spirit of existing documents, they were frequently a vocal and annoying minority that required regular efforts to refute. This probably fed into an already growing movement among the Jews to strictly identify the Jewish canon and to define it in terms of books known in the Hebrew language.

The Septuagint was becoming troublesome in that it continued to feed Christian claims. Jews who could read Aramaic and Hebrew could to some degree avoid the problems. But for the large majority of Jews in the empire this was not possible. Thus during the second century at least two major translation efforts were made to create new Greek translations of the Scriptures which were more literal in their translation of the Hebrew. And by the third century these had displaced the Septuagint among many Jews, at least in Egypt.

It is quite likely that during the second century, especially earlier in the century, Christians in many places were to a large degree dependent upon limited manuscripts of some Old Testament

books and otherwise upon *testimonia* extracts.[388] Eusebius provides important evidence in this regard from Melito of Sardis in the middle of the second century.[389] Melito, a leader, or perhaps even the bishop, of a church in a very important city such as Sardis found it necessary in the second half of the second century to go to Palestine in order to "learn accurately" (ajkribw`" maqw;n) what the books of the Old Testament were. Why would he have to do this unless there was some controversy about the matter? Interestingly, the list he gives is the Hebrew canon, not the list of all books included in the Septuagint. In addition, Melito explicitly claimed that while he was there he made extracts from the Old Testament books, compiled them into six books, and sent them to his friend Onesimus (ejx wln kai; ta;" ejkloga;" ejpoihsavmhn, eij" e{x bibliva dielwvn). It seems remarkable that such an important figure as late as the second century should be so limited in manuscript resources. But it helps to explain the apparently primitive resources available to many Christians and the reliance upon the *testimonia* extracts as authoritative.

In spite of this resource issue, it should not be imagined that Christians were unaware of textual variations. This was commonplace knowledge in a world where all books were copied laboriously by hand. It was a given part of life. In such a world where manuscripts were so easily altered, it was much easier than today to believe that your opponents had engaged in such activity. In addition, Jewish authorities were apparently active in pointing out many textual issues to Christians such as Justin. And the importance of these points motivated Christians to respond.

In a very important section of his book, *The Proof from Prophecy,* Skarsaune has clearly demonstrated that already in Justin Martyr there is an attempt to answer Jewish textual criticisms in regard to certain Christian proof-texts. He has shown that Justin has two main categories of Old Testament quotations in his *Dialogue.* He has sections of short quotations that are often grouped

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[388] In the Papias citations preserved in Eusebius in *Hist. eccl.* 3.39, we see that oral tradition too was a regular medium through which Christians passed their traditions concerning Jesus and probably Old Testament proof texts concerning him as well.

[389] Eusebius claims to quote from a work he calls the *Extracts.* This work is not listed by Eusebius as one of Melito's known works in *Hist. Eccl.* 4.26.2. Yet he gives it this title and quotes from it in 4.26.12. Perhaps the "six books" mentioned by Melito each have different titles which are listed earlier by Eusebius.

together in traditional groupings, sometimes conflated, usually non-LXX in nature, and at times wrongly attributed. These he demonstrates are drawn from traditional *testimonia* sources. Skarsaune has also shown that there often are also long quotations of the same texts in Justin and that these are drawn strictly from the LXX. These are often presented as texts to counter claims made by Trypho. Yet on several occasions the LXX quoted text does not agree with a *testimonium* text of the same prophecy given previously. Sometimes the LXX does not even agree with Justin's own arguments!

These circumstances drive Justin to make explicit remarks about Greek manuscripts in local synagogues. He labels these manuscripts "Jewish" because they do not agree with his *testimonia* sources which he considers to be the true text of the "Seventy (LXX)." It turns out in almost all these cases that Justin's "Jewish" text is actually that which is known today to be the actual LXX text. Whereas Justin was mistaken in identifying his own authoritative Christian testimony sources as the text of the Seventy![390] Thus the complex combination of a transition of the *testimonia* tradition from Hebrew to Greek, limited textual resources, inherited extract resources, limited linguistic skills, an uncritical acceptance of the entire *testimonia* tradition and a reliance on oral transmission, led even prominent Christian theologians of the second century C.E. to work with inaccurate resources for their theological labors and saddled them with defending some accepted proof-texts that Jewish authorities correctly criticized.

Rather than be intimidated or even reserved in their claims on the basis of such issues, Christian theologians of the second century continued undaunted in their bold defiance of Jewish authority and criticism in regard to the scriptures. Christian theology had long claimed the church to be the true Israel, as opposed to the Jews. And Christians had been convinced of the correctness of their understanding of the prophets since the earliest days of The Way. This confidence led to the bold claim for Israel's scriptures: All these prophecies, which prove the Christian faith, said Justin to Trypho, "They are contained in your Scriptures, or rather not yours, but ours. For we

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[390] Skarsaune, 17-140.

believe them; but you, though you read them, do not catch the spirit that is in them."[391] The second-century fathers of the Great Church were certain in their faith about Jesus, and they felt that all of the Christian tradition had to be defended. And so they defended at times even that which turned out to be indefensible.

[391] Justin *Dial.* 29.

Chapter 8: Origen and the Jews

Scholars have produced a significant amount of work investigating the opinion of early ecclesiastical figures toward the Jews of their respective periods. Origen is one of the most important figures in the study of early Christian and Jewish relationships for several reasons. The first is the availability of source material. Although much of Origen's work has perished over time, that which exists contains a significant amount of material that mentions the Jews of his day and Origen's response to them. This material helps us to understand the extent to which Origen interacted with Jews, understood their faith and practice, and responded to it.[392]

A second reason for the importance of Origen in this regard is the time in which he lived. During the first half of this period the Great Church came to clearly dominate numerically among the variety of Christian sects. This century was a troubled time for the empire as a whole and for the church. There were several periods of significant persecution. The episcopate became the clear principal of organization among the urban Christian centers. And the ground was laid for the Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century. And importantly, the third century was a period when the number of Christians started to become numerically significant in relationship to the Jewish population of the empire. Earlier we estimated that from 200 C.E. to 300 C.E. the Christian population grew from around 200,000 to several million, from a fraction of a percent of the empire to a little less than 10% of the empire's population, from less than 10% of the Jewish population to being equal in number. At the same time, the Jews were probably starting to recover from the

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[392] On the other hand, Roger Brooks warns that scholars have on the whole tended to overemphasize the quantity and quality of this material in the interest of "scholarly ecumenism." See "Straw Dogs and Scholarly Ecumenism: The Appropriate Jewish Background for the Study of Origen" in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 63-95.

devastating second century. This is confirmed by the fact that the Mishnah was starting to take form in this period and was different than any Jewish writing before it.[393]

A third reason for Origen's importance in the study of early Christian and Jewish relations is the fact that he spent the last part of his life in Caesarea located along the Mediterranean in Palestine. The city was previously known as Strato's Tower. It was a maritime city and appears to have been organized as a Greek *polis* quite early.[394] It was taken by Pompey and made an independent city which was occupied by a Hellenized Syrian population that considered it a "city of Greeks."[395] Augustus later gave it into the control of Herod the Great. Herod renamed the city to Caesarea and spent a great amount of money on building projects within the city. But he did so in a way that it enhanced its standing as a significant pagan Greek city to the consternation of some Jews.[396] Nevertheless, during the Herodian period Jews started to settle in the city among the local population. And by the middle of the first century C.E., Jews and Syrians actually argued over whether it was a Jewish or Greek city.[397] The first Greek Christian convert mentioned in the New Testament is the centurion Cornelius of Caesarea (Acts 10). Luke reports that a local Christian church took root there and that Paul visited the city several times (Acts 18:22; 21:8-10).[398] There is no reason to believe that the Christian population did not continue to grow within the city in the

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[393] Brooks, 73-77. Neusner points out how different the Mishnah is from the messianic Judaism that led to several first century movements and the revolts and destruction of the early second century in *Messiah in context: Teleology in formative Judaism*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 17-53.

[394] Tcherikover, 112-113.

[395] Josephus *J.W.* 2, 266; *Ant.* 14, 76.

[396] Josephus reports Herod's 12 year building project in the city in *Ant.* 15, 331-341. This included a theatre, an amphitheatre, temples, and many other grand structures. Due to this great amount of work in the city, Herod became known as the "founder" of the city.

[397] The Syrians recognized the city's oijkisthv~ was a Jew, namely Herod, but they still claimed the city was a povli~ jEllhvnwn. *J.W.* 2, 266.

[398] Luke specifically mentions Philip the Evangelist and his four prophetic daughters as being from Caesarea (Acts 21:8-10).

next two centuries although little is known about it before Origen's period.[399] Thus the city became the cosmopolitan center for the Roman administration of Palestine, containing a significant population of Jews, Hellenized pagan Syrians, and Christians.

Origen probably had some interaction with Jews while he lived in Alexandria, which was also an important Jewish center.[400] However, after his fallout with bishop Demetrius of Alexandria, he relocated to Caesarea in ca. 232 C.E., where he was welcomed by the local ecclesiastical authorities.[401] He also appears to have had a good reputation and solid personal relationships with many bishops from Jerusalem to Cappadocia. It was there in Caesarea that Origen almost certainly had interaction with Jews in general, and debates with leading Jewish authorities of the region in particular.

It can be demonstrated from Origen's own writings that average Christians in Caesarea were interacting with Jews of the city, even attending the synagogue. In *Comm. in Matt.* 11.8, Origen admonishes his audience not to seek purity through the washing of hands, as the Jews do, but to purify their actions and thus wash the hands of their souls.[402] And in several of his sermons Origen admonishes his audience not to take part in the Jewish Sabbath and other ceremonies, obviously implying that some Christians were doing that very thing.[403]

Origen's personal interactions with Jews can likewise be demonstrated from his own writings. This has been done in great detail by several modern scholars. One of the most

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[399] Eusebius mentions Theophilus as bishop of Caesarea in the last part of the second century during the Easter controversy (*Hist. eccl.*5.23).

[400] But it had almost certainly declined significantly after the revolt in 115-117 C.E.

[401] Eusebius *Eccl. hist.* 6.26-27.

[402] GCS 10.47.5-15. jHmei`~ de; ouj kata; th;n tw`n par j ejkeinoi`~ presbutevrwn paravdosin, ajlla; kata; to; eu[logon kaqaivrein peirwvmeqa eJautw`n ta;~ pravxei~. According to Eusebius, Origen wrote the commentary on Matthew late in life while in Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* 6.36.

[403] *Hom. Lev.* 5.8 (GCS 6.349.4); *Sel. Exod.* 12.46 (PG 12.285); *Hom.in Jer.* 12.13 (GCS 6.100). Origen's homilies too, according to Eusebius, were recorded while Origen was in Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* 6.36.

frequently cited works on this topic is by Nicolaus de Lange.[404] He states that "Origen holds a key position in the history of the relations between Jews and Christians."[405]

De Lange discusses at length Origen's potential Jewish sources, both written and living Jewish authorities. One long standing debate among scholars has been how to reconcile Jerome's observation that Origen mentioned by name a contemporary patriarch named "Huillus" along with Origen's own mention of a patriarch named Jlou`llo~.[406] Apparently these two slightly different names refer to the same individual. Yet scholars are uncertain who this person might be since it does not correspond directly with the known Jewish patriarchs of the period. Some have suggested Origen was referring to "Hillel", who was the younger son of Gamliel III and brother of Judah II, who were the Jewish patriarchs in Origen's day. Others have suggested this patriarch mentioned by Origen was not the Patriarch who was the titular head of all of Judaism in the empire, rather he was a local authority who shared the same title.[407] Other than this individual Jlouvllo~ Origen does not name his Jewish sources. But he frequently refers to Jews impersonally as "a noted man among the Hebrews", "the teacher of the Hebrews", and "the Hebrew". He himself states that he consulted with "many Jews" and "not a few Jews" on particular questions.[408] It appears that one or

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[404] Nicholas de Lange, *Origen and the Jews: studies in Jewish-Christian relations in third-century Palestine* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[405] De Lange, 1-2. He points out that earlier scholars of Origen and of Jewish history had unfortunately largely ignored Origen's interactions with the Jews of his day.

[406] *Ruf.* 1.13. *Sel. Ps.* (PG 12, 1056B).

[407] See H. Graetz, "Hillel, der Patriarchensohn," MGWJ 25 (1881): 433-34. G.F. Moore suggested that Jlou`llo~ was a scribal error for Jlouvda~, that is, Judah II, the Patriarch in G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, MA: 1962), 165, n. 1. See Reuven Kimelman, "Rabbi Yohanan and Origen on the Song of Songs: A third-century Jewish-Christian disputation" *HTR* 73(1980): 569, for a review of many other ideas scholars have proposed.

[408] *Cels.* 2.31: jEgw; de; kai; polloi`~ jIoudaivoi~ kai; sofoi`~ ge ejpaggellomevnoi~ ei\nai sumbalw;n and *Ep. Afr.* 6: Oujk ojlivgoi~ JEbraivoi~ ajneqevmhn

more of these Jews were Christian converts.[409] "The Hebrew", in particular, is mentioned already in Origen's Alexandrian works and appears to be a special case of another particular Jewish individual that can not be identified with certainty. Taken together, however, it is very probable that Origen was in the habit of consulting with Jews in regard to matters of the Hebrew language and biblical interpretation when opportunity afforded itself.[410]

But Origen's interaction with Jews was not limited simply to consultation regarding difficult linguistic matters and questions of biblical interpretation. He also engaged Jews in private and public debates. No explicit dialogues or records of such debates have survived. But numerous scholars have attempted to find the traces of such debates in the written sources that do survive. For example, Reuven Kimelman attempted to trace a debate between Origen and R. Yohanan regarding the interpretation of the Song of Songs.[411] His thesis was that "RY led the exegetical battle against Origen's Christologication of the Song's allegory."[412] Kimelman was able to demonstrate with some success evidence of an exchange of exegetical ideas and reactions to them that would be difficult to explain without an interaction between the exegetical traditions the authors represent.[413] It is impossible to determine whether such literary evidence of intellectual exchange was due to direct contact of the parties or not although in this case several of the ideas involved seem to have been fairly specific to Origen. Other explicit examples of topics debated by

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[409] *Sel. Ezech.* 9.4 (PG 13, 801); *Hom. Num.* 13.5. *Hom. Jer.* 20, 2: paravdosi~ jEbrai>kh; ejlhluqui`a eij~ hJma~ dia; tino~ fugovnto~ dia; th;n Cristou` pivstin

[410] See the entire discussion in de Lange 23-27.

[411] The Song of Songs had long been an object of allegorical interpretation by the Jews. Several copies of the book were found in Qumran cave 4: (4Q106 (Cant^{a}), 4Q107 (Cant^{b}), & 4Q108 (Cant^{c}) indicating that already at that time the book may have been read allegorically and not as an erotic love song.

[412] Kimelman, 569.

[413] He concluded: "The result of this examination of the comments of Origen and RY on the first six verses of the Song show them differing on five major issues which divided Judaism and Christianity of that period. … Note that when these antitheses are juxtaposed to each other, they appear as halves of a debate. In light of this and the commonality between Origen and RY, as discussed in the introduction, it is safe to conclude that a contemporary Jewish-Christian dispute on the meaning of the Song is reflected in the exegesis of Origen and RY." Kimelman, 594-5.

Jews and Origen where evidence from both sides remains are very hard to find.[414] It is much more certain that in general such written exchanges did occur.

Origen was also involved in verbal debates with Jewish figures of his day especially in Caesarea. Some probably were private discussions or debates.[415] But others were public debates with an audience. In *Cels.*1.45, Origen relates a brief part of one of these debates and claims that there were judges present to decide the outcome. Such public debates were likely part of the culture of Caesarea and likely played a role in gaining and retaining converts to the respective religions.[416] Thus Origen was seriously concerned about them because, he says, in such disputes the Jews often despise and laugh at the Gentile Christians.[417] This, Origen says, was a great motivation to him in his textual studies. We will examine the role of the *testimonia* tradition in such debates with the Jews and Origen's use of that tradition in a later chapter.

In light of this interaction with a variety of Jews in his day, scholars were led to the question what really was the depth of Origen's understanding of the Judaism of his day. Related to this is the question of Origen's abilities to read and use Hebrew. This question has been debated vigorously by scholars in the past but as de Lange has pointed out it has been given more importance that it probably deserves. When treating this question some scholars do not seem to appreciate the complete Hellenistic nature of a city like Caesarea where almost everyone including the Jews of the city spoke Greek on a daily basis.[418] Yet in debate with the Rabbis specifically over

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[414] De Lange offers a few examples such as the Christian argument that if circumcision was necessary God would not have created Adam uncircumcised. R. Hoshaya responded to this assertion by stating that everything created in the first six days requires perfecting in some way, including man, who must be perfected by circumcision. De Lange, 89 – 102. It is impossible, however, to prove that any such examples come from direct contact between Origen and any of the particular Jewish figures.

[415] e.g. *Ep. Afr.* 6.

[416] See Paul M. Blowers, "Origen, the Rabbis, and the Bible: Toward a picture of Judaism and Christianity in third-century Caesarea" in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 96-116.

[417] *Cels.* 1.45.

[418] And it is in this context that the synagogue archeological finds of this period must be placed. See chapter 6.

biblical interpretation, knowledge of the Hebrew text undoubtedly played a part. De Lange reviewed the evidence in regard to Origen's Hebrew abilities and concluded that Origen could not speak or read Hebrew, except perhaps for a few words, but that he had Jewish acquaintances who helped him in this regard.[419] This author agrees with his conclusions.

But if Origen was not a Hebrew scholar how much did he know about Jewish exegesis and customs? One would expect that he was somewhat familiar with these things given his interaction with such a variety of Jews over such a long period of time. Several scholars have put forth an effort to document the extent of Origen's knowledge of the Judaism of his day that goes beyond the standard body of Christian polemical material. A few examples will suffice our purposes here.

Hans Bietenhard has pointed out that Origen knew what the most popular Greek bible among the Jews was. He knew that the Psalter was divided into five books by the Jews. He was aware of a Jewish controversy over how many of the Psalms were written by Moses. He knew that the "Sela" of the Psalms was not clearly understood by Hebrew speaking Jews. He also had some information about the Tetragrammaton, that it was written in old Hebrew texts and that it was read as "Adonai" by the Jews.[420]

De Lange gives more examples and more detail of Origen's knowledge of the Jews. He was somewhat familiar with the Jewish calendar and Jewish festivals. He was, for example, aware of the details of the Paschal "search for leaven" in the Jewish household. Origen was also familiar with some Halakhic rules governing the observance of various laws. For example, he knew that the injunction that no one should go out of their dwelling place on the Sabbath (Ex. 16:29) was understood to mean that no one should go out farther than 2000 cubits. In regard to Sabbath laws, he also knew that a sandal with a nail was technically a burden while one without nails was not. Origen also corrects a detail in Celsus' portrayal of the Jews as agreeing with Christians that the Logos of God is the "Son of God" when he states that "I have met many Jews who professed to be

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[419] De Lange, 21-23. He dismisses the evidence of Jerome and Eusebius as over-enthusiastic conclusions from Origen's quotation of Hebrew words from time to time and the inclusion of the Hebrew column in the Hexapla.

[420] Hans Bietenhard, *Caesarea, Origenes und die Juden* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1972), 19-38.

Sages, but I have never heard any of them approve the doctrine that the Logos is the son of God." In fact, Origen was probably accurately stating his experience in dealing with Jews of his day, although things were possibly different in the day of Philo and even Celsus.[421] In these details Origen's knowledge is fairly impressive.

The question remains how far these specific instances can be generalized to some level of competent knowledge of Judaism of his day. Roger Brooks has attempted to show that in fact Origen's knowledge was rather superficial. He compares Origen's *Peri Archon* with the content of the Mishnah in order to look for parallels and concludes there are none.[422] Of course the weakness of this argument hardly needs to be pointed out. The most glaring problem is that the *Peri Archon* and the Mishnah were obviously written with very different intents and audiences. They each are written in the context of two different communities that have already drifted far apart in the focus of their daily scholarly efforts. If anything this is evidence for the progression of the separation of the Jewish and Christian communities by this time. Secondly, the *Peri Archon* was written by Origen during the Alexandrian period of his career and probably would not reflect the level of understanding of Judaism that Origen had at the end of his career.

Much more to the point, Brooks compares Origen's exegesis of Leviticus and compares it to the Mishnah. Here he does a good job of pointing out Origen's great lack of familiarity with specific laws and opinions of the Mishnah even when commenting on the same text. Origen regularly complains of the "literal interpretation" of the law by the Jews which he calls the "Jewish interpretation." But his description of the details of this interpretation rarely matches the details of interpretation found in the Mishnah. Brooks concludes that Origen was really quite ignorant of the details of Jewish law and that the Jews were largely "straw dogs" for his argument for the use of allegorical interpretation of the law.

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[421] For a discussion of all these examples see de Lange, 39-47.

[422] Brooks, 86-90.

Summary

Origen was no Jewish Rabbi or scholar. He did not study Jewish law for the sake of doing so. He did however interact with some Jews including Rabbis. We can see from some of the material in Origen's works that the Jews that he interacted with were located more toward the Rabbinic end of the spectrum than the other extreme of very Hellenized Judaism.[423] In this way, Origen did investigate issues that were important to him from the Christian tradition. He also engaged Jewish authorities in public and private debate regarding various issues. While Origen may have had some detailed knowledge of specific Jewish exegesis and laws, there were many issues specifically of Jewish concern that he was unfamiliar with and in these instances he probably fell back on general knowledge and Christian polemical arguments that may in many instances have been inaccurate.

One firm conclusion is that Origen was actively concerned about Christian debates with Judaism over biblical interpretation, from textual arguments to exegetical method. He wanted to be prepared and wanted other Christians to be able to be prepared to debate the Jews on sound biblical footing. And in this matter Origen spent a tremendous amount of effort and must be considered unique among the first several centuries of Christian exegetes.

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[423] The Jew of Celsus, produced by that author more than half a century earlier, as we have seen, was somewhat farther toward the Hellenized portion of the Judaism spectrum.

Chapter 9: Origen's Exegesis and the Jews

In the last chapter I provided an overview of Origen's general interaction with the Jews. This chapter is intended to give a brief overview specifically of his exegetical work and its relationship to the Jews of his day. As was demonstrated earlier, there is evidence from the second century that Christians and Jews had vigorously debated many points regarding the exegesis of the Old Testament texts at all levels: text, translation, and interpretation. Origen showed explicit concern for the proper treatment of the Old Testament at all these levels.

Work on the Text

In regard to the proper text, the evidence suggests that Origen spent a great deal of effort in the general area of determining the correct text of the Old Testament. As discussed earlier, by the second century the Septuagint had become the dominant text used by Greek speaking Christians. It was referred to as the text of the "Seventy" in accordance with the well-known story of that number of Jewish translators who produced the text simultaneously in Egypt.

In the second century, it appears that there was a powerful Jewish reaction to the Christian use of the text. This reaction started by the beginning of the second century and was well underway by the mid-second century. It motivated the Jews to find fault with the text of the Seventy and to base their ongoing arguments with the Christians upon the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. By Origen's day apparently this had caused at least some Christians besides Origen to acknowledge that there were faults to be found in the text of the Seventy. For example, Origen points out specifically that his friend Africanus called the book of Susanna "spurious" (kekibdhleumevno~ o[nto~), a "work recent and fabricated" (suvggramma newterikovn kai; peplasmevnon), created by a "forger" (oJ mi`mo~), even though this book was associated with the important prophetic book of Daniel in the LXX.[424] His evidence for these claims was entirely drawn from the fact that the original text of the Old Testament was the Hebrew

[424] *Ep. Afr.* 1-2.

not the Greek.[425] In response, Origen claimed that he knew of "countless" other cases where the text of the LXX contained more or less than the Hebrew text.

This movement which enhanced the authority of the Hebrew text created a problem for those Jews outside of the Land of Israel who did not speak Hebrew. As a result at least two new Greek translations of the Old Testament were generated in the second century C.E., one by Aquila and one by Theodotion. According to Origen, by his day the translation of Aquila had become the favorite Greek version of the scriptures among Jews who only knew Greek.[426] It was a much more literal translation of the Hebrew. And, importantly, it followed the Hebrew in omitting the non-Hebrew changes to the text of the Old Testament. Origen gives several examples from the books of Daniel, Esther, and Job. Aquila's close adherence to the Hebrew text probably served to give it support among the Jews as well as made it much easier for Christians to identify where their texts differed from the traditional text of the Jews.

The combination of new emphasis upon the Hebrew text and the now open knowledge that the text of the Seventy differed in places from the Hebrew (and Aquila's literal Greek translation of it) also caused problems for Christians who considered the LXX their sacred text. It was now important to account for those differences in the course of debates. Origen for his part felt that it was very important to be familiar with both the Christian and Jewish versions of the texts during such discussions. This appears to have been one of his primary motivations in producing the Hexapla, a text that reproduced the various editions of the Old Testament in parallel columns. Traditionally it has been believed that the work consisted of eight columns, the first containing the Hebrew text, the second a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew text, and in the following columns

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[425] His evidence was textual and linguistic. He pointed to the simple fact that the book did not exist in the Hebrew text. More impressively he pointed out that the book contained clever Greek stylistic uses of words which could not have originated in the Hebrew.

[426] *Ep. Afr.* 2. " w/l mavlista eijwvqasi oiJ ajgnoou`nte~ th;n jEbraivwn diavlekton crh`sqai"

were the Greek editions of Aquila, Symmachus, the LXX, Theodotion, and two others.[427] This work was massive and took from 15 to 25 years to complete. Otherwise, there is limited information regarding the work itself and thus most of the details of the work are still matters of scholarly debate with little hope of firm resolution.[428]

Even Origen's intent in expending such effort on the Hexapla is a point of scholarly disagreement.[429] Despite all the theories, at least one of the most important motivations, mentioned by Origen himself, was to gain a clear understanding of how the editions of the Old Testament differed in order that he and other Christians could be prepared in their private and public debates with the Jews over particular texts.[430] Christians needed to be better prepared in such matters because Origen did not want to quote texts to the Jews which did not exist in their copies. Such practices by Christians had led the Jews to despise and laugh at Gentile Christians specifically as

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[427] Several scholars have questioned whether there ever was a Hebrew column, suggesting there were only seven columns. See Pierre Nautin, *Origène: Sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 321. Also see R.G. Jenkins, "The First column of the Hexapla: The Evidence of the Milan Codex (Rahlfs 1098) and the Cairo Genizah Fragment (Rahlfs 2005)" in *Origen's Hexapla and Fragments: Papers presented at the Rich Seminar on the Hexapla, Oxford Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, 25th – 3rd August 1994* (ed. Alison Salvesen; Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 3-17.

[428] An important reference to the work is found in Eusebius *Eccl. hist.* 6.16. Origen himself does not ever name the work but refers to it several times. In his letter to Africanus, Origen states that he had worked as hard as possible to discern the meaning of the various editions in all their variations (ejpi polu; tou`to, o}sh duvnami~, pepoihvkamen, gumnavzonte~ aujtw`n to;n nou`n ejn pavsai~ tai`~ ejkdovsesi kai; tai`~ diaforai`~ aujtw`n) (*Ep. Afr.* 5). In his Commentary on Matthew, Origen notes several reasons why there have come to be variations in the Old Testament manuscripts. Here again he notes that he has marked those passages in the LXX that do not occur in the Hebrew, although, he says, he didn't dare to remove them altogether (ouj tolmhvsante~ aujta; pavnth perielei`n) (*Comm. Matt.* 15.14).

[429] See for example John Wright, "Origen in the Scholar's Den: A Rationale for the Hexapla" in *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy* (eds. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen; Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1988), 48-62. Several scholars have argued that Origen pursued the work to aid in the study of the Hebrew language, for example, Harry Orlinsky, "The Columnar Order of the Hexapla," *JQR* 27 (1936-37): 137-149 and Henry Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925-1930).

[430] See S.P. Brock, "Origen's Aims as a Text Critic of the Old Testament," *Studia Patristica* 10 (1970): 215-218.

"being ignorant of the true readings as they (the Jews) have them."[431] Origen's efforts were to allow him and others to be more effective in such debates. This fits precisely into the context we have already described of the long standing textual controversies involved in the debates between Jews and Christians fueled in large part by continuing use of Christian *testimonia* taken from the LXX and other non-biblical sources.

Work on Textual Interpretation

Origen's exegetical efforts or method of interpreting biblical texts has also been a field heavily worked by scholars. Origen's own beginning point for the interpretation of the scriptures was the traditional Christian and Jewish conviction in regard to the divine inspiration of the scriptures.[432] He stands firmly in this tradition, designating the scriptures with phrases such as "divine words" (qei`oi lovgoi), "divine scripture" (qei`a grafhv), "sacred scriptures" (ijera; gravmmata). Zöllig finished his study with the conclusion that for Origen the scripture was "divine" for the primary reason that "it has God as its author."[433] One of Origen's main proofs for this conviction was the traditional argument based upon the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in the person of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of Jesus' own prophetic utterances.[434]

The proper way to interpret the divine scriptures was another matter. Here Origen was much less traditional. Origen himself comments on the interpretation of scripture in *De Principiis* Book

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[431] *Ep. Afr*. 5. ouj katafronhvsousin, oujd j wJ~ e[qo~ aujtoi`~, gelavsontai tou;~ ajpo; tw`n ejqnw`n pisteuvonta~, wJ~ t j ajlhqh` kai; par j aujtoi`~ ajnagegrammevna ajgnou`nta~.

[432] For specifics regarding Origen's view of the inspiration of scripture see August Zöllig, *Die Inspirationslehre des Origines* vol. 5 part 1 of *Strassburger Theologische Studien* (Freiburg: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1902). Also see Rolf Gögler, *Zur Theologie des biblischen Wortes bei Origenes* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1963), 282-298, and R.P.C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: a Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959), 187-209.

[433] Zöllig, 9.

[434] *Princ.* 4.1.3-5.

4. There Origen puts forth his theory on the nature of the scripture by drawing an analogy from Greek anthropology. He argues that:

> Just as a man consists of body, soul, and spirit, so in the same way does the Scripture which has been prepared by God to be given for man's salvation.
>
> w{sper ga;r oJ a[nqropo~ sunevsthken ejk swvmato~ kai; yuch`~ kai; pneuvmato~, to;n aujto;n trovpon kai; hJ oijkonomhqei`sa uJpo; qeou` eij~ ajnqrwpw`n swthrivan doqh`nai grafhv[435]

From this tripartite nature of the scripture Origen concludes that there are three senses of the scripture that can be explored by the interpreter of scripture: the literal, the moral, and the spiritual senses. In practice, however, this tripartite division often was collapsed into two senses: the literal and the spiritual, or between the letter and the spirit.[436]

In putting this model into practice Origen defined the "literal" sense in a very narrow way. He did not define it in the modern way of "the sense in which the author originally intended the text." This definition leaves room for poetic language and figures of speech as part of the original intent. But for Origen the literal sense was what words strictly said in their most strict every day meanings. Thus M. F. Wiles states:

> Despite the great range of his intellectual gifts Origen was totally lacking in poetic sensitivity. The literal sense of Scripture is for him the literally literal meaning of the words. When the Psalmist declares that God's truth 'reaches to the clouds,' Origen feels constrained to say that the clouds cannot be intended literally in such a saying; they must be interpreted spiritually of those who are obedient to the word

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[435] *Princ.* 4.2.4. Origen referred to the of the Septuagint text of Prov. 22:20 as a scriptural proof-text for this system.

[436] Charles J. Scalise, *"*Origen and the *sensus literalis*" in *Origen of Alexandria: His world and his legacy* (eds. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen; Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 123.

> of God. The literal interpretation of Zech. 4:10 would imply that God had seen bodily eyes.[437]

This led Origen to often speak disparagingly of the literal sense. On the one hand, he was eager to point out that the scriptures were "in no way myths" (oujdamw`~ mu`qoi), as the works of the Greek poets were then accustomed to be described (as in the Homeric epics).[438] Origen is able to admit there are valuable myths, worthless myths, significant and empty myths, myths admirable for the truth they contain and myths despicable for their promotion of immorality. But ultimately a "myth" was to be understood as primarily a product of literary creation, whether good or bad, not as a description of a specific event that literally happened. And Origen was unwilling to use this label to describe the scriptures.[439]

On the other hand, Origen recognized that there were texts which he had great difficulty accepting as literally historically probable.[440] He claimed that the literal sense of such passages

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[437] Quoted in Scalise, 123, n.21. Scalise concluded that Origen's narrow and rigid view of the *sensus literalis* led him in practice to abandon that sense of scripture too quickly and thus lose hermeneutical control of his exegesis (129). Likewise, Hanson claims that "in a great many cases Origen resorts to allegory simply because he will not recognize an ordinary metaphor when he sees one, or, if he recognizes it, will not leave it alone." R.P.C. Hanson *Allegory and event: A study of the sources and significance of Origen's interpretation of scripture* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1959. Repr., Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 246.

[438] See Jeffrey A. Oschwald, *The self-evident truth: Scripture and apology in the Contra Celsum of Origen* (Ph.D. diss., Notre Dame University, 1993), 90-118 for a detailed discussion of the use of the term "myth" in Origen.

[439] Here Origen follows Philo. For example, in discussing the serpent who speaks to Eve in Genesis 3, Philo states that "these things are not fabrications of myth (muvqou plavsmata), in which the race of poets and sophists delights, but are rather proof of types, inviting unto allegory for the things given through the hidden meaning." *Opif.* 157.

[440] Sometimes this difficulty was based upon moral considerations. So he could not accept that King David had committed adultery and murder and thought this passage had to be allegorized to save his reputation (Hanson, 262). At other times this concern was more philosophical or rational as in regard to the creation story of Gen. 1-2. Here Philo already had a tradition of allegory that he could follow and this in turn influenced Origen (Hanson, 51).

was intended for the "simple" and the "masses."[441] But the enlightened Christian should investigate such passages with a view toward the spiritual sense which lies hidden under the literal. And with this justification in mind, Origen cultivated the exegetical method of allegory[442], although this did not formally resolve the problem of the historicity of the literal sense.[443] However, Origen's use of allegory, while one of the main interests of modern scholarship's investigation into his work, is secondary to the investigation of this paper.[444] The more important question is how Origen's exegesis affected his judgment of and relationship with contemporary Jews.

In regard to the Jews specifically, Origen quite often accused the Jews of working with nothing but the literal sense and being ignorant of the spiritual sense. But in his criticism of Jewish interpretation as "literal", Origen was not original. Indeed, by the third century "Jewish scholarship is, to those Christian writers who are acquainted with it, a byword for its literalism and dislike of allegory."[445] This criticism was especially popular when dealing with the law, the practice of which Christians had officially long criticized. Undoubtedly this criticism was the institutionalized intellectual, social, and emotional remnant of the first century controversies

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[441] Origen regularly worked with the traditional Alexandrian distinction between the "simple" believer and the more mature believer. See Gunnar af Hällström, *Fides simpliciorum according to Origen of Alexandria* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1984).

[442] For a recent bibliographical review of modern scholarship on Origen's use of allegory, see Karen Jo Torjesen, *Hermeneutical procedure and theological method in Origen's exegesis* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), 1-12.

[443] This was a question that was eagerly taken up into the scholarly debates of "myth" and "history" of the last century. See R.P.C Hanson, 259-288 for a discussion of this topic. Allegory seems to have been a mediating way between declaring a text literally historical and labeling it with the pejorative "myth", which explicitly declared the text to be a work of fiction. In this way a text could be recognized as authoritative and as containing valuable truth without committing to acceptance of the literal meaning of the text. It was usefully ambiguous in regard to the historical nature of the text and yet took seriously the attempt to find the "hidden" value in the text which had to be discovered through the symbolism of the allegorical method.

[444] Origen received ancient and modern criticism for his use of allegory. For example, Hanson concludes regarding Origen's allegory that "it in fact, if pursued logically, transforms the Bible into a divine cross-word puzzle the solution to whose clues is locked in Origen's bosom." Hanson, 248.

[445] Hanson, 35.

regarding circumcision and other components of the law in relation to Gentile membership in the church. In accordance with this criticism, Origen was especially critical of the Jews' literal acceptance of every small mandate given in the law. In contrast, Origen engaged in complete allegorical freedom when dealing with texts of the law.

One interesting demonstration of this attitude is Origen's use of the phrase "Jewish myths", which he borrows from Titus 1:14. In this text the Christian leader is admonished to keep himself from jIoudai>koi`~ muvqoi~. Origen built upon this and claimed that the Christians of his day should avoid or had avoided Jewish muqologiva in *Contra Celsum* 2.6, 2.52, and 7.29. Despite many other scholarly speculations, Jeffrey Oschwald has demonstrated that Origen's use of this phrase refers specifically to the literal Jewish interpretation of the law and prophets void of reference to Jesus, which Christians regularly found there. Thus, according to Origen, the same text of the law and the prophets are full of hidden spiritual knowledge when read in light of Jesus, but are no better than myths, once the hidden messianic reference and foretelling is denied and the law is simply read as an obligatory rule of behavior.[446] Other than applying this phraseology specifically to the Jews, Origen was very traditional in this aspect of his exegetical comments and criticism.[447] Hanson concludes, "We can see then that Origen made no drastic innovation upon the traditional Christian attitude to the Jewish law which he inherited. Christians had from the very beginning maintained that the Jewish law predicted and prefigured Christ, and Origen made this his chief point."[448]

Yet this criticism of Jewish literalism was not the only aspect of Origen's exegesis that related to contemporary Jews. We have already seen that Origen engaged in exegetical controversy with various Jewish teachers. Through this work with and against various Jews, Origen picked up on and used some ideas that had first appeared in Jewish exegetical efforts. In *Allegory and Event,*

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[446] Oschwald, 109-117. Also see De Lange, 105 in regard to Origen's use of this idea.

[447] The term is used as a pejorative reference to the myths of the Greeks in Josephus *Ant.* 1.16; Clement of Alex. *Protr.* 2.20 & 32 and *Strom.* 1.13; 6.28. But Origen appears to be the first to apply it to the Jews and this in a unique way.

[448] Hanson, 309.

R.P.C Hanson has demonstrated that a tradition of Jewish allegory did exist and that that it was somewhat different in nature from Greek philosophic allegory. It is also well-known that Philo engaged in allegorical interpretation of the scriptures and that he influenced Origen. But it can also be demonstrated that even later some of the Rabbis engaged in some traditional Jewish allegory. And it can be demonstrated to some reasonable probability that Origen picked up on some of his allegorical interpretation from the Jewish Rabbis, even outside the context of the interpretation of the Song of Songs, discussed earlier.[449]

Summary

All of this is not yet the *testimonia* tradition. It does, however, show that Origen was quite traditional in his exegesis in many aspects despite his well-known originality in applying allegorical interpretation to the scriptures within the Christian tradition. He was aware of and reacted to traditional Christian / Jewish exegetical traditions, in their agreements and disagreements. He made great personal efforts to give himself and other Christians firm ground from which to debate Jewish criticisms of Christian exegesis. He also made use of traditional Christian criticisms of the Jewish interpretation of scripture as "literal." Yet, at the same time, he knowingly made use of other Jewish traditional interpretations that he found useful. In the broader context he stood well within the Christian exegetical tradition in his general criticism of Jewish exegesis even if his precise method was non-traditional and even if at times he was able to find individual pieces of Jewish exegesis valuable to his purpose. The question that remains to be answered is how the Christian *testimonia* tradition fit into the exegetical work of this complex Christian figure.

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[449] See specific suggestions in De Lange, 112-121.

Chapter 10: Origen and the Christian *Testimonia* Tradition

In the preceding chapters I have demonstrated the origin and development of a Christian tradition I have called the *testimonia* tradition. I have shown that this multifaceted and dynamic tradition consisted of the action of proof-texting the Christian faith from the Jewish scriptures via texts that became traditional in use. I have demonstrated some of the specific *testimonia* texts, *testimonia* themes, and controversies that were involved in Christian / Jewish arguments regarding some of these elements in the second century C.E. I have also given an overview of Origen's general exegetical work and of what is generally known regarding his relationship with the Jews of his time and place. It remains for this chapter to consider specifically how Origen made use of the Christian *testimonia* tradition in his work and how this relates to his relationship with Jews around him.

First, as pointed out earlier Origen carried out his exegesis very much within the traditional Christian conviction that the Old Testament scriptures were inspired and trustworthy. One of Origen's main proofs for this conviction was the proof of fulfilled prophecy.[450] He claimed that the prophecies are a manifestation of the Spirit working in the Gospel since they "are sufficient to produce faith in any one who reads them."[451] Indeed, they are among the strongest confirmation of Christian claims for Jesus.[452]

Origen time and again appealed to the prophets. He claimed that the wisdom found there was once hidden but that this wisdom has been revealed by the coming and teaching of Jesus. And when Celsus openly criticized the Christian use of the Hebrew prophets, Origen energetically

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[450] See Karen Jo Torjesen, , 36-38 as she presents Origen's arguments on this topic from *Princ.* 4.1.

[451] *Cels.* 1.2.. me;n dia; ta;~ profhteiva~ iJkana;~ pistopoih`sai to;n ejtugcavnonta mavlista eij~ ta; peri; tou` Cristou`. See also *Cels.* 8.48.

[452] *Cels.* 1.49.

defended this basis of the Christian faith.[453] In book 7 of Against Celsus, Origen's opponent is reported to have written specifically that Christians wrongly despise the Greek oracles and prophets while clinging to those of the Jews. In response, Origen defended the Old Testament prophets first on the basis of their gender, opposing them to the Greek prophetesses. Secondly, he defended them on the basis of their austere and virtuous lives recorded in the Jewish scriptures.[454]

Celsus is also recorded as saying that the prophets are full of dark and difficult words that make no sense and therefore are of no value. Origen responded that while his own abilities were limited, he had produced commentaries on several prophetic books that explained many details of the texts of several of the ancient prophets and thus showed that these charges are untrue. He then produced several examples, most of which demonstrate Origen's use of allegory to explain the meaning of the Hebrew prophets where the literal sense was deemed unacceptable.

In addition, Origen responded to gnostic opponents who claimed that the apostles of the New Testament were wiser (sofwtevrou~) than the fathers and the prophets. Apparently this was done in the interest of contrasting the revelation given to the prophets by the lesser god of the Old Testament to the revelation given to the apostles by the Father of Jesus. Origen denied that this

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[453] Celsus was not criticizing the idea of prophecy. Indeed, he held up prophecy among the Greeks over against the Hebrew prophets. Thus Robert J. Hauck, in his *The More Divine Proof: Prophecy and Inspiration in Celsus and Origen,* states on page 3,

…. the question of prophetic knowledge is central to what holds pagan and Christian apart, and indeed, is an important facet of late antique religious thought. The ultimate question is how the soul finds freedom from the powers which seek to restrain it. Both Celsus and Origen argue that their own founders achieved such liberation. Both want to prove that divine truth is found in their own traditions; both assert that the teachers of the other's doctrine were misled by false and daemonic inspiration; both claim that their founders were inspired sages, who rose above earthly limits to find the knowledge of god. Both sides, pagan and Christian, are concerned with the mechanics of prophecy; how and when it occurs, what is the source of the inspiring influence; and most importantly, whether it is bound to earth by daemons, or ascended to heaven with the souls of divine men.

[454] For Origen an ascetic and virtuous life is proof of the presence of God's Spirit. The Spirit brings holiness and holiness allows for more participation in the Spirit.

was accurate and defended the prophets, many of whom "saw" the coming of Jesus as accurately as the apostles saw it.[455]

Thus in principle Origen believed that the predictions of the Jewish prophets were critical to the presentation of the Christian faith and generally considered those prophets equal in value to the apostles. And most interestingly, he did not restrict the importance of the prophets to the "simple" believers as he often did the "literal" meaning of the law. Thus despite his unique preference for allegory and his open recognition of difficult texts in the scriptures, Origen did not diverge in the main from the prophetic piety of the Great Church that we have already documented.

Based upon this support for the prophets, Origen's place in the Alexandrian and Palestinian church, and his level of scholarship, it hardly requires detailed proof that Origen was aware not only of such general arguments regarding the prophets but that he was also very aware of many of the specific Christian proof-texts as they had been used before him. And it is very likely that he made use of such texts during his time as head of the catechetical school in Alexandria. But did he simply use them in the same proof-texting manner we observed in the second-century Christian authors? My method for investigating this question will be to make use of some of the specific traditional *testimonia* content already identified and follow them in Origen's work in order to gather some data that should lead to some conclusions regarding his use of such texts.

Psalm 110:1

In chapter 4, I identified a group of *testimonia* themes that were connected by relation to the text of Psalm 110. The Psalm was used in the earliest days of Jewish Christianity to prove and relate several ideas: the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God, the subjection of all things to the exalted Jesus, and Jesus as Lord of all things. The use of the Psalm and other associated texts resulted in conflated proof-texts that were used to provide a Christian basis for their worship of the risen Jesus.

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[455] *Comm. Jo.* 6.5.30 – 6.6.31.

In Origen's existing works this Psalm appears many times. However, it is very interesting that many times it is introduced into Origen's work in a secondary fashion, through commentary upon New Testament texts that contain the Psalm. For example, the conflation of Ps. 110 and Dan 7:13 is only introduced via Origen's exegesis of the text of the Gospel of Matthew. And while explaining John's designation of Jesus as the "lamb of God" in John 1, Origen makes use of Ps 110:1 and Ps 8:6 as they are presented by Paul in 1 Cor. 15 yet without direct reference to the apostle.[456] It should be noted that while doing so Origen uses the ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου of the LXX as the conclusion of Ps 110:1 as opposed to the ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ of 1 Cor 15:25. Thus he has corrected Paul's use of the text to the correct LXX form.[457]

There are however direct uses of the Psalm as a proof-text in Origen's work. Several of these occur in the commentary on the Gospel of John. For example, in his commentary on John 13:3 where it is stated that Jesus knew that "the Father had given all things into his hands", Origen brings Ps 110:1 into the discussion saying that by the Spirit David foresaw this and prophesied concerning it.[458] And in *Comm. Jo.* 13.8, Origen very interestingly conflates Ps 110:1 with Rom. 6:10 to provide a proof-text for the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, one of the earliest Christian applications of the Psalm. Another example can be found in the *Scholia in Apocalyspem* where Origen connects Ps 110:1 with the text of Lk 1:33 where it is prophesied that Jesus would take the throne of David and rule over Jacob forever. In doing so, Origen shows that Jesus would fulfill the prophecy of the Apocalypse and all the ancient prophecies concerning him.

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[456] *Comm. Jo.* 6.57. See similar uses of 1 Cor 15:23-28 in *Comm. Jo.* 10.10 and 10.39. The quotation of a traditional proof text that is contained in a quotation of another authoritative text is a new and important phenomenon in the history of the *testimonia* tradition and the history of the Christian Scriptures in general. In this way the texts of the New Testament, considered authoritative by the third century, introduced authoritative uses of the *testimonia* such that the details of the original use were no longer important because logically the authoritative text validated its own use of the earlier text. But this phenomenon is largely outside the scope of this paper.

[457] Origen explicitly uses the form of 1 Cor 15:25 in *Comm. Jo.* 1.16, *Comm. Matt.* 15.23, *Fr. Eph.* 9.106-107, and *Fr. Ps.* 9.37, 92.1.

[458] *Comm. Jo.* 32.3.

These examples demonstrate that Psalm 110 remained an important proof-text for Origen. It continued to serve for a variety of doctrines in a variety of contexts. And Origen continued the general Christian practice of using groupings of scriptural texts to prove the point he was trying make. However, Origen did not simply mechanically use the same *testimonia* groupings that were seen in earlier authors. The text was now often used in conjunction with New Testament texts. First, this reflects the established authority of the New Testament in Origen's day and demonstrates a third-century change in the conservative practice of Christian proof-texting. Secondly, it probably demonstrates Origen's own originality in supplying biblical proof for the points he trying to communicate. The *testimonia* tradition was changing and expanding even as it continued to serve as a basis for Christian doctrine.[459]

Hardening Theme

Another interesting phenomenon can be observed in the theme of hardening that was documented in Chapter 4. There it was found that a group of verses consisting of Isa 29:9-10, Dt 29:4, Isa 6:9-10, Jer 5:21, Is 53:1, Isa 65:2 and Ps 69:23-24 were considered proof texts for a theme of hardened hearts that led to unbelief. This theme is applied to the Jews frequently in the New Testament and occasionally to unbelieving Gentiles. The theme was basically a traditional Christian commonplace in the second century but it found less and less regular application as interaction with actual Jews became infrequent.[460] This theme also began to interact with the gnostic soteriology which taught that people were hardened or not in accordance with their nature from birth. Similarly Marcion taught the creator God was the author of evil and made use of the

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[459] The last part of the second century and the first half of the third century should be viewed as period of transition in this regard. Already in Justin and Origen New Testament texts are used as authoritative. But the old traditional texts are not mixed so easily and freely with texts of the New Testament as is seen in Origen. Precisely the same situation is seen in Cyprian's *Ad Quirinum*, which was essentially a new systematic presentation of the Latin *testimonia* in the third century. There Ps 110:1 is connected with Dan 7:13, as in the Gospels, and also with other New Testament texts from Matthew and Revelation (2.26). Ps 8:7 does not appear.

[460] See *Dial.* 12 where Justin quotes from "Jeremiah" incorrectly indicating a *testimonia* source. Also *Dial.* 25 & 33.

hardening of Pharaoh as a prime example of his doctrine.[461] Second-century Christian authors of the Great Church argued vigorously against this idea emphasizing the concepts of individual responsibility on the basis of free will. Thus the concept of the hardening of people's hearts became less simple to use in the context of this new controversy. In this way new contemporary situations caused old *testimonia* themes to become less pertinent and receive less focus by the beginning of the third century.

The evidence in Origen follows this same pattern. On the one hand is no clear usage of the theme as a complex of *testimonia* passages as we find in the mid second-century. On the other hand, Origen was very much concerned about the contemporary argument of free will and hardening and about the biblical texts related to this topic. He touched upon this topic in many places. And in this context he discussed some of these traditional hardening passages. So for example in *De Principiis* book three there is an extended discussion regarding free will (peri; aujtexouvsiou) and personal responsibility. And here Origen discussed the hardening of Pharaoh specifically because it was used by the "heretics" as a point of proof.[462] And along the way of this discussion he brought up the traditional *testimonium* Isa 6:9-10 but only in a passing way and only because it is used by Jesus in the Gospels (Matt 13:14-15, Mk 4:12).

It is quite interesting that after Origen discussed Pharaoh and passages from the New Testament, he turned his attention explicitly to the prophets regarding this topic.[463] But when he did so, he did not use any of the traditional hardening passages but discussed instead Isa 63:17-18 and Jer 20:7, both of which speak of God misleading or deceiving his people. This is again in the interest of discussing God's nature in reaction to the teaching of the Marcionites and the gnostic groups.[464]

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[461] Irenaeus *Haer.* 4.29.1. Tertullian *Marc.* 2.14.

[462] *Princ.* 3.8.

[463] *Princ.* 3.12.

[464] Precisely the same discussion occurs in *Fr. Jo.* 14-23. See the similar distinction between ejk fuvsew~ and ejk aijtiw`n in *Fr. Eph.* 31-35.

In the case of the hardening theme Origen's use of the traditional *testimonia* is very limited. Where he touched upon them it is often because they are used in the New Testament. Where he made use of the prophets explicitly he used new passages of concern rather than the traditional texts. When the traditional texts were touched upon, they were applied to a new situation or discussed in the context of new controversies. It is unclear if the lack of use of the traditional hardening theme is mostly due to lack of contemporary interest or whether it was found to be uncomfortable in light of the contemporary controversies with the gnostics and Marcionites over the nature of God and the nature of the freedom of mankind.

Contemporary Controversial *testimonia* Texts

We can investigate Origen's use of the *testimonia* further by considering his use of those texts which were controversial a little before his time. Five examples of this type of prophetic texts were identified in chapter 7. There were three main types of controversies regarding texts: controversial exegesis, controversial textual sources, and controversial translations.

Controversial Exegesis (Application)

Psalm 110:1

One of the chief examples of a controversial application of a text is that of Psalm 110. Considering the importance of Psalm 110 to the Christian claims regarding Jesus, it is not surprising that there was a Jewish reaction to the repeated Christian use of this text. Earlier we saw that Justin and Tertullian report that the Jews denied the Psalm applied to Jesus and countered that it was originally written regarding king Hezekiah.[465] But there is no other verification of this in other second century or early third century authors. And in the investigation as to Origen's use of the Psalm just presented, there was no direct evidence that this was a controversial text for Origen. It is possible that Origen simply doesn't explicitly note such a long standing controversy. It is also

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[465] Justin *Dial.* 33, 83. Tert. *Marc.* 5.9. Tertullian seems to be dependent upon Justin and there are no other independent verifications for this claim.

possible that the second century argument simply became stale and ceased to be a contemporary third-century issue. It is impossible to be sure with existing evidence. At any rate, the controversy, if it existed, was not important enough to his work to make mention of it.

Psalm 72

Psalm 72 is another example of a controversial application of a text to Jesus. The Psalm was read by Christians as a messianic prophecy applicable to Jesus as the Son of God. The explicit influence of this Psalm on the New Testament is subtle but discernable indicating its early adoption by Christians.[466] Much of the Psalm was read as applying to Christ. By the mid-second century verse 5 in particular was important to Christian devotion. In the LXX the verse contains a singular subject:

> καὶ συμπαραμενεῖ τῷ ἡλίῳ καὶ πρὸ τῆς σελήνης γενεὰς γενεῶν
>
> and he will endure with the sun and before the moon from generation to generation.

This text was read by second century Greek Christians as a prophecy pertaining to Jesus as the preexistent heavenly messiah.[467] It was important enough as a *testimonium* for Justin to single it out as a prophecy rejected by the Jews. The Jews, according to Justin, stated that the Psalm

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[466] It is possible this was motivated in part by the connection between the Jewish Davidic messianic figure and the title "Son of God" which appears already in the texts from Qumran. Collins points out that the Florilegium 4Q174 equates the Branch of David with the Son of God from 1 Sam 7:14. And he points out that 4Q246 also demonstrates some at Qumran used the title "Son of God" for the expected Davidic messianic figure. Collins, 163-167.

[467] Justin *Dial.* 34 and 64. The verb in the MT is the plural יִירָאֻוךָ, "they will endure." Both the Greek and the Hebrew agree on the singular, however, in verses following, raising the legitimate question as to whether the MT has been corrupted from the singular וְיַאֲרִיךְ. On the other hand, there is no indication of this particular passage of the Psalm being used in first century Jewish Christianity or among early second century Greek Christians. This seems to imply it first gained importance when the LXX became the text of choice for Greek speaking Christians after the Psalm itself was already being used.

spoke of Solomon, not the messiah. Tertullian reports the same thing although he does not reference verse 5 in particular.[468]

Origen implicitly makes use of verse 5 in one place where he interprets it allegorically. In *Comm. Jo.* 6.55, he states that the Savior

> Sumparamevnei tw/ᾧ nohtw/ᾧ hJlivw pro; th`~ lamprotavth~ ejkklhsiva~, tropikwvteron selhvnh~ legomevnh~, tugcavnwn genew`n geneai`~
>
> He endures with the intelligible sun before His most illustrious church, figuratively called the moon, from generation to generation

This casual introduction of the text of the Psalm into a text that had little in it to suggest its use betrays a close familiarity with the text. Origen has taken a text commonly known to Christians and has applied his own allegorical style to it in order to make it of use in the context of his work on the Gospel of John.

Another verse from the Psalm demonstrates Origen's familiarity and use of the Psalm. Verse 8 of the Psalm states that:

> He will have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

This text was read by earlier authors as prophesying the spread of the Christian faith across the earth. And Origen made use of it in precisely this way in *Princ.* 4.1.5, *Frag. Ps.* 71.8, and in *Sel. Ps.* 12.1072.

All of these instances show Origen's interest in this traditional Christian *testimonium* and his regular use of it in his own works. On the other hand, there is no evidence that this use was motivated directly by controversy with the Jews. And there is no mention of the controversial nature of the Psalm. This does not exclude the possibility, however, that there were still debates going on regarding these texts between Christians and Jews.

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[468] Tert. *Marc.* 5.9

Controversial Textual Sources

Psalm 96 (Ps. 95 LXX)

In chapter 7, I demonstrated that Ps 96(95):10 became an important *testimonium* in the Latin West in the form of: "The Lord reigns *from the tree*." There is no evidence the words "from the tree" ever existed in the Hebrew text or the Greek text of the LXX. But authors from Justin, to Tertullian, to Augustine used the text in this form. And Justin accused the Jews of having removed it from the LXX manuscripts.

Origen does comment on this Psalm in his *Frag. Ps.* but when he comes to verse 10 he does not even comment on this phrase of the verse. Further the phrase "from the tree" does not occur in Origen's work. The meaning of this fact is not completely clear since authors before Justin and other well-known *testimonia* users such as Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria do not make use of this phrase either.

It is worthy of note that Origen does not even mention the textual situation or mention any correction of it since he was probably aware of its use as a proof-text. But the best that can be mustered here is an argument from silence.

Sayings of Jeremiah

In chapter 7 I pointed out that in the second century there was a fair amount of confusion regarding a variety of *testimonia* attributed to Jeremiah. In the first place there was the *testimonium* used by Justin that read:

> 'I [was] like a lamb that is brought to the slaughter: they devised a device against me, saying, Come, *let us put wood on His bread*, and let us blot Him out from the land of the living; and His name shall no more be remembered.'

This text is from the LXX of Jer 11:19 and will be properly handled under the category of controversial translations. But it is mentioned here because Justin claimed that this passage was

missing from some Jewish LXX texts of Jeremiah. He believed that it had been cut ajpo; tw`n dia; jleremivou lecqevntwn. Skarsaune has demonstrated that Justin was very much limited in his use of the prophet Jeremiah having used only texts known to be traditional *testimonia*. This implies that Justin's main source for the prophet was an excerpt source of such traditional texts.[469] Daniélou likewise concluded that there was a work circulating in the second century that attributed a variety of sayings to Jeremiah.[470] Two other concrete instances of such Jeremiah *testimonia* can be identified.

In *Dial.* 15, Justin points out that Jeremiah has cried out against the Jews: "For your ears are closed, your eyes are blinded, and the heart is hardened." This precise text is not found in Jeremiah or elsewhere although it is derived from texts found in the hardening *testimonia* theme. But this particular conflation is not found in Origen or elsewhere. So it leads only to another argument of silence.

The next and most important *testimonium* attributed to Jeremiah of unidentified origin is the one that claims that Jesus delivered the souls of the Old Testament faithful from Sheol by descending there after his burial in the grave:

> 'The Lord God remembered His dead people of Israel who lay in the graves; and
> He descended to preach to them His own salvation.'

In the second century, this text served as the primary proof-text for the doctrine of the descent into hell in the Great Church.[471] It is quoted repeatedly in Irenaeus and Justin, sometimes

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[469] Skarsuane, 465.

[470] Daniélou called this work the *Apocryphon of Jeremiah.*

[471] cf. the Vulgate of Sirach 24:45: "I (Wisdom) will penetrate the lowest parts of the earth and seek out all those who sleep, and illumine all those who hope in God [the Lord]" (*Penetrabo inferiores partes terrae et inspiciam omnes dormientes et inluminabo sperantes in Deo* [*Domino*]).

attributed to Jeremiah, but sometimes to Isaiah.[472] Already Justin recognized that these words did not appear in the LXX version of Jeremiah. This passage does not exist in any of Origen's existing work. So again it is difficult to know if Origen knew of it specifically or even dealt with it in some way.

This investigation of questionable textual sources has not led to much specific data with which to work regarding Origen's awareness of specific difficulties. In each case he has kept to the text of the LXX and there has been no evidence in regard to the problematic *testimonia* in his commentaries or homilies. There is a passage however in the *Letter to Africanus* that indicates we should not interpret Origen's silence as ignorance. There where he is discussing his work on textual variations between Jewish and Christian texts he wrote:

> But why should I enumerate all the instances we collected with so much labor, to prove that the difference between our copies and those of the Jews did not escape us? In Jeremiah we perceived many such things, and indeed we found much transposition and variation in the readings of the prophecies.[473]

Thus while it is impossible to prove in any of these singular cases that Origen was aware of them, by the weight of his own witness the probability lies on the side of the argument that Origen was aware of many of these variations in Jeremiah (cf. e.g., the LXX Baruch and Letter of Jeremiah). Further, he lists other books of the Old Testament explicitly indicating the intensity of his work in this area. Thus given the popularity of some of these proof-texts and the evidence of Origen's own investigation into these matters due to the ongoing controversies in this area, it is safest to conclude the following:

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[472] *Dial.* 72. *Haer.* 3.20, 4.22, 5.31, and *Dem.* 78. Curiously the passage does not occur in Tertullian or any of the Latin authors. Yet another indication of an early dichotomy in the *testimonia* tradition between the Greek East and Latin West. But interestingly it is the Apostles Creed of the West that contains the phrase "*descendit ad inferna*" which the Nicene Creed of the East omits.

[473] *Ep. Afr.* 4. Polla; de; toiau`ta kai; ejn tw/` JIeremiva katenohvsamen, ejn wJ/` kai; pollh;n matavqesin kai; ejnallagh;n th`~ levxew`~ tw`n profhteuomevnwn eu{romen.

1. Origen was aware of many of these textual difficulties,
2. He chose to stick with the LXX text in the main elements of his work such as his commentaries and to not explicitly comment on the textual difficulties that he had identified in other places, and
3. He avoided using as proof-texts those traditional *testimonia* that did not have textual support in the LXX.

In regard to number three, it is not to be proven to what extent this was due to Origen's own decisions and to what extent these questionable passages had already decreased in popularity by Origen's time. But judging from the continued use of such passages in Tertullian, and Cyprian, and others, as well as several *agrapha* and similar things in Clement of Alexandria, it is quite likely that Origen was part of a third-century process of eliminating some of the most questionable of the traditional testimonia which were very popular earlier in order to make the Christian proof-text tradition conform more strictly to the LXX text.

Questionable Translations

Jeremiah 11:19

Under the category of Questionable Translations we must return to the text of Jeremiah 11:19. Most modern translations are very similar to:

> I did not know that they had devised schemes against me, saying, "*Let us destroy the tree with its fruit*, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be remembered no more."

Yet the phrase נַשְׁחִיתָה עֵץ בְּלַחְמּוֹ is not straightforward. The latest critical texts actually turn this passage into a matter of a questionable text.[474] But in antiquity the Hebrew text was not in question.[475]

Translations from Luther to the most modern text are in essential agreement with the given translation.[476] But the final phrase literally means "in / with its bread"? But what does it really mean to destroy or ruin the tree "in / with its bread"? In antiquity the translations were basically literal in terms of the final phrase but did not understand the verb correctly. The LXX translates "ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ" And Jerome likewise had "*mittamus lignum in panem eius*." But what does it mean to send or place wood on his bread?

This text was used in the second century as a *testimonium* as indicated by Justin in *Dial.* 72.[477] It was viewed as a prophecy of the crucifixion by Justin but was not part of the earlier grouping of passages dealing with the crucifixion seen in an earlier chapter. Justin understood the passage as a prophecy of the wood of the cross being laid upon the "bread" of Jesus' body.

Thus this text had a fundamentally strong textual basis in terms of representation in the Hebrew text and Greek text, even if the translation was questionable. But it seems to have had a limited history as a Christian *testimonium* and could not be taken in any literal sense in order to be used.

Given these difficulties, it is very interesting that Origen picked up this text and commented upon it at length in his commentary on Jeremiah (*Hom. Jer.* 10.1-3). There Origen does not note

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[474] The BHS suggests that the word בְּלַחְמּוֹ should be read a בְּלֵחוֹ , "in its freshness" which leads to the common translation "let us destroy the tree with its fruit". Or this translation is arrived at by understanding "with its bread" to refer to the tree's fruit.

[475] Justin claims that in fact the Jews had eliminated this passage from their texts of Jeremiah. *Dial.* 72. There is no textual evidence of such an omission from any extant texts of the LXX. Justin simply seems to have been incorrect in pointing to this text as a problem in this regard unless there was some type of unique local situation he was experiencing.

[476] Luther's 1545 translation contains "Lasst uns den Baum mit seinen fruechten verderben."

[477] This may not have been a widely used text judging from its lack of use by other extant authors.

that the translation ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ is a questionable translation of the Hebrew text. Nor does he question the text as Christian *testimonium*. Indeed he accepts and explains the text as an anti-Jewish text. The "bread" of Jesus, explains Origen, is the logos in which we feed. Since the Jews wanted to bring Jesus' teaching into disrepute, they said: 'Let us throw wood on his bread', thinking the crucifixion would stop his teaching through which we feed on the logos. But in fact, Origen argues, ironically it made the teaching more effective.

Origen's exact explanation of the text is unimportant. What is important is that he took a text that was strong in terms of textual representation, even though it was difficult to explain, and accepted it as an anti-Jewish prophecy of the crucifixion. This example reveals much in terms of Origen's approach to the Christian *testimonia* tradition and how he was very willing to make use of such texts in a manner consistent with previous Christian tradition as long as a passage was textually strong in the LXX tradition.

Isaiah 7:14

Without doubt the most famous text among the category of Questionable Translations, is Isaiah 7:14, which was discussed in detail in Chapter 7. This verse is used in the Gospel of Matthew and is implied in the Gospel of Luke so as to show that the virgin birth of Jesus was prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures. As we have seen, this teaching of the Great Church was well established by the beginning of the second century, probably considerably earlier. Already early in the second century it was attacked by different groups outside of the Great Church. And in the third century this topic continued to be very contemporary for Origen. In response to the controversy Origen regularly defended this traditional Christian doctrine.

In his *Contra Celsum* Origen returned to this topic repeatedly in response to Celsus' dismissal of the Christian doctrine. Celsus claimed in his work that Mary had been betrothed to Joseph but was divorced by him after she committed adultery with a soldier named Panthera.

Afterwards, she gave birth to Jesus as an illegitimate child and moved to Egypt where Jesus learned Egyptian magic before he returned to Palestine.[478]

Origen focused on this topic at length in Book 1 of this work. Here he specifically criticized Celsus for not quoting the Isaiah prophecy from the Gospel of Matthew although he had quoted many other texts from the gospel. So Origen explicitly quoted the prophetic text from Isa 7. After doing so he explicitly noted the Christian / Jewish argument regarding the translation of the Hebrew text:

> jEa;n de; JIoudai`o~ euJresilogw`n to; jIdou; hJ parqevno~ mh; gegravfqai levgh/
> ajll j ajnti j aujtou` jIdou hJ nea`ni~, fhvsomen pro;~ aujto;n o{ti hJ me;n levxi~ hJ ajalmav, h}n oiJ me;n ejbdomhvkonta meteilhvfasin eij~ th;n parqevnon a[lloi d j eij~ th;n nea`nin, kei`tai, w}~ fasi, kai; ejn tw/` Deuteronomivw ejpi; parqevnou
>
> Now, if a Jew should split words, and say that the words are not, "Lo, a virgin," but, "Lo, a young woman,"[56] we reply that the word "Almah"—which the Septuagint has rendered by "a virgin," and others by "a young woman"—occurs, as they say, in Deuteronomy, as applied to a "virgin,"

Origen followed this argument with an errant reference to Deut 22:23 where נַעֲרָ בְתוּלָה is translated παῖς παρθένος in the LXX. הָעַלְמָה is not even present in this text.

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[478] *Cels.* 1.28-33.

[479] Obviously he was familiar with the controversial translation of the text from Isaiah. And he might also have simply been reproducing a well-known Christian argument here, which was based upon ignorance of the Hebrew text. It is important to note that he did not check the veracity of his argument either because of lack of ability or the resources to do so. Nevertheless he fiercely contended the Jewish dismissal, reproduced by Celsus, of the prophecy of the virgin birth in Isa 7.[480]

In addition to the misplaced linguistic argument from Deuteronomy Origen also resorted to a rhetorical question, which was also a traditional Christian commonplace, in order to prove that the LXX translation of the passage was correct.[481] Why would the prophet have promised a sign of a "young woman" giving birth to a son, asked Origen. "What kind of sign, then, would that have been—a young woman who was not a virgin giving birth to a child?"[482]

After these points Origen continued on to argue in favor of the traditional Christian doctrine of the virgin birth. First he produced an argument regarding the trustworthy nature of the Hebrew

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[479] עַלְמָה appears 7 times in the Hebrew Old Testament in Gen 24:43, Ex 2:8, Ps 68:25, Pr 30:19, Cant 1:3, 6:8, and Isa 7:14. It is translated by the LXX with parqevno~ in two of these cases. It is translated by nea`ni~ in four cases. Thus the only passage available for Origen to reference for his given argument would have been Genesis 24:43.

On the other hand, parqevno~ appears in the LXX a little over 50 times, all but 7 times in order to translate בְּתוּלָה. nea`ni~ appears in the LXX as a translation of the Hebrew text on the order of 25 times. It translates עַלְמָה in only four of these texts and in the rest of the cases it translates הָנַּעֲרָה.

[480] This corroborates the earlier conclusions regarding Origen's Hebrew abilities as well as his general attitude and approach to the Christian *testimonia.* This must also indicate that Origen had not used this proof in argumentation with Jews who could read Hebrew otherwise he would have quickly been forced to abandon it.

[481] See Justin *Dial.* 84; Irenaeus *Haer.* 3.6; Tertullian *Marc.* 3.13

[482] *Cels.* 1.35.

prophets. In addition, he pointed out that the Greeks themselves believed that not every man has been born of the union of a man and woman.[483]

When Origen's other works are examined it is clear that the virgin birth is an important part of his faith and piety. Often he refers to Jesus casually as the one "born of the virgin". The virgin birth is discussed in several aspects in various works by Origen. But many of these are centered upon the exegesis of New Testament texts, especially those found in the gospels of Luke and Matthew. I have not identified any other extended commentary upon the text of Isaiah itself as discussed above.

So in conclusion, Origen mentions the virgin birth frequently and the prophecy of Isa 7:14 specifically on many occasions. But even as the matter was obviously important to him, his justification for the Christian exegesis of this text was very much traditional with very little original contribution. He even reproduced commonplace Christian arguments including errors of proof which he did not verify before using.

Summary: Origen and the *testimonia* tradition

In summary, in the mid-third century the Christian Old Testament *testimonia* tradition continued to be active and dynamic. The Old Testament continued to serve as a fundamental source of authoritative texts for Christian authors as they presented and defended their faith in Jesus as the Son of God. In the second century a fairly well defined grouping of texts that would eventually make up the New Testament was taking shape. These texts were becoming recognized as authoritative and were as useful in proving Christian doctrine as the traditional Old Testament prophetic texts. The growing use of the New Testament texts, combined with continuing doctrinal

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[483] *Cels.* 1.37. Origen refers to Greek philosophical arguments about the origin of the first man, which he considers more incredible (paradoxovteron) than the Christian doctrine of Jesus' birth. He also refers to contemporary stories about Plato's birth which he considers one of the Greek "fables" (jAlla; tau`ta me;n ajlhqw`~ mu`qoi).

controversy inside and outside of the church contributed to keeping the content of the Christian proof-text repertoire dynamic.

Some of the prophetic proof-texts which had been used in the second century were questioned by Christian opponents on the basis of text, translation, and exegesis. By the mid-second century the need was recognized for a sound textual basis for Christian doctrinal argument. Justin identified some questionable texts but continued to use them while blaming the textual issues on the evil actions of the Jews. He continued to use other questionable proof-texts oblivious to the problems they presented.

Origen should be seen as a significant figure in this movement to find a sound textual basis for the Christian proof-text tradition. He made a great effort to document the state of the LXX text in relation to the Hebrew and other Greek translations. He also investigated the text of some prophecies probably in reaction to the criticism of Christian opponents, especially the Jews. Origen identified many problem texts and did not use those he found to be unsupported by the LXX. He recognized that the LXX and Hebrew disagreed on the content of some texts and he wanted Christians to be aware of these differences and be able to argue cogently with the Jews and other opponents regarding doctrine despite these textual problems.

In regard to the translation and exegesis of the *testimonia* texts Origen appears to have been largely traditional. He regularly makes use of these prophetic proof-texts and considers them to be a critical part of the defense of the Christian faith. There is no clear acknowledgement of Jewish arguments regarding any controversial texts and he repeats many of the arguments that were used in the second century.

Finally, in regard to the allegory for which he is so famous, Origen did not criticize the Christian use of the prophetic texts and did not in any way question or dismiss the use of the texts in this way as he did the use of the "literal" sense of the law by the Jews. There are cases, as presented above, where in the course of his commentaries Origen subjects some traditional texts to allegorical interpretation but in so doing he does not deny their primary and traditional use as prophetic proof-texts.

Overall, Origen was a significant contributor in the movement to base the Christian proof-text tradition upon a sound LXX text, at least in the Greek East. This movement was largely motivated by Jewish opposition to the Christian use of some Old Testament texts. Otherwise, despite his reputation for uncontrollable allegorical interpretation, Origen is largely traditional and conservative in his evaluation and use of the traditional Christian *testimonia* proof-texts taken from the Hebrew Old Testament.

Appendix 1: Collins' Second Temple Period Messianic Proof-texts and Their Applications

	Royal Davidic King	Priest	Prophet	Heavenly Savior
Is. 11:1-5	Shoot of Jesse shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth			
Num. 24:17	a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel			
2 Sam. 7:10-14	He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.			
Psalm 2	The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and his anointed. He said to me, "You are my son; today I have begotten you.			
Amos 9:11	On that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen,			
Gen. 49:10	The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes;			
Is. 9:6-7	For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom.			
Jer 23:5	I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king			
Jer 33:15	In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David;			

Ezek 17:22-24	I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain.			
Ezek 34:23-24	I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.			
Ezek: 37:15-28	My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. ... and my servant David shall be their prince forever.			
Lv. 4:3, 5, 16		anointed priest		
Dt 33:10-11		They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, And Israel Your law.		
Dt 18:15			The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet.	
Mal 3:1			See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.	
Mal 4:5			Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.	
Is 61:1			The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me;	
Is 52:7			How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news,	
Dan 9:25			from the time that the word went out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the time of an anointed prince, there shall be seven weeks.	

Dan 7:14				I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man
Pr. 8:22				The Lord created me, the beginning, the first of his acts of long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

Appendix 2: Noted Early Christian *testimonia* & their previous Jewish Use

Figure 1: Phase 1 *testimonia*

Text	Christian Use	Pre-Christian Jewish Messianic Use
Is 61:1	The Christ is to be anointed with the Spirit and perform miracles	Prophetic Messiah
Is. 42:1-7	God's Servant to be given the Spirit, and be beloved by God.	

Figure 2: Phase 2 *testimonia*

Text	Christian Use	Pre-Christian Jewish Use
Joel 3:5-6	Last Days	
Psalm 110:1	Ascension of the Christ predicted Jesus, who is the Christ, is to be called Lord	
Psalm 16:10	God's resurrection of Jesus prophesied	
Is 52:13	God has glorified his Servant, Jesus	
Is 53:11	Christ, God's Righteous One, who bears the sin of many	
Pr. 8:22	Jesus the Beginning	heavenly messiah figure
Dt. 18:15-20	Jesus the promised prophet	prophetic messiah figure
Gen. 22:18	Jesus the promised seed of Abraham	Isaac a type of the messiah
Ps. 118:22	Jesus the rejected Stone	
Is 53:3	Jesus the rejected Servant	
Ps 2	Jesus is God's anointed	royal Davidic messiah figure
Dt. 21:23	Jesus is accursed by dying on a tree	

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