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Jesus and the Gentiles





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Preface

The writing of this PhD dissertation, which began in autumn 2007, has been quite an adventurous enterprise. From the early beginnings of my theological studies I have been interested in the mission of Jesus and the early Christians. I wrote my Masters thesis about the missionary vision in Luke-Acts, and now I have continued my exploration into the heart of the Gospel, into the person of Jesus.

Thanks to the stipendium and financial support I received from the *Thanks to Scandinavia Fund* and *Stiftelsen för Åbo Akademi Forsknings Institut*, I managed to study at the *Hebrew University of Jerusalem* for the academic year 2010/2011. This was an important and inspirational year during which my PhD dissertation proceeded more rapidly. In addition to taking courses at the Hebrew University I frequently visited the famous *École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem*. The exhaustive library there contributed to my understanding of Jesus' Jewish context in the early first century Galilee in particular.

I owe my deep gratitude to Professor Kari Syreeni, who has been my official adviser for all these years. His wise advice has been precious. I thank especially Professor Sean Freyne and Adjunct Professor Tom Holmén for their contributing criticism and valuable advice. I also want to thank Professor Antti Laato, Professor emeritus Karl-Gustav Sandelin, Dr. Pekka Lindqvist and Dr. Sven-Olav Back. The Historical Jesus Workshop led by Tom Holmén introduced me to interesting scholarly discussion concerning Jesus. The participants, who by now are all doctors themselves, deserve my sincere thanks for their enlightening advice and critique. St. Michael's Church here in Turku, Åbo, also deserves my gratitude. Thanks to her pastors and leaders' understanding attitude I have been enabled to combine my academic studies and pastoral work. I also thank Lorna Koskela for correcting my English in this thesis.

Most of all I owe my heart-felt thanks to my wife Carita, to whom this dissertation is dedicated. During the years of my doctoral studies we got married and have been blessed with two children. Besides family life Carita has shared in the joys and pressures of my academic

work. She has corrected many stylistic features of the dissertation, and for the more interesting part she joined me on several field trips or “family trips” to the archaeological sites in Israel during our year there.

Åbo, October 2012

Juho Sankamo

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shall further inquire whether Jesus intentionally excluded Gentiles from the sphere of his mission, and if so, for what reason. Moreover, the Gospel of John does not recall Jesus healing a single Gentile, while the Synoptics credit Jesus with occasionally helping also certain Gentile individuals. At the same time we are to note that all the Gospels seem to support the Gentile mission. In the resurrection accounts the disciples are commissioned with a mission for all nations and the whole world (Matt 28:16–20; Luke 24:46–49).

The Synoptics indicate that Jesus helped the Syrophoenician woman's daughter (Mark 7:24–30; Matt 15:21–28) and the centurion's servant-boy (Matt 8:5–10; Luke 7:1–10). Also the story of the Gerasine demoniac is most probably to be understood as concerning a Gentile man (Mark 5:1–20; Matt 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–39). These three stories are valid evidence for the claim that from time to time Jesus actually, although seldom, helped certain Gentiles who requested his help. Despite these concrete occasions, it is to be noted that according to the Synoptics Jesus never took the initiative to help the Gentiles. He never visited Gentile areas in order to practice Gentile mission. All the relevant narratives in the Synoptics indicate that certain Gentiles occasionally took the initiative to request Jesus for help. Jesus, according to the Gospels, hesitantly answered positively to their need. It is to be emphasized that in the case of the Syrophoenician woman and the centurion from Capernaum Jesus is said to have performed the healing from a distance. Jesus did not go and meet the Gentile patient, he did not enter into his/her house. Reading the Gospels at their face-value it becomes obvious that Jesus remained distant from the Gentiles and he drove his mission among the Jews.

Mark 3:8, Matt 4:25 and Luke 6:17 tell that multitudes came to hear Jesus and to be healed by him. These multitudes, as the previously listed verses state, included people from the east side of Jordan, from Idumea, from the Decapolis, from the districts of Tyre and Sidon. However, it is not to be taken for granted that the many coming from the foreign lands were Gentiles. Of course Mark can have implied that among the ones coming from foreign regions as Tyre and Sidon, some were Gentiles. The editor's interpretative note in Matt 12:17–18, 21 support such a conclusion. The saying-material of the Synoptics, which are attri-

buted to Jesus, does contain some positive words regarding the Gentiles. In the scholarship the saying about the great banquet has been regarded as essential because scholars have often interpreted it as containing a reference to the Gentiles who are to enter into the kingdom of God/Heaven in the eschatological future. In the eschatological banquet of the kingdom of God the Gentiles will dine in the company of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Matt 8:11–12/ Luke 13:28–29). Jesus is recalled to have compared “this generation” and the inhabitants of Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin with Gentiles of Israel’s biblical past. These comparisons are always done for the advantage of the Gentiles – Tyre, Sidon, Sodom, the people of Nineveh and queen of Sheba (Matt 11:20–24; Luke 10:13–15; Matt 12:39–42; Luke 11:29–32). In the light of these sayings, the worst of the Gentiles, the Sodomites, will have it more tolerable during the judgement day than the towns of Galilee, in which Jesus is said to have centered his mission.

On the basis of the Gospels’ stories, sayings and parables we might receive the impression that Jesus restricted his mission to the Jews, but that he expected that in the eschatological future, during the day of Judgement and when the banquet in the kingdom of heaven would be served, an eschatological reversal would take place. In this reversal the worst of the Gentiles, such as the Sodomites, and the many peoples coming from around the compass (Matt 8:11–12), would have it more tolerable than Jesus’ Jewish contemporaries, the members of “this generation” and the residents of Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida. Despite these positive hints for the Gentiles, we are to recognize that the saying-material, attributed to Jesus, contains only few and minimal references to Jesus urging, hoping or predicting that his disciples would practice a Gentile mission – i.e. to preach for the Gentiles – in the eschatological future (Mark 13:10; 14:9). Moreover there are no clear hints of Jesus giving advice to his disciples regarding how they should relate to the Gentiles who would eventually become believers in Christ: should Christ-believing Gentiles be accepted as Jesus’ disciples and as Christians? And if so, should they be circumcised and obligated to follow the Torah? Such questions, which became urgent and central for the early Christians during the 40s (Acts 15; Gal 2), are not addressed in the Gospels.

When studying Jesus' attitudes towards the Gentiles we are not solely to restrict ourselves to the concrete sayings and practices which directly deal with the Gentiles. In accordance with second temple Judaism the eschatological restoration and consummation always influenced the Gentiles and the nations in some manner. Due to this fact, Jesus the Jew, if his mission is to be seen in a context of eschatological restoration, most probably had some kind of a view of the Gentiles *per se*. In accordance with this vein of reasoning, Jesus' actions and words, which ought to be seen as eschatological in some sense, can imply a message for the Gentiles. Certainly it is difficult to explain the early Christians' Gentile mission in the 40s by referring to the few occasions where Jesus hesitantly healed individual Gentiles. It can be argued, perhaps more credibly, that the eschatological role in Jesus' mission gave rise for the early Jewish-Christians' conviction that the Christ-message ought to be proclaimed for non-Jews too.

1.2 Clarifying the possible reasons for the early Church's Gentile mission

The Gentile mission of the early Church demands historical explanations. How can it be explained that a movement, which was centered on a Jewish man who had a mission for the Palestinian Jews, came to result in a strong Gentile mission? All of Jesus' disciples were Jewish. According to the Gospels, Jesus, did not explicitly commission or predict the Gentile mission of the early Church during his earthly mission. The Gospels relate that Jesus drove his mission on the soil of ancient Israel. He is not told of travelling around the Diaspora where *de facto* most of the Jews lived during the first century CE.⁴ From these factors, found in the Gospels, it is highly surprising that the early Church felt

⁴ Schnabel, 2004, 122–123. Schnabel states the following on p. 122: "It is estimated that the small, pre-exilic Jewish population of perhaps 150,000 grew to around 8 million in the first century AD. Of these, only 700,000 to 2.5 million lived in Palestine. This means that between 2 million and 7 million Jews lived outside Palestine in the Diaspora." We are on speculative grounds when trying to estimate the size of first century Jewish population in Palestine and in the Diaspora, despite this; we can assuredly claim that the vast majority of Jews lived in the Diaspora already during the first half of the first century. See Räsänen, 2010, 36. The most important centers for Jews in the Diaspora were Rome and Alexandria.

that crossing the ethical lines over to the Gentiles was a “natural extension” of its mission.⁵ How did Jesus, with his Jewish roots, come to launch a movement, which grew into its Gentile future? Did the Church, as it went over to the Gentiles, deny and forsake its Jewish roots in Jesus? Whether or not the early Christians’ Gentile mission was a “natural extension” in line with Jesus’ visions has remained a matter of dispute among the scholars.

For example J. P. Meier claims that the Gentile mission divided the ranks of the early Christians because Gentile outreach and preaching the Gospel for the Gentiles was something that could not be associated with the mission or will of the historical Jesus. Meier insists that the

“programmatic mission to the Gentiles during the course of this present world was a wrenching departure for the early church and caused so much controversy in the first Christian generation. Neither the actions nor the words of the historical Jesus had given precise and detailed instructions for such an initiative.”⁶

Sanders and several other scholars such as Fredriksen, Bird and Theissen, argue that there is no support for the claim that any Christian group opposed Gentile mission as such.⁷ Paul, as Bird notes, had great disputes concerning his Law-free Gospel (Gal 1:6–12; 2:1–15), which he preached for the Gentiles, but from his letters we do not know of any disputes concerning the legitimacy of the Gentile mission as such.⁸ Paul’s letter to the Galatians reveals that there were disputes regarding by which means the Gentiles could turn towards Christ and God. In sum, what was at stake were the questions as to whether the Gentiles, who had turned to Christ, should be circumcised and obligated to follow the Torah (Acts 15:1, 5; Gal 5:2) or not. Should they become Jews in order that they might turn to Jesus Christ? Evidently, as far as we are aware on the basis of our sources, no one opposed the idea that Gentiles should

⁵ Fredriksen, 1999, 94. Fredriksen states that the early Christians regarded the Gentile mission as a “natural extension” for the early Church’s mission.

⁶ Meier, 1994, 315.

⁷ Sanders, 1985, 220. Fredriksen, 1999, 94. Bird, 2010, 134. Bird, 2006, 53.

⁸ Bird, 2006, 4–5.

become part of the Christ-movement. But during the 40s and 50s some conservative Jewish-Christians insisted that the Gentiles who became Christians should be circumcised and obligated to follow the Torah. In view of this, the question becomes even more pressing: on what basis did the early Church so unanimously and seemingly so naturally extend its mission also to the Gentiles?

Several answers have emerged to explain the early Christians' Gentile mission. It could be argued that the Jewish-Christians began with the Gentile mission because their message was not accepted by the Jews (Acts 13:46). This explanation proposes that the shift to Gentiles was motivated by a practical reason: the Gentiles were open to accept the Gospel, while the Jews as a people were not. Could it be that the early Church simply adopted the assumed missionary practice and universal vision of the Jews of the second temple period? This explanation is not convincing because the evidence does not support the claim that Judaism was a missionary religion during the first century CE. There are no convincing signs of the Jews practising an organized outreach for the Gentiles, which could be credibly compared with the early Christians' Gentile mission driven by Paul and others.⁹ We shall deal with the complex question of whether Judaism was a missionary religion in chapter 2.4. In its Gentile mission the early Christians were quite unique – they were part of the formation of the first real missionary religion in the ancient world.

There is the possibility that the eschatological and Christological views of the early Church led the Christians to the conviction that the salvation of the Gentiles had arrived. As we have noted, according to the Jewish eschatological visions the salvation or damnation of the Gentiles belonged clearly to the eschatological era. Sanders, as well as Fredriksen, explain the Gentile mission of the early Christians by emphasizing both Jesus' and the early Christians' eschatological awareness and their belief that the end times had arrived. Sanders states that

⁹ Bird, 2010, 12. Bird, 2006, 2.

“one of the surest proofs that Jesus’ career is to be seen within the general context of Jewish eschatological expectations is that the movement which he initiated spawned a Gentile mission.”¹⁰

Jesus’ mission was understood by the early Church as fulfilling eschatological hopes – the end of days had arrived (Rom 13:11–12; 1 Cor 7:29). The fact that the early Church was centered in Jerusalem supports its eschatological self-understanding. Fredriksen underlines the fact that the early Christians had their leading position in Jerusalem and that the city was considered important (Gal 1:17; Acts 1–8; 11:22; 15:4; Rom 15:25–27). As Paul writes, the “pillars” (στῦλοι), namely Jacob, Kepha and John (Gal 2:9), were stationed in Jerusalem at least during the early history of the Christian movement. It would not have been obvious that the original twelve disciples of Jesus would have chosen Jerusalem as their center. After all Jesus’ mission was centered in the Galilean rural towns such as Capernaum and none of the Twelve disciples were from Jerusalem. In service of the Gentile mission and for the advantage of the Diaspora community we could expect that the center for “the pillars” would have been for example Caesarea Maritima, which was the Roman capital of the Judean procuratorship. Moreover Caesarea Maritima had a great harbour and due to its location was at the center of international traffic crossroads and thus a cosmopolitan and international polis with a sizeable Gentile population. Fredriksen argues credibly that the apostles such as Peter chose Jerusalem as the leading center for the early Church because of the city’s mythical role in the fulfillment of the eschatological expectations. The word of God would go forth from Zion as Isa 2:2–4 foretells.¹¹ Admittedly the early Christians’ beliefs in a realized eschatology could have resulted in their interest in the salvation of the Gentiles and the city of Jerusalem. The salvation of the Gentiles would be a sign that the eschatological era had arrived. In his recent studies Michael F. Bird has come to the following conclusion: “The primitive Christian mission arose principally out of a concoction of eschatology

¹⁰ Sanders, 1985, 212.

¹¹ Fredriksen, 1999, 94–96.

and Christology and reading the Jewish Scriptures in light of new perspectives in these areas.”¹²

One possible reason and explanation for the Christians’ Gentile mission is that Jesus had actually, in some way, intended it for his followers. Scholars have traditionally and also quite recently argued against this explanation. It is widely held that Jesus did not launch a Gentile mission and that he did not predict or hope that his disciples would be engaged in preaching the Gospel for the Gentiles. For example Meier states that Jesus “did not view either himself or his disciples as charged with the task of undertaking a mission to the Gentiles while this present world ran its course.”¹³ According to my stance Meier fails to offer a credible historical explanation for the early Christians’ Gentile mission. Martin Hengel, on the other hand, is more realistic in his claim. Hengel states the following:

“It is worth noting that the Jewish-Messianic movement in the early church was able to go beyond the geographic borders of Eretz Israel and the religious borders of strict Judaism so quickly, in relatively few years. This chain of events is without parallel in the history of Palestinian Judaism and must have its roots, finally, in the actions of Jesus himself. The promises uttered by the prophets concerning the end times that were to come with the appearance of the Messiah included the fact that membership in the people of God would be opened to the Gentiles.”¹⁴

1.3 A glance at previous research from Joachim Jeremias to the present

Joachim Jeremias published his *Jesu Verheissung für die Völker* in 1956. Jeremias’ book stands as the most influential scholarly work regarding Jesus’ attitudes towards the Gentiles. According to Jeremias Jesus did not intend that he himself or his disciples would practice Gentile mission. Despite this Jeremias claimed that Jesus anticipated the fulfillment of the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles into Mount Zion or the

¹² Bird, 2010, 12.

¹³ Meier, 1994, 315. Sanders, 1985, 218-221. Dunn, 2003, 539.

¹⁴ Hengel, 2010, 53.

kingdom of God in accordance to passages such as Isa 2:2–4 and Tob 13–14. Jeremias’ main theses are followed by several current scholars. In 2006, Michael Bird wrote his monograph *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission*. Bird maintained that Jesus’ mission concerned foremost Israel and the Jews in the context of the fulfillment of Israel’s eschatological restoration. Bird concluded that since the eschatological fulfillment was already in a state of partial realization, the eschatological climax, the salvation of the Gentiles, was also becoming a reality. Bird claims that the few Gentiles who were healed by Jesus foreshadowed the coming salvation for the Gentiles.¹⁵ In contrast with Jeremias, Bird allows that Jesus would have foreseen his disciples proclaiming the Gospel for the Gentiles, because God, although working sovereignly, often acts through agents – Israel and individuals – in order to fulfil his plans.¹⁶ In Bird’s view the zeal of the early Jesus-movement to convert Gentiles finds its explanation in Jesus’ eschatological mission to restore Israel and from the Christological implications attributed to Jesus.¹⁷

Between Jeremias and Bird there are no other as extensive monographs on this topic. In the so called Third Quest for the historical Jesus the Jewishness of Jesus and his mission has been emphasized. Especially in the Third Quest some scholars have proposed that Jesus restricted his and his disciples’ mission solely for the Jews and that he did not address the question of the salvation of the Gentiles in any clear manner. Concerning the Synoptics and the Jesus traditions Allison states that “they fail to address the issue of circumcision and have next to nothing – perhaps nothing at all – to say about Gentiles and their place in the community of salvation.”¹⁸ Several scholars of the Third Quest maintain that Jesus most probably expected – in line with the majority of early first century Palestinian Jews – that in the eschaton some Gentiles would be saved and they would make pilgrimage to the restored Zion.¹⁹ This idea differs from Jeremias’ stance in the sense that Jeremias claimed that Jesus had quite a clear vision of the salvation of the Gentiles. This vision

¹⁵ Bird, 2006, 173–177.

¹⁶ Bird, 2006, 16–17, 172, 177.

¹⁷ Bird, 2010, 12. Bird, 2006, 173–177.

¹⁸ Allison, 1997, 112–113. See also Catchpole, 2006, 171–178.

¹⁹ For references see Bird, 2006, 18, n. 100. Levine, 2006, 62, 64–72.

was loyal to a salvation historical pattern: first the Jews, then the Gentiles. Moreover according to Jeremias Jesus expected the salvation of the Gentiles to follow a five-stage pilgrimage of the Gentiles, and that the disciples would be totally passive in this process. The view that Jesus would have neither thought nor talked about the universal implications of his message is somewhat implausible because the Jewish eschatological visions – although they would be centered on Zion and on Israel – always dealt with the question concerning the Gentiles and the world. For example we may note that in the strictly particularistic and nationalistic Qumran community the eschatological hopes contained visions of the Kittim and the nations.²⁰ If Jesus is regarded as an eschatological figure – a prophet or the Messiah – in the context of Israel’s eschatological restoration, then it is presumable that he addressed the question of the Gentiles in some way.

1.4 Methodological considerations and the question of sources

In order to reach the historical Jesus we will make use of the criteria of historicity: i.e. criterion of embarrassment (or contradiction), discontinuity, multiple attestation, plausibility, coherence, and the criterion of rejection and execution. We shall also emphasize the Palestinian environment and context.²¹ With good reasons Allison doubts that the criteria of historicity will lead the scholars to an objective truth regarding particular sayings and deeds of Jesus. The criteria are to be understood as tools which are to be used cautiously, because, often times the criteria do not form the scholar’s view of Jesus, but rather the criteria are used by the scholar to support their view of Jesus. Allison states that the criteria of “dissimilarity, multiple attestation, coherence, and embarrassment have been used to concoct many different sorts of figures.” I agree with Allison on the point that no refined criteria have led or will lead scholars to an authentic consensus regarding particular aspects of Jesus’ deeds

²⁰ See Bird, 2006, 14.

²¹ See Meier, 1991, 167–184. Dunn, 2003, 330–336. Pitre, 2005, 26–29. For a severe criticism of these criteria, which have been widely in use during several decades, see, Allison, 2011, 3–30.

and sayings.²² The scholar's will is evidently stronger than the criteria, and thus the criteria do not overcome our subjectivity.²³ Although admitting that we are forever biased, scholarly discussion is not flawed and useless. Every criterion is to be criticised and we are to strive for objectivity by using scholarly reasoning. The criteria of historicity are to be used, but we are to acknowledge that they do not automatically lead the scholar into a *correct* discerning of the authenticity of individual sayings and deeds.²⁴

Jesus studies are not exact sciences, and therefore exact results concerning the authenticity of particular sayings and deeds are not the most crucial when aiming at reaching Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus' sayings and deeds, his person, left impressions on the memory of his disciples, and these impressions and memories, many are found from the Gospels, are transmitted into the Jesus tradition. That a certain saying and deed coheres with a great bulk of material supports the conclusion that Jesus quite possibly said and did something like that.²⁵ Certainty in individual and specific sayings is difficult to gain, but nonetheless we can achieve reasonable certainty in the greater motifs and themes of Jesus' mission – i.e. he proclaimed the kingdom of God, he called God the father, he was known from his healings and exorcisms.²⁶ After his death Jesus remained in the memories of his disciples. Naturally, for a short time the short-term memory guarded the details, but the long-term memory held fast in the impressions and in the big picture of Jesus mission. We can assume that the Gospels' Jesus traditions reflect more or less correctly

²² Allison, 2011, 12. On p. 9 Allison states the following: "Our criteria have not led us into the promised land of scholarly consensus, so if they were designed to overcome subjectivity and bring order to our discipline, then they have failed: the hopelessly confusing parade of different Jesuses goes on."

²³ Allison, 2011, 9, 19.

²⁴ Allison demonstrates how, when applied to a certain biblical passage, different criteria can lead to totally contradictory results. Some criteria can support the passage's authenticity, while other criteria support its inauthenticity. See Allison, 2011, 9, 14–22.

²⁵ See Theissen & Winter, 2002, 197–199. Theissen & Winter note that recently scholars have not aimed at resolving the authentic words of Jesus (*ipsissima verba*) but rather the authentic voice of Jesus (*ipsissima vox*).

²⁶ Allison, 2011, 24–25. Dunn, 2011, 202–204. Dunn proposes credibly that the characteristic themes and motifs of Jesus' mission are reflected in the Jesus traditions. The memory of what Jesus did and said was kept alive in the "living tradition" of the disciples, see Dunn, 2011, 204–205.

the impressions which Jesus left on the disciples' long time memory – certain details might be wrong, i.e. the sentence, but that does not mean that the big picture is wrong. Allison states that

“we should proceed not by looking at individual units microscopically but by gathering what may be called macro samples of material. We might even find that collectives display features or a Gestalt not discernible in their individual components.”²⁷

In this study I will concentrate on Jesus' Palestinian Jewish context. Concerning accurate passages an important question will be whether they have a plausible *Sitz im Leben* in the Palestinian context of Jesus' mission, or if they suit better the context and reality of the early Church. Despite the fact that the early Church had its base in Palestine, it is clear that the historical Jesus and the early Christians had a differing mission especially when it comes to the Gentiles. Several scholars have suggested that the positive statements and actions regarding the Gentiles attributed to Jesus in the Gospels, are actually reflections of the Church's views and practices. The connection between Jesus and the Gospels is complicated especially at this point. If a saying or action attributed to Jesus contradicts with the practice and beliefs of the early Church, then, with the aid of the criteria discontinuity, its authenticity can be supported. Of course we are to be cautious in drawing conclusions too quickly when applying the criteria to Jesus studies. Jesus' deeds and sayings are more credible if they are plausible in his Palestinian Jewish context of the first half of the first century.²⁸ But Jesus left an impact on his disciples, and thus the tradition, his *living memory* certainly shaped the beliefs, practises and convictions of his disciples. In this study we shall concentrate mostly on the context of Jesus in first

²⁷ Allison, 2011, 22–25. The citation is from p. 23. On p. 21 and 22 Allison states the following: “After our short-term memories have become long-term memories they suffer progressive abbreviation.” “The early Jesus tradition is not a collection of totally disparate and wholly unrelated materials. On the contrary, certain themes and motifs and rhetorical strategies are consistently attested over a wide range of material. Surely it is in these themes and motifs and rhetorical strategies, if it is anywhere, that we are likely to have some good memories.”

²⁸ Theissen & Winter, 2002, 210–212, 246.

century Palestine. This context is revealed in textual sources from the second temple period as well in archaeological excavations.

The term “Palestinian environment” is vague and can include a vast number of meanings. I understand it as referring to the Palestinian context, which is formed of physical and cultural, religious and political, historical and economic factors. The Palestinian context is partly revealed by the Jewish writings of the second temple period and also partly by the Tannaitic literature, which of course has to be used cautiously since the Mishnah was composed only about 200 CE. I will critically make use of the Pseudepigrapha – including the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* – because this work arguably contains some Jewish material from the second temple period. From among the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) Aramaic texts of *1 Enoch* and Tobit, and Hebrew texts of *Jubilees* and Sirach have been discovered, as well as other works counted among the Pseudepigrapha and the OT Apocrypha. Consequently the discovery of the DSS has given the Pseudepigrapha more credibility as Jewish writings from the second temple period.²⁹ Josephus’ works are, strictly speaking, not writings of the second temple period, but they are of primary importance when studying the history of that period. Of course the OT as such, as it largely forms the basis for the writings and religious ideas of the second temple Judaism, is not to be overlooked. The Palestinian context cannot be revealed only with the written sources, and so in addition to the written sources I will make considerable use of the archaeological results from first century Galilee.

The particular sayings, aphorisms and parables are to be seen and evaluated in the historical context of Jesus’ mission, and thus the Palestinian context is crucially important for understanding Jesus. The context often gives important clues for the meaning of the particular sayings. I maintain with Horsley: “Jesus cannot possibly be understood

²⁹ See Harrington, 2001, 28–30. Vermes, 2004, 15–17, 24. Ware, 2005, 147–148. Ware states that “in the present form the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* is a Christian document, composed in Greek probably in the late second century. However, while the origins of these Testaments are perplexing, it is certain that they incorporate older Jewish traditional materials. In the *Testament of Levi* in particular, the author apparently utilized a Jewish Levi document very similar to that underlying the various Aramaic Levi fragments found at Qumran and elsewhere.”

except as embedded in both the movement he catalysed and the broader context of Roman imperial Palestine.”³⁰

1.5 The Gospel sources

Traditionally Jesus scholars have found their sources in the Synoptics: Mark, Matthew and Luke. The two-source hypothesis predominates in current studies: Mark and Q are the foremost sources.³¹ These sources are used by Matthew and Luke. The dating of the composition of the Gospels is a difficult task, but scholars have usually concluded that Mark was written around the year 70, Matthew ca. 80 CE, Luke ca. 90 CE and John ca. 100 CE.³² Mark, the earliest Gospel, is written and composed from the basis of oral or/and written sources. Luke and Matthew had their own special traditions.³³ The question regarding Q is complicated, and we are to remind ourselves that Q is hypothetical. Despite the hypothetical nature of Q, it seems most likely that a written source of Jesus’ sayings, which we call Q, existed.³⁴ Meier claims that in the study of the historical Jesus we deal with three main sources – Q, Mark and John. In addition to these main sources he mentions “two minor and problematic sources”: M and L. The question whether John’s Gospel occasionally draws from an independent source is a disputed and live question.³⁵ When needed, I shall take all these possible sources in consideration in my analysis.

³⁰ Horsley, 2006, 38.

³¹ Meadors, 1995, 1–2.

³² Chilton, 1999, 15.

³³ Meier, 1991, 43–44. Evans, 1999, 4. Thus we would have four synoptic sources: Q, Mark, Matthew and Luke.

³⁴ Kloppenborg Verbin, 2000, 11. “Modern scholarship on the Saying Gospel Q is founded on a hypothesis. It is a venerable one... Yet the hypothesis has withstood criticism. Because it offers the most economical and plausible accounting of the form and content of the Synoptic Gospels, it continues to be by far the most widely accepted solution to the Synoptic Problem.” See also Meadors, 1995, 1–2.

³⁵ Meier, 1991, 44–45. Evans, 1999, 3–4. Whether or not John is to be considered an independent source is a matter of scholarly debate. For the recent discussion see Charlesworth, 2010, 4–10. Dunn, 2003, 40–41. During the last century John’s Gospel has been held as a foremost theological Gospel but without any historical validity. Charlesworth (Charlesworth, 2010, 4–10) mentions several respected scholars who bypass the Gospel of John in their study of Jesus: G. Bornkamm (Jesus of Nazareth, 1960, 13–14), E. P. Sanders (1985, 62; 1993, 128, 57), J. D. Crossan (Historical Jesus, 234, 427–432), N. T. Wright (1996, p.

The Synoptic Gospels constitute the most important historical basis for studying Jesus. Our use of the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Thomas (GThom) is scarce, since they are clearly later than the Synoptics,³⁶ and additionally, they often depend and build on the traditions which are used already by the Synoptics. The claim that the Gospel of Thomas knew an independent source, from which he drew his material, is highly disputed. GThom most plausibly used the canonical Gospels as his sources but in an indirect manner. The claim that the writer of the GThom had an actual canonical Gospel or the Synoptics in front of him is unlikely and naive. It seems, however, that the writer of GThom used the canonical Gospels indirectly: he knew the same sources used by the canonical Gospels in a written or oral form and possibly he wrote at least partly from his/her memory.³⁷ Notably, the Gospels of John and Thomas do not contain crucial material regarding our main interest. Evidently all the Gospels have their own theological tendencies, and thus we are to evaluate every passage individually in order to decide whether it contains historical tradition that can be traced back to Jesus.

1.6 The Dead Sea Scrolls

Use of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DDS) for the historical Jesus studies has been a subject of long discussions, and I see it worthwhile to clarify at this stage my own views regarding the matter. I will occasionally make use of the DSS since I support the view that they are central for clarifying an important part of Jesus' Palestinian context. According to Evans the non-Jewish and non-Palestinian features of the Gospels have been exaggerated in the scholarly studies throughout the 20th century.

xvi), J. Klausner (*Jesus of Nazareth*, 1944, 125), D. Flusser (*Jesus*, 1969, pp. 7–8, p. 58) and G. Vermes. Recently, however, several some leading scholars have taken John's Gospel into account in their studies of Jesus, see Charlesworth, 2010, 38–39. Some of the archaeological results have raised interest in John's Gospel because occasionally John introduces information about the Palestinian context and especially about Jerusalem which has been ratified by recent archaeological investigations. See Charlesworth, 2010, 32, 40–43.

³⁶ Chilton, 1999, 15. Chilton clarifies that that Gospel of John is generally thought to have been written ca. 100 CE in Ephesus and the Gospel of Thomas in Edessa sometime during the middle of the second century.

³⁷ For the discussion concerning the relation between the GThom and the canonical Gospels see Uro, 1998, 8–32.

Evans claims that the plausible context for the Gospels is mainly to be found in the Jewish Palestinian context and not in the Greco-Roman world among the pagans and Diaspora Jews. Evans further insists that “all of the major themes or emphases in the Synoptics have close parallels in the scrolls, thereby underscoring once again the Palestinian and Jewish provenance of these Gospels.”³⁸ I maintain with Evans in his claim that the main ideas represented in the “core” scrolls – which resemble with central themes in the Gospels – were not as sectarian as has often been assumed. As several subjects from the DSS have clear parallels in the Gospels, it seems that these ideas were not so far from mainstream Judaism of the time.³⁹

It is true that scholars of the historical Jesus have not paid enough attention to the DSS, as Horsley claims. The New Quest certainly did not emphasize the DSS for understanding the historical Jesus.⁴⁰ Horsley regards the Dead Sea community as a comparable community to the Jesus-movement. The community behind the DSS and the “Jesus-and-movement”, as Horsley calls it, are the only Jewish sects from whom we have notable sources.⁴¹ The movements certainly considered several similar themes as central for themselves: divine revelation, eschatological fulfillment, the Holy Spirit and communal dining. Both movements

³⁸ Evans, 2006, 75–76, 95. The citation is from p. 75. On p. 95 Evans concludes as follows: “It is important to consider that in the case of almost every principal topic in the Synoptic Gospels, there is significant overlap with distinctive emphases in the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially with regard to the “core” scrolls. At the very least this recognition underscores the Palestinian, as well as Jewish, dimension of the Gospels. This is not to say that they give no evidence of Greco-Roman or Diaspora ideas.”

³⁹ Evans, 2006, 95. As paralleling ideas between the DSS and the Gospels Evans recounts the following: 1) the motif of secrecy, 2) the motifs of righteousness and fulfillment, and 3) the motifs of election and community.

⁴⁰ Horsley, 2006, 37–38. Horsley claims that in the recent several books on the historical Jesus, written by leading scholars of the subject, few discuss the historical context of Jesus in depth and even fewer discuss the relevance of the DSS. Horsley refers to the works of J. D. Crossan, E. P. Sanders and J. P. Meier as he claims that they, the leading scholars, have not made enough use of the DSS in studying the historical Jesus. Horsley seems to be somewhat overstating his claim. Jesus’ Jewish context has been a point of focus for the scholars of the third quest, and scholars as Charlesworth and Collins (Collins, John J., 1995), in particular, have richly used the DSS in historical Jesus studies.

⁴¹ Horsley, 2006, 38–41.

were also critical towards the temple of Jerusalem and its priesthood.⁴² Horsley states the following:

“In the central way of expressing the fulfillment of (Israel’s) history now happening, both Qumran and Jesus-and-movement thought of themselves as engaged in a new exodus and renewed Mosaic covenant. In somewhat different ways the two movements saw Isaiah’s prophecy as now being fulfilled.”⁴³

Basically, as Horsley notes, the Qumran community consisted of scribal-priestly circles, while the “Jesus-and-movement”, as he calls it, consisted of Galilean rural population. Unlike the Qumran sect did, Jesus formed a popular movement, not a scribal and priestly movement. The Teacher of Righteousness revealed the mysteries of God to the scribes and priests of Qumran, while Jesus thanked the Lord for hiding the mysteries of the Kingdom of God from the wise and intelligent, and for revealing them to the infants.⁴⁴

1.7 Archaeology in the study of Jesus

The Palestinian context of Jesus is revealed not only by the Jewish written sources of the second temple and Roman periods, but also by the archaeological results. If the DSS have sometimes been too scarcely used in the studies of the historical Jesus, then we might insist that the use of the archaeological results in our field of study have also been poorly represented.⁴⁵ However several scholars of the historical Jesus have, in recent years, acknowledged the importance of archaeological results for the Jesus studies. Since the 1980s more and more archaeolo-

⁴² Horsley, 2006, 45–50. On p. 49 Horsley states the following: “Jesus’ popular-prophetic condemnation of the temple and high priesthood thus parallels the scribal-priestly condemnation found in the Dead Sea Scrolls...” On p. 50 Horsley continues by writing that “It would appear that both the Qumran community (evident in the DSS) and Jesus and the Jesus movement(s) (evident in the Synoptic Gospel tradition) were movements dedicated to the renewal of Israel over against the temple and high priesthood. They had rejected the temple at different points in Second Temple history and from different social locations. Neither movement needed the temple and its sacrificial cult for expiation and forgiveness of sins.”

⁴³ Horsley, 2006, 43.

⁴⁴ Horsley, 2006, 59–60.

⁴⁵ Freyne, 2006, 64–68.

gical and historical investigations of the Roman period Galilee have shown up, and nowadays plenty of monographs, doctoral dissertations and articles are being published on these issues. Freyne is correct that the “quest for the historical Jesus” has partly inspired and influenced the archaeological and historical studies of Roman period Galilee.⁴⁶

The archaeological results cannot be ignored when we are studying the historical Jesus. Reed asserts that “archaeology’s contributions to the study of the Gospels and the historical Jesus cannot be overestimated.”⁴⁷ These contributions are, however, most often not made of concrete finds of artifacts and cities which can be associated with Jesus and with the Gospels. More to the point, modern and scientifically responsible archaeologists of the late second temple period Palestine are not in the fashion of Indiana-Jones-style searching for items and sites mentioned in the NT. Archaeology serves the historical Jesus studies by revealing the social and cultural world of first century Palestine. This task is accomplished partly by the archaeologists’ spade who intend to analyse patterns among the sites – villages, towns and cities – and the unearthed artifacts. Thanks to serious archaeological excavations in Palestine we gain information regarding the context of Jesus – be it politics, culture, demographics, religion or economics.⁴⁸ All our texts from the second temple period are always biased in some direction, and thus present a particular point of view. Somewhat in contrast with the textual points of view, the archaeological excavations have, more often, revealed continuity of material culture in the Levant generally. The archaeological excavations reveal coins, pottery, building styles, patterns of living etc. and often these results shed light on the connections between Jews and Gentiles.

The contribution of archaeology to our subject is especially important because we are interested in the ethnic consistence of the first century Palestine. Ancient artifacts, buildings, coins, statues and inscriptions can be used as markers which reveal the ethnic reality of the first century Galilee. As clear markers of Jewish residence at least four indi-

⁴⁶ Freyne, 2007, 13.

⁴⁷ Reed, 2006, 40. Charlesworth, 2010, 32, 40.

⁴⁸ Reed, 2006, 40–41, 54.

cators: pools for ritual immersion (miqvaot), stone vessels, secondary burial in shaft tombs and the absence of pork in the diet, can be counted.⁴⁹ Pagan temples and statues of the Emperor can, on the other hand, be seen as markers of Gentile residence. The archaeological contributions will be important especially in chapter three, in which we deal with the Galilean context of Jesus' mission.

1.8 Defining the Gentiles: The terms used for the non-Jews

By the end of the second temple period the Hebrew expression גויים/גוי had become a technical term for a non-Jew. In the LXX גוי is almost always translated as ἔθνος, while the singular עַם is translated as λαός. Schnabel states that in the LXX the term ἔθνος is found 1003 times, and that it is stereotypically translated from גוי, which typically designates “the other,” the counter group to the chosen people. By the time of the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek the epithet λαός/עַם came to denote the holy people, Israel, in contrast to the גויים/ἔθνος, which referred to the Gentiles.⁵⁰ In the NT ἔθνος corresponds most often with the Hebrew word גויים, and thus on these occasions ἔθνος clearly denotes the non-Jews/Gentiles.⁵¹ In Hebrew גויים often had a negative tone. In the Hebrew Bible there are also other epithets for foreigners. The epithets זר, גר and נכרי are used for the non-Israelites in the Mosaic Law. The term גר means a non-Israelite resident alien or a sojourner who is living in the land of Israel. In the LXX גר is translated 77 times as προσήλυτος. Notably in the Pentateuch of the LXX גר is almost always translated as a proselyte (προσήλυτος).⁵² The גר usually took part in the religious life of the Hebrews, i.e. the Israelis.⁵³ The terms זר and נכרי and its equivalent בני הנכר designates people who are “aliens” in a more clearly ethnic or political sense. In contrast to the גר, the זר and נכרי are not permanent residents in

⁴⁹ See Reed, 2006, 52–54.

⁵⁰ Schnabel, 2004, 134. See Kittel, 1964, 365.

⁵¹ Kittel, 1964, 370.

⁵² Schnabel, 2004, 134.

⁵³ Schnabel, 2004, 67–69. See also Bird, 2010, 35, 65. Morton, 1999/2008, 192–193.

the land of Israel. The prophets often use זר and נכרי when they address foreign nations. Schnabel notes that the נכרי are portrayed in the OT in a negative manner and their fate in Israel is worst among the different kinds of foreigners.⁵⁴ In this study I understand the epithet Gentile as referring to a non-Jew. The word Gentile, ἔθνος, is to be understood as referring to the non-Jewish ethnic background of the person. Moreover the Gentiles in first century Galilee were most often also religiously alien to the Jews – i.e. they did not practice the religion of Judaism. If Gentiles were interested in Judaism and if they believed in the God of Israel, they would have been either Godfearers or full proselytes. The Gospels do not explicitly mention of Jesus as ever being in contact with a Godfearer or with a proselyte.

My intention is not to survey Jesus' attitudes towards foreign political entities and towards foreign nations or towards the Roman Empire. Jesus, according to the Gospels, was occasionally in contact with *individual* Gentiles (Matt 8:5–13; Mark 7:24–30). Several passages Matt 5:47; 6:7. 32 and Mark 10:42 claim that Jesus criticized the Gentiles (ἔθνος). In these instances the Gentiles are seen as a group consisting of non-Jews. They, the Gentiles, are the גויים, they might live in Palestine or in any other part of the world, but what is emphasised is that they are not ethnically and religiously Jewish. They are people who are not members of the Jewish people ethnically, culturally or religiously. They are outside of the covenant between Israel and her God (Eph 2:11–12).

⁵⁴ Schnabel, 2004, 70. See Isa 1:7; 2:6; 60:10; 61:5; 62:8; Jer 2:25; 3:13; 5:19; Lam 5:2; Hos 7:9; 8:7; Obad 11; Ezek 7:21; 11:9; 44:7.

2 Jews and Gentiles in the late second temple period: Theology of mission

2.1 Introductory remarks

The vast majority of scholars are convinced, on good grounds, that Jesus did not practice a mission to reach the Gentiles with his Gospel about the kingdom of God. This leads us to the question, did the other Jews of Jesus' time practice Gentile mission? Was there an idea of universal mission in early Judaism? Some scholars have insisted that Judaism, as a religion, was indeed eager to drive a Gentile mission. In this chapter we are mainly clarifying part of Jesus' ideological and religious context. Our two principal questions in this chapter are the following. First, was late second temple Judaism, or some faction of it, a missionary religion? Secondly, in what manner would the fate of the nations be realized according to the eschatological hopes of Judaism? We will also evaluate how the Jews of the second temple period regarded their mission, task and ultimate meaning in the world, among the Gentiles.

Some earlier scholars have claimed that the missionary practices of the early Christians were adopted from Judaism. Thus they understood Judaism as a strongly missionary religion which aimed converting Gentiles into Judaism. According to this view, the rapid spreading of the Christian Gospel becomes understandable because the early Christians, Paul in particular, had adopted the missionary practice and manners of the Jews of their time.⁵⁵ Recently several scholars have claimed that Judaism did not intend to convert Gentiles, and therefore it cannot have functioned as a model for the early Christians' eager Gentile mission. Goodman and Bird explicitly claim that Judaism, due to its lack of proselytizing movements, does not explain the strong and unparalleled missionary zeal apparent in the early Church.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ For a discussion concerning these arguments see Schnabel, 2004, 92–93. Ware, 2005, 23–55.

⁵⁶ Goodman, 1992, 53, 74–75.

2.2 Israel and its universal task

Bird, Ware and Wright have correctly emphasized that in our sources, i.e. in the OT and in the writings of the second temple period, Israel has a unique purpose and task for all the nations.⁵⁷ This universal purpose arises from the belief that there is only one God, YHWH, who has created the world and chosen Israel to be his servant. Monotheism in itself leads naturally to the idea that the one and only true God is to be worshipped by all humankind.⁵⁸ The Gentiles served idols and did not have the Torah of God, which was given to Israel on Sinai. Israel's ultimate purpose was to transmit God's blessing to the world, to be a "light to the nations" and to bring forth God's glory to the world. Admitting this, we are to recognize that Israel's universal task did not mean that Israel should be active in proselytism – in the OT the conversion of the Gentiles is an eschatological event and God is most often its sole subject. Quite recently Ware has emphasized that Paul thought that the Gentile mission was actually the mission of God.⁵⁹

Several scholars have emphasized that in the OT Israel does not have a mission to preach to the Gentiles. The only "missionary journey" to reach the Gentiles can be attributed to the prophet Jonah who delivered the message of God's doom to the Ninevites (Jonah 1:2; 3:2, 4–7). Otherwise there are very few passages which speak of a futuristic missionary duty of God's servants to preach God's word to the Gentiles.⁶⁰ The passage of Isa 66:19 and the Isaianic Servant Songs constitute the

⁵⁷ Bird, 2006, 126–130. Wright, 1992, 267–268. Ware, 2005, 57–159.

⁵⁸ See Schnabel, 2004, 58–60. On p. 59 Schnabel states correctly that "Israel's confession of the uniqueness of YHWH is the foundation for missionary concepts."

⁵⁹ Ware, 2005, 291–292.

⁶⁰ Despite the fact that Jonah is sent to Nineveh, to the Gentiles, it is obvious that his mission can barely be seen as supporting a Gentile mission. The Ninevites repent, but there is no hint of them being circumcised and there is no indication that Jonah would have been compelled to convert the Ninevites into the religion of the Hebrews. Moreover in the rabbinic writings Jonah is not considered as a missionary to the Gentiles. The Ninevites' repentance is regarded as exemplary for the Jews: *m. Taan.* 2:1; *b. Taan.* 16A; *b. Ros. Has.* 16B; *Mek. R. Yishm. Piska* 1; *y. Sanh.* 11:7 (30b); *Gen. Rab.* 44:12. In the tradition attributed with Jesus, the sign of Jonah and the repentance of the Ninevites poses a challenge of repentance to Israel. So to say, the Ninevites are seen as exemplary in their willingness to repent: Matt 12:39–41/Luke 11:29–32; Matt 16:4. See Schnabel, 2004, 87. Wilson, 1973, 1–3.

only passages of the OT anticipating human emissaries to preach the word of God to the Gentiles.⁶¹ Ware emphasizes the role of the book of Isaiah for Jewish universalism: “The relationship of God of Israel to the nations is in Isaiah, to a greater degree than in any other book of the Old Testament, a prominent and consistent theme.” According to Ware in Isaiah a conversion of the Gentiles in the eschaton is envisioned, but this conversion will be solely realized by God.⁶² In the OT in general, Israel’s universal reason of existence is not connected with its need to proclaim God’s message to the Gentiles and actively reach out to them. On the contrary, the universal mission of Israel becomes fulfilled when she acts obediently to her covenant with the one and only God (Jer 4:1–2). Schnabel states that

“the mission of Israel, focused on following joyously and obediently the injunctions of the covenant that YHWH had granted Israel, was local. What is universal, is the future consequences of this obedience.”⁶³

This principal idea is stated in various ways in the OT.⁶⁴ In the Psalms the conversion of the Gentiles in the eschaton is eagerly anticipated. Numerous Psalms envision the universal reign of God or the king of Zion.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Schnabel, 2004, 85.

⁶² Ware, 2005, 59–60, 106–107. See Isa 2:2–5; 11:9–10; 25:6–9; 60:1–16; 66:18–24. On p. 61 Ware notes that “Israel has no part in the conversion of the nations; it is God who will turn the nations to himself and bring them to Mount Zion (Isa 2:2; Hag 2:7; Zech 9:7; Zeph 2:11; Ps 22:27).”

⁶³ Schnabel, 2004, 77–78. The citation is from p. 78.

⁶⁴ As a clear representative of this Deut 26:18–19 can be mentioned: “Today the Lord has obtained your agreement: to be his treasured people, as he promised you, and to keep his commandments; for him to *set you high above all nations that he has made, in praise and in fame and in honour; and for you to be a people holy to the Lord your God, as he promised.*” Deut 26:18–19 bears the principal claim which is also apparent in Matt 5:13–16: The disciples/the holy people of the Lord are shining for the glory of God because of their good works and faithfulness.

⁶⁵ Ware, 2005, 68–70. For the universal reign of God or his anointed king, see Pss 2:8–12; 22:27–28; 46:8–10; 66:1–4; 72:8–11; 96:10–13; 97:1, 9; 98:1–9; 110:1–2. The nations are summoned to praise God: Pss 47:1–2; 66:1–8; 68:32–33; 96:1–2, 7–10; 97:1; 98:4–6; 100:1–2; 117:1. In the Psalms the conversion of the nations is an eschatological expectation: Pss 22:27; 66:4; 67:4–6; 86:9; 102:15–17, 19, 21–23. In certain Psalms the hearer is called to proclaim God’s wonderful deeds among the nations, but there is no clear command to engage in missionary preaching: Pss 9:12; 96:3; 105:1–3.

The salvation of the Gentiles was part of the eschatological vision, it belonged to the expectations regarding the messianic age. During the time of eschatological fulfillment the blessed Zion would in a centripetal fashion gather Gentiles to herself (Isa 2:2–4; 11:1–10). According to Isaiah, the Servant of the Lord (Isa 42:1, 4, 6; 49:1, 6; 52:15) and some human emissaries (66:19) would be active in proclaiming the word of God to the Gentiles and in gathering them to Zion. Despite these futuristic visions it is quite clear that according to the OT the Hebrews did not practice Gentile mission. In the OT only some individuals, such as Ruth, are mentioned as having joined the people of God as converts.⁶⁶ In Isaiah and in the OT in general the conversion of the Gentiles was expected in the eschaton. In the context of the eschatological gathering of the exiled Jews and the restoration of Zion the Gentiles would make pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This explains why the Jews did not practice Gentile mission although they anticipated the hope of the Gentiles conversion.⁶⁷

The OT and the second temple Jewish writings certainly associate Israel with both particularistic and universalistic terms. Lundgren emphasizes correctly that the self-conception and mission of the Jews and Israel, from the times of the OT to the period of formative and classical Judaism, was stamped with the idea of both particularism and universalism. Lundgren states that

“the concept that unites the particularistic and the universalistic feature is the concept of the mission of Israel. Israel is the witness and servant of God for all mankind, ‘a light for the Gentiles’ ... Thus God acts for the benefit of all but uses Israel as his agent.”⁶⁸

Israel is the chosen people (Deut 7:6–9; 32:8–9), the kingdom of priests (Exod 19:5–6), and its destiny and calling is to be a blessing for all the families of the earth (Gen 12:2–3). The fact that the Jews of the second temple period agreed that Israel was God’s chosen people is attested

⁶⁶ See Schnabel, 2004, 78–86, 90–91.

⁶⁷ Ware, 2005, 60–61.

⁶⁸ Lundgren, 2001, 19–31. The citation is from p. 24. See, Blenkinsopp, 2002, 115–117.

throughout our sources. This idea of being God's chosen people formed the core of the Jews' self-conception.⁶⁹ Israel was to keep itself separated from the Gentiles and their pagan beliefs and practices. In 1 Macc 1:11 the "wicked men" of Israel encourage the other Palestinian Jews to abandon this Jewish separateness, which was an emblematic feature of the Jewish people: "Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles around us, for since we separated from them many disasters have come upon us."⁷⁰ Israel is, as Num 23:9 states, "a people living alone, and not reckoning itself among the nations." At the same time the universal calling for Israel is apparent in the OT and in the writings of the second temple period.

2.3 The universal hopes concerning Israel's eschatological restoration

2.3.1 Restoration eschatology

What is meant by the hope of Israel's eschatological restoration differs from text to text, but basically Jews shared hopes of a time of blessedness, fruitfulness, peace and prosperity (Deut 30:1–10). These eschatological hopes were often connected with visions of an exodus and ideas according to which one or two messianic figures would appear. According to some sources the temple would be restored or rebuilt and a pilgrimage of Gentiles and nations would flow into the House of God. Satan and the demons would be annihilated and doomed, and Zion would be transformed into a paradise. Wright has emphasized that several Jews expected foremost that the God of Israel would return to Zion.⁷¹ Regarding the eschatological hopes it is to be emphasized that during the se-

⁶⁹ See Bird, 2006, 126. Wright, 1992, 259–268. Lundgren, 2001, 19–22, 25–28. Dunn, 2003, 289–290. The following passages state the fact that Israel was considered to be chosen by God: Deut 7:6–16; 14:2; Exod 19:5; Ps 33:12; 135:4; Isa 41:8–9; 44:1–2; 45:4; Sir 46:1; Wis 3:9; 4:15; 4 *Ezra* 2:15–17; 5:23–29; 6:54; *Spec.* 1:303; *Vit. Mos.* 1:278; *Jub.* 15:31–32; *Ps. Sol.* 9:9–10 etc.

⁷⁰ See Catchpole, 2006, 172.

⁷¹ For clarifications of restoration eschatology and eschatological beliefs of the Jews during the second temple period see the following references: Bird, 2006, 27. Donaldson, 1997, 70. Sanders, 1985, 77–119. Sanders, 1992, 289–298. Wright, 1992, 299–338. Dunn, 2003, 393–396. Dunn, 2003B, 4–7. Levine, 2006, 56–57, 62, 68–69.

cond temple period Jews did not share a “single complete narrative wholly agreed as to its details”. I concur with Dunn’s statement:

“What we have in Israel’s eschatology is a common basic outline of trust and hope elaborated and supplemented only by flashes of insight and inspiration.”⁷²

In this work restoration eschatology is used as a concept that describes the wide spread eschatological beliefs of the Jews of the second temple period according to which God was expected to redeem his people, restore Israel, and bring forth a time of blessedness. This would be a time during which the prophecies of salvation would be fulfilled – apparently fulfillment would mean damnation to some who were regarded as sinners. Despite the various complex visions of Israel’s eschatological restoration, the restoration would always strongly affect the world and the Gentiles in some manner. Thus the eschatological restoration of Israel and the messianic age would concern not only Israel and the Jews but also the Gentiles.⁷³

2.3.2 Jeremias and the pilgrimage of the nations

Jeremias formulated a neat five-stage eschatological model of the pilgrimage of the nations from the OT.⁷⁴ He claimed that Jesus shared the main lines of this five-stage model of eschatological pilgrimage. Jeremias has, for understandable reasons, been criticized for simplifying the eschatological visions of the OT and second temple Jewish thought. The Jews of the late second temple period were certainly not united in a strictly formulated dogma of the pilgrimage of the nations. There were various scenarios of the fate of the Gentiles in the eschatological era. The OT itself contains several eschatological scenarios which are occasionally in contradiction with each other.

⁷² Dunn, 2003B, 34–36. The citations are from p. 34.

⁷³ The eschatological fulfillment of Israel’s narrative would be incomplete if the Gentiles and the whole world were not addressed in some manner. Bird, 2006, 27, 29. See also Vermes, 1983, 35. Sanders, 1992, 265–270.

⁷⁴ Jeremias, 1971, 247. Jeremias, 1981, 57–60.

Jeremias' model of the eschatological pilgrimage consists of the following five stages:

1. God's glory is revealed to the nations (Zech 2:17; Isa 40:5; 51:4; 52:10; 60:3).
2. The calling of God (Isa 45:20, 22; 55:5; 66:19-20; Ps 96:3, 10).
3. The actual pilgrimage of the nations to Zion (Isa 2:3; 19:23; 60:11; 66:18; Ps 47:10; Jer 3:17; Mich 7:12; Zech 8:21, 23; 14:16).
4. The destination of the pilgrimage is the world sanctuary (Isa 45:14, 23; 56:7; 66:18; Pss 22:28; 96:7-8; Zeph 3:9).
5. In the world sanctuary the nations are incorporated into the people of God. They take part in the banquet at the world mountain (Isa 25:6-9).

Jeremias emphasizes the universal hopes of the OT, and claims that the negative remarks of the fate of the Gentiles represent a later and marginal view in the OT. Moreover, Jeremias states that "the attitude of late Judaism towards non-Jews was uncompromisingly severe" and that "the dominant popular expectation eagerly awaited the day of divine vengeance, especially on Rome, and the final destruction of the Gentiles." Jeremias insists that these negative eschatological expectations regarding the Gentiles were popular among the Jews, and that these expectations were part of Jesus' religious environment.⁷⁵ However, on p. 61 of *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* Jeremias admits that

"the pilgrimage of the Gentiles is also to be found in the extra-canonical literature. It has repeatedly been inserted into the text of the Septuagint (LXX Isa 54:15; Amos 9:12 = Acts 15:17)."

Jeremias lists passages such as Tob 13:13; *Sib. Or.* 3:716-717, 725-726, 772-775; *T. Ben.* 9:2; *I En.* 10:21; 48:5 and 90:33 as representatives of the fact that extra-canonical writings of the second temple period also contained the hope of the Gentiles entering into the world sanctuary in

⁷⁵ Jeremias, 1981, 40-41.

the eschaton. Jeremias further claims that some Jewish groups of the late second temple period clearly believed that part of the Gentiles would benefit from the coming of the Messiah in the eschaton (*Pss. Sol.* 17:31; *4 Ezra* 13:12–13; *T. Ben.* 11:2; *T. Levi* 18:9). For Jeremias the “late Judaism” turns out to refer mainly to the rabbinic Judaism of the post-70 period. In the rabbinic literature, so Jeremias insists,

“the exclusively nationalistic conception of the Messianic age which envisaged the destruction of the Gentiles had completely prevailed after the destruction of the temple in AD 70.”⁷⁶

In my view, Jeremias does not address clearly enough the question how, according to his understanding, the Jewish religious environment of Jesus’ time could be negative and positive towards the Gentiles.⁷⁷ Jeremias claims that the Jews of the first century were driven with a great zeal to convert the Gentiles into Judaism.⁷⁸ He argues that the cultural and religious environment of Jesus was strongly anti-Gentile in its eschatological expectations. Despite this, Jeremias acknowledges the several extra-canonical passages which testify for more positive hopes regarding the fate of the Gentiles in the eschaton. Additionally, the passages which bear proof for anti-Gentile eschatological visions, are mostly from the rabbinic literature, and thus they are later and they do not necessary portray the common beliefs of the late second temple period. In light of the writings of the second temple period it is plausible to maintain that prior to the destruction of the temple the Palestinian Jews quite widely shared positive hopes regarding the fate of the Gentiles in the eschaton. The “final destruction of the Gentiles” was not, according to our sources, a commonly shared hope, although this hope also existed among certain circles. Certainly the eschatological hopes were complex and various. At the popular level there quite certainly existed widely supported eschatological hopes of the Messiah, a new king David, ruling

⁷⁶ Jeremias, 1981, 61–62.

⁷⁷ Jeremias, 1981, 40–41, 61–63.

⁷⁸ Jeremias, 1981, 11–19. In an article I have clarified the Jewish hopes regarding the role of the Messiah. According to my view a great many Jews of the first century anticipated the next world ruler would rise from Judea (*Bell.* 6:312). This ruler-gestalt was certainly associated with messianic beliefs in some Jewish circles. See Sankamo, 2012, 293–308.

over the Gentiles and the nations (See *Bell.* 6:312; 2 *Bar.* 39:7; 40:1 and 4 *Ezra* 12:31–32; *Pss. Sol.* 17–18).⁷⁹

2.3.3 Sanders and the fate of the Gentiles

According to Sanders the pilgrimage of the Gentiles is only one of the several visions which can be found in the OT. Sanders introduces six different predictions from the OT which deal with the fate of the Gentiles.⁸⁰ Evidently all of these predictions are mentioned with varying degrees of frequency in the OT and also in the writings of the second temple period:

1. The wealth of the nations flow into Jerusalem (*Isa* 45:14; 60:5–16; 61:6; *Mic* 4:13; *Zeph* 2:9; *Tob* 13:11; 1QM 12:13–14).
2. The kings of the Gentiles and the Gentile nations bow and serve Israel (*Isa* 49:23; 45:14, 23; *Mic* 7:17; 1 *En.* 90:30; 1QM 12:13).
3. Israel will be a light for the world. Her salvation shall shine to the ends of the earth (*Isa* 49:6; 51:4; 2:2; *Mic* 4:1). Gentiles may be added to Israel and thus be saved (*Isa* 56:6–8; *Zech* 2:11; 8:20–23; *Tob* 14:6–7; 1 *En.* 90:30–33)
4. The Gentiles and their cities are destroyed and conquered (*Isa* 54:3; *Sir* 36:7, 9; 1 *En.* 91:9; *Bar* 4:25, 31, 35; 1QM 12:10).
5. The Gentiles face the revenge of Israel (*Mic* 5:10–14; *Zeph* 2:10–11; *T. Mos.* 10:7; *Jub.* 23:30; *Pss. Sol.* 17:25–27).
6. The Gentiles survive but they will live outside the land of Israel (*Pss. Sol.* 17:31).

⁷⁹ Collins, 1995, 68. Collins states the following: “This concept of the Davidic messiah as the warrior king who would destroy the enemies of Israel and institute an era of unending peace constitutes the common core of Jewish messianism around the turn of the era.” Horsley & Hanson, 1985, 109–110. In an article I have clarified the Jewish hopes regarding the role of the Messiah. According to my view a great many Jews of the first century anticipated the next world ruler to rise from Judea (*Bell.* 6:312). This ruler-gestalt was certainly associated with messianic beliefs in some Jewish circles. See Sankamo, 2012, 293–308.

⁸⁰ Sanders, 1985, 214–215.

Out of this more or less contradictory list of eschatological expectations it is impossible to form one dogmatic and unifying expectation which would be shared in detail by the Jews in general. It is, however, clear that the pilgrimage of the nations was a widely supported vision among the Jews of the first century. It is to be noted that despite the complicity of the vision attested in the OT and in the later writings of the second temple period, Sanders still claims that during the time of Jesus Judaism was quite united in its conviction that the eschatological restoration of Israel would launch the pilgrimage of the nations to Mount Zion.⁸¹ Regarding the Jews' eschatological hopes about the Gentiles Dunn states that "more commonly the expectation was for the Gentiles to come in pilgrimage to Zion to pay tribute or to worship God there."⁸² The popularity of the vision of the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles is also emphasized by Ware. According to him the expectation of the Gentile pilgrimage to the restored Zion is a "widespread, fundamental and characteristic feature of Jewish thinking regarding gentiles in the second temple period." This fervent hope and longing finds its expressions in the works of LXX Isaiah, Sibylline Oracles 3, Wisdom, Parables of *Enoch* (1 En. 48; 62), Philo, Tobit and *Testament of Levi*. Although claiming this, Ware admits that there were some Jewish groups – especially the Qumran sect – in which the idea of the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles was marginalized, but not totally abandoned (1QIsa-a, Targum of Isaiah, Qumran).⁸³ I maintain with the view that the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles into Zion to worship God was a popular vision.

In the light of our sources the Jews of the late second temple period were considerably united in one belief: Israel's eschatological restoration would affect the Gentiles. Eschatological beliefs of the restoration of Israel concern, almost without exception, the question of the fate of

⁸¹ See Sanders, 1993, 191–193. Sanders states that "many Jews" held eschatological hopes according to which the Gentiles would be converted and that they would make pilgrimage to Mount Zion in order to praise the Lord in His temple. All this would result from the Gentiles' future turning to God. According to Sanders "a good number of Jews" shared such beliefs, and that these visions/beliefs were "long-standing and deeply held hopes among the Jews."

⁸² Dunn, 2003B, 5.

⁸³ Ware, 2005, 111–112, 153–154. See Bird, 2006, 28.

the Gentiles.⁸⁴ According to a minority view the Gentiles would be doomed and totally destroyed.⁸⁵ Despite the destructive vision it is important to note that the vision of destruction and salvation is not to be seen in too absolute terms. Scholars have recognized that in our sources the predictions of doom and salvation for the Gentiles can be found inseparably close to each other. Thus, the predictions of doom for the Gentiles do not necessarily mean that they were in an absolute sense doomed to damnation. This is evident in texts such as Isa 66:15–21; 2 Bar. 72:2–6 and *Pss. Sol.* 17:22–25, 30–31, in which the predictions concerning the destruction and salvation of the Gentiles is separated by only a couple of verses.⁸⁶

2.3.4 The pilgrimage of the nations

The pilgrimage of the nations is influentially introduced by Isaiah, and the vision has spread to various books and passages of the Hebrew Bible. The pilgrimage, as expressed in Isa 2:2–3, appears in passages such as Mic 4:1–3; Jer 3:17 and Zech 8:20–23. In these passages the Gentiles make pilgrimage into Zion in order to worship the Lord, hear

⁸⁴ See Dunn, 2003, 394–395. In some occasions the Gentiles are foreseen as making an eschatological pilgrimage to Mount Zion in order to pray to the Lord, and in another vision the Gentiles are flowing to Zion in a negative manner in order to pay tributes to the Israelites and in order to serve them as slaves. Eschatological pilgrimage in which the Gentiles will come to Zion in order to serve the God of Israel: Ps 22:27–28; 47:6–9; 68:30–32; 86:9; Isa 2:2–4/Mic 4:1–3; Isa 45:20–23; 56:6–8; 66:19–20, 23; Jer 3:17; Zeph 3:9–10; 8:20–23; 14:16–19; Tob 13:11; 14:6–7; *1 En.* 10:21; 48:5 (=in this verse pilgrimage is not explicitly mentioned despite the fact that “all who dwell on earth shall fall down and worship before him” – i.e. the Son of Man); 90:30–36; *Sib. Or.* 3:702–719, 772–775; *T. Ben.* 9:2; 2 Bar. 68:5–8; The eschatological pilgrimage according to which the Gentiles will bring gifts and tributes to the Israelites: Isa 18:7; 45:14; 60:3–16; 61:5–6; Hag. 2:7–9; 1QM 12:13–14; 19:3–9; *Pss. Sol.* 17:30–34; *Sib. Or.* 3:772–776. The following passages concern the eschatological conversion of the Gentiles or the fact that the divine truth will become evident to the whole world during the end times: *1 En.* 10:21; 50:2–6; 90:30–36; 91:14; *T. Sim.* 7:2; *T. Lev.* 4:4; 8:14–15; *T. Napht.* 8:3; *T. Asher* 7:3; *T. Dan.* 6:7.

⁸⁵ Ps 2:8–9; Zeph 2:9–11; Sir 36:1–9; *Jub.* 15:26; Isa 34:2; Mic 5:15; Zech 12:9; *T. Mos.* 10:7; *Jub.* 15:26–32; *1 En.* 48:7–10; 63:1–12; 91:9; 1QM 1:9–10; 4:12; 6:5–6; 9:5–9; 11:13–17; 12:10–16; 15:1–16:15; 1QPHab 5:4; IQSa 1:21. A pessimistic vision concerning the Gentiles could be argued to be in accordance to the destructive stories of the Egyptians drowning into the Red Sea and the troops of Sennacherib being miraculously put to death outside the walls of Jerusalem. See Bird, 2006, 27. See 1 Macc 4:9; 7:39–42; 2 Macc 8:19–24; 15:20–27; Sir 48:17–22; *Bell.* 5:375–419; 2 Bar. 63:3; 1QM 11:9–10.

⁸⁶ Bird, 2006, 28.

his Torah and serve him. In the writings of the second temple period this view is presented for example in Tob 13:11, 14:6–7 and *Sib. Or.* 3:715–723, 767–775. In other instances the Gentiles do not arrive solely for cultic and religious reasons, but in order to bring tributes and the “wealth of the nations” to Jerusalem (Isa 60:3–7, 9, 11, 13; 61:6; 66:12). Due to these gifts of the Gentiles the formerly poor Zion will become rich at the expense of the formerly rich Gentiles who then become poor. The kings of the Gentiles come to Zion and bring the children of Zion with them, and consequently the eschatological exodus and the pilgrimage of the nations are realized *simultaneously*. These royal Gentiles will then humbly give child care for the newborns of Israel and serve them (Isa 49:22–23; 60:16; 66:12). As this overview shows, the book of Isaiah contains two different visions of the Gentiles arriving in Zion during the eschatological time. According to the first view they will make pilgrimage in order to serve the Lord, see his glory and hear and obey his Torah (Isa 2:2–4; 66:18–21, 23). According to the second view the Gentiles arrive in Jerusalem in order to serve the Israelites and in order to bring the “wealth of the nations”, which means gold and silver, camels and flocks of sheep, into the city (Isa 60:3–16).⁸⁷

In the Gospels we do not find any evidence that Jesus would have shared the vision of Gentiles flowing to the kingdom of God or to Zion in order to serve as slaves for the Jesus-group or for some other in-group. The Jesus tradition does not even contain explicit sayings according to which the Gentiles or outsiders would make pilgrimage to God’s kingdom in order to pray to God and listen to his Torah. It is possible to find evidence according to which Jesus expected many Jews and Gentiles to make “pilgrimage” or simply to travel into the kingdom of God where a *great banquet* would be served (Matt 8:11–12/par.). The Jesus traditions do not connect the destination of the pilgrimage to Zion, the House of the Lord or Jerusalem, but only as the kingdom of God, where a banquet is served in company of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. A difference between the classical views of the pilgrimage of the nations and the Jesus-traditions is the notion that the pilgrimage of the Gentiles was not clearly associated with a meal or banquet at Mount Zion. In Matt

⁸⁷ See Stansell, 2009, 233–255.

8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29 the destination of the many is geographically unclear, but what is emphasized is that at the destination, in the kingdom of God, a meal will be served. It is certainly correct to note that our written sources from the OT and from the second temple period do not indicate that there was to be a banquet at the final destination of the eschatological pilgrimage. The most outstanding passages of the eschatological pilgrimage, namely Isa 2:2–3 and later Tob 13–14, do not, in any way, refer to a banquet. However it is quite likely that the reader/hearer of Isa 2:2–3 would have understood these verses in connection with Isa 25:6–10.⁸⁸ From the point of view of the first century Jews, it is difficult to imagine any other eschatological context for Isa 25:6–10 other than Isa 2:2–3.⁸⁹

2.4 Did Jews practice proselytism?

So far we have clarified the varying beliefs of Jews from the second temple period concerning the fate of the Gentiles in the eschaton. Now we shall highlight the concrete practices of the Jews towards the Gentiles. Scholars have intensively discussed whether or not the Jews of the second temple period were driven with zeal for Gentile mission. In other words, was Judaism a “missionary religion”? If Judaism was embraced with a missionary zeal to convert the Gentiles, then Jesus, who according to the Gospels did not partake in driving his mission among the Gentiles, was strikingly different from many of his contemporaries. This is what Jeremias insisted. According to him, during the time of Jesus, Judaism was driven with an unparalleled zeal for mission in its history. He states that “Judaism was the first great missionary religion to make its appearance in the Mediterranean world.”⁹⁰ Looking at the history of

⁸⁸ Bird, 2006, 88–89.

⁸⁹ It is credible to claim that from the first century readers’ or hearers’ point of view “this mountain” of Isa 25:6 would have been understood as Mount Zion at least due to the fact that Mount Zion is mentioned previously in Isa 24:23. It has been argued that the eschatological vision of a banquet (Isa 25:6–10) did not belong together with the vision of the eschatological pilgrimage. For the related discussion see Beasley-Murray, 1986, 170. Bird, 2006, 88. Allison, 1997, 186.

⁹⁰ Jeremias, 1981, 11–12. On p. 12 Jeremias states that “Jesus thus came upon the scene in the midst of what was par excellence the missionary age of Jewish history.” He also claims that the gradual decline of Jewish missionary activity began in the post-70 period, and that

scholarship it is obvious that around the turn of the twentieth century most scholars claimed that Judaism was a missionary religion. Jeremias' conclusion about the missionary zeal of Judaism was a view which was still widely supported in scholarly circles during his time.⁹¹ The problem seems to be that our sources reveal a fervent expectation and hope of conversion of the Gentiles in the eschaton. Despite this hope of the Gentiles' conversion there are only a few vague references to Jews actively converting Gentiles to Judaism, but confusingly, our sources reveal that in the ancient world there were considerably many converts, as well as God-fearers who had partially converted to Judaism.⁹²

2.4.1 What is mission?

Among scholars the concept of Gentile mission is often understood in different ways and this naturally impacts the results of the scholars' view of the question. To begin with, we can note that mission in general is to be understood as intentions and actions motivated by the aim of reaching, achieving something and of getting somewhere. Jeremias un-

the Jewish missionary efforts gradually died away as Christianity emerged as the state religion of the Roman Empire and conversion to Judaism became illegal. Jeremias, 1981, 11–12, 17. On p. 17 Jeremias states that “conversion to the Jewish religion meant nothing less than naturalization, becoming a Jew: the Jewish mission was at the same time national propaganda.” He is convinced of the popularity of the Gentile mission among the Jews of the late second temple period: “Jesus grew up in the midst of a people actively engaged, both by the spoken and written word, in a Gentile mission, whose impelling motive was a profound sense of their obligation to glorify their God in the Gentile world.”

⁹¹ Bird, 2010, 8–9. Bird refers to notable scholars as Adolf von Harnack, Emil Schürer, Julius Wellhausen, T. Mommsen, G. F. Moore and S. Sandmel who regarded Judaism as a missionary religion during the end of the second temple period. See Schürer, 1986, 158–176.

⁹² Ware, 2005, 47–55. On p. 54–55 Ware concludes that “Jews in antiquity did not, as far as our evidence indicates, engage in planned or public missionary preaching to gentiles. The only Jewish missionaries we know of in antiquity are the Jewish Christians we meet in Paul's letters, the book of Acts, and other early Christian documents.” For the evaluation of the number of partial converts in antiquity, see Ware, 2005, 44–47. Our sources suggest that there were gentiles who had partially converted to Judaism, but at the same time we are to note that conversion to the nascent Christianity became more popular at an early stage. As Ware states on p. 47 “these conversions to Judaism were not comparable in scope to the missionary gains of the early church... By the middle of the second century at least, Christians simply took for granted that their numbers far exceeded those of the entire Jewish population worldwide” – see, 2 *Clem.* 2:3; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 117; Irenaeus, *Dem.* 94; Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.* 1.4.2.

derstood Gentile mission as “national propaganda,” because the Jewish religion cannot be separated from the Jewish nation and people. Moreover he claims that the Gentile mission was intended to fulfil the hope of glorifying God in the midst of the Gentile world, to spread the light of the Torah to the Gentiles and to *convert Gentiles to Judaism*. Surprisingly for Jeremias, Jesus, as he claims, strongly opposed this Gentile mission, which was widely supported and practiced among the Jews of his time (Matt 23:15).⁹³ According to Jeremias this mission was initiated and practised by certain individuals (John 7:35) who felt compelled to practice Gentile mission – i.e. to realize the universal ends of Judaism.

It is important to note that not even Jeremias, who claims that Judaism at the time of Jesus was a religion strongly engaged in Gentile mission, insisted that the initiative to practice the mission was made by the official institutions of Judaism.⁹⁴ From the times of the OT throughout the second temple period the only period when we can talk about an organized mission-campaign intending to convert the Gentiles occurred during the reign of the Hasmoneans at the end of the second century BCE. Josephus informs us that during the reign of John Hurcanos I (134–104 BCE) the Judeans forcefully converted the Idumeans, and later during the reign of Aristobulos I (104–103 BCE), the Itureans were converted by force to Judaism. Josephus states that if the Idumeans wished to stay on the recently invaded lands, which were now annexed into the kingdom of the Hasmoneans (*Ant.* 13:257–258, 319), they were to be circumcised. It has been noted by Goodman and Bird that this great and organized campaign cannot be regarded as evidence for the Jews’ readiness to spread Judaism around the world. Rather, these campaigns were motivated by the Jews’ willingness to keep the land of Israel pure and Jewish. The ideological and religious motivation behind the campaign of the Hasmoneans was certainly similar to the motivation which urged the Maccabeans to circumcise all the uncircumcised boys by force – both Jews and Gentiles – whom they found “in the confines

⁹³ Jeremias, 1981, 17, 17–39.

⁹⁴ Jeremias, 1981, 16–17. Jeremias admits that we do not have any documents which would contain an official sending of the Jewish missionaries to the Gentiles. There are only scattered references here and there about certain individuals teaching the Torah for the Gentiles – or as we might put it – bringing the Light to the Gentiles.

of Israel” (1 Macc 2:46). The Maccabeans fulfilled this duty at the beginning of their revolts, which suggests the high importance of the act. Josephus mentions that in 67 CE two great men, who were under the jurisdiction of the king Agrippa II, came to Galilee. The Galileans were about to force these two Gentiles to be circumcised if they would stay among them (*Vita* 113). Here it is to be noted that in the case of the conversion of the Idumeans and these two courtiers of Agrippa II, it is emphasized that they were allowed to stay in the Land only if they got circumcised (*Ant.* 13:257–258, 319, 394–397; *Vita* 113, 149–154). If they left the Land, there would be no compelling reason for them to be circumcised. This of course suggests that the Jews’ motivation to circumcise the Gentiles residing on their land was part of their will to keep the holy land Jewish and religiously pure. These incidents cannot be counted as evidence for the Jews’ willingness to practice Gentile mission. It is clear that the social pressure to be circumcised was great in Galilee and Judea. Bird’s statement is correct: “The circumcision of Gentiles here (in Israel) is not a matter of mission or conversion but of maintaining the holiness of the land and protecting it against defilement.”⁹⁵ The need to keep the holy land purified and undefiled is apparent in various passages in the second temple writings. During the Maccabean revolts the pagan cult objects were erased, torn down and several Gentiles were driven out from the land: 1 Macc 4:42–45; 5:68; 13:47–48, 50; 14:36.⁹⁶ The theological motivation for these cultic reforms came no doubt from Deut 12:2–4.

Since the 1990s Jeremias’ claim that Gentile mission was highly practised during the time of Jesus has been criticized and abandoned by Goodman and McKnight. We can certainly state that the consensus according to which Judaism was a missionary religion has been abandoned among current scholars. However it is clear that Goodman and McKnight’s negative conclusion about the missionary zeal of Judaism is partly dependent on their narrow definition of Gentile mission. In his definition of Gentile mission Goodman states that the conscious motivation behind the mission is of high importance. According to him the

⁹⁵ Bird, 2010, 35, 59–60. Goodman, 1992, 64–65. Ware, 2005, 49.

⁹⁶ See Schnabel, 2004, 96–97. Bauckham, 2005, 94–102.

direct motivation behind Gentile mission is to proselytize, and not solely to inform, educate or justify a view of faith with an apologetic intention.⁹⁷ Due to this apparently strict definition Goodman neglects several passages containing mentions of apologetics and education when he judges whether Judaism was a missionary religion or not. In a similar manner McKnight understands a missionary religion as a religion which self-consciously intends to evangelize non-members so that they will convert to the religion.⁹⁸ Dickson criticizes McKnight and Goodman's minimalistic definition of Gentile mission because they tend to regard mission too narrowly as an activity which can directly be connected with aims of converting the non-member. According to this narrow definition mission is understood practically as evangelizing/preaching to non-members in order that they would convert. However mission, which aims at the conversion of non-members, can be seen in broader terms. Prayer, apologetic teaching, and good works on behalf of the non-members is often to be seen as being indirectly motivated by a missional commitment – i.e. a desire that the non-members would, in some manner, become members or associates.

Dickson is certainly right in his claim that a missionary religion is not solely recognized by its practical acts of preaching, evangelizing and winning over non-members, but also by several other activities, which are not directly to be seen in serving the conversion of the non-member. The mission commitment of a religion is also seen in its religious beliefs and visions.⁹⁹ We may state that the question of Judaism as a “missionary religion” is too simplistic. It presupposes that Judaism was united in these great intentional questions – i.e. that Jews in general wished for the conversion of the Gentiles, and that they acted in accordance to this hope.¹⁰⁰ To such a question an easy and correct answer must be “no,” because in the presupposed sense Judaism was not a missionary religion. However Judaism certainly contained universal hopes,

⁹⁷ Goodman, 1994, 4–5.

⁹⁸ McKnight, 1991, 4–5.

⁹⁹ Dickson, 2003, 10. Dickson defines mission as “the range of activities by which members of a religious community desirous of the conversion of outsiders seek to promote their religion to non-adherents.”

¹⁰⁰ Dickson, 2003, 11–13.

which I think, were shared by the majority of the Jews. These universal hopes contained the vision that Israel would be a source of blessing and light to the nations (Gen 12:2–3; Isa 49:6), and that the Gentiles would make pilgrimage to the glorified Mount Zion in the eschaton because of God’s miracle.¹⁰¹ Among the Jews there certainly were some teachers who sought to teach and reach the Gentiles in order that they would come to salvation, under the “wings of the Shekinah.”¹⁰²

2.4.2 Evidence of Jewish proselytizing practices

Our purpose is not to go too deep into the discussion of the missionary activity of certain Jews during the second temple period. Here I will introduce the main passages important for the question of Jewish Gentile mission only in passing. To begin with, both the Roman and the Jewish written sources suggest that some individual Jews practised Gentile mission during the second temple period. There are two more or less explicit references to individual Jews proselytizing Gentiles in Rome. The first dates to 139 BCE and the second to 19 CE. According to Valerius Maximus, who was a writer in the early first century, the Jews were expelled from Rome in 139 BCE due to their spreading of their religion (*Factorvm et Dictorvm Memorabilivm*, 1.3.3).¹⁰³ The second reference to possible proselytizing activity in Rome concerns year 19 CE when, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 18:81–84), Tacitus (*Ann.* 2:85), Suetonius (*Tib.* 36) and Cassius (*Dio*, 57.18.5a) a great multitude of Jews were deported from Rome. It is noteworthy, that only Cassius clearly states that the reason for the expulsion was the proselytizing activities of the Jews.¹⁰⁴ According to Josephus the expulsion of four thousand Roman Jews to the island of Sardinia was due to one Jewish swindler who “had been driven away from his own country by an accusation laid against

¹⁰¹ Ware, 2005, 90, 93–94, 107, 116–117, 143, 153–154.

¹⁰² Donaldson, 1997, 59. Dickson, 2003, 12–13, 49–50.

¹⁰³ *Valerius Maximus*, 13. 3–4. Dickson, 2003, 24–25. Valerius compiled his work during the reign of Emperor Tiberius (14–37 CE). McKnight, who is, as we have seen, skeptical about the claim that Jews would have been engaged in Gentile mission, states on the basis of Valerius Maximus’ texts that during this time Jews indeed practiced proselytism to some degree. Further he states that this activity seems to have been so powerful that the Romans needed to take some contra-actions against it. McKnight, 1991, 73.

¹⁰⁴ Dickson, 2003, 26–27.

him for transgressing their laws”, *Ant.* 18:81. This unnamed Jewish swindler, who was “in all respects a wicked man”, had escaped his penalty to Rome where he now “professed to instruct men in wisdom of the laws of Moses”, 18:81. Working with three other Jews, who were “entirely of the same character” as himself, they “persuaded Fulvia, a woman of great dignity, and one that had embraced the Jewish religion, to send purple and gold to the temple at Jerusalem”, 18:82. Fulvia gave them the money to be sent to Jerusalem, the men used the money themselves. The deception became however known to the husband of Fulvia, who told it to the Emperor Tiberius, 18:83. Consequently Tiberius banished the whole Jewish community of Rome, altogether four thousand Jews, if Josephus is to be relied on, from the city to the island of Sardinia, 18:84. From Josephus’ account it is possible to read an implicit reference to Gentile mission as these men were teaching the Torah to the people, and as they were in contact with a convert to Judaism. Moreover the idea of sending gifts to the temple in Jerusalem can be understood in the light of the wider visions of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, which is often accompanied with the hope of the wealth of the nations flowing into the city (Tob 13:11; Isa 60:5–13; Hag 2:7; Ps 72:10). Other foreign converts also sent money to Jerusalem: *Ant.* 20:50–53.

Dickson interprets these two stories in Rome as support for the claim that some individual Jews spread the teachings of Judaism in Rome, and no doubt also in other cities in the Empire, in order to convert Romans to Judaism.¹⁰⁵ McKnight hesitantly admits that there is evidence which suggests that in Rome, at the two periods mentioned, there were Jews who attempted to convert Romans to Judaism. McKnight stresses that the evidence from Rome is exceptional and deals only with Rome.¹⁰⁶ It is however more likely that it would have been more dangerous and difficult to practice proselytism in Rome than in other cities or towns in the Empire. As Dickson remarks, the official restrictions for promoting other religious beliefs were stricter in Rome than elsewhere in the Roman Empire. Consequently, it can be assumed that proselytism

¹⁰⁵ Dickson, 2003, 30–31.

¹⁰⁶ McKnight, 1991, 74.

was also practiced by other individuals elsewhere in the Empire.¹⁰⁷ It is possible that Paul knew about the infamous incident in 19 CE in Rome as is suggested by verses Rom 2:17–24, which might refer to the incident. If this is the case then Paul (Rom 2:17–24) was criticizing the Jewish missionary activities on the basis of these individuals who deceived the Romans despite the fact that they had taught the Torah to them. The passage of Rom 2:17–24 refers to the Jews as guides to the blind, while in *Sib. Or.* 3:194–195 “the nation of the Mighty God... shall be to all mortals the guide of life.” Moreover in *Sib. Or.* 3–4 the Gentiles are encouraged to abandon their idols and to serve God.¹⁰⁸ These passages from the *Sib. Or.* 3–4 supports the view attested in Rom 2:17–24 according to which some religious Jews saw it as their duty to proclaim some kind of ethical monotheism to the Gentiles. According to my view there is a weak possibility that Rom 2:17–24 actually refers to the incident mentioned by Josephus (*Ant.* 18:81–84) and the three other sources, but even if it does not refer to that incident it still stands as evidence of Jewish missionary practice.¹⁰⁹

In addition to these two references to missionary activity in Rome, Josephus mentions by length (*Ant.* 20:17–96) the conversion of Helena, the queen of Adiabene and his son Izates. Their conversion in Northern Mesopotamia would have occurred ca. 30 CE. Queen Helena is mentioned also in the rabbinic sources: *m. Naz.* 3:6. Josephus states that Ananias, a Jewish merchant, got among the women in the royal household, and “taught them to worship God according to the Jewish religion.” Additionally, he also urged Izates to embrace Judaism, 20:34–35. Izates became a convert, but he felt that he “could not be thoroughly a Jew unless he was circumcised,” 20:38. Helena, his mother, and the Jewish merchant Ananias tried to convince him that it would be too dangerous for him to be circumcised because he was the king, and his subjects would never allow themselves to be led by a Jew, 20:39–40. For the moment Izates was convinced that he could serve God even if not circumcised, 20:41–42. Afterwards, however, Eleazar, a Jew from Galilee,

¹⁰⁷ Dickson, 2003, 31. See Ignat. *Phld.* 6:1.

¹⁰⁸ *Sib. Or.* 3:5–10, 547–579, 624–634, 732–740; 4:162–167.

¹⁰⁹ Dickson, 2003, 31–32.

came to meet the king. He persuaded Izates that in order to serve God as a Jew, he would have to be circumcised. Therefore Izates was circumcised, 20:43–46.¹¹⁰

In this respect it is interesting that when Philo writes about the converts, as he quite often does, he never mentions that they would have been circumcised.¹¹¹ Notably in *Sib. Or.* 4 the message for the Gentiles does not mention circumcision but is a message of monotheism and the future judgement. Circumcision is not required or even mentioned, but what is required from the Gentiles is a purification bath (*Sib. Or.* 4:162–177). It seems that the Jews had various opinions concerning what laws the converts, the God-fearers and the Jew-sympathizers should keep. Circumcision was not required of the God-fearers or of the Gentiles who

¹¹⁰ See Dickson, 2003, 33–37. The question whether the Gentiles who converted to Judaism were obligated to be circumcised, is certainly complicated. Borgen (Borgen, 1987, 220, 223) states the following: “According to *b. Sabb* 31a, Hillel gave the status of proselyte to a heathen who came to him and accepted the Golden Rule as summary of the Torah. Philo and Hillel’s understanding has thus been that bodily circumcision was not the requirement for entering the Jewish community, but was one of the commandments which they had to obey upon receiving status as a Jew.” On p. 223 Borgen states: “Although Philo, according to *QE* 2:2, gave heathens the status of proselytes on the basis of ethical circumcision of the pagan pleasures, he meant that the observance of bodily circumcision was to follow.” In *QE* 2:2 Philo interprets Exod 22:21 and states that “the *sojourner* (= προσήλυτος) is one who circumcises not his uncircumcision but his desires and sensual pleasures and the other passions of the soul.” It seems that for Philo a full proselyte could be circumcised in the sense of *QE* 2:2, and that a physical circumcision was not needed (Borgen, 1987, 218–219). Philo clearly emphasizes that a proselyte was identified due to his or her ethical behaviour (*Virt.* 102–104). According to Borgen’s reading of Philo “conversion meant that the proselytes made a social, judicial and ethnic break with pagan society and joined another ethnic group, the Jewish nation.” In line with *Virt.* 102–104 they abandoned their family, their country and their customs in order to join a new “commonwealth” (πολιτεία). Borgen, 1987, 212–213. Bird, 2010, 106–107. Ware, 2005, 140–143. See: *Virt.* 180, 219, 214. *Spec.* 1:51–153. On pp. 210–211 Borgen (Borgen, 1987, 210–211) claims that Philo’s passage concerning conversion in *Virt.* 178–179 works as a “model for the instruction of pagans in Philo’s own time.” The whole section of *Virt* 175–186 pictures the virtue of conversion. We may note the curious passage of Tacitus in *Hist.* 5:5, which concerns Gentiles who have joined with the Jews in some way – perhaps as proselytes: “Those who come over to their religion adopt the practice, and have this lesson first instilled into them, to despise all gods, to disown their country, and set at nought parents, children, and brethren.” In the texts of Philo we get the impression that conversion was marked by following some ethical virtues (*Virt.* 102–104, 180–182), but Philo does not mention that the converts would have been physically circumcised.

¹¹¹ Donaldson, 1997, 64. Philo introduces certain Gentiles as righteous and pious despite the fact that they did not live in accordance to the Torah: *Spec.* 2:42–48. Philo wrote about the Gentiles’ conversion in *Virt.* 178–179.

had loosely joined with the Jewish community and observed some of the Jews' religious practices such as the Sabbath and the lighting of lamps.¹¹² Fredriksen is right in insisting that during the ancient times the Gentiles' joining with the Jews in their worship of the God of Israel must be understood in the context of the "religious ecumenicalism that marked pagan culture generally." Some Gentiles adopted many practices and views from the Jews, some joined their worship, but at the same time these "sympathizers" of the Jewish religion and nation still remained Gentiles.¹¹³ They did not usually convert to Judaism because that would have required circumcision and a whole transformation of one's identity at its core. A full conversion, marked by circumcision, would have meant that the convert was to obey the whole of the Torah as Paul claims in Gal 5:3.¹¹⁴ Fredriksen is worth citing in length:

"Conversion accordingly meant ceasing traditional pagan worship altogether, thus cutting oneself out of the social and religious fabric of the ancient city. This was a serious and consequential step. Virtually all civic activities involved sacrifices. Failure to participate in the cults of the city and of the empire (which mandated homage to the emperor and to the genius of Rome) could easily result in at least resentment, if not actual criminal charge."¹¹⁵

¹¹² Schürer, 1986, 165–176. See especially pages 165, 173–175. On the edited version of Schürer's work on p. 173 it is stated: "For the acceptance of real proselytes into the Jewish community during the existence of the Temple three demands were to be made, according to the rabbis: (1) מילה, circumcision; (2) טבילה, baptism, i.e. a purificatory immersion; (3) הריצית קרבן, an offering to the Sanctuary." See various demands concerning the Gentile converts: *m. Ker.* 2:1; *m. Pes.* 8:8; *m. Eduy.* 5:2.

¹¹³ Bird, 2010, 84–85. Also Bird emphasizes this point and notes on p. 85 that "since the Roman religion was not exclusivist in principle or practice, it was relatively easy to establish new cults in the imperial capital itself and to worship in a variety of religious temples and associations. That is why a Roman noble woman such as Julia Severa could be a pagan high priestess and also the benefactor of a synagogue at Acomia in Phrygia." See Schürer, 1986, 164. On p. 164 it is stated the following: "The possible forms of the union of gentiles to Judaism, and the extent of their observation of the Jewish Law, were clearly very varied. Tertullian speaks of gentiles who worshipped their pagan gods as well as observing individual Jewish precepts. On the other hand, those who underwent circumcision presumably undertook thereby the obligation to observe the entire Law to its full extent (cf. Gal 5:3)." See Bird, 2004, 124, 129.

¹¹⁴ Schürer, 1986, 165–176.

¹¹⁵ Fredriksen, 1999, 129–132. The citation is from p. 130. See also Bird, 2010, 22–23. Bird notes correctly, in line with Fredriksen, that conversion to Judaism meant that the per-

According to my view there is no reason to doubt the basic historicity of Josephus clarification of the conversion of the queen of Adiabene and her son Izates. The circumcision of Izates was an exceptional matter, which, as the story claims roused fears and deemed serious consideration, and the persuasion of the Galilean teacher, Elieazar. Goodman is correct in stating that

“circumcision is a painful business and cases are recorded from the ancient world of this being the sticking point for would-be converts: Izates of Adiabene hesitated to undertake an act which might prove disastrously unpopular with his subjects (*Ant.* 20:38–39).”¹¹⁶

The requirement of circumcision was not something which was necessarily connected with the activity of the Jewish “missionaries”.¹¹⁷ This again proves that Judaism of the second temple period did not practice a wide-ranging and intentional Gentile mission in order to convert

son had to renounce his or her former pagan religious practices and beliefs. A pagan could be devoted to Isis or Dionysios and add to his or her pre-existing religious convictions the devotion to some other pagan deity. Such syncretism was theoretically impossible for a convert to Judaism because Judaism was a monotheistic faith, which excluded all other deities. On p. 33 Bird states that “circumcision was the end point or the final bridge to be crossed in the movement towards the Jewish way of life. The implication is that Judaizing by Gentiles was a broad concept, but circumcision was the terminus of conversion.” See Bird, 2010, 24, 30–31, 33–34. Circumcision as a proof for full conversion is apparent in the following passages: *Ant.* 20:38; 13:257–258, 319; *Bell.* 2:454; *Jdt* 14:10. See Bird, 2010, 24–40.

¹¹⁶ Goodman, 1994, 81.

¹¹⁷ See McKnight, 1991, 79–82. There are references to Gentiles becoming Jews and being circumcised, but these are not always connected with any kind of a mission to reach the Gentiles: *Jdt* 14:10; *Bell.* 2:454; *Ant.* 11:285. During the Hasmonean Judaizing campaigns the Itureans and the Idumeans were forced to be circumcised and to become Jews if they wished to stay in their lands, which were now in the hands of the Jews: *Ant.* 13:257–258, 318–319, 397; 15:253–254. If a Gentile was married to a Jew, there is evidence that the Gentile converted to Judaism and was thus circumcised: *Ant.* 16:225; 20:139, 145–146. These passages clearly indicate that circumcision was an act of conversion and through it the person became a member of the Jewish people. It seems to be that those who wished to live among the Jews in Galilee and Judea were somewhat persuaded to convert and to be circumcised (*Vita* 113). But I do not find convincing reasons to suppose that the Jewish “missionaries” would have, not at least in general, compelled or persuaded the Gentiles and “sympathizers” of Judaism in the Diaspora to be circumcised.

(by circumcision) Gentiles into Judaism.¹¹⁸ Admittedly certain individual Jews took the initiative to spread “ethical monotheism” and to “evangelize” about the God of Israel to Gentiles. The Jews did not as a rule, however, demand or wish that the Gentiles would become Jews – i.e. full members of the Jewish people.¹¹⁹

Philo certainly had the view that the religion of Judaism was to serve the whole world. Philo hoped that the Gentiles would abandon their weird laws and adopt the Torah, *Vit. Mos.* 2:44: “I think that in that case every nation, abandoning all their own individual customs, and utterly disregarding their national laws, would change and come over to the honour of such a people only; for their laws shining in connection with, and simultaneously with, the prosperity of the nation, will obscure all others, just as the rising sun obscures the stars.” Philo also mentions that unlike the adherents of the mystery religions of Alexandria, the Jews practiced their religion openly, *Spec.* 1:320–323. Philo claims that the teaching of Judaism was for the benefit of all and thus it was and ought to have been taught in the market places, 1:321. The fact that Philo does not mention the synagogue but the market places of Alexandria strongly suggests that he hoped that the glories of Judaism would be taught for all.¹²⁰ Philo states that the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek because some Jews thought that it would be “a scandalous thing that these laws should only be known among one half portion of the human race” and consequently, due to the Greek translation, the Bible was made available for the barbarians and the Greeks (*Vita Mos.* 2:27). As further evidence for certain Jews being willing to spread the teaching of Judaism to the Gentiles we can refer to Gal 5:11, Rom 2:19–24 and Matt 23:15. The passage from Galatians most probably indicates that Paul had

¹¹⁸ Bird, 2010, 12–13, 40. See also: Schürer, 1986, 164–165.

¹¹⁹ See Bauckham, 2005, 99. Rabbinic writings from the Talmudic period state that the Gentiles are encouraged and obligated to keep the laws of the sons of Noah, i.e. the Noachide Laws (*b. Sanh.* 58b–59a). The writings concerning the Noachide Laws are too late to be applied as sources to our study. Despite this the Noachide Laws of the Talmud reveal that the Jews wanted to spread ethical monotheism to Gentiles, although they did not wish the Gentiles to convert fully to Judaism. A list of laws given to the sons of Noah is found in *Jub.* 7:20–21. See Neusner, 2005, 288–290. Lundgren, 2001, 29–31. *B. Sanh.* 56a; *t. 'Abod. Zar.* 8:4; *Gen. R.* 34:8 and *Seder Olam R.* 4.

¹²⁰ Dickson, 2003, 38–39. McKnight, 1991, 55–56.

been involved in preaching “circumcision” to the Gentiles during the period prior to his revelation of Christ.

The saying of Matt 23:15 has been interpreted in several ways. Does it imply that some Pharisees travelled to foreign lands in order to convert Gentiles?¹²¹ Or does it reflect some Pharisees’ willingness to convert other Jews into their party or sect?¹²² Both of these interpretations are unlikely because they cannot be supported by clear writings from the second temple period. I concur with Ware in his conclusion that Matt 23:15 relates the eagerness of some Jews to convert the God-fearers and Jewish sympathizers through circumcision into Judaism. This explanation gains support from the story of Eleazar, the Galilean Jewish teacher, who travelled to foreign lands in order to complete the conversion of gentile Izates (*Ant.* 20:43–46). Eleazar compelled Izates to be circumcised in order to convert to Judaims – following Jewish ethical monotheism as such was not enough for him.¹²³

Although there is not enough evidence to claim that Judaism was a “missionary religion,” it is clear that quite many of the Jews felt and believed that their mission was to spread the teachings of Judaism – ethical monotheism – to the Gentiles. In this respect the idea that Israel is the kingdom of priests is especially important: Exod 19:6; Isa 61:6. In accordance to these verses Israel fulfils its priestly duty as a people when she obeys the Torah, the voice of God. In *T. Levi* 14:1–4 it is pointed out that the Levites are to obey the Torah in order to shine in front of the nations, and so the light would enlighten every man: “For what will

¹²¹ Jeremias, 1981, 18–19. Feldman, 1993, 298.

¹²² Goodman, 1994, 69–74.

¹²³ Ware, 2005, 53–54. See Gal 1:7; 2:4, 11–13; Acts 15:1. This view is also held by McKnight and Bird. McKnight, 1991, 106–108. Bird, 2004, 127–137. Bird (Bird, 2004, 120–122, 136–137), McKnight (McKnight, 1991, 106–107), Goodman (Goodman, 1994, 69), Davies and Allison (Davies & Allison, 1997, 287–288) argue that Matt 23:15 has its core in the tradition but that the saying has been framed by Matthew into its present form. Concerning the meaning of Matt 23:15 Bird (Bird, 2004, 136) states the following: “In sum, I have suggested that Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for Judaizing a God-fearer with a view to indoctrinating him with nationalistic propaganda where, if he accedes and enacts such a perilous programme, the proselyte will share the fate of his mentor and burn like Jerusalem in the ashes of *geheena* in the aftermath of the terror wrought by the Roman legions.” Interestingly, Josephus informs us that several foreigners and Idumaeans, who had been converted to Judaism, eagerly took part in the Jewish war against the Romans (*Bell.* 4:224–355; 5:15, 248–250, 358; 7:191): see Bird, 2004, 130–131.

all the nations do if you become darkened with impiety? You will bring down a curse on our nation because you want to destroy the light of the Law which was granted to you for the enlightenment of every man.” Parts of the *Testament of Levi* can be dated to the second or first century BCE because a copy of this work was found in Qumran.¹²⁴ The Wisdom of Solomon (Wis 18:4) states that “They (i.e. the Egyptians) had kept in captivity your children, by whom the indestructible light of the Law was to be given to the world.” This passage, too, indicates that Israel’s mission is to bring forth the Light for the world. In Judaism the light, in such connotations, is usually understood as referring to the Torah and to the knowledge of God: Isa 51:4.¹²⁵ This idea is apparent also in Paul (Rom 2:19; 2 Cor 3:7–18).

Josephus (*Bell.* 7:45) mentions that in Antiochia the Jews “also made proselytes of a great many of the Greeks perpetually, and thereby, after a sort, brought them to be a portion of their own body.” Josephus also states in *Bell.* 2:560–561 that a great multitude of the women of Damascus were “addicted to the Jewish religion” (ὀπηγμέναις τῇ Ἰουδαϊκῇ θρησκείᾳ).¹²⁶ Finally we are to notice that according to Philo the doors of the Synagogues were open in every city during every Sabbath (*Spec.* 2:62–63). Josephus also boasts (*C. Ap.* 2:282) that

“the masses have long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances; and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, nor a single nation, to which our custom of abstaining from work on the seventh day has not spread, and where the fasts and

¹²⁴ Feldman, 1993, 294–295. Ware, 2005, 147–151. Especially regarding *T. Levi* 14:3–4 Ware states the following on p. 149: “the largely pre-Christian origin of this passage is indeed remarkably confirmed by the Qumran fragment 4QLevi-a ar 3–5 (=4Q213 3–5), for these highly mutilated fragments, where their text is preserved, correspond quite strikingly to the text of *Testament of Levi* 14:3–4. This fragment shows that the Jewish traditions underlying *Testament of Levi* 14:3–4 are probably Palestinian in origin.”

¹²⁵ See Prov 6:23; *Apoc. Bar.* 59:2; 77:16; *4 Esra.* 14:20–21; *Dm. R.* 7:3 ja *Sifr. Num.* 6:25. For the dating of the Wisdom of Solomon, see Ware, 2005, 117. Ware states that the Wisdom of Solomon “was composed in Greek anywhere from around 120 BCE to around 45 CE. The widespread assumption that the work was composed at least partly for gentiles in order to promote their conversion has little evidence to support it... The book was apparently addressed to a Jewish audience.”

¹²⁶ See Bird, 2010, 96–97.

the lighting of lamps and many of our prohibitions in the matter of food are not observed.”¹²⁷

This suggests that several non-Jews who were interested in the Torah, the Jewish religion, philosophy or the Jewish people, occasionally joined the Synagogue service and adopted certain matters from the Jews. These notions suit with the references in Acts 13:42–48 and 15:21 according to which God-fearers were present in the Synagogues around the Diaspora.¹²⁸ Although Judaism obviously tended to be an attractive religion and way of life for many Gentiles and pagans, this does not imply that these individuals were converted into Judaism by means of circumcision.¹²⁹

Finally, several scholars have noted that the Jewish population had increased manifold during the second temple period.¹³⁰ Feldman states that

“only proselytism can account for this vast increase, though admittedly aggressive proselytism is only one possible explanation for the numerous conversions.”¹³¹

Bird rightly criticizes scholars for relying too much on the demographic estimations of ancient times. Surely these figures and estimations are vague. Bird is of course right in noting that proselytism is not the most possible explanation for the population increase. There were also other reasons which resulted in the growth of the Jewish people.¹³² However,

¹²⁷ See also: *C. Ap.* 1:167–171.

¹²⁸ Dickson, 2003, 78–79. Hengel, 2010, 56. The synagogues attracted God-fearers as *Bell.* 2:560–561, Acts 9:19–22 and 11:19–30 testify.

¹²⁹ See Bird, 2010, 101–103.

¹³⁰ See Bird, 2010, 52–53, n 153–154. It has been argued that the Judean/Jewish people increased from about 150 000 at the end of the pre-exilic period from 4 to 8 million Jews in the middle of the first century CE.

¹³¹ Feldman, 1993, 293. Stern, 1974, 117–118. Concerning the Diaspora Stern states on p. 117 that the “rapid population increase of the various Jewish communities has been remarked upon by Jews and Gentiles alike. Another major source of population increase was proselytism, which reached its peak in the first century C.E.”

¹³² Bird, 2010, 52–54. As other reasons for the Jewish population's growth Bird mentions “superior Jewish hygiene, Jewish refusal to engage in infanticide and abortion (Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5.3), immigration, intermarriage, forced conversions in Ituraea and Idumaea by the

the ancient references to the growth of the Jewish people, lays forth considerable evidence that some Jews were active and successful in proselytism.

We are to abandon Jeremias' claim according to which Jesus lived among Jews who were eagerly practicing Gentile mission. The Jew-centered mission of Jesus, which excluded the practice of reaching out and evangelizing the Gentiles, did not, as such, distinguish him from his contemporaries. Despite the fact that Jews in general did not practice Gentile mission, it is clear that some Jewish individuals took the initiative to spread the teachings of Judaism, especially ethical monotheism, to the Gentiles. It seems that Jews were mostly passively open to Gentiles, but they seldom took the active part in reaching out to them – not at least in an organized missionary campaign in the Diaspora. Judaism in itself was apparently an attracting religion and lifestyle to several Gentiles. It is often stated that according to the Jews of the second temple period the possible salvation of the Gentiles was thought to belong to the eschatological future. This is true, and it explains why the Jews of the first century were not engaged in aggressive proselytizing. The eschatological hopes, which would offer salvation also to the Gentiles, did not include any explicit imperative for the Jews to reach out for the Gentiles. Our textual sources suggest that Jews in general were positively related towards converts and to the fact that Gentiles would live according to the principles of ethical monotheism. One interesting question is how the Jews of the late second temple period understood the relationship of the current converts and the hope of the eschatological conversion of the Gentiles. On the base of our sources Ware insists that at least certain Jews – Philo for example – regarded these present-day converts as foreshadowing the eschatological conversion and pilgrimage of the Gentiles.¹³³

Hasmoneans, assimilation of the Phoenicians into Israel, and an increase in the agricultural output of Ptolemaic Egypt that could sustain larger populations.”

¹³³ Ware, 2005, 142–143, 147, 90.

3 “Galilee of the Gentiles” and Jesus

3.1 Introduction

In recent decades Galilee has increasingly attracted scholars involved in Jesus studies. Sean Freyne, one of the leading experts of Galilean early Roman history, sums up the state of current research by arguing that it is, in the present climate of research, unthinkable to claim for any kind of a calling or mission for Jesus without taking into account the Galilean context. This is understandable in the sense that the aims of Jesus’ mission must be plausible in his religious, historical and cultural context. At the same time Freyne states that the Third Quest for the historical Jesus “is rapidly in danger of becoming the quest for the historical Galilee.”¹³⁴ Freyne’s comments are particularly true for our subject. In this chapter we will take an overview of the historical, cultural, ethnographical and sociological reality of Galilee during the first half of the first century, or more precisely during Herod Antipas’ reign (4 BCE – 39 CE). Due attention will be paid to the archaeological results, which have been somewhat neglected by scholars of the historical Jesus.¹³⁵

3.2 Galilean Judaism

On the basis of scribal evidence from the pre-70 period, the Gospels (Mark 14:70), Josephus (*Bell.* 2:237) and the rabbinic writings (*y. Shabb.* 16:8, 15d)¹³⁶, quite a negative picture of the Galileans emerges. The suspicious attitude towards the Galileans was arguably most posed by the Jerusalem orthodoxy. The Galileans were seen as flax in their Torah observance (*m. Ned.* 2:4). This is evident in the Gospel of John (John 7:45–52; 8:48).¹³⁷ These negative remarks pertaining to the Gali-

¹³⁴ Freyne, 1994, 75–76. The quote is from p. 76. Freyne, 2007, 13. Witherington, Ben III, 1995, 14–15.

¹³⁵ Freyne, 2006, 64–66.

¹³⁶ Johanan ben Zakkai the leading sage of the emerging rabbinic Judaism is reported to have said “Galilee, Galilee, you hate the torah; your end will be destruction.” *Y. Shabb.* 16:8.

¹³⁷ Freyne, 1988, 1–2. Freyne states that in the rabbinic writings after the second century the Galileans are described as “quarrelsome, dubious in their knowledge and observance of halachah, and generally not very trustworthy.”

leans are mostly from later periods and not from the first century. Even though the Galileans are often portrayed in less flattering ways, they are never considered half-Jews or Gentiles.¹³⁸ In scholarly discussion the Galileans have been stamped with various stereotypes. They have been considered as hotheaded Zealots, non-Jews, lax in Torah-observance, miracle-working Hasidim, and interested in apocalyptic beliefs.¹³⁹ The Synoptics and the work of Josephus picture the Galileans of the first century as religiously and culturally Jewish. Josephus, as the most detailed describer of Galilee and the Galileans, does not note anything exceptional in their way of Judaism. Josephus does not describe the Galileans as assimilated to Gentile customs.

Goodman claims that the Galileans were in a general sense similar to the Judeans. The Galileans, like the Judeans, held the Torah as a sacred God-given instruction to Israel. The Galileans kept the Sabbath (*Vita* 159) and the kosher regulations (*Bell.* 2:591–592; *Vita* 74–76). The Galileans made pilgrimage to Jerusalem (*Vita* 348; Luke 13:1).¹⁴⁰ The Galileans' concern for purity issues is supported by the findings of numerous miqvaot in Galilee. When Antipas in 17 CE built Tiberias on a gravesite, he had trouble getting the locals to move to the newly built city (*Ant.* 18:36–38). These notions support the view according to which the Galileans considered themselves as Jews. Our sources do not discern any local differences between Galilean and Judean Judaism.¹⁴¹ Fredrik-

¹³⁸ Freyne, 1988, 1–3.

¹³⁹ Freyne, 1988, 5–6. On pages 1–30 Freyne goes through the history of the characterizations of the first century Galileans. See also Goodman's article: Goodman, 1999, 596–617. Levine, 2006, 162–165.

¹⁴⁰ Josephus indicates that the Romans benefited militarily from the loyalty of the Galilean Jews concerning the Sabbath. Because of the Hasmonean king (103–76 BCE), Alexander Jannaeus', assault of Ptolemais and Strato's Tower, Cleopatra's son Ptolemy Lathyrus attacked at least two Galilean sites: Asochis and Sepphoris. Josephus writes that Ptolemy invaded Asochis on the Sabbath, without notable resistance, *Ant.* 13:337–338. Such an observation indicates that Asochis was primarily inhabited by Jews, who kept the Sabbath. Later during the Jewish War the Jews in Tarichaeae, led by Josephus, felt obligated not to raise arms on the Sabbath, *Bell.* 2:634, *Vita* 1:159.

¹⁴¹ Goodman, 1999, 601–602, 607, 617. Charlesworth, 2010, 23. Concerning the material culture which unites Judea and Lower Galilee during the first century BCE and CE Charlesworth states: "Thus, the assumption that one should differentiate between Galilean and Judean Judaisms (as reflected in the works by Horsley, Oakman, and Kloppenborg Verbin) and that Lower Galilee was far removed culturally from Judea need to be replaced with precise information obtained by the present excavations at Jotapata, Khirbet Kana, Beth-

sen leans on *C. Ap.* 1:34–42; 2:179 and *Ant.* 16:162–166, as well as on the attestations of non-Jews to the Jews' practices, for her solid conclusion that the Jews of antiquity were united in the principal views concerning the Torah, temple, Sabbath, circumcision and dietary laws. There is no need to doubt the conclusion that during the first century CE, the Jews of Palestine and Diaspora in general expressed a great consensus concerning the fundamental elements of their religion and people. These elements were the Torah, the people, the temple, Jerusalem and the land of Israel.¹⁴² Apparently the Jews of Galilee and Judea can be seen as sharing the main indicators of the Jewish religion, "common Judaism," as Sanders states.¹⁴³ These main indicators, i.e. circumcision, Sabbath observance, purity concerns and loyalty towards the temple, manifested the covenantal relationship between God and Israel.¹⁴⁴ There are no reasons for drawing a clear religious and cultural boundary between Judea and Galilee.¹⁴⁵ Goodman argues credibly that the cultural and religious

saida, Midgal, Tiberias, and elsewhere. The pre-70 archaeological evidence now unites Upper Galilee with Tyre and Sidon but Lower Galilee with Judea."

¹⁴² Fredriksen, 1999, 61–62, 177–179. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1:38–42 "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, {g} which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine;³⁹ 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;⁴⁰ 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."⁴¹ It is true, our history has been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but has not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there has not been an exact succession of prophets since that time; and *how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation, is evident by what we do; for, during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it is becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them.*"

¹⁴³ Dunn, 2006, 212. Dunn rightly argues in this recent article that the Galilean Jews can be seen under the umbrella of "common Judaism". See also Kazen, 2002, 280–285. Räisänen, 2010, 26–27.

¹⁴⁴ Chancey, 2002, 4–5. Wong, 2009, 12–14, 20–21.

¹⁴⁵ Dunn, 2006, 207–212. Dunn gives convincing support for the statement that the Galileans are to be regarded as Jewish.

gulf separating the Jewish people from the Gentiles is not comparable to the cultural gap between Galilee and Judea.¹⁴⁶

In his works Josephus clarifies the geographical features of Galilee, while he does not describe the inhabitants from there. The Gospels on the other hand give only scarce information of the Galilean geographical and administrative context. According to the Gospels, Galilee was a rural area with plenty of villages. The ethos of Galilee was Jewish and religious, which is indicated by the references to the Galileans attending synagogues, keeping the Sabbath, making pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and on the whole, observing the Torah. According to the Synoptics, Galilee was no stranger to the sick, poor and needy, nor to the Herodians, the toll-collectors, the rich, or to the Pharisees or to the publicly acclaimed sinners and social outcasts. In the light of such a comprehensive sociological picture of Galilee, the absence of Gentiles and the God-fearers is worth noting.

3.3 Galilee of the nations

The composer of Matthew declares that Jesus moved to Galilee, which he calls “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Matt 4:13, 15). Matthew also knows the account according to which Jesus instructed his disciples to “go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 10:5b–6). These verses show the complicity of our issue. Does Matt 4:15 indicate that Galilee was populated by Gentiles, ringed by Gentiles or governed by Gentiles, or something else? In light of Matt 10:5b–6 it is obvious that according to Matthew the “Galilee of the Gentiles” was not populated by Gentiles. The Synoptics mention only one possible occasion located in Galilee where Jesus helping a Gentile is recorded – i.e. the centurion of Capernaum (Matt 8:5–13, Luke 7:1–10).

From the time of Herod Antipas and Jesus we find almost no references to Galilean Gentiles in Josephus’ works or in the Synoptics.

¹⁴⁶ Goodman, 1999, 596, 602. Reed, 2006, 49–54. On the basis of archaeological evidence Reed states that the Galileans are to be seen under the umbrella of “common Judaism.” Archaeological evidence reveals Jewish features in the early Roman Galilee: miqvaot (מִקְוֵאוֹת), stone jars, very few pork bones and no statues of pagan deities and emperors.

The literal Gentile-references in Galilee deal with Tiberias (*Ant.* 18:37; and later *Vita* 67) and Capernaum (*Matt* 8:5–13). Regarding the time phrase from Late Hellenistic to Early Roman periods, only once does Josephus mention the presence of Gentiles in Galilee. This reference is to the massacred Greeks of Tiberias (*Vita* 67). The lack of references to Galilean Gentiles in Josephus' works is important since Josephus certainly was familiar with Galilee at this time period.¹⁴⁷ The archaeological evidence is congruent with these few literal references. No archaeological remains of pagan temples or buildings, which can be related to paganism in Galilee during the time of Antipas, have been found. It is worth remembering that several Jewish writings from the second temple period, not to mention the passages of the OT, denounce idol-worship and paganism: *Wis.* 13–15; *Let. Aris.* 134–139. Hellenistic remains do not necessarily refer to Gentile residence. Remains related to paganism, on the other hand, can most likely be taken as evidence of Gentile inhabitation. Chancey writes in a somewhat overstating manner that Herod the Great “ringed Galilee with temples to the imperial cult and other construction projects.” Galilee and Judea noticeably lacked pagan temples – presuming that Baniyas of Caesarea Philippi did not belong to Galilee.¹⁴⁸ It is clear that pagan influences came from outside Galilee, from its surroundings, i.e. from pagan cities and centers as Baniyas, Caesarea Maritima, Sebaste, Tyre and Sidon.

There are no references to God-fearing Gentiles being drawn into the synagogues of Galilee as in Antiochia of Syria (*Bell.* 7:45). Moreover there are basically no accounts of clashes and revolts between the Jewish and the Gentile population in the Galilean cities, when compared with the violent revolts, which occurred in the 60s in other cities outside

¹⁴⁷ Chancey, 2002, 168. Sanders, 2002, 35. “The only references to Gentiles in Jewish Palestine place them in the cities, and there are few such references (above we noted that there was a small population of Gentiles in Tiberias). In short, there were not many Gentiles in Jewish Palestine.” Sanders refers to the verses *Ant.* 18:37 and *Vita* 67 on p. 28–29. On p. 168 Chancey states: “Josephus, whose intimate familiarity with Galilee is evident in both *War* and *Life*, also refers to non-Jewish Galileans in this period only once, in his discussion of the massacre of Tiberias’ Greeks by Jews.”

¹⁴⁸ Chancey, 2002, 50. See *Ant.* 15:266–276, 328–341 and 16:136–149; *Bell.* 1:401–428. We know with certainty that Herod the Great had built a temple to Roma and Augustus near Baniyas.

of Galilee (*Bell.* 2:477–483). Josephus writes that the Jews of Tiberias, who arguably made up the majority of the city’s population, massacred Tiberias’ Greek population during the Jewish War (*Vita* 65–67). Josephus also states that in Damascus almost all the wives of the local Greek inhabitants of the city had been “addicted to the Jewish religion” (*Bell.* 2:560). Nothing in this vein has been preserved to us concerning the Galilean cities and their synagogues.

Even if the evidence supports the notion of a Jewish Galilee there are scholars who propose that Galilee indeed had a notable Gentile population. For example Borg claims that Jesus lived in a reasonably cosmopolitan environment, and that Galilee was certainly not “a bucolic rural backwater.” According to him Galilee contained “a considerable number of Gentiles.”¹⁴⁹ Funk insists on the semi-pagan atmosphere of Galilee even more strongly. According to him Jesus was brought up in the

“semi-Pagan Galilee, whose inhabitants, because they were often of mixed blood and open to foreign influence, were despised by the ethnically pure Judeans.”

Moreover Funk assumes that Jesus had learned Greek from his surrounding “pagan environment” in Galilee. Both Funk and Borg regard Sepphoris as a great Hellenistic city.¹⁵⁰ Mack insists that it is not credible that the Galileans would have “converted to a Jewish loyalty and culture” suddenly in 100 BCE when Galilee was annexed into Judea. Thus for Mack the “common Jewish culture” uniting Galilee and Judea at the time of Jesus is a myth.¹⁵¹ Mack emphasizes that for 300 years prior to Jesus, Galilee had been influenced by Hellenism, and thus it is not plausible to claim that Jesus would have been surrounded by a strongly Jewish culture in Galilee. Mack further states that Galilee was, during the first century, largely Greek-speaking but also bilingual.¹⁵² Crossan claims that Sepphoris as well as Tiberias had a great cultural

¹⁴⁹ Borg, 1994, 26.

¹⁵⁰ Funk, 1996, 33–34, 79. The quotation is from p. 33.

¹⁵¹ Mack, 1993, 59–60.

¹⁵² Mack, 1993, 57–58.

impact on Galilee. These cities were, according to Crossan, situated by the main road crossing Galilee in an east-west direction. Crossan claims that the road of Via Maris, coming through the great Mediterranean city of Ptolemais, passed via Galilee from Sepphoris to Tiberias. Crossan puts much weight on this economic traffic and claims that it brought a great Mediterranean cultural influence into the whole of Galilee. According to Crossan the Greco-Roman polis of Sepphoris embraced the pan-Mediterranean culture over all of Galilee.¹⁵³ Crossan's claims concerning the Via Maris are debatable since there is no clear evidence that, in the first century, the Roman road would have gone through Sepphoris. However, traces of a Roman road between Sepphoris and Ptolemais from the second century on have been found.

The silence of the Synoptics and John on Jesus' Gentile contacts in Galilee can be explained in at least two ways. We can claim that Jesus did not have contact with the Gentiles in Galilee because there were so few Gentiles in Galilee. In this case Jesus' lack of Gentile-contacts does not reveal anything about his attitudes towards them. On the other hand, if we come to the conclusion that Galilee had at least a noticeable Gentile minority, we can claim that Jesus intentionally avoided contact with them. Both solutions, even if they are not necessarily mutually exclusive, have found scholarly support. Our conclusions concerning the ethnic consistence of Galilee and Palestine as a whole naturally affect our interpretation of Jesus' stance against the Gentiles. Jeremias for example is convinced that Jesus could not have avoided Gentiles within the boundaries of Palestine, and thus he must have considered whether he should drive his mission among the Gentiles too.¹⁵⁴

The writers of Matthew, 1 Maccabees and Isaiah called Galilee the "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matt 4:15; 1 Macc 5:15; Isa 8:23). The name of Galilee, as referred in verses Isa 9:1; 8:23, literally means "circle of the peoples" (Γαλιλαία τῶν ἔθνων/הגויים הנילך). Galilee was largely in the biblical area of the tribe of Naphtali, and it touched the areas

¹⁵³ Crossan, 1991, 18–19. For a contrasting view, see Kazen, 2002, 285–286.

¹⁵⁴ Jeremias, 1981, 26. Jeremias claims that Jesus must have come into contact with Gentiles even within the boundaries of Palestine. He states that despite the probability that "Gentiles may have been comparatively scarce in the hill-country of Galilee, they were much more numerous about the Lake of Gennesaret, and still more so in Jerusalem."

of Asher, Zebulun and Issachar.¹⁵⁵ It is debated whether the Isaianic epithet “of the Gentiles” refers to Galilee as being populated by Gentiles, surrounded by Gentiles or under the control of the Gentiles. The epithet originated from verse Isa 8:23 (9:1), which attests to the early Israelites’ experience of the difficulty of living surrounded by hostile Canaanite city states.¹⁵⁶ Of course the epithet might also refer to the non-Jewish population of Galilee in the late eighth century BCE. The epithet clearly stayed in tradition as Matt 4:15 and 1 Macc 5:15 indicate. The epithet gained different meanings under different time-epochs. From the Early Roman period to the Jewish revolt, 66–73 CE, the old epithet of Galilee, became descriptive for Galilee’s situation surrounded by hostile Gentiles. Freyne points this out by noting that the cities, mentioned by Josephus (*Bell.* 2:477–483), in which Jews suffered from the Greeks hostilities in the beginning of the Jewish war, were all surrounding Galilee: “Scythopolis, Ptolemais, Tyre, Hippos, Gadara, and the territory of Agrippa II, i.e. Batanea, Hauran, and Trachonitis.”¹⁵⁷

During the first half of the first century the epithet “Galilee of the Gentiles” can most naturally be seen as referring to Galilee’s geopolitical situation. It was encircled by the Gentile tribes as Josephus recalls (*Bell.* 3:41). On the west and north side of Galilee were the areas of Phoenicia and Syria. The great cities of Tyre and Sidon were situated on the coast of the Mediterranean. Decapolis with its Greco-Roman cities like Hippos, a city just 15 km from Capernaum by sea, was found on the eastside of Galilee. While from Capernaum one could see the city lights of Hippos, Gergesa and Tiberias. Hippos and Gergesa were on the eastside of the Galilean sea, and Tiberias was on the westside of the sea. On the south of Galilee lay Samaria, as well as Scythopolis, the greatest Greco-Roman polis of Palestine.

¹⁵⁵ Josh 20:7; 21:32; 1 Kgs 9:11.

¹⁵⁶ Freyne, 2001, 195.

¹⁵⁷ Freyne, 2001, 195. Josephus states that the Caesareans slaughtered 20 000 Jews in one hour, which was all of their Jewish population, *Bell.* 2:457–458. This event led to revolts and further bloodsheds in surrounding cities. Josephus states in numbers that the inhabitants of Aschalon killed 2500 Jews, and the inhabitants of Ptolemais killed 2000 Jews, *Bell.* 2:477–480.

3.4 Three influential phases and individuals in Galilean history: Aristobulus I, Pompey and Antipas

During the first century the ethnicity of Galilee was greatly shaped by three historical phases which Galilee had faced. First, the Hasmoneans connected Galilee to the temple state of Judea in 104 BCE. Secondly, after the Roman takeover of Judea in 63 BCE, Pompey reduced the Jewish state to the areas that were inhabited by Jews (*Bell.* 1:154–156). Therefore the great Jewish state of the Hasmoneans reached its end, though Galilee remained within the Jewish state. Thirdly, the Romans gave Herod the Great control of the ‘kingdom’ in 40 BCE. At the beginning of his reign, Herod had to stand persistently against the resistance that he faced among the Galileans (*Ant.* 14:432–433, 450). After the death of Herod the Great, the client king of Palestine, (4 BCE), the kingdom was divided among his three sons: Archelaus, Philip and Antipas. Herod Antipas was appointed as the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He reigned from 4 BCE to 39 CE. We will now shortly survey these historical phases.

3.4.1 The Hasmoneans: The military invasion of the Land

It is well known that the Maccabees dreamed of reclaiming the Great Israel by military force.¹⁵⁸ The Hasmoneans, not surprisingly, justified their conquest of land by referring to Israel’s ancestral right to the land. This religious and nationalistic justification is clearly stated in 1 Macc 15:33 through the mouth of Simeon the Maccabean in year 142/3 BCE – i.e. at the time of declaring the independence of the Jewish state.¹⁵⁹

“We have neither taken any other man’s land, nor do we hold dominion over other people’s territory, but only over the inheritance of our fathers. On the contrary, for a certain time it was unjustly held by our enemies; but we, seizing the opportunity, hold fast the inheritance of our fathers.”

¹⁵⁸ Freyne, 2004, 74–75, 77–80.

¹⁵⁹ Mendels, 1992, 83. See Freyne, 2001B, 292–293. The book of 1 Macc is generally dated to about 100 BCE.

This statement reflects the Maccabean ideology. The Hasmonean realm did conquest foreign territory, but according to their reasoning the land belonged to them due to the promises of God. 1 Macc 14:16 states that Simeon “broadened the borders of his nation, and ruled over the land.” During the reign of John Hyrcanus I (134–104 BCE) this nationalistic ideology, backed up by biblical justification, resulted in forcefully converting the inhabitants of conquered territories in Idumaea, Shechem, in parts of Transjordan, and Samaria (*Ant.* 13:254–258). During the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE) the borders of the Hasmonean kingdom reached out to their widest since King Solomon (*Ant.* 13:395–397).¹⁶⁰ The ancestral right, emphasized in the second temple writings, recalls the Hebrew conquests of Canaan in the book of Joshua (Sir 46:1–10) in particular.¹⁶¹

The Maccabean war was followed by the Hasmonean dynasty, which prospered during the reign of John Hyrcanus, 134–105 BCE (*Bell.* 1:68–69). It was first during Hyrcanus’ reign that active ideas about the invasion of Galilee seem to have appeared amongst the Hasmoneans. But before the Hasmoneans could reach Galilee, they had to invade the gentile territories which ringed Galilee, or more specifically, which separated Galilee from Judea.¹⁶² From point of view of Judea, Galilee was isolated by Straton’s Tower (later Caesarea Maritima) on the Mediterranean coast, Samaria in the hill country and Scythopolis in the valley. Therefore Hyrcanus started an invasion campaign, which some scholars think, was regarded as “the holy war” in the contemporary popular imagination.¹⁶³

The Hasmoneans took over the Mediterranean coast and they invaded Transjordan in the east (*Ant.* 13:255–256). After this they destroyed the temple on Mount Gerizim in Samaria most likely in 107 BCE (*Ant.* 13:254–256, 281). Hyrcanus forced the Idumeans, who lived in the south of Judea, to convert to Judaism by circumcision (*Ant.* 13:256–258;

¹⁶⁰ Mendels, 1992, 84. Nickelsburg, 2005, 93.

¹⁶¹ Freyne, 2004, 60–91.

¹⁶² Freyne, 1980, 41–42.

¹⁶³ Freyne, 1980, 42. This idea of “the holy war” can be supported by the fact that according to Megillat Ta’anith the conquest of the Great Plain was celebrated as a Jewish national holiday.

15:254–255). During the time of Samaria’s invasion Scythopolis came into Jewish hands (*Ant.* 13:280). Until the end of Hyrcanus’ reign the Jewish state of the Hasmoneans included almost thirty Hellenized cities from the Mediterranean coast to Galilee, Transjordan and Idumea.¹⁶⁴

Hyrcanus’ invasions cleared the way for Aristobulus I (104–103 BCE) to connect Galilee into the Hasmonean kingdom. How this annexation of Galilee into Judea was worked out is a matter of dispute. Josephus has not written about a Hasmonean military campaign driven to Galilee in order to invade the land and/or convert its inhabitants. The idea of a Hasmonean Judaizing campaign to Galilee is based on Schürer’s identification of the Iturean territory, or at least a sizeable part of it, with Galilee.¹⁶⁵ Josephus states that Aristobulus I

“made war against Iturea, and added a great part of it to Judea, and compelled the inhabitants, if they would continue in that country, to be circumcised, and to live according to the Jewish laws” (*Ant.* 13:318–319).

It is noteworthy that unlike the Idumeans, the Galileans and Itureans are never being accused of being half-Jewish (*Ant.* 14:403). The Ituraeans were an Arab tribe, and they lived primarily in the north and northeast of Galilee, on and around Mount Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon.¹⁶⁶ Freyne states that the precise localization of the Ituraeans is difficult because of our few sources, and because of the “semi-nomadic lifestyle” led at least by some of their members.¹⁶⁷ Freyne further concludes that perhaps the closest connection between Itureans and Galilee is to be found in the Itureans’ brigandage-lifestyle, which can be seen as having some resemblance with the brigands of Galilee which spurred up bet-

¹⁶⁴ Mantel, 1975, 268–269.

¹⁶⁵ Schürer, 1973, 217–218. Chancey, 2002, 42; Freyne, 1980, 43. Chancey and Freyne attest that most scholars have followed Schürer on his identification of Iturea with Galilee. Freyne (1980, 42) gives *Ant.* 13:304 and *Bell.* 1:76 as possible evidence of a Galilean campaign during Aristobulus’ reign.

¹⁶⁶ Chancey, 2002, 44. Freyne, 2001, 189.

¹⁶⁷ Freyne, 2001, 188–189. See: Strabo, *Geog.* 16:755f. and *Ant.* 15:344–348.

ween 47 and 4 BCE.¹⁶⁸ This of course is speculative and impossible to prove with any certainty. While the Jews were in some extent jealous of the Phoenicians' seafaring activities, Josephus does not distinguish the Itureans from the anonymity of other Arab tribes, other than by negative remarks. Some of their members are highlighted for leading a precarious lifestyle, and by the fact that the Itureans caused frustrations for Rome's ambitions in the East.¹⁶⁹

From Josephus we know that the circumcised Idumeans remained, in some forms, separated from the Jews. According to Josephus' portrayal several of these half-Jewish Idumeans joined the zealous Jews during the Jewish war, and some of them continued worshiping their native god Qos (*Bell.* 4:345–353; *Ant.* 15:253–258). Freyne points out that in later Jewish history the Itureans, unlike the Idumeans, are not pictured with such an information or profile.¹⁷⁰ Along with Freyne, I see this as a strong suggestion that Schürer's conclusion highly overestimated his claim that during the early Hellenistic era, most of Galilee was inhabited by Itureans.¹⁷¹ More correctly, the Galilee of the time of the Hasmonean "invasion" seems to have been scarcely inhabited. The claim that the inhabitants of Galilee were, for the great part, Itureans is not convincing.

In addition to the Idumeans, the Samaritans were also considered to be half-Jewish (*Ant.* 9:277–291, *b.Qidd.* 75a–6a). According to Matt 10:5b Jesus especially forbids his disciples to go over to the Gentiles: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans." The reference to the Samaritans works as a clarification. Arguably Matthew's Jesus did not regard the Samaritans as real Jews. It seems that the reference to the Samaritans might have been necessary. Otherwise the disciples might have preached to them, as the prohibition not to go over to the Gentiles would not necessary have excluded the Samaritans in the eyes of all first century Jews. The ethnic identity of the Samaritans was

¹⁶⁸ Freyne, 2001, 206–207. Freyne refers to the following texts: *Bell.* 1:204–206; *Ant.* 14:158–160; Strabo *Geog.* 16:755. See also Freyne, 2001B, 298–299. Freyne writes (2001B, 298) that "little or no evidence of Iturean material remains has so far come to light in Galilee."

¹⁶⁹ Freyne, 2001, 194.

¹⁷⁰ Freyne, 2001, 205–206. Freyne refers to the following texts: *Bell.* 4:345–353; 6:378; *Ant.* 15:253–258.

¹⁷¹ Freyne, 2001, 205. Schürer, 1973, 217–218.

not quite clear (*m. Qidd.* 4:3; *Ant.* 9:288–291; 12:257–260). Josephus bitterly states that the Samaritans identified themselves occasionally with the Jews if it brought some positive consequences for them, but on the other hand, when the Jews had difficulties they bluntly denied having any kinship with them (*Ant.* 9:291; 11:340).¹⁷²

3.4.2 The ethnic roots of the Galileans: Who were they?

Horsley has argued that the Galileans consisted mostly of former Northern Israelites, but also of converted Itureans.¹⁷³ Reed on the other hand has offered a solution according to which the Galileans were Judeans who had colonized Galilee during the Hasmonean period. Reed maintains that Galilee was scarcely populated and mainly non-Jewish before the Hasmonean annexation. Reed claims that there was a population gap in Galilee from 700 to 200 BCE.¹⁷⁴ The possible population peek in Galilee during the Hasmonean annexation is suggested by the sudden increase of sites and the overall material culture in the Late Hellenistic Galilee (200–100 BCE). It is noteworthy that the Galilean material culture, beginning with the annexation of Galilee into Judea, matches the mate-

¹⁷² Davies & Allison, 1991, 166. Catchpole, 2006, 178–179. Meier, 2001, 533–534. In *m. Qidd.* 4:3 it is stated that the Samaritans are of “doubtful status”. The uncertainty of their ethnic origin is also referred to in *Ant.* 9:288–291; 12:257–260. (*b. Qidd.* 75a–6a). According to Josephus’ attestations the Samaritans claimed, depending on their occasional advantage, that their ethnical origin was among the descendants of Joseph (*Ant.* 9:291) and among the Sidonians (*Ant.* 12:257–291). According to *Ant.* 9:288–291; 10:184 and 2 Kgs 17 the Samaritans were descendants of the Persian Cutheans. They had been settled on the area by the Assyrians. It is apparent from the sources that there was a fierce tension between the Jews and the Samaritans: Sir 50:25–26; Luke 10:29–37; John 4:9; *Ant.* 11:114; 18:30; 20:118–136; *T. Levi* 5–7; Jdt 9:2–4 (=commenting Gen 34). In 1 Macc 3:10 the Gentiles and the Samaritans are seen together as fighting against the Jews, and therefore, according to 1 Macc, some nationalistic Jews were certainly skeptical and critical towards the Samaritans. See Binder, 1999, 471–475. Bryan, 2002, 172–177, 182–185.

¹⁷³ Horsley, 1996, 22, 25–26. Horsley, 1995, 32–33, 39–40. Horsley states (Horsley, 1995, 40) on p. 40 that “during the second-temple times most inhabitants of Galilee were descendants of the northern Israelite peasantry.” For a short but insightful general presentation of the scholars’ views of the Galileans’ ethnic background, see Freyne, 2001B, 297–303.

¹⁷⁴ Reed, 1999, 102. Kazen, 2002, 277–278. Freyne, 2004, 62–63. Freyne, 2001, 197. Freyne criticizes Horsley’s argument by stating that if the Israelite tribes had continued their existence in and around the Galilean area, we would expect to find some cultic places for the worship of JHWH during the period between 700–200 BCE. Freyne is certainly right in questioning whether it could be possible for such a specific ethnic identity to be maintained without any cultic center as Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem.

rial culture of Judea, as Reed states. This shared material culture of Judea and Galilee consists of stone vessels, miqvaot, and secondary burials with ossuaries in kokhim and the lack of pork.¹⁷⁵ Reed explains convincingly that the increase of archaeological findings coinciding with the Hasmonean annexation can easily be explained by the fact that during that time Galilee was colonized by Judeans.¹⁷⁶ According to Bauckham the early first century Galilee consisted of a population made up from remnants of the Israelite population, a great many Judean immigrants and some converted Gentiles.¹⁷⁷ It is true that during the second temple period, and sometime after this period, the Israelite tribes were not considered to be “lost”. They are mentioned on several occasions and their location is often referred to,¹⁷⁸ although they are seldom located in Galilee.

It seems reasonable to assume that in 104 BCE the Hasmoneans colonized Galilee, which was quite a desolate area. Further in the north of Galilee, Aristobulus I invaded areas of the Itureans and forced them to make a decision between leaving the country or being circumcised and converting to Judaism (*Ant.* 13:318). Earlier, as we have seen, Hyrcanus had given the same options to the Idumeans (*Ant.* 13:257). The poor conditions in Galilee, its scanty population during the second century BCE, can explain Josephus’ silence about the Galilean campaign. After Hyrcanus had invaded the surrounding cities and territories between Judea and Galilee, Galilee could peacefully be joined to the Hasmonean kingdom. Ituraea contained only some of the Northern parts of Galilee. It would be hard to prove why Josephus would have called Galilee Ituraea, when he could have used its proper name or “Galilee of the Gentiles”. I maintain with Chancey’s statement: “Perhaps no event is as significant for understanding the subsequent population of Galilee as

¹⁷⁵ Reed, 1999, 102.

¹⁷⁶ Reed, 1999, 89, 97–99. Reed, 2000, 52–53. Charlesworth, 2010, 23, 24–26. In agreement with Reed Charlesworth writes on p. 23 that “it is now becoming clear that a large majority of Galilean Jews had been moved (or migrated) from Judea by one of the Hasmoneans.” See Charlesworth’s representation of the scholarly discussion concerning the ethnic background of the Galileans: Charlesworth, 2003, 39.

¹⁷⁷ Bauckham, 1997, 165. Willitts, 2007, 195–196, 202.

¹⁷⁸ Bauckham, 1997, 163–164. See: *Ant.* 11:113; *T. Mos.* 3:4, 6; 4:9; *Sib. Or.* 2:171; *m. Sanh.* 10:3; *2 Bar.* 62:5; 77:17; 78:1.

Aristobulus' conquest."¹⁷⁹ Judea, Perea, Idumea and Galilee were traditionally Jewish at least since the time of the Hasmoneans.¹⁸⁰ After Aristobulus' reign, in the first century BCE, Galilee belonged to the Jewish nation, and the inhabitants of Galilee considered themselves as Jews.¹⁸¹

3.4.3 The Romans

At the beginning of the Roman rule, 63 BCE, Pompey reduced the Jewish state to the areas populated by Jews. Thus Judea proper, the villages of eastern Idumaea, Jewish Perea east of the Jordan and Galilee remained within the Jewish state. What the Hasmonean dynasty had conquered from Syria during the reigns of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, were now lost. These areas became part of the Syrian province of the Roman Empire. The reduced Jewish state lost the inland cities of Marisa, Sebaste and Scythopolis. Beyond the Jordan the Jews lost the great Greek cities of Pella, Hippos, Dios, Gadara and Gerasa. These cities were now joined to the Roman province of Syria given back to their former inhabitants – i.e. to non-Jews. This was also the case with maritime cities such as Gaza, Joppa, Dora and Caesarea (*Ant.* 14:74–78, 88; *Bell* 1:156–166, 169–170).¹⁸² It is important to note that at the time of Pompey Galilee was considered to be Jewish and thus it remained within the Jewish sta-

¹⁷⁹ Chancey, 2002, 42.

¹⁸⁰ Sanders, 2002, 16. This can be further backed by archaeological evidence in the case of Galilee. Chancey (2002, 46–47) clarifies that Galilee's numismatic evidence indicates that already during Alexander Jannaeus' reign Galilee was both politically and economically integrated into the Hasmonean kingdom. Numismatic evidence of Hasmonean presence in Galilee has also already been found from Hyrcanus' reign, though not as much as from Jannaeus' reign.

¹⁸¹ Chancey, 2002, 45. This is clearly seen in the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE). Freyne, 1980, 44: "The Jewishness of Lower Galilee seems secure even at that early state of its incorporation into the Hasmonean kingdom."

¹⁸² See Schürer, 1973, 233–242. Josephus informs us that later in history, immediately preceding the Jewish Revolt (66–73 CE) there was a massacre in Caesarea in which the inhabitants of Caesarea killed more than 20 000 Jews. This led to the uprising of the Galileans. They came from villages and burned cities of the Syrian province as Philadelphia, Gerasa, Pella, Scythopolis, Gadara and Hippos. *Bell.* 2:459. These stories reveal that a Jewish minority resided in these Hellenistic cities and villages in Syria. In these cities the Gentiles and the Jews lived together under a certain pressure and fear. *Bell.* 2:457; *Vita* 44. Freyne, 2000, 48.

te. This crucial stage of history, once again, strengthened the Jewish identity of Galilee.

3.4.4 Herod Antipas' Galilee

During the time of Jesus' mission Herod Antipas was the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (4 BCE–39 CE). Politically Antipas' Galilee was not an Imperial province of Rome. Galilee was a tetrarchy, which was allied to Rome. As a procuratorship, Judea was ruled by a Roman procurator. It is to be pointed out that the Roman procurators did not govern Judea and Jerusalem on a day-to-day basis. The procurators had their administrative centers and homes in Caesarea. They visited Jerusalem during the great Jewish feasts. In domestic affairs the High Priest was the *de facto* ruler of Jerusalem. The Sanhedrin was the highest juridical organ in Jerusalem and Judea.¹⁸³

The questions as to whether Galilee was Jewish, Hellenistic, rural or urban, are too restrictive. Hellenism and Judaism were not mutually exclusive. The idea that they were, led the earlier scholarly discussion to the conclusion that Greek influences prove that the population of Judea and Galilee consisted of a reasonable number of non-Jews, and that the ethos throughout was pagan.¹⁸⁴ Galilee is not to be seen as a monolithic entity. There are no reasons to suppose that Galilee would not have been as diverse as Judea. Of course Judea and Galilee were different in many respects. Jerusalem was, because of Judea's political situation, more strongly influenced by Rome. The religious importance of Jerusalem and its temple also influenced Judea and especially Jerusalem. The city with its temple was the worldwide spiritual and political center of Judaism. It gathered Jewish pilgrims during the great feasts from all over the Diaspora. Because of this Jerusalem felt the influence of Diaspora Judaism strongly, and contacts with Hellenism would have been unavoidable. In the light of Jerusalem's political and religious situation it is reasonable to claim that the city was more open to Greco-Roman culture and politics than the villages and towns of the less significant Galilee.

¹⁸³ Gnilka, 1997, 32. Sanders, 2002, 9.

¹⁸⁴ See Freyne, 1980, 101.

This does not necessarily mean that the Judeans would have been religiously flexible Jews.

The Jews' loyalty towards the Torah can be supported by both archaeological and literal evidence. The many miqvaot, pools for ritual bathing, which have been excavated in the Galilean villages, the lack of pagan temples dedicated to Augustus or to other pagan gods, mark the land of Galilee during the first half of the first century. It is also to be noted that Herod Antipas did not have his own image stamped on the coins used in Galilee. In contrast, Antipas' brother Herod Philip, who ruled the northeasterly region of Trachonitis, Gaulanitis and Batanaea, stamped his own image on his coins. The majority of Philip's subjects were non-Jews.¹⁸⁵ Even though Antipas was a great builder-king, he did not feel free to build pagan temples or statues in Galilee. The most natural reason for this is that he was compelled to consider his subjects' religious convictions. He governed under the social pressure posed by the Jewish religion, and at the same time, he also felt the pressure of Rome. He named the new capital city of Galilee for the honor of the new emperor – Tiberias. In sum, we can conclude that during the long reign of Antipas Galilee had a clear Jewish identity. We can broadly follow Sanders' argument according to which the Galileans' religious identity can be described by the beliefs of "common Judaism".

3.5 Galilean geography and archaeology

3.5.1 Lower and Upper Galilee

Josephus divides Galilee into two regions: Upper and Lower Galilee (*Bell.* 3:38–40). In the Mishnah Galilee is divided into three sections: Upper and Lower Galilee and the Valley. The village Kefar Hananiah, which was located about 20 km west from Capernaum, was the dividing point between Upper and Lower Galilee. Tiberias was in the valley (*m. Seb.* 9.2). Galilee covered an area of about 2,000 km².¹⁸⁶ The Gospels indicate that Jesus was mainly active in the villages of Lower Galilee: Nazareth, Nain, Cain, Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin. Josephus de-

¹⁸⁵ Stern, 1974, 286–287.

¹⁸⁶ Schnabel, 2004, 180.

scribes Galilee as a densely populated rural land of villages and towns, with a strong Jewish ethos. According to him Galilee “is all cultivated by its inhabitants, and no part of it lies idle” (*Bell.* 3:42–44). The majority of Galilee’s inhabitants were rural farmers (*C. Ap.* 1:60),¹⁸⁷ and we can securely state that Galilee, as well as Judea, were agrarian societies. In Galilee perhaps 90 % of the population lived in the countryside and were engaged in agriculture.¹⁸⁸ Besides the rural villages, Galilee had also an urban population, which lived in Tiberias and Sepphoris.¹⁸⁹ These two cities were Galilee’s administrative and economic strongholds. Josephus also states, in line with the Synoptics, that Galilee had many synagogues (*Vita* 277; Mark 1:39; Matt 4:23; Luke 4:15). According to Josephus there was a synagogue in Tiberias (*Vita* 277, 279), Dor (*Ant.* 19:300–311) and in Caesarea (*Bell.* 2:266–270, 284–292, *Ant.* 20:173–178, 182–184).

3.5.2 The size of the Galilean population

Josephus claims that Galilee consisted of 204 villages (*Vita* 235). Elsewhere he states that the population of the smallest village was 15 000 people (*Bell.* 3:43). Josephus is clearly overestimating these numbers because if we take him literally the population of Galilee would have reached up to over 3 million people in 67 CE. It is very difficult to estimate the number of the Galilean population and its ethnic consistence. This is due to the fact that we do not have enough reliable statistic material. The Jewish sources, Josephus and the Midrash, grossly exaggerate their numbers. The Midrash Rabba insists that the coastal plain had 600 000 towns, *Shir. R.* I:16. Avi-Yonah concludes, on the basis of archaeological and scribal evidence, that at the time of Jesus the whole of Palestine had about two and a half million residents.¹⁹⁰ This estimation of Avi-Yo-

¹⁸⁷ Schnabel, 2004, 187–188. In the works of Josephus and in the rabbinic texts Galilee is portrayed as a fertile land producing several kinds of fruits, vegetables, legumes and spices. Agriculture was the most important work-sector in both Galilee and Judea. Galileans also practiced fishing.

¹⁸⁸ Stegemann, 2011, 2302.

¹⁸⁹ Horsley, 1996, 89.

¹⁹⁰ Avi-Yonah, 1974, 108–109. According to Nehemiah 50 000 adult males returned to Judea from the Babylonian captivity. This would suggest that the whole number of returnees would have risen to about 250 000 people (*Neh* 7:66; *Ezra* 2:64). 1 Macc 12:41 states

nah is most probably too high. Horsley estimates that the population of Galilee would have been about 150 000 during the reign of Antipas. He also estimates that the combined population of Sepphoris and Tiberias would have been about 15 000 inhabitants.¹⁹¹ Stegemann claims that it is estimated that the population of Galilee at the time of our concern reached 150 000 – 200 000 people.¹⁹² Both the Synoptics and Josephus give the impression that Galilee was crowded: Mark 2:2; 3:7–8; *Bell.* 3:2–3, 42–43 etc. Edwards proposes that Galilee was densely populated with significant urban centers and numerous large villages.¹⁹³ The textual proof clearly speaks for the assumption that Galilee was densely populated. Galilee most probably had a Jewish population rising up to about 200 000 inhabitants. We may conclude that a densely populated village or town was at the heart of Jewish Galilee. The vast majority of first century Israeli Jews lived in villages.¹⁹⁴

Josephus implies that as in Alexandria (*Bell.* 2:495; 7:191–192; 2:488), and other cities in the Diaspora, so also in the border areas of Galilee (*Bell.* 2:503), the Jewish people lived in areas and villages separated from the Gentiles. This suggests that the Galilean villages were not to a notable degree ethnically mixed. Sanders notes that the only rare references to Gentiles in Jewish Palestine occur in cities, not in the villages. In Galilee the Gentiles are only noted to have resided in Tiberias. According to Sanders there were only a few Gentiles in Jewish Palestine and these were concentrated to cities such as Tiberias, which according to him had a Gentile minority.¹⁹⁵

3.5.3 Evaluating the evidence of archaeology

Scholars have held that Upper Galilee and the Golan were more conservative than Lower Galilee. This is mainly because more Jewish inscrip-

that during the Hasmonean times Jonathan mobilized 40 000 men. This would indicate that the whole Jewish population would have reached about 500 000. Josephus insists to have recruited 60 000 men from Galilee in 66 CE, *Bell.* 2:583. This would suggest that the Galilee consisted of about three quarters of a million inhabitants.

¹⁹¹ Horsley, 1996, 45.

¹⁹² Stegemann, 2011, 2302–2303.

¹⁹³ Edwards, 1992, 55.

¹⁹⁴ Talmon, 1991, 39. Safrai, 1976, 728. Stegemann, 2011, 2302. Horsley, 2010, 120–121.

¹⁹⁵ Sanders, 2002, 35–36

tions, artworks, synagogues and miqvaot have been found in Upper Galilee and Golan than in the villages of Lower Galilee.¹⁹⁶ Horsley states that this judgment is misleading because the archaeological evidence referred to derives mostly from the third and fourth century CE.¹⁹⁷ The timing of the findings is a principal problem and challenges the archaeological research. The timing of the discoveries, whether it is pre- or post-70, determines much of our interpretation of the Galilean ethos, culture and ethnical consistence. The persistent idea, that Galilee was Hellenistic and urban, has mostly arisen out of archaeological proof that has to be re-evaluated. Horsley rightly argues that based on archaeological findings of mostly the Middle (135–250 CE) and Late Roman (250–363 CE) era, Galilee seems to have been politically, economically, and even to some extent culturally, integrated into the Roman Empire. When Jesus is seen as living in a Galilean context created erroneously by the archaeological findings that are based on the second and third centuries, he is easily seen as an uncontroversial urban citizen of a pan-Mediterranean culture.¹⁹⁸

It is apparent that most of the found Jewish landmarks are from the middle Roman to the early Arab period. It is however important to note that in the pre-70 discoveries the emerging cultural differences between Upper and Lower Galilee seem to be quite small.¹⁹⁹ It is clear, as several scholars insist, that the cultural differences between Upper and Lower Galilee can be explained by geographical differences. Upper Galilee, so to say the north of Galilee, dominated by Mount Hermon and the other mountains and hills, created challenges for communication, traffic and transportation. The geography of Upper Galilee can be seen as the main reason for its considerable isolation. Upper Galilee was less

¹⁹⁶ Freyne, 2000, 166–7, 174, 179, 191, 198, 217. On p. 217 Freyne writes the following: “Undoubtedly, Lower Galilee, especially around the lake does present a more mixed cultural aspect than Upper Galilee/Golan, as has been shown by various archaeological surveys. This difference is, no doubt, attributable to the trading and other links that were possible in the Valley region as a result of the ease of communications between the various city territories and across the lake. These provided a natural outlet for any surplus production as well as markets for the pottery and fish industries which we know were developed in Lower Galilee.”

¹⁹⁷ Horsley, 1996, 91–92.

¹⁹⁸ Horsley, 1999, 59–60.

¹⁹⁹ See Freyne, 2000, 174, 179, 191.

urban and more separated from foreign influences than Lower Galilee. The cultural changes did not have such great effect on Upper Galilee as they had on Lower Galilee. The archaeological remains suggest that during the Late Hellenistic period and the Hasmonean period, as Reed argued, Galilee was colonized by Judeans who spread their Jewish religion to Galilee. Leaning on archaeological evidence we can argue that Galilee as a whole was Jewish during the first century.²⁰⁰ We will now have a closer look at the Galilean earthly remains from the pre-70 period.

Reed has shown that in the Late Hellenistic Galilee, during the Hasmonean period, there was a sudden rise of sites and overall material culture. This coincides with the Hasmonean annexation, and as Reed suggests, it has its likeliest explanation in the fact that during that time many Judeans colonized the scarcely populated Galilee. The archaeological remains of this period show that Judea and Galilee had shared indicators of the Jewish religion: stone vessels, miqvaot in houses, burial practices with ossuaries in kokhim, and a diet without pork-bone leftovers.²⁰¹ It is noteworthy that from Sepphoris, originating between 100 BCE–70 CE, over one hundred stone vessel fragments and over twenty miqvaot have been unearthed, and both in Sepphoris and Nazareth stone vessels, miqvaot and Jewish-style tombs have been found. It is interesting that the zoo-archaeological profile of Sepphoris shows no signs of pork-bones during the first century. Stone vessels and miqvaot originating from the first century has also been found in Tiberias, Jotapata (Yodefata) and Gamla. Miqvaot, originating from the first century, have been excavated in Chorazin, Beit Yinan, Beth Shearim, Khirbet Shema and Sasa. We may note that stone vessels have been found in the first century Capernaum.²⁰² In comparison with the other areas outside of Galilee, Reed claims the following:

²⁰⁰ Leaning on archaeological evidence we can argue that Galilee as a whole was Jewish during the first century. The following scholars claim that Galilee was Jewish during the first century. Freyne, 2000, 198. Horsley, 1996, 90–92. Dunn, 2003, 299. Sanders, 2002, 21. It is however to be noted that these scholars present quite different views regarding the origin of the Galilean Jews: Cf. Chapter 3.4.2.

²⁰¹ Reed, 1999, 89–90, 97–99.

²⁰² Reed, 1999, 100–103.

“This archaeological profile of Galilean sites contrasts with those of the surrounding regions, accentuating its distinct Jewish character. The lack of stone vessels and miqvaot, the presence of pork, and the differences in burial practices characterize the material culture of the regions surrounding Galilee at this time.”²⁰³

The archaeological finds of Galilee during the first century indicate that Galilee and Judea shared the religious material culture and practices during the first century. This material culture reflects the Jewish ethos of the residents in Galilee. The argument of a considerably urbanized and Hellenized Galilee is based on emphasizing the role of Tiberias and Sepphoris, and the role of the economic traffic via the east-west road leading from Damascus through Tiberias and Sepphoris and reaching the Mediterranean polis of Ptolemais (Akko). To be sure, the centers of Galilee – Tiberias and Sepphoris – were more Hellenized, more pro-Roman and more ethnically mixed than rural Galilee. However, it is not plausible to claim that Tiberias and Sepphoris embraced a cosmopolitan culture over the rest of Galilee. On the contrary, it seems that these Galilean centers were not admired but often despised by the Galilean villagers. The Hellenistic and cosmopolitan features of Tiberias and Sepphoris certainly portray the elite, but these features cannot be attributed to the whole of Galilee, which consisted mostly of village communities.²⁰⁴

3.6 Jesus’ heartlands: Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin

Capernaum and its closest villages, Chorazin and Bethsaida, formed the heartland of Jesus’ ministry (Matt 11:20–24). Chorazin was “up to the hill” behind Capernaum, about three or four kilometers from Capernaum. Bethsaida was about 13 kilometers from Capernaum. According to Q these villages rejected Jesus’ message and therefore Jesus proclaimed his harsh words of doom and woes against them (Luke 10:13–15; Matt 11:20–24).

²⁰³ Reed, 2001, 117.

²⁰⁴ Reed, 1999, 98. Kazen, 2002, 285–286.

3.6.1 Capernaum

Recently the calculations of the inhabitants of Capernaum and other Galilean villages have been revised downwards. Horsley for example estimates that in Capernaum there were about 1000 inhabitants, and not “between 12 000 and 15 000” as sometimes thought. High estimations of the population in the Galilean villages have of course supported the arguments of an urban Galilean environment. According to Horsley’s calculations, if Capernaum had reached those high expectations of the number of its population, it would be one third of the size of Jerusalem.²⁰⁵ This statement of Horsley is of course dependent on the estimated size of Jerusalem’s population. According to Reed, Capernaum’s population during the first century was between 600 and 1500 inhabitants. Despite the seemingly low figure, Reed claims that the village was regarded as one of the larger villages of Galilee.²⁰⁶ The estimations concerning Capernaum or the whole of Galilee’s population are not solved.²⁰⁷ As Stegemann notes the radical differences in the scholars’ views concerning the size of the population of Capernaum are dependent on their views of the size of the area occupied by Capernaum and by the assumed number of people living per hectare.²⁰⁸ The greatly differing figures of Capernaum’s population, presented by different scholars, are not factual, but rather assumptions backed with more or less solid archaeological evidence. Basically the estimations suggested by Reed, Meyers and Strange are based on their view of the size of the ancient village and the density of its population per hectare.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ Horsley, 1996, 114.

²⁰⁶ Reed, 2000, 152.

²⁰⁷ Davies, Allison, Meyers and Strange argue for a relatively high population of Capernaum. According to Davies and Allison Capernaum’s population might rise up to 12 000 (Davies & Allison, 1988, 378) and according to Meyers and Strange the population of Capernaum would have been between 12 000 and 15 000 inhabitants (Meyers & Strange, 1983, 58).

²⁰⁸ Stegemann, 2011, 2296. Reed, 2000, 149.

²⁰⁹ Meyers & Strange, 1983, 58, 52. According to Meyers and Strange Capernaum occupied a land area of 300 000 square meters (30 hectares). They estimate that about 400 to 500 people inhabited 10 000 square meters (one hectare), and thus the size of Capernaum’s population rises up to 12 000 – 15 000 inhabitants. Reed on the other hand assumes that Capernaum occupied a much smaller land area (100 000 square meters/10 hectares) and he

Arguably Capernaum was comparatively big among the small villages of Galilee. The Synoptics describe Capernaum as a village where there was a centurion (Matt 8:5–10), a toll-collector (Mark 2:14; see also Matt 17:24) and a synagogue (Mark 1:21). The confusing fact is that outside the Gospels the village or town is mentioned only once or twice (*Bell.* 3:519–521; *Vita* 403–404). The OT lacks any mention of it. The inhabitants are portrayed as quite observant Jews because, as Mark indirectly suggests, they brought their sick to be healed by Jesus only after the Sabbath was over (Mark 1:21, 29, 32–34). Capernaum seems to have had some strategic importance because it was the last village on the road leading from Antipas’ territory to Philip’s territory and further to Damascus.²¹⁰ According to Rousseau and Arav this highway ‘Via Maris’ passing by Capernaum went from Damascus to Ptolemais and Caesarea Maritima.²¹¹ Capernaum’s assumed location by the highway could have given Jesus the possibility to spread his message wider than to the locals in the town. Capernaum also gave Jesus a somewhat safe position. Because Capernaum was located in the border area, and as it was by the seashore and close to the trade route leading across the border, Jesus had an easy possibility to flee over to Philip’s territory if Antipas had threatened him too seriously (Luke 9:9; 13:31). It is important to notice that Antipas had executed John the Baptist (Mark 6:14–29). The Gospels do not mention Jesus criticizing Herod Philip. It might be that Philip, the “person of moderation and quietness in the conduct of his life and government” (*Ant.* 18:106–107), offered Jesus safer grounds than the Galilee ruled by his brother Antipas, who had not hesitated to execute a popular prophet.

Archeological investigations have shown that Capernaum had the narrow and irregular streets of a little village. Only one public building has been found – if we accept that the fourth century synagogue was

also estimates the number of inhabitants per hectare to be much lower (100–150 persons/hectare). This explains why he insists that only 600–1500 populated Capernaum during the first century. Reed explains his low estimation of the number of population density by insisting that the houses of Capernaum were made of mud-packed basalt fieldstones, which would not have supported, according to him, second floors. Therefore the village did not have multiple-storied houses. See Reed, 2000, 149–152.

²¹⁰ Dunn, 2003, 319.

²¹¹ Rousseau & Arav, 1995, 39–40.

built on top of a first century synagogue. No theater or gymnasium has been unearthed. There is no evidence of special wealth: elite houses, fine glass, any marble, mosaics, frescoes, or expensive pottery.²¹² Based on the archaeological excavations, Binder states that Capernaum was “only a small village occupying about fifteen acres and consisting primarily of private insulae.”²¹³ If the village was this small it would not have had space for several public buildings, in addition to the one found. It might also be worth noting that Capernaum, as most villages and towns in Galilee, had no walls.²¹⁴ The list of walled cities of Israel according to the Mishnah (*m. Arak. 9:6*) does not mention Capernaum.

The synagogue of Capernaum has raised questions amongst scholars. The synagogue is of importance for our subject because according to Luke 7:1–10 it was built by the centurion of Capernaum whose servant-boy Jesus is reported to have healed. The ruins of the synagogue date from the fourth or fifth centuries CE. Recent archaeological excavations, however, supported by the strong textual proof from the Gospels, suggest that this synagogue was built on the foundations of an earlier synagogue from the first century. Sacred buildings such as synagogues were often built on earlier holy sites. The synagogue is constructed of white limestone and its size is great: 24.5 x 18.7 meters. On the southern wall of the synagogue are three entrances which face towards Jerusalem. The older layer of the walls was made of basalt stone, and this older wall surrounded a floor paved with cobblestones. The argument that the earlier building was a private house can be excluded on several grounds. All the excavated private houses in Capernaum had walls of unhewn stone, and most of the private houses had only beaten-earth floors. None of the private houses were as big as the synagogue (24.5 x 18.7 meters).²¹⁵ Ar-

²¹² See Reed, 2000, 156–157.

²¹³ Binder, 1999, 191. Reed, 2001, 124. Reed’s statement on p. 124 gives a picture of the modesty of the Galilean villages: “At Capernaum, for example, most walls were made of unhewn stones, packed with mud, were covered with thatched roofs, and had beaten earth floors.”

²¹⁴ Schnabel, 2004, 188. A walled city might have been dangerous for Jesus and his followers. Perhaps they would have been trapped within the city walls, as later happened to Paul (Acts 9 and 2 Cor 11).

²¹⁵ Binder, 1999, 186–189. It must be noted that the size of the building was 24.5 x 18.7 meters outside the walls, and inside the wall measured 22 x 16.5 meters, p. 192.

chitectural forms of the building – as much as can be compared with the older building – resemble the main structures of other first century synagogues: Gamla, Masada and Herodium.²¹⁶ In light of the archaeological and textual evidence, we can securely state that the basalt stone walls surrounding the stone paved floor, constituted the first century synagogue of Capernaum.²¹⁷ Consequently, the main city of Jesus’ mission was rather a sizeable village, which embraced a clearly Jewish ethos. The population of Capernaum consisted of Jews.

3.6.2 Bethsaida-Julias

Herod Philip’s reign was long and successful (4 BCE – 34 CE). It lasted for 37 years (*Ant.* 18:106). In the areas ruled by Philip the majority of the population consisted of Gentiles. In the border district, close to Galilee, lived numerous Jews, who as we have argued earlier, felt connected to their Jewish motherland by a thousand ties. They spoke the same language and dialect as the Galilean Jews.²¹⁸ They led a similar way of life, and the Sea of Galilee was for many of them their source of livelihood. Chorazin and Capernaum were on Herod Antipas’ side of the border, while Bethsaida was on Herod Philip’s side of the border (*Ant.* 18:28; *Bell.* 2:168). Theissen points out that the border separating Antipas’ and Philip’s areas was political and artificial. Jews lived on both sides of the border in these border areas. The vanished borderline was marked by the river Jordan. Certainly Jews living on both sides of the border considered themselves united with each other. This argument can be supported by the fact that during the Jewish war, 66–73 CE, Jews in both districts adopted the same rebellious ethos.²¹⁹ In the Gospel of John Bethsaida is

²¹⁶ Binder, 1999, 192.

²¹⁷ Binder, 1999, 192. If this conclusion is correct, then we are faced with the odd fact that the synagogue of Capernaum was the biggest synagogue of the second temple period, or at least the biggest that has been found so far. Despite this it is not mentioned in the works of Josephus or in the Mishnah. The synagogue of Capernaum is slightly bigger than the synagogue of Gamla.

²¹⁸ See Bockmuehl, 2005, 63–64. Galileans were, as Bockmuehl notes, recognizable for their careless pronunciation. See b. *’Erub.* 53b, Mark 14:70; Matt 26:73. The Galilean Jews spoke Aramaic with a Galilean Jewish accent.

²¹⁹ Theissen, 1991, 50. Rousseau & Arav, 1995, 20.

simply called “Bethsaida in Galilee” (John 12:21).²²⁰ Archaeological finds suggest that Bethsaida was destroyed probably right before or shortly after the fall of Gamla in November 67 CE. Josephus states that when the general rebellion against the puppet king Agrippa II started in 66 CE, the people around and in the city of Bethsaida gave their sympathies to the Jews fighting against Agrippa II, who was supported by the Romans (*Vita* 398–406).²²¹ These notions support the claim of a Jewish ethos in Bethsaida.

Herod Philip developed Bethsaida and renamed it Bethsaida-Julias either in honor of Augustus’ wife and Tiberius’ mother, Livia-Julia, or as Josephus states, in honor of Augustus’ daughter Julia (*Ant.* 18:28).²²² Herod Philip’s renaming and transformation of the village (κώμη) Bethsaida into a Greek polis (πόλις) Bethsaida-Julias occurred in 30 CE.²²³ In Mark Bethsaida is called a ‘village’ (κώμη, Mark. 8:23, 26), but in Matthew, Luke and John (Matt 11:20–21, Luke 9:10, John 1:44), it is called a city (πόλις).²²⁴ The centrality of Bethsaida-Julias is pointed out by the fact that Herod Philip was buried in the city in 33 CE.²²⁵

Several houses, city walls and a large public building, which originate from the Hellenistic and Roman era, have been discovered in Bethsaida. Excavators have also found implements for agriculture and fishing. This is not surprising due to the city’s location. Due to the fact that Bethsaida is in the border area and in the territory of Philip, the

²²⁰ See Bockmuehl, 2005, 62–63. Bockmuehl clarifies the ways in which scholars have explained the fact that John 12:21 calls Bethsaida a Galilean town. Bockmuehl states that “most scholars now recognize, however, that Jewish settlements in the Jordan valley and around what is known in the Gospels as the Sea of Galilee were sometimes described as part of Galilee. Both Josephus and Luke refer to Judas of Gamla as a Galilean, and the geographer Ptolemy also viewed Julias as belonging to Galilee.” The citation is from p. 63. See Acts 5:37; *Ant.* 18:4, 23; 20:102; *Bell.* 2:118, 433. Josephus occasionally gives an ambiguous description of the location of Bethsaida: *Bell.* 3:57, 515; *Ant.* 18:28; *Vita* 403, 406.

²²¹ Chancey, 2002, 106–107. Theissen, 1991, 50. Rousseau & Arav, 1995, 20, 100.

²²² Chancey, 2002, 106. See the discussion in Chancey’s note 239.

²²³ Rousseau & Arav, 1995, 20.

²²⁴ We can speculate that Mark called Bethsaida a village because Jesus was active in Bethsaida before its elevation to a city. This would presuppose a very early source for Mark, deriving from the 30s. Matthew and Luke, which are usually dated to the 80s and 90s, use the term city, because that was Bethsaida’s title from the 30s. See Rousseau & Arav, 1995, 67–68. Chancey, 2002, 106.

²²⁵ Stern, 1975, 135–136. Chancey, 2002, 106. See *Ant.* 18:108.

question emerges as to whether the population of Bethsaida consisted of Jews or Gentiles or of an ethnically mixed population. This question is important for our concern and scholars are not unanimous in answering it. Chancey states that “for the most part” the archaeological remains cannot, in the case of Bethsaida, reveal whether its first century inhabitants were Jewish or Gentile.²²⁶ Quite recently Savage, who works as an assistant director of the excavations at Bethsaida, concluded firmly that the population of the first century Bethsaida consisted of Jews. He also states that if some Gentiles or pagans lived in the town, they have remained invisible in the archaeological stratum. On the base of archaeological remains Savage claims that “the portrait from Bethsaida indicates that there was no eclectic mix of Greek and Jew, pagan and monotheist in this part of the Galilee in the first century CE.”²²⁷ Savage supports this claim by noting that five types of archaeological objects have been found from first century Bethsaida which indicate that the city had a Jewish population: Hasmonean coins, stone vessels, Galilean Coarse Ware, Kefar Hannanian ware and a possible secret highway. It is true that the city most probably lacked a synagogue, miqvaot and ossuaries, which are also clear markers of Jewish presence. Nonetheless, the five objects certify the claim of a Jewish Bethsaida in the first century.²²⁸

According to Mishnah Abodah Zarah 3:7 the people of Sidon/Saidan (Bethsaida is called Saidan in the Mishnah) worshipped a tree over a pile of stones. Under the stone pile lay idols. This strange reference in the Mishnah is interesting when compared with the claims of Rami Arav. The excavator Rami Arav has argued that the archaeological evidence suggests that Bethsaida had a first-century CE temple of the imperial cult. He supports this argument by insisting that the large public building follows the architectural lay-out of a Roman temple with a

²²⁶ Chancey, 2002, 108. In contrast with Arav (Arav, 2006, 161) who proposes that during the time of Jesus the population of Bethsaida was Jewish.

²²⁷ Savage, 2011, 13–15, 135–136, 139–140, 142. The citation is from p. 135.

²²⁸ Savage, 2011, 91–92, 123. The quotation is from pp. 91–92. On p. 96 Savage states: “If scholars are correct in their valuation of limestone ware as a marker for Jewish presence at a site, the value of finding such vessels at Bethsaida cannot be underestimated. They could be the best indicators that we have of a possible first century CE Jewish community at Bethsaida. They are known to have been used at over fifty-nine different sites located throughout Roman period Judah with their peak occurrence in Jerusalem.”

pronaos, a *naos* and an *opisthodomus*, i.e. back room. The size of the building is not huge, only 20 x 6 meters. Outside this public building an incense shovel and a clay figure of a female with red curled hair has been found. It is however important to note, as Savage emphasizes, that these items, interpreted as cultic, were not in the building but on its west and southeast sides.²²⁹ Arav identifies the female-figurine as Livia-Julia, who was the wife of Emperor Augustus. In addition to her royal status she also had a clear religious status as the first priestess in the Emperor cult dedicated to Augustus in Rome. Livia-Julia was also identified as the mother of god and as the goddess Roma.²³⁰ Three other figurines have also been found.²³¹

Chancey criticizes Arav's conclusions by noting that the building is not to be seen as a typical Roman temple, but rather simply as a rectangular public building. Chancey does not find evidence which would confirm that the female figurine is Livia-Julia, nor that it is used in cultic practices in the suggested Roman temple. Chancey claims that the only thing that the figurine can prove is that the inhabitants of Bethsaida felt free to have such a figure even when prohibited by the Jewish tradition. Chancey refers to Josephus who often reported cultic Roman temples located outside the Jewish Galilee, in centers such as Baniyas and Caesarea Philippi. Josephus does not give any hint that Herod the Great or Herod Philip had erected a pagan temple or statue in the city of Bethsaida. Of course it is to be noted that the archaeological excavations suggest that this public building was constructed in the second century BCE and not during the time of Herod the Great or Philip.²³² Nevertheless the silence of Josephus is indeed an important evidence for the absence of a Roman temple in first century Bethsaida. We may also note that Josephus does not mention that the Jews would have destroyed the building or that they would have been upset about it in the wake of the Jewish war. According to Josephus the revolting Jews were severely annoyed and provoked to violence due to the Greek-styled animal paintings on

²²⁹ Savage, 2011, 147.

²³⁰ Arav, 2006, 162–164.

²³¹ Arav, 1999, 18–25.

²³² Savage, 2011, 148–149, 152.

the walls of the royal palace of Tiberias. The palace was set on fire by certain Galileans who were led by the rebel leader Jesus the son of Sapphias (*Vita* 65–67). Moreover from Bethsaida, and more importantly, from the rectangular public building of Bethsaida, there has not been found an altar, no clearly identified cultic objects and no dedicatory inscriptions. All this suggest that the presence of the temple in Bethsaida prior to 70 CE is still not convincing.²³³ If Savage’s timing for the construction of the building is correct – i.e. second century BCE – then it most probably cannot have been built to serve as a temple of the imperial cult or as a proto-synagogue. Thus Savage suggests that the building might originally have been built during the era of Seleucid control in order to serve as some kind of a temple of fertility.²³⁴ There is the likelihood that this temple was later transformed into the service of some ends other than paganism. Perhaps it was used as a synagogue although certainty in this question cannot be achieved for the moment.²³⁵

However, if Arav is right in his claim that there was a Roman temple in Bethsaida during the first century, and probably in function during the time of Jesus, then we are facing something of a sensation. The significant conclusion would be that Jesus would have driven his mission in a town which had a Roman temple dedicated to the Emperor cult. This in itself would strongly indicate that the city was inhabited at least partially by Gentiles. Bethsaida’s importance is attested in the Gospels. It is the city most frequently mentioned in the Gospels in connection to Jesus’ activity after Jerusalem and Capernaum.²³⁶ Arav concludes by claiming that it is “correct to assume that Jesus’ address to the Gentiles was made in the front of the temple of the Roman emperor and perhaps oriented towards it.” At the same time on the basis of his archaeo-

²³³ Chancey, 2002, 107–108.

²³⁴ Savage, 2011, 154.

²³⁵ See Savage, 2011, 147. Savage notes correctly that the ground plan of the building does not resemble the architectural plans of the synagogues of first century. Synagogues had a more open and bigger open space in the major room. The synagogues were also more squarish. The structures of first century synagogues are revealing, when they are compared with the length and width of the building at Bethsaida. The structure of Gamla is 25.5 x 17m, Masada 15 x 12m, Herodium 15.15 x 10.6m.

²³⁶ References in the Gospels: Matt 11:21, Mark 6:45, 8:22, Luke 9:10, 10:13, John 1:44, 12:21.

logical excavation results, Arav claims that during the time of Jesus Bethsaida was Hellenized only by a low degree, if at all, and that this possible Hellenization was imposed on the city from outside, from the small Roman temple.²³⁷ Thus Arav claims that Bethsaida was populated by Jews from 80s BCE on, and that the city's population remained Jewish for several centuries.²³⁸ In light of the arguments of Arav it is a surprising fact that the Gospels do not recall any healings or any mention of the Gentiles in the city of Bethsaida. It is also worth noting that the Gospels do not mention that Jesus would have condemned the worship of pagan gods and idols. The absence of such judgments against pagan religions suggests that in Galilee and Judea Jesus was not faced with paganism. However, it is clear that at least in Caesarea Philippi/Banias paganism, idolatry and foreign religions were quite evidently present.

We can conclude that Bethsaida was a lively Jewish city at the time of Jesus. I am not convinced that there was a Roman temple in the city during the first century, at least not during the late 20s which are especially important regarding the study of Jesus. The public building, whatever its original function might have been, was most probably used for some communal purpose during the time of Jesus.

3.6.3 Chorazin

Chorazin is not mentioned in any text prior to the NT. In the rabbinic texts it occurs from the third to fourth centuries as among the "medium-size towns" of Palestine, *t. Makkot* 3:8. The archaeological site localized as the ancient Chorazin does not have any remains from Jesus' time. The discovered basalt synagogue, miqvaot, houses and buildings are from the third and fourth centuries. The town is mentioned in Matt 11:20–22 and Luke 10:13–14 in a summarizing manner, although no specific story of a visit of Jesus to Chorazin has been preserved to us in the Gospels. The Chorazin of Jesus' time has, most probably, been quite similar to the village which originates from the third and fourth centuries. This is

²³⁷ Arav, 2006, 166.

²³⁸ Arav, 2006, 161.

due to the fact that building techniques and materials remained the same.²³⁹

In sum, if we accept the notion that Jesus' mission was centered on the northern corner of the Sea of Galilee as Matt 11:20–24/Luke 10:13–15 indicate, then we can attest that Jesus' mission was practiced mainly in the rural Jewish villages and towns. The three explicitly mentioned villages of Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida were all populated mainly by Jews. With the exception of Bethsaida these villages did not have previous “biblical history” and moreover, again with the exception of Bethsaida, the archaeological findings from the pre-70 period for these villages were considerably scarce and poor.²⁴⁰ The fact that the northern corner of the Sea of Galilee was on the border between the districts of Antipas and Philip, might have been important for Jesus. We may assume that the border played some role in Jesus' security.

3.6.4 Nazareth

Scholars seldom find any reason to suspect that Nazareth had been Jesus' hometown prior to his public ministry. Nazareth is not mentioned in the OT, the works of Josephus or in the rabbinic writings. This suggests that the village must have been relatively small. During Jesus' public ministry he is often called “Jesus of Nazareth” (Mark 1:24; 10:47; Luke 4:34). With certainty we can state that Nazareth was a small Jewish village. It is also important to notice that Nazareth was located only four kilometers from Sepphoris, the Herodian administrative center of Galilee.

The relationship between Nazareth and Sepphoris is complicated. Nazareth's nearness to Sepphoris makes it peculiar that Nazareth is not mentioned outside the NT. As a neighbouring village to the administrative and political capital of Lower Galilee, we would expect to find some references to it. The reason for this silence is, however, partly understandable due to the fact that Nazareth was overshadowed by a more significant village called Japha, which was also located in the vicinity of Sepphoris. Josephus calls Japha “the greatest village (κώμη) of all Gali-

²³⁹ Rousseau & Arav, 1995, 52–53.

²⁴⁰ Arav, 2006, 166. For the significance of Bethsaida in the OT see Arav, 2006, 145–149.

lee”, *Vita* 230. Japha was located by one of the main roads of the area. Even though Nazareth was close to Sepphoris, it was off the road and it was small compared to Japha. It is, however, obvious that in Nazareth, Japha, as well as in all the other nearby villages, Sepphoris’ administrative power was clearly felt.²⁴¹ Crossan, among others, has strongly emphasized that Jesus as a villager from Nazareth was in contact with urban and Hellenistic culture due to the nearness of Sepphoris. According to Crossan Jesus did not live in rural isolation, but in a rather urban environment.²⁴²

Sepphoris had a tragic near history, which without doubt also affected the population of its surrounding villages including Nazareth and Japha. Antipas had rebuilt Sepphoris in the 20s and it became his administrative capital and the city of his residence.²⁴³ In 4 BCE, in the midst of the political disorder which followed the death of Herod the Great (*Bell.* 2:55–63), Sepphoris faced a terrible attack. Right after Herod’s death, Judas son of Hezekiah, started a popular insurrection in Galilee. At the same time Simeon, a former slave of the king, started an insurrection in Perea (*Bell.* 2:57). With an army of “desperate men” Judas son of Hezekiah attacked the royal fortress of Sepphoris (*Ant.* 17:271–72; *Bell.* 2:56). This incident forced the Romans to take powerful action. Quintilius Varus, proconsul of Syria, led the Roman troops from Syria to Galilee and Sepphoris. Josephus writes (*Bell.* 2:68) that Varus came to Galilee from Syria and “took the city of Sepphoris, and burnt it, and made slaves of its inhabitants.” After this Varus also burned Emmaus, which was a nearby village (*Bell.* 2:71). The burning of other close-by villages, such as Nazareth and Japha, is not mentioned.

It is of course impossible to determine what kind of an impact this tragedy of Sepphoris had on Jesus and on his attitudes towards the Gentiles and more precisely towards the Romans. Undoubtedly Jesus must have been affected in some way. Quite certainly in some cases the burning of Sepphoris in 4 BCE resulted in deep fear and hatred against the Romans in particular and against Gentiles in general. Without doubt

²⁴¹ Horsley, 1996, 110–111.

²⁴² Crossan, 1991, 18–19.

²⁴³ Gnilka, 1997, 30–31.

this tragic event caused certain Jews to abandon their nationalistic dreams and ethos and thus they became more lenient towards the Romans and the Gentiles. Consequently, during the Jewish war, which began in 66, Sepphoris is noted to have been a peace-loving city, which did not join the revolt against Rome. The aftermath of the tragic events of 4 BCE must have left a deep trauma on the Jewish population near Sepphoris and the whole of Galilee.²⁴⁴ The Roman strike to Sepphoris in 4 BCE had supposedly a long-lasting effect on the city and its surroundings. All talk about a Jewish king or messiah, and about a revolt against Rome, would have raised suspicions in Antipas' strongholds in Sepphoris as well as in Tiberias.

3.7 Galilee, Herod the Great and Herod Antipas

3.7.1 Herod the Great and his building projects

Herod the Great was famous for his building projects. According to Josephus he did not leave any part of his kingdom without some kind of a temple or monument being erected in honor of the Emperor (*Bell.* 1:407–408). Josephus, however, seems self-contradictory because he states elsewhere that Herod the Great did not build pagan temples or Imperial monuments in Judea (*Ant.* 15:329). Josephus informs us that in Samaria/Sebaste Herod the Great built a temple to Augustus and other gods (*Ant.* 15:296–298). Herod the Great also provided Caesarea Maritima with a beautiful temple and statue for the Emperor. The city had also a statue dedicated to Rome (*Bell.* 1:414).²⁴⁵ It is revealing that at the time of Herod the Great and Herod Antipas, such monumental pagan temples and monuments did not exist in Galilee or Judea, that is, in the areas where the majority of the residents were Jewish.²⁴⁶ Josephus' broad statement about Herod building Imperial monuments and pagan temples all over of his kingdom is misleading (*Bell.* 1:407). It is more likely, and in line with Josephus' other information and the archaeological data, that Herod the Great built such buildings *around* Judea and Galilee, i.e. outside the area of Jewish residence.

²⁴⁴ Horsley, 1996, 111–112. Horsley, 1999, 62.

²⁴⁵ Avi-Yonah, 1974, 93.

²⁴⁶ Sanders, 2002, 21.

Josephus (*Bell.* 2:266–268) mentions a revolt in 66 CE, immediately prior to the Jewish war. Jews from Caesarea Maritima rose up against the local Syrians and wanted to reclaim their priority to the city. They insisted that the city belonged to the Jews because it was built by a Jew – Herod the Great. The Syrians admitted that the city was built by a Jew but insisted that it was built as a Greek city – as otherwise Herod would not have built statues and temples within the city. In this passage (*Bell.* 2:266–268) the statues and temples are seen as identification markers of a Greek city and as proof for the claim that the city was not Jewish. In accordance with the Syrians’ argumentation – as represented by Josephus – a Jewish city would not have pagan statues and temples.

It is occasionally difficult to estimate which buildings or institutions are regarded as offensive for Judaism. Josephus writes that the Herodian Jerusalem had a theater, amphitheater and hippodrome (*Ant.* 15:267–279). According to Josephus these Greco-Roman entertainment institutions offended at least some Jews (*Ant.* 15:267–279). In *Ant.* 15:328–330 Josephus states that even though Herod the Great built pagan temples and buildings with forbidden images, he did not erect them on clearly Jewish soil. The entertainment institutions are Hellenistic but not pagan. Archaeological investigations are clear on the fact that no remains of pagan temples from Galilee or Judea prior to 70 CE have been found. Despite this, Greco-Roman entertainment institutions have been found elsewhere than in Jerusalem. Tarichaeae had a hippodrome before 70 CE (*Bell.* 2:599, *Vita* 132). Tiberias had a stadium (*Vita* 92) and a royal palace with animal decorations and Greek-style furniture (*Vita* 65, 68). It is also possible, as many scholars maintain, that the theater of Sepphoris was built before 70 CE. This theater could seat about 4500–5000 spectators.²⁴⁷ Josephus does not mention the theater, which of course supports the conclusion that the theater was built only after 70 CE.

The building projects of Herod the Great and Herod Antipas were certainly expensive, and therefore they cast a heavy economic burden on the Jews. As well as the economic burden we must keep in mind that the pagan temples, imperial buildings and monuments were also against the

²⁴⁷ Chancey, 2002, 74–75. Chancey clarifies the scholarly discussion regarding this topic.

Jewish customs, which forbid Jews to “pay any honor to images, or representations of animals, after the manner of the Greeks” (*Ant.* 15:329). According to *Ant.* 15:328–330 Herod the Great erected these buildings “in order to please Caesar and the Romans”, though he did not build them “in Judea”, for that “would not have been tolerated” by the Jews. Herod the Great built these disputable monuments in “the country, outside of our bounds, and in the cities thereof” (*Ant.* 15:329). These pagan and Roman buildings were laid in Gentile-dominated cities both within and outside of Herod’s borders: Tripolis, Ptolemais, Damascus (*Bell.* 1:422), Jericho (*Bell.* 1:659, 666; *Ant.* 17:175), Caesarea Maritima (*Bell.* 1:414), Samaria/Sebaste (*Bell.* 1:403) and Caesarea Philippi/Banias (*Bell.* 1:404–405).²⁴⁸ What is again notable is the fact that such buildings were built in Samaria/Sebaste, but not on Galilean soil. The reason for this is that Herod the Great regarded that the clear majority of Galileans were Jewish. Stern is quite right in his conclusion:

“Herod (the Great) is to be regarded as one of the most enthusiastic propagators of the imperial cult in his time, notwithstanding his care not to practice it in areas with a clear Jewish majority.”²⁴⁹

In sum, Herod the Great is remembered as an exceptional builder-king. He excelled all “Jewish kings” in building cities during the second temple period. He built the cities of Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste, but his most famous building project is the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. Due to it Jerusalem became one of the finest capitals in the entire East.²⁵⁰ According to *Ant.* 15:383–387 Herod the Great constructed buildings not only in his own kingdom, but also in places outside his own territory. He was a benefactor for projects in Asia Minor, the isles of the eastern Mediterranean, Greece and the coastal cities of Palestine.²⁵¹ In light of these buildings and constructions it looks odd that, ac-

²⁴⁸ Sanders, 2002, 21–22.

²⁴⁹ Stern, 1974, 241. Sanders, 2002, 21. “Herod (the Great) did not build pagan temples in Jewish areas such as Sepphoris; he did not build amphitheater in Jerusalem; he did not build gymnasia anywhere in his realm.”

²⁵⁰ Stern, 1974, 257–259.

²⁵¹ Chancey, 2002, 50.

ording to our sources, he scarcely built anything in Galilee.²⁵² Because of his numerous building projects, which were almost entirely outside of Jewish Galilee, the reign of Herod the Great was economically difficult for the inhabitants of Palestine.²⁵³ Many of the economically poor Galileans would presumably have agreed with the bitter aftermath of Herod's rule as stated in *Bell.* 2:85–86:

“he (Herod the Great) had -- done much harm to the cities of his own country while he adorned those who belonged to foreigners; and he shed the blood of Jews in order to do kindnesses to those people that were out of their bounds.”

3.7.2 The Hellenization of Herod Antipas

Antipas' reign (4 BCE – 39 CE) in Galilee and Peraea can be labeled a success. Antipas managed to bring peace to the nation. During his reign Galilee remained outside of all external military conflicts. History does not reveal any serious tension between Antipas and his subjects. He was no cause for revolt, as Jensen argues.²⁵⁴ No other Jewish ruler managed to stay in office as a national leader as long as Antipas during the second temple period. He is remembered as a great builder, who built Tiberias as the capital of Galilee (*Ant.* 18:36–38; *Bell.* 2:168; *Vita* 64–69). He restored Sepphoris and Betharamatha (*Ant.* 18:27). Tiberias was named in honour of emperor Tiberias, with whom Antipas had friendly relations. Antipas was highly sensitive towards the Jews. He did not mint any coins with images which were forbidden for the Jews, as his brother Herod Philip did. Nor did Antipas build any pagan temples or statues of the emperor, as his father Herod the Great had done.²⁵⁵ In these respects Antipas differed from his father Herod the Great and from his brother Herod Philip. Chancey states that compared to the typical coins and constructions of the time, the absence of images on coins, and the absence of temples to different deities and the emperor, was striking.²⁵⁶ In this

²⁵² Chancey, 2002, 50. See also Stern, 1974, 272.

²⁵³ Freyne, 1980, 190. See also *Ant.* 15:365; 17:308.

²⁵⁴ Jensen, 2007, 32.

²⁵⁵ Chancey, 2002, 51–52.

²⁵⁶ Chancey, 2002, 52.

sense Galilee differed from the neighbouring areas and cultures. Both Josephus and Luke attest that Antipas attended the temple of Jerusalem during the great feasts (*Ant.* 18:122–123; *Luke* 23:7). It seems that Antipas was a loyal friend of Rome, and at the same time he made efforts to act in a Jewish manner in order not to irritate the Galilean population. Douglas Edwards sums up correctly the essence of the Roman way of ruling in Galilee:

“In the first century, Roman presence and power is mediated through certain members of the Herodian line who were sensitive to Jewish concerns and not overtly Roman in practice (notably Herod Antipas and Herod Agrippa II).”²⁵⁷

Herod the Great built scarcely anything in Galilee.²⁵⁸ Regarding Galilee Antipas had a different policy. In Galilee he rebuilt and established Tiberias, Sepphoris and Betharamatha. The establishment of Tiberias and Sepphoris can be counted as Antipas’ most important political decision and achievement.²⁵⁹ Antipas made Sepphoris the “Autokratoris” (Ἀυτοκρατορίδα) of Galilee in honour of Augustus (*Ant.* 18:27). The name “Autokratoris” suggests that Sepphoris functioned as an autonomic polis within Galilee. Josephus calls the city the “ornament of Galilee,” (*Bell.* 2:56; *Ant.* 17:171; 18:28). The establishment of these cities signalled a change in policy. Although Herod the Great, who is to be regarded the greatest builder of the second temple period, is not reported as having driven any major building project in Galilee, his son Antipas changed the policy by starting several building projects in this area.²⁶⁰ Over only two decades Antipas built two major cities in Galilee. This signaled a clear, and for many Galileans a shocking message of Romanization. Despite this message these new Herodian centers had a clearly Hellenistic and Jewish identity and ethos.

²⁵⁷ Edwards, 2009, 220.

²⁵⁸ Chancey, 2002, 50–51. *Ant.* 17:271, *Bell.* 2:56. It seems that the royal palace and the fortress of Sepphoris were the only buildings Herod the Great built in Galilee. Interestingly these buildings were attacked right after his death.

²⁵⁹ Freyne, 1980, 69.

²⁶⁰ Stern, 1975, 98–100. Horsley, 1999, 62. Horsley, 1995, 120.

3.7.3 Herod, the Herodians and Jesus

How did Antipas and his supporters relate to Jesus? There are no references to the Herodians, except for the three references in Mark 3:6 and Mark 12:13/Matt 22:16, in the discovered texts prior to the first century and during the first century.²⁶¹ The question whether these passages are historically valid and whether they reflect actual occasions, when Jesus met with Herodians, is not our main concern.²⁶² Our primary interest is to understand who the Herodians were, and then, what their relation was with Jesus. The Gospels do not give us any clear information about the Herodians. The term ‘Herodian’ (Ἡρῳδῖανοί) refers, most probably, to the political supporters of the Herodian dynasty.²⁶³ It is not clear, however, whether this name *Herodian* refers to a specific ruler of the Herodian dynasty, thus the term Herodian can be seen as referring to Herod the Great (*Bell.* 1:319), Antipas, or to his successors Agrippa I or/and Agrippa II (*m. Sotah* 7:8).²⁶⁴ I follow Meier in his conclusion that the Herodians in Mark 3:6 and 12:13/Matt 22:16 are related to the followers of Antipas, i.e. to the supporters of his reign. But I am not convinced that the Herodians were a political party formed around Antipas. It is more plausible to argue that the Herodians supported the Herodian dynasty, and had trust in its capability to rule Judea and Galilee – the Jewish nation – because of its friendly relations with the Emperor and the Romans.²⁶⁵ Both Herod the Great (*Ant.* 14:385) and Herod Antipas (*Ant.*

²⁶¹ Meier, 2001, 560–561.

²⁶² Meier, 2001, 563–564, 565. Meier does not consider the references (Mark 3:6; 12:13) to the Herodians as historically valid for understanding the historical Jesus. He argues that the stories, which these references are part of, bear in themselves problems that do not necessarily support their historicity in the career of Jesus.

²⁶³ Ferguson, 1987, 422. Meier, 2001, 561, 564.

²⁶⁴ For the discussion concerning the Herodians, and to whom the term refers, see: Meier, 2001, 560–565. Richardson, 1996, 259–260. Richardson argues that the term ‘Herodians’ suggests three main possibilities to interpret it. 1) It is a late term that refers to the Agrippa II. The term, Herodians, was imported to the Gospels, but it does not denote the time of Jesus, but rather the time of the Gospel writer. 2) The term reflects the real political situation and terminology of Jesus’ time. In this case the term refers to Antipas. 3) The term is anchored in the ‘long’ history of Herod the Great and his successors in the Herodian dynasty. Richardson argues convincingly for the third option.

²⁶⁵ Richardson, 1996, 260. The Herodians were political relativists, who regarded that the Herodian dynasty – Herod the Great and Antipas – were rulers, who had realistic possibilities of ruling the Jewish state in a Roman world.

18:36) were friends of the Emperor. Certainly the Herodians would have had connections with Gentiles. It is worth noticing that Jesus is not explicitly told of helping or dining in company of the Herodians. There are no traditions indicating that Jesus would have shared a meal and taught about the kingdom of God around a table-fellowship of Herodians. During the time of Jesus' mission, this more or less organized group, the Herodians, consisted of Antipas' servants, slaves, officers, and in general, all of his supporters.

The Gospels are silent in telling of Jesus or his disciples seeing or saying anything positive in the Herodians, on the contrary, if Mark 8:15 recalls a historical saying, Jesus warned his disciples of the yeast of Herod (ζύμης Ἡρώδου). The Synoptics mention that Antipas paid attention to Jesus' ministry (Mark 6:14, 16). This is understandable and plausible, because earlier Antipas had executed John the Baptist (*Ant.* 18:116–118; Mark 6:14–29). In *Ant.* 18:118 Josephus explicitly mentions that John the Baptist's great influence had bothered Antipas to the extent that he had executed him. This is not surprising, since as a Roman client ruler Antipas had to intervene in the Baptist's influential activity. His options were few, and therefore the preemptive execution is not to be seen as an unexpected outcome of the Baptist's activity.²⁶⁶

The assumed enmity of Antipas and the Herodians towards Jesus, who was basically regarded as another influential and popular Jewish gestalt, can be based on the warnings Antipas posed against Jesus (Luke 13:31–33; Mark 8:15), and on the Jesus' withdrawals into designated areas beyond Antipas' borders (Mark 6:30–32; 45; 7:24).²⁶⁷ Richardson has made some interesting remarks concerning Jesus' withdrawals from Antipas' territory. According to John several of Jesus' disciples came from Bethsaida (John 1:43–44), which belonged to the territory of Philip. To be more specific, Bethsaida belonged to the areas of Gaulanitis, which had a much higher Jewish population than Philip's other areas in general. Richardson raises three points to support the claim that Jesus had – for some reason – quite a solid footing in the Jewish Gaulanitis of Philip. First, Jesus withdraws to “the other side” – εἰς τὸ πέραν – (i.e.

²⁶⁶ Jensen, 2007, 14–15.

²⁶⁷ See Jensen, 2007, 17.

Philip's side) on several occasions in order to heal, exorcise and to pray, or as we may argue, to escape Antipas' threat (Mark 4:35; 5:1; 6:45–46; 8:22). Secondly, both Matthew and Mark recall Peter's messianic confession of Jesus to have taken place in Caesarea Philippi/Banias, which was far from Bethsaida, but clearly in Philip's territory. Thirdly, the 'woes' against the Galilean villages of Capernaum and Chorazin pose a threat of judgment over Antipas' Galilee. Richardson states the following:

"his [Jesus'] withdrawals and even the awkward itinerary of Mark 7:24-9:50 seem to have had a political motivation. When Jesus wanted to be away from Antipas, Philip's territory was the preferred place."²⁶⁸

Why would Jesus have spent so much of his time in Philip's territory? Richardson argues that the 'withdrawals' to Philip's territory are not to be seen as extensions of the Galilean ministry but as a hiatus to his Galilean mission. The Gospel narratives can be interpreted as assuring this conclusion. The reason for the 'withdrawals' can be linked with the political reality of Galilee and with Jesus' personal safety due to Antipas threat, whether it be indirect or direct.²⁶⁹ These remarks, understood within the historical context of Galilee, could offer plausible reasons as to why Jesus would not have visited Antipas' main strongholds: Tiberias and Sepphoris. These cities were the Herodian centers of Galilee.

Would Antipas, as a relatively peaceful ruler, have endangered Jesus? Some scholars argue that Antipas really held Jesus as his enemy. Others argue that this is not the case.²⁷⁰ There are solid grounds to state that Antipas must have been quite perplexed by Jesus and his fame in Galilee. Meier is correct in stating that the Antipas' unhealthy interest in Jesus as stated by Mark and Luke (Mark 6:14–16; Luke 9:7–9; 13:31–32; 23:6–12) may bear a historical echo. Meier goes on to suggest that

²⁶⁸ Richardson, 1996, 303–304.

²⁶⁹ Richardson, 1996, 304–305.

²⁷⁰ Jensen, 2007, 17. Jensen clarifies the scholars' basic arguments for their views concerning Antipas' attitudes towards Jesus.

Antipas might have used servants and allies to spy on and to discredit Jesus publicly.²⁷¹ A great fame would have been dangerous for Jesus. A charismatic person connected with prophetic and messianic expectations and exciting multitudes with his message of the kingdom of God, would at least have perplexed the local ruler, who aimed at maintaining peace and security in his territory, and who dreamt of being acclaimed as a king by the Emperor of Rome (*Bell.* 2:20).

What kind of ruler was Antipas? Josephus is surely suspected of giving an intentionally negative portrait of his rule. But it is to be noted that Antipas is not blamed for such cruelties and murders as is his father Herod the Great (*Bell.* 1:492; 659–660; 2:86; *Ant.* 16:150–153; *T. Mos.* 6:2–7). Unlike his brother Archelaus, who was accused of similar cruelties as Herod the Great (*Bell.* 2:8–13), Antipas himself is left innocent of such crimes. Jensen concludes his definition of Antipas by stating that he was an “unremarkable ruler in deeds as well as in misdeeds, credits as well as discredits.”²⁷² Of course, as Antipas rebuilt Sepphoris and founded Tiberias, he can be regarded as a reformer, a ruler of some notable achievements. Despite these achievements Jensen is correct in claiming that Antipas can hardly be seen as a motivator or as an explaining factor for Jesus’ mission.²⁷³ He did not create a society where the tension between the poor and the rich became too high. On the base of the archaeological surveys Aviam has recently stated that it cannot be credibly claimed that during the first half of the first century the population of the Galilean cities was rich while the villagers were poor and suppressed by the rich.²⁷⁴ There are clear signs that the Galilean villagers did not

²⁷¹ Meier, 2001, 564–565. “Thy spy systems were quite common in the 1st-century Roman empire.” Herod the Great is told of having spies everywhere: *Bell.* 1:492–493.

²⁷² Jensen, 2007, 16, 27, 29, 32. The citation is from p. 32.

²⁷³ Jensen, 2007, 32.

²⁷⁴ See Aviam, 2011, 29–37. On p. 35–36 Aviam describes the survey of the dozens of human bones found in the archaeological excavation at Jotapata (Yodefat). It became clear that the bones had belonged to the Jews who had been killed in the Jewish war, when the Romans defeated Jotapata in 67. According to Aviam they unearthed the bone-remains of “more than 2500 human beings”. “Among the victims were citizens of the town and refugees from nearby villages”, p. 35–36. On p. 36 he states that the bones represent the population of a wider area in Lower Western Galilee, and interestingly, the surveys on these bones suggested that the bones had belonged to wealthy humans. There were no signs that the people had suffered from any sicknesses or starvation.

live in poverty, but that their economic status and standard of living was close to middle class.²⁷⁵ As an exemplary case we may state that fine houses decorated with frescoes and stucco have been unearthed from the so-called “wealthy quarter” of Gamla. Although the houses in Jotapata (Yodfat) were not as stylish as the houses of the wealthy in Gamla, Jotapata too had houses with signs of wealth, such as an unusually high frescoed wall and stucco.²⁷⁶ These aspects suggest that the economic situation of Galilee would not have caused revolts during the reign of Antipas.

In conclusion, Antipas was a relatively peaceful client ruler of Rome. During his reign the country was economically stable and peace prevailed. Nonetheless, as the execution of John the Baptist suggests, Antipas did not grant Jesus security. In this sense, the threat of Antipas can be used as a reason for Jesus’ possible avoidance of Tiberias and Sepphoris, and for his occasional ‘withdrawals’ into Philip’s territory. However, the ‘fear-factor’ is all but certain and it is grounded on several assumptions and few facts. I am inclined to maintain that Jesus as a prophetic figure of Israel’s eschatological restoration would have stood in opposition to the pro-Roman ethos of Antipas’ Galilean strongholds, which were marked with a pro-Roman ethos.

3.7.4 Tiberias: A foreign body within Galilee?

Antipas founded Tiberias in 18 or 19 CE. The establishment of Tiberias and Sepphoris are to be regarded as his most important political achievements. Tiberias quickly became one of the greatest cities of Palestine. Antipas named the new city for the emperor Tiberias (14–37 CE). The new city replaced Sepphoris as Galilee’s capital, and it became the city of Antipas’ new residence. Tiberias, with its administrative machinery,

²⁷⁵ Aviam, 2011, 29–37. Josephus claims that there was a Galilean border village called Chabulon/Kabul, which had houses with the beauty and style comparable to the houses in Tyre, Sidon and Berytus, *Bell.* 2:504. See also *Vita* 246, which approves that there were rich houses in the villages of Galilee. Aviam bases his argument mainly on the archaeological evidence unearthed from Yodfat and Gamla. On p. 30 he states that “the archaeological excavations at both first century towns of Yodfat and Gamla, show that most of their inhabitants lived their lives between levels of prosperity and simplicity, but not poverty.”

²⁷⁶ Aviam, 2011, 30–31.

resembled a Hellenistic polis. As such an urban city or polis, Tiberias was exceptional because the majority of its inhabitants were Jewish.²⁷⁷ Josephus mentions the Greeks in Tiberias only in the context of their massacre by the Jews during the Revolt (*Vita* 65–67). This suggests that the Greeks had a minority position in the city.²⁷⁸ Tiberias was not uncontroversial. The city was founded on unclean ground, on a graveyard. Josephus states that living in Tiberias required transgressing the Torah (*Ant.* 18:38).²⁷⁹ Many sepulchres were taken away from the city. Josephus also mentions that Antipas populated the new city with strangers, poor people whom he had “collected from all parts” (τοὺς πανταχόθεν ἐπισυναγομένους ἄνδρας ἀπόρους) of the land and many Galileans (*Ant.* 18:35–38).

John Rousseau and Rami Arav consider that “in order to populate the city Antipas recruited soldiers, non-Jews, freed slaves, landless people, the poor, and Jews who did not care about purity issues” to reside there. Rousseau and Arav further state that Tiberias was a “pagan city.”²⁸⁰ Rousseau and Arav interpret *Ant.* 18:35–38 too broadly and incorrectly and thus they come to the conclusion that Tiberias was a pagan city. Apparently Tiberias had a Gentile minority (*Vita* 65–67) and some of the newcomers and strangers “collected from all parts” were Gentiles (*Ant.* 18:37). The fact that Josephus claims that Antipas had to “buy” newcomers from everywhere by offering to them free houses and land, suggests that the newcomers did not accept Antipas’ offer without reservations – this implies that many of the newcomers were indeed Jews. Josephus’ text itself indicates that Antipas knew that the newcomers would have to break the ancestral laws in order to move into the city. If Antipas had collected Gentiles he would not have had to make such offerings.

²⁷⁷ Stern, 1975, 132–134.

²⁷⁸ Chancey, 2002, 94, 119.

²⁷⁹ Josephus writes in *Ant.* 18:38 that Antipas became the benefactor of those who moved to this new-built city. Antipas built the newcomers very good houses at his own expense and gave them land for free. This overflowing generosity was because he was well-aware of the fact that the ones “to make this place a habitation” were “to transgress the Jewish ancient laws, because many sepulchres were to be here taken away, in order to make room for the city of Tiberias; whereas our laws pronounce, that such inhabitants are unclean for seven days.”

²⁸⁰ Rousseau & Arav, 1995, 317–318.

Presumably Jewish conservatives avoided Tiberias, in a way or another, because it was built on a necropolis (*Ant.* 18:35–38).²⁸¹ Thus Theissen assumes that Tiberias “remained a foreign body within Galilee.”²⁸²

3.7.5 The influence of Sepphoris and Tiberias on Galilee

The assumed Hellenistic culture of Galilee is often based on the argument that Sepphoris and Tiberias overshadowed the whole area with their Hellenistic influence. For instance Crossan has proposed that Galilee was not as rural as has often been thought, but on the contrary the area was greatly influenced by the cosmopolitan and Hellenistic culture of its two leading cities, Sepphoris and Tiberias.²⁸³ It is, however, difficult to prove that these two Herodian administrative cities actually defined the cultural atmosphere of the surrounding Galilean villages. Certainly these administrative cities offered their political-economic structure to the Galilean villages. The reaction to this was not cultural assimilation and influence, but rather resistance among the ordinary Galileans.²⁸⁴ I maintain with Freyne that if any urban center dominated the culture of Galilean villages it was Jerusalem – not Tiberias and Sepphoris. The Gospels implicitly confirm this picture by stating that the Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to oversee Jesus’ activity among the villagers (Mark 3:22; 7:1).²⁸⁵

The tax collectors are regarded as sinners and outsiders. They represent the “influence of the city.”²⁸⁶ This standpoint is strengthened when we evaluate many of Jesus’ teachings and parables in which he takes a quite suspicious attitude towards ‘urban’ institutions as courts, councils, governors, and kings (e.g., Matt 5:25–26; Luke 12:57–59; Matt 10:17–19).²⁸⁷ It is important to emphasize that Sepphoris and Tiberias were not major Hellenistic cities comparable with Caesarea Maritima and Scythopolis. On the contrary these Herodian cities were minor pro-

²⁸¹ Gnilka, 1997, 32.

²⁸² Theissen, 1991, 34.

²⁸³ Crossan, 1991, 18–19.

²⁸⁴ Horsley, 1996, 60, 119.

²⁸⁵ Freyne, 2004, 82–83. Freyne, 2000, 51. See Kazen, 2002, 284–285.

²⁸⁶ Freyne, 2000, 51. See also Freyne, 1988, 145–148.

²⁸⁷ Horsley, 1996, 121.

vincial centers.²⁸⁸ Moreover, Josephus informs us that the population of Tiberias and Tarichaea observed the Sabbath (*Vita* 157-162, 275). It is crucial to understand that Gentile influences did not primarily come from the Galilean centers of Tiberias and Sepphoris, but from the surrounding border areas of Galilee. Galilee was surrounded and ringed with foreign people and influences.

Josephus names Tiberias, Sepphoris and Gabara as the three greatest cities of Galilee (*Vita* 123). It is interesting that he seems to distinguish the Galileans from the inhabitants of these three major cities. Therefore according to Freyne, Josephus portrays the average Galileans as townspeople and rural villagers in contrast to the urban inhabitants of the Galilean cities.²⁸⁹ Freyne states that the ‘Galileans’ considered Sepphoris in particular to be too pro-Roman (*Vita* 30, 104, 124, 345–348, 373, 394–395). This is why the Galilean rural people were suspicious of the citizens of Sepphoris. Freyne assumes that the Galileans’ hostility towards Tiberias was based on the social division between the Herodian court of Tiberias, the elite, and the rural people of the nearby villages and towns.²⁹⁰ From a strict conservative Jewish point of view the Herodian centers were problematic because Tiberias was grounded on a gravesite. Moreover, in Tiberias there was a stadium, in Tarichaea a hippodrome and in Sepphoris an amphitheater.²⁹¹ It is, however, hard to estimate whether the amphitheater of Sepphoris and the stadium of Tiberias were built during the reign of Antipas or later. There is no scholarly consensus on this question.²⁹²

²⁸⁸ Dunn, 2006, 214.

²⁸⁹ Freyne, 2000, 30–31.

²⁹⁰ Freyne, 2000, 31–33, 52–53, 78. Sepphoris had quite a pacifistic reputation which increased the Galileans distrust towards Sepphoris (*Vita* 348, 128). Dunn, 2003, 278. There was a remarkable hostility amongst the ordinary Galileans towards Tiberias and Sepphoris and their more Hellenized residents.

²⁹¹ Freyne, 2000, 53.

²⁹² Freyne, 2000, 63–64; Sanders, 2002, 31–33. Batey, 2006, 117–118. Batey argues that the theater was built by Antipas (p. 118–119) and that it seated approximately 3,000. Batey further estimates that the size of Sepphoris’ population would have been between 20,000 and 30,000. I find Batey’s claims credible. Antipas was raised up in Rome, he lived in a cultural atmosphere which embraced drama and theater. After he returned from Rome as a tetrarch of Galilee, and found Sepphoris burned by the Roman troops, he rebuilt the city and made it his capital. Its glory was realized with a beautiful theater.

Regarding the early Roman period it is clear that Sepphoris and Tiberias lacked pagan temples. No altar to Roma Aeterna and no clear and large public statues have been found.²⁹³ The Jewish residents of Sepphoris seem to have been liberal in their concerns for the temple of Jerusalem. Josephus accuses the Sepphorites for this cause: they did not defend the temple “which was common to us all” (*Vita* 348).²⁹⁴ The building of Sepphoris and Tiberias were aggressive acts of Romanization by Antipas.

Galilee lost its status as largely independent as Rome’s ally in 44 CE when Agrippa I died. Galilee was placed under direct Roman rule, and as such it became part of the Judean Imperial province governed by a Roman prefect.²⁹⁵ This political shift naturally had a great impact on how Sepphoris and Tiberias were developed later. It is clear that during the beginning of the direct Roman rule, the Hellenistic culture and the number of imperial symbols increased. The amphitheater of Sepphoris might have been built during this period of direct Roman rule. Be that how it may, Horsley suggests that the amphitheater in itself announced “Rome!”²⁹⁶ It is worth noting that Tiberias and Sepphoris, the urban centers of Galilee, were modest in comparison with Jerusalem, Scythopolis and Caesarea Maritima, the largest Palestinian cities of that time. For example in Scythopolis archaeologists have found numerous imported marble columns and imperial Greco-Roman artworks. Horsley states that

“nothing close to this level of imperial cosmopolitan culture is found at Sepphoris and Tiberias, even after the more intense Romanization following the great revolt and the Bar Kokhba Revolt”.²⁹⁷

It is undeniable, however, that Sepphoris and Tiberias stood out as symbols of Romanization driven by Antipas. However, this Romani-

²⁹³ Freyne, 2000, 69.

²⁹⁴ Freyne, 2000, 123. Sanders, 2002, 31.

²⁹⁵ Horsley, 1996, 51, 53.

²⁹⁶ Horsley, 1996, 54.

²⁹⁷ Horsley, 1996, 59. For the discussion of the greatest cities of the first century Palestine and Levant see: Charlesworth, 2003, 41–43.

zation was not exceptionally powerful in these Jewish cities and their influence on the rest of rural Galilee was not too great.

3.7.6 Sepphoris, Tiberias and Jesus: Why would Jesus have avoided Tiberias?

There are no hints in the Gospels that Jesus would ever have visited Tiberias and Sepphoris. In the Synoptics Jesus never even explicitly mentions them. We may suppose that the evangelists behind the Synoptics, and who supported Gentile mission, would have had motives to tell about Jesus' healings and teachings in these big cities of Galilee. The silence of Tiberias and Sepphoris calls for an explanation.

Tiberias and Sepphoris were both Jewish cities with a reasonably Jewish atmosphere and a Gentile minority.²⁹⁸ The question is obvious: why would Jesus not have visited these cities?²⁹⁹ If Jesus had been unsuccessful in these cities, then we would, as Freyne assumes, expect woes against them similar to those expressed against Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum (Matt 11:21–24/Luke 10:13–15).³⁰⁰ As these cities were distinctly Jewish, we would expect Jesus to have driven his mission in these cities where several “publicans and sinners” resided. This would have been in line with his mission for the Jews.

Rousseau and Arav pose that Jesus may have avoided the city for two reasons: he might have regarded it unclean because of the presence of the burials (*Ant.* 18:38), or/and he might have avoided it because of Antipas and his guards' presence in the city.³⁰¹ The first alternative is difficult to maintain because the Gospel traditions show quite clearly that Jesus did not avoid ritually unclean people: lepers, the sick and dead. It seems that if Jesus intentionally avoided Tiberias and Sepphoris, a somewhat plausible reason, would have been Jesus' fear of Antipas and his guards, i.e., Jesus' avoidance would have been due to practical reasons. Antipas posed a direct or indirect threat to Jesus, and this threat

²⁹⁸ Freyne, 2000, 190–191.

²⁹⁹ Schnabel, 2004, 236–239. Schnabel introduces the various different scholarly opinions to this question.

³⁰⁰ Freyne, 2000, 190.

³⁰¹ Rousseau & Arav, 1995, 318.

would be felt especially in Sepphoris and Tiberias – the strongholds of Antipas.³⁰²

Due to the “fear factor” posed by Antipas to Jesus, and which could explain Jesus’ avoidance of the urban Galilean centers, we need to take a glance at a practical point of view: did the cities and towns of Galilee have walls around them? Arguably, fleeing from a walled city would have been more difficult than escaping from a city without walls (2 Cor 11:32–33; Acts 9:23–25). Richardson has clarified the wall-situation in Palestine prior to 70 CE. He claims that, in general, towns and villages lacked walls. Major cities, capitals and metropolises were walled. Sepphoris, Bethsaida, and Caesarea Philippi/Banias had walls at least very soon after they became central capitals. Tiberias was an exceptional capital in the sense that it was not surrounded by walls prior to the Revolt. Immediately prior to the Revolt Josephus promised to erect walls around Tarichaeae and Tiberias (*Vita* 141–144). A small town or village was typically not walled, but as always there were some exceptions – for example Jotapata (Yodfat) and Gamla were walled. However Gamla was walled shortly before the Revolt in order to protect its inhabitants from the Romans (*Bell.* 4:9–10). Capernaum and Chorazin had no walls. Our information of the wall-situation comes from both Josephus’ writings and from the archaeological excavations. Both of these sources of knowledge support the claim that walled cities and towns were uncommon in Antipas’ Galilee.³⁰³ Because Tiberias did not have a wall around itself, the argument according to which Jesus would have avoided the city because of his fear of being trapped there, loses part of its credibility.

When discussing reasons why the Gospels do not mention Jesus visiting certain towns and cities, we are moving on speculative grounds. It is impossible to gain full certainty of the unstated reasons. In addition to Tiberias and Sepphoris, the Synoptics are also silent about Jesus visi-

³⁰² It was under Antipas’ power to execute the death penalty. He had full authority in domestic affairs. During the adulthood of Jesus, Galilee was a tetrarchy allied to Rome. Judea was a procuratorship under the surveillance of the Roman governor of Syria. For a discussion of the political state of Judea, see Sanders, 2002, 9. Gnilka, 1997, 32.

³⁰³ Richardson, 2006, 126–127. Aviam, 2004, 18. Josephus mentions the walls, and the lack of walls around the Galilean cities, in connection with the first revolt.

ting great cities surrounding Galilee: Scythopolis, Hippos, Ptolemais, Tyre, Sidon or Caesarea Philippi/Banias. Several crucially important Jewish towns, such as Gamla and Jotapata, which played a central role in the Jewish war, are also left unnoticed in the Gospels. If Jesus is regarded as an ethnically open-minded and socially border-crossing man, it is difficult to understand why there is no account of him visiting small and politically insignificant Gentile villages in the border areas of Tyre (Mark 7:24), Decapolis and Gergesa (Mark 5:14, 20). The fear of Antipas would not explain Jesus' avoidance of those Gentile villages and cities outside of Antipas' territory. We are left with no certain answers, but nonetheless one quite plausible claim is that Jesus actually avoided Tiberias and perhaps also Sepphoris due to the danger posed by Antipas.

3.8 The Holy Land, ideology and religion

We will now take a glance at how the land of Israel was considered in the Jewish religious and nationalistic circles. It is important to acknowledge the deep meaning of the land of Israel for the Jews of the late second temple period, and to understand how powerfully the land was associated with eschatological hopes of Israel's restoration. In Jewish nationalistic ideologies the land of Israel claimed the right to territories far beyond the borders of Jewish Palestine at the time of Jesus. Mendels clarifies that during the Hasmonean and the early Roman period the territorial issues of the Promised Land became the main symbol of Jewish nationalism. The territorial issue is alive in the Jewish writings of the time.³⁰⁴ Willitts also contends that among the observant circles of Palestinian Jews the belief in Israel's territorial restoration was widespread.³⁰⁵ According to Mendels Palestinian Jews as a whole, including the Pharisees, Sadducees and the Essenes, shared a great passion for the land. In the Jewish writings of the Hellenistic and early Roman periods the Jews' right to the land is emphasized by references to the OT – to Joshua, David, and Solomon and to the biblical prophecies. In the visions of the

³⁰⁴ Mendels, 1992, 98–99. Mendels rightly concludes that the Jews' nationalistic spirit concentrating on the Land lost much of its force after the Jewish War and the destruction of the Temple. See Freyne, 2001B, 289–303.

³⁰⁵ Willitts, 2007, 167–168.

War Scroll Israel would possess vast areas of the Mideast. *Jubilees* and Ben Sira portray the land in romanticizing ways leaning on the biblical promise and justification of God.³⁰⁶ On the basis of many textual sources from antiquity Willitts states that “many first-century Palestinian Jews conceived Eretz Israel not in the narrowly defined geopolitical borders of Israel in the Second Temple period, but as encompassing the utopian borders that were originally promised to Abraham and Moses and allotted to the tribes of Israel under Joshua, although never fully acquired by Israel in their history.”³⁰⁷

In the writings of the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods the ideal Israel’s borders are not discussed in length or clearly clarified. The obvious reason for this is that the writers based their knowledge on the OT, which gives several varying definitions of the borderlines of the Promised Land.³⁰⁸ It is nevertheless clear that all the Gentile territories where Jesus visited according to the Synoptics had historically belonged to the greater Israel (cf. 1 Macc 15:33–34): the territory of Tyre and Sidon, the territory administered by Caesarea Philippi and the cities of the Decapolis on the east coast of the Sea of Galilee. These lands were regarded as Israel’s heritage in the future because they had been promised to Abraham.³⁰⁹ Notably all of these territories had a Jewish minority.³¹⁰ During the first century Tyre and Sidon were considered to be within the biblical Israel and within her renewed borders.³¹¹ The zeal of the Jewish people for the Holy Land was confronted with the political realities and borders. During the first century parts of the prophetic Holy Land were populated by Gentiles among whom Jews lived as a minority. In 1 Macc we encounter how the Hasmoneans felt justified in invading Idumea, Galilee and areas beyond the Jordan (1 Macc 15:33–34, cf. Ch. 3.4.1).

³⁰⁶ Mendels, 1992, 91–93. Ben Sira describes the conquest of the Land by Joshua and Caleb: Sir 46:1–10. The book of *Jubilees* mentions repeatedly that the Land was promised to the Jews: *Jub.* 13:19–21; 14:19; 15:10; 17:3; 32:19. The Land is also told to be a good land: *Jub.* 12:30; 13:2–7; 25:27; etc. During the time of eschatological fulfillment the Jews will dwell peacefully in their land: *Jub.* 50:5–6.

³⁰⁷ Willitts, 2007, 163.

³⁰⁸ Mendels, 1992, 96–98. For a clarifying discussion of the borders of the utopian, messianic and biblical Israel see Willitts, 2007, 163–168.

³⁰⁹ Dunn, 2003, 322–323.

³¹⁰ Dunn, 2003, 321–323.

³¹¹ Bird, 2006, 113.

During these times several pagans were driven out of the land and pagan cult objects were destroyed.³¹² During the Jewish war some Galileans took a rigidly separatist stance towards the Gentiles as Vita 112–113 indicates. If the Gentile did not undergo circumcision, he had to leave the Jewish land.³¹³

3.9 Concluding remarks

We may conclude that during the first century both Galileans and Judeans regarded the Galileans as Jewish. In Galilee Jesus did not frequently meet Gentiles as very few Gentiles lived in this territory. This can be supported by textual as well as archaeological evidence. Galilee was ringed with Gentile cities, but their influence on the densely populated rural Galilean villages and towns was not considerably strong. Galilee had two main capital cities, Sepphoris and Tiberias. As they represented the highest level of Hellenization and pro-Roman ethos in Galilee, they were not very respected and influential among the rest of rural Galilee. Most probably Jesus felt at least an indirect threat from the Herodians and Antipas. Jesus quite possibly wanted to avoid the fate of John the Baptist at the hands of Antipas – this might be one of the reasons why Jesus occasionally withdraw to Philip’s territory and why there is no account of him visiting Tiberias and Sepphoris. We are also to note that Jesus, whose mission is to be seen in the context of Israel’s eschatological restoration, would have been ideologically in stark contrast with the pro-Roman ethos of Tiberias and Sepphoris. The concept of the Holy Land – biblical Israel – was deeply rooted in the Jewish nationalistic and religious ethos. The land, and especially Jerusalem, was to be kept holy (see chapter 2.4.1).

³¹² Cf. Ch. 2.4.1. See 1 Macc 4:42–45; 5:68; 13:47–48, 50; 14:36.

³¹³ See Freyne, 2001B, 302–303.

4 Jesus' Jewish mission

4.1 Introduction

In this Chapter we shall discuss whether Jesus' Jewish mission excludes his interest in the salvation of the Gentiles. We are to investigate how Jesus related to the land of Israel. Did he confine his and his disciples' mission within the borders of Israel? Emphasis is laid on the mission discourse found from the Synoptics. Additionally, we are also to clarify whether Jesus held that the eschatological restoration was in some sense in a state of realization. Lastly, in this chapter we question whether the Jews regarded sinners as Gentiles and Gentiles as sinners.

4.2 Jesus and the land of Israel

4.2.1 Why would Jesus have visited foreign territories?

Jesus drove a mission on Jewish land in Galilee. Jesus and his disciples did not have to travel long distances in Galilee. From Capernaum it was only a one or two day trip to most of the Galilean towns either in Lower or Upper Galilee. According to the Gospel traditions Jesus occasionally visited Gentile areas: Samaria (Luke 9:52–53; 17:11; John 4:4), the territory of Decapolis (Mark 5:1–20; 7:31), the territory of Tyre and Sidon (Mark 7:24, 31) and the surrounding villages of Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27; Matt 16:13).³¹⁴ The reasons for the occasional visits outside of Jewish Galilee and Judea are not clearly expressed in the Gospels. Jesus might have visited the foreign areas for various reasons. Perhaps he wanted to search for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, escape the Herodians, preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, find some rest and take a vacation, go to the far-off-lands in order to pray, or perhaps he wanted to travel in the border areas of biblical Israel in order to pose a political or theological message. There are several possibilities and the definite rea-

³¹⁴ Bird, 2006, 102. Chancey, 2002, 176–177. Schnabel, 2004, 180. Schnabel clarifies that “from north to south, Galilee measured 50 km long, from west to east about 40 km. – Any Galilean town or village could be reached in two days of walking at the most.” According to Josephus the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (100 km) was usually done over three days (*Vita* 269).

sons are difficult to determine. Presumably Jesus as a religious leader, connected through his teaching and miracles to the hopes of Israel's restoration, would have had some ideas regarding the Holy Land.

Without going into in-depth discussions regarding the historicity of the individual border-crossing visits here, I will make some principal questions and overall statements. *First*, it has been argued that the trips are to be seen as Jesus widening the geographical zone of his mission. Some scholars have reasoned that the evangelists suggest that these trips to Gentile lands foreshadowed the future Gentile mission. This statement is problematic because these visits are not portrayed as mission journeys. In comparison with Mark 1:38–39 we see that the visits to the Galilean cities and towns served the purpose of proclaiming the kingdom of God throughout Galilee. No such programmatic statements can be seen as motivating the visits outside of Galilee or Judea. Moreover, during the border-crossing visits Jesus is not explicitly noted of giving any clearly positive statements concerning the future Gentile mission of his disciples. Notably there is no account of Jesus visiting the Gentile cities of Caesarea Maritima and Antiochia, which became centers for the nascent Christianity (Acts 11:19–27; 21:8–16). It is interesting that Luke, who evidently supported the Gentile mission, mentions Jesus visiting Gentile lands only once – i.e. in the story of the Gerasene demoniac (Luke 8:26–39). Unlike Mark and Matthew, Luke (9:18–22) does not connect Peter's confession of Jesus' identity with the territory of Caesarea Philippi.

Secondly, although we are told of Jesus entering important Gentile regions such as the districts of Caesarea Philippi/Banias, where there was an outstandingly beautiful pagan temple built of the white marble (*Ant.* 15:363–365, *Bell.* 1:404), there is no account of him giving critical and condemning statements against paganism. There was a temple for Zeus in the polis of Gerasa, and according to the Synoptics (Mark 5:1) Jesus exorcised a man in the country of the Gerasenes. The journeyes, as they are represented in the Gospels, did not explicitly serve the aim of having Jesus proclaim judgment on paganism. *Thirdly*, while there is an account of Jesus visiting the district of Tyre and Sidon, nothing is said about his attitudes towards those major cities even though they are

fiercely doomed in several OT prophecies. The intentions and motives for these visits are not clarified by the Synoptics.

Freyne argues that if Jesus is to be regarded as a prophet of Israel's restoration, it is no surprise that he would have wished to visit the borders of the prophetic greater Israel.³¹⁵ It is evident that in the Synoptics the theme of the land of Israel is not apparent (Matt 5:5). There is no evidence to claim that Jesus would have nurtured any plans or hopes of a military conquest while visiting the surrounding areas of Tyre and Sidon and Caesarea Philippi. Moreover, Jesus, as far as we are aware, did not make any territorial claims for the soon to be restored Israel (cf. 1 Macc 14:16–17; 15:33).³¹⁶ It is historically plausible that he would have visited the border areas in Upper Galilee, within the political districts of Tyre and Sidon, and the surrounding villages of Caesarea Philippi, in order to “search for the lost sheep of the House of Israel.”³¹⁷ Despite the fact that these foreign lands, which Jesus visited according to the Synoptics, were outside the political borders of Antipas' Galilee, they were within the biblical borders of Israel, and there were Jews living in these areas.³¹⁸ Jesus' mission is strongly marked by its Jew-centeredness, and by visiting the surrounding areas of Tyre, Sidon and Caesarea Philippi, he would not necessarily have contradicted his Jew-centered mission. The claim according to which Jesus visited the foreign territories in search for the lost sheep of the house of Israel is, however, weakened by the fact that in the Gospels Jesus does not visit these foreign territories for a purpose of driving a mission – i.e. preaching to their Jewish communities.

³¹⁵ Freyne, 2004, 75.

³¹⁶ Freyne, 2004, 80, 89.

³¹⁷ Freyne, 2004, 76–77. Freyne states: “There is nothing historically implausible, therefore, in suggesting that a journey of Jesus to the region (Caesarea Philippi at this case) could well have been based on his (Jesus') concern ‘for these lost sheep of the house of Israel’, while operating with a different perspective on what constituted the ideal Israel. From Jesus' point of view they did live within the borders of Israel as this was ideally understood, and they too should be reassured that they were invited to participate in the new ‘family’ which he was gathering for the banquet with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” Dunn, 2003, 323. Freyne, 2001B, 306. 310.

³¹⁸ Schnabel, 2004, 182.

4.2.2 Defining the borders

We know that the rabbis of a later period claimed that the Jews living within the biblical borders of the Greater Israel had to live in accordance with the halakhic laws given for the holy land even if they lived outside Israel's political borders.³¹⁹ Some writings from the Talmud refer to villages located on and around the foothills of Mount Hermon as Jewish villages which were obligated to follow the Halakah of Erez Israel.³²⁰ Freyne refers to *m. Hall.* 4:11 and *Bell.* 7:43 in support for the claim that Syria was regarded as part of the land of Israel. "Whoever acquires land in Syria is like one who acquires it on the outskirts of Jerusalem."³²¹ Stern argues, in line with Theissen, that the Jews of Syria and Phoenicia formed part of the major centers of Jews during the time of our concern. The Syrian and Phoenician Jews were like the Jews of Galilee. They saw each other as partners and allies.³²² According to Josephus' information tens of thousands of Babylonian Jews were moved to Phoenicia (*C. Ap.* 1:194). From the early Roman period we have clear evidence of Jewish communities in the Phoenician centers of Ptolemais, Tyre and Sidon.³²³

Some later texts from the Talmud refer to an imaginary borderline of the Land of Israel, which differed from the political borderlines of ancient Palestine. This imaginary borderline was held by those returning from Babylonian captivity, and the Jews in these areas observed the rabbinical law for the "Land of Israel" (*T. Shebuoth* 4:11; *Sifre Ekeb* [Dtn. 11:24] 51; *y. Shebuoth* 36c). This imaginary borderline did not follow the political borderline of the time. These borderlines are note-

³¹⁹ Willitts, 2007, 165–166.

³²⁰ Freyne, 2004, 77–80. Dar, 1993, 26–27. Dar refers to the following passages: *y. Seb.* VI:1, 36.3; *t. Seb.* 84,11; *Sifre Deut.* 51. Besides these references, the Talmudic list of "forbidden fruits of Paneas" also indicates, according to Dar, that Jews lived in the vicinity of Paneas and at the foothills of Mount Hermon. These Jews, Dar suggests, grew or imported fruits. The notion of the "forbidden fruits of Paneas" is in the Jerusalem Talmud (*y. Demai* II:1, 22).

³²¹ Freyne, 2004, 76. Willitts, 2007, 165. See also: *m. Abod. Zar.* 1:8. Apparently part of the Halakha concerning renting and selling of houses and land was valid in the land of Syria, because it was seen as belonging to biblical Israel.

³²² Stern, 1974, 137–138. Theissen, 1991, 66–67.

³²³ Stern, 1974, 142. Jews were in Ptolemais (*Bell.* 2:477), Tyre (*Bell.* 2:478) and Sidon (*Ant.* 17:324; *Bell.* 2:479). Stern explains the scarcity of concrete references to Jews living in the Phoenician towns due to accidental causes, p. 142.

worthy for our subject because they exclude from the Land of Israel the areas inhabited by non-Jewish residents. The Talmudic borderline may thus aid us in determining the extent of Jewish settlement outside the political borders of Jewish Galilee. Of course, the Talmudic texts cannot straightforwardly be applied to second temple Palestine, but as Avi-Yonah attests, the boundaries referred to in the Talmud might go back to the second temple period. Notably the areas around Tyre and Caesarea Philippi were included within the imaginary borderline of Israel,³²⁴ and there were actually Jewish settlements and villages within these regions.

It is a complicated task to decide the borderlines of the ancient world. This is especially true in the case of Phoenicia and Galilee. It is a well-known fact that the definite borders of Tyre and Galilee were especially unclear because the border areas lacked clear “natural marks” which would have defined the political border. Freyne’s statement regarding the border districts separating Galilee and Tyre is correct:

“The physical features here are much more complex and that no outstanding natural boundary suggests itself to mark off the region in any particular direction. Perhaps we should not then be surprised to find that the political boundaries have apparently reflected this confusion of nature.”³²⁵

Historically the borders between Galilee and Tyre were gradually moved. For example during the Jewish revolt Kedesh was clearly in the Tyrian district, but earlier in history, during the time of Jonathan (152–143 BCE) the village had marked the border between Galilee and Tyre (*Ant.* 13:154). Josephus states that during the Hasmoneans’ reign Mount Carmel belonged to Galilee but during the time of Herod Antipas, it belonged to Tyre. During our time of concern Mount Carmel marked the southern border area of the district of Tyre. Hence, this area marked the north-western border-area of Galilee in quite wide terms, as Josephus clarifies (*Bell.* 3:35).³²⁶ During the reign of Antipas the territory of Tyre

³²⁴ Avi-Yonah, 1974, 103–104. See also Jeremias, 1981, 36. Davies & Allison, 1991, 546–547.

³²⁵ Freyne, 1980, 8.

³²⁶ Mussies, 1997, 265–266. Theissen, 1991, 76–77.

stretched north over the whole of Upper Galilee and reached the basin of Lake Huleh by the River Jordan. Thus Jesus would, of necessity, have touched the territory of Tyre if he had traveled from Galilee to Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27).³²⁷ Quite naturally the culture was mixed in these border areas, where different worlds met. Josephus states that “Zebulon, a strong city of Galilee, which was called the City of Men..., was of admirable beauty, and had its houses built like those in Tyre, and Sidon, and Berytus,” *Bell.* 2:503–505, see also *m. Sot.* 8:3. Josephus writes that this city, which is seemingly influenced by Greco-Roman architecture, “divides the country of Ptolemais from our nation,” *Bell.* 2:503. This notion suggests once again that the Hellenistic, urban and possibly to some extent pagan influences came from outside the borders of Galilee, and not predominantly from Galilee’s own urban centers and Herodian strongholds – Tiberias and Sepphoris. Foreign influences were mainly spread from surrounding non-Jewish centers such as Ptolemais, Tyre, Sidon, Scythopolis and Hippo.

I maintain with Davies and Allison that “as a matter of history, Jesus himself probably never left the boundaries of the Jewish population”, although he crossed the borders of Galilee.³²⁸ The Gospels do not explicitly suggest that the border-crossing visits were practiced in order for Jesus to drive his mission among the Gentiles. There were Jews living in these remote areas in their own villages and communities. It is true, however, as Chancey notes, that visiting the Gentile areas, for example the region of Tyre, would unavoidably have led Jesus into contact with Gentiles. Admitting this Chancey also emphasizes that all of the Gentile areas which Jesus is said to have visited had a remarkable Jewish minority.³²⁹ Dunn’s conclusion is credible:

“We certainly cannot exclude the possibility that Jesus himself saw it as part of his task to extend his mission to the children of Israel still resident in these territories – hence the poignant episode with the Syrophenician woman.”³³⁰

³²⁷ Jeremias, 1981, 36. Davies & Allison, 1991, 546–547.

³²⁸ Davies & Allison, 1991, 546.

³²⁹ Chancey, 2002, 177.

³³⁰ Dunn, 2003, 323.

4.2.3 The district of Tyre as a growing soil for Jewish nationalists

Josephus mentions that the city of Tyre was surrounded by the rural district of Tyre, which neighbored Galilee (*Bell.* 3:38). Among other villages the above mentioned Kedesh was situated in the district of Tyre (*Bell.* 2:459, 588; 4:105). It was well inland, and not far from Upper Galilee. Both Mark and Matthew place the meeting of Jesus and the Syro-Phoenician woman outside the city of Tyre, in its surrounding. According to Mark 7:24 the meeting occurred in the “region of Tyre” and as Matt 15:21 indicates, in the “district of Tyre and Sidon.” Elsewhere Mark clarifies that a multitude of people came to hear Jesus from “Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and *the region around Tyre and Sidon*”, Mark 3:8. In the summary of Mark 3:8 the geographical origin of the people is revealed, but not their ethnicity. It is likely that Mark 3:8 refers to both Jews and to Gentiles living in the district of Tyre and Sidon. Notably the regions mentioned in Mark 3:7–8 & par. are to be understood in the context of Mark’s narrative in which Jesus is depicted as the king of the Jews who gathers the Jewish people around himself.³³¹ Immediately after this list of geographical locations, Mark 3:13–19 notes that Jesus chose the Twelve. In this plan of gathering, calling and searching for the Jews, it seems that the list of sites in Mark 3:7–8 is not coincidental.

In the context of the Jewish mission portrayed in Mark 1–4 it is probable that the sites of Mark 3:7–8 recall central geographical destinations around the compass: Jerusalem was south of Galilee, Tyre and Sidon were by the Mediterranean coast in the west, Transjordan was in the east and Idumaea was far in the south. At this time Jews were residing in all of these destinations.³³² Jesus is said to have visited all of these geographical locations: Phoenicia in the west (Mark 7:24), Peraea and the

³³¹ See: Jesus calls individuals (Mark 1:17–20; 2:13–17). The whole population of Capernaum has gathered around the house where Jesus resides (1:32–33). Jesus acknowledges his necessity to preach in the villages of all of Galilee (Mark 1:38–39).

³³² Marcus, 2000, 257, 260. In *Bell.* 2:43 and *Ant.* 17:254 it is noted that Jews from Judea, Galilee, Idumea, Jericho, Perea and beyond Jordan gathered into Jerusalem for the Pentecost feast in year 4 BCE.

Decapolis to the east (Mark 5:1–20; 7:31; 10:1; John 1:28) and the areas around Caesarea Philippi up north (Mark 8:27). It is generally agreed that the list of Mark 3:7–8 is a Markan summary. The passage is surprising as it claims that at this early stage of Jesus’ ministry crowds gathered to see him from distant regions, from Idumea and Transjordan, from Tyre and Sidon.³³³

Certainly the summary of Mark 3:7–8 is formulated by the evangelist in accordance to his intentions. In the Markan plot featured in the sections of Mark 1–4 and Mark 5–8, the crowds that are coming to Jesus from all around and outside of Palestine (Mark 3:7–8) are to be understood as Jews and probably also as Gentiles. Jesus gathers people both from Jewish as well as from non-Jewish territories.³³⁴ It is worth noting that in none of the occasions when Jesus is recorded as having met a Gentile according to the Synoptics, is there any indication that he would have wished to convert the Gentile through circumcision to Judaism or that he would have wished that the Gentile or the Gentiles would depart from the territories which belonged to the Greater Israel, the Holy Land.

The regional information mentioned in Mark 3:8 is particularly interesting when it is compared to certain passages in Josephus’ works. Josephus clarifies that John Gischala had collected a band of 400 men from the region of Tyre and its villages (*Bell.* 2:588). They formed part of his most faithful followers in the Jewish revolt. From Josephus we know that the regions around Tyre, and the villages surrounding it, were partly populated by Jews who were strongly tied to the Jewish culture. I concur with Theissen’s claim:

“We have to suppose that he (John Gischala) and his followers were convinced adherents to the Jewish faith, just as it is often the case that the most fanatical nationalists come from border regions or from abroad.”³³⁵

³³³ Marcus, 2000, 260.

³³⁴ It has been argued that the geographical sites reflect the location of early Christian communities, or that they foreshadow the Church’s Gentile mission or that they set out a plan for Jesus’ mission. In the last case Mark 3:7–8 would function in a similar fashion as Acts 1:8, which sets a geographical plan for the witnesses. See Dunn, 2003, 322–323. Freyne, 1980, 358–359, 362. Freyne, 2001B, 305–307. Jeremias, 1981, 33–36. Marcus, 2000, 260.

³³⁵ Theissen, 1991, 67.

John Gischala operated on the borders between Upper Galilee and Tyre, which was in constant turmoil (*Bell.* 4:105–106). The passage of *Bell.* 4:105 testifies that several Gentiles who lived in the villages and towns around Tyre hated the Jews. Undoubtedly the atmosphere in the border areas between Phoenicia and Galilee was tense. Enmity between the Galilean Jews and the Phoenicians Gentiles had deep biblical roots, which were further strengthened by the current economic situation. Josephus mentions that at the outbreak of the Jewish revolt the Hellenistic coastal cities were targets of Jewish raids (*Bell.* 2:266–294; *Ant.* 20:173–178). Ptolemais and Tyre slaughtered or imprisoned their own Jewish inhabitants, while Sidon spared its Jews (*Bell.* 2:458–460; 477–480).³³⁶ Josephus mentions three Syrian cities, namely Sidon, Apamea and Antiochia, which did no harm to their Jewish citizens at the outbreak of the great revolt in 66 CE (*Bell.* 2:479).

It is reasonable to raise the question about Josephus' intentions and the reliability of his statements concerning his claim that John Gischala collected his loyal supporters from these Gentile territories. We can suspect that Josephus aimed to support the notion that John Gischala gathered his most loyal men from outside Galilee. He might have done this in order to show the Galileans in a more positive light.³³⁷ In *Vita* 372 Josephus further tells of John Gischala's troops. John Gischala collected 1500 strangers (ξένοι) from Tyre, the metropolis. The ethnicity of the "strangers" is not clear.

4.3 Jesus and the "lost sheep of the house of Israel"

4.3.1 The Twelve and Jesus' mission discourse: Introductory remarks

The vast majority of scholars hold that Jesus restricted his and his disciples' mission to the Jews. The question arises: did Jesus' mission to the Jews totally exclude the idea of a Gentile mission? In answering this

³³⁶ Chancey, 2002, 143–144.

³³⁷ Chancey, 2002, 164, n. 294.

question we shall survey Jesus' mission discourse for the Twelve disciples. According to the Synoptics Jesus gathered the Twelve, whom he sent on an urgent mission to preach and heal in the towns of Israel. Matt 10:23 states that the Twelve would not have time to reach all the cities of Israel before the Son of Man would come – this verse can easily be understood as implying that a Gentile mission would not come into question since the disciples would not even have enough time to reach all of Israel.

The mission discourse is included in all the Synoptics (Mark 6:8–11; Luke 9:2–6; Matt 10:5–42). Besides the mission discourses we shall concentrate on the sayings of Matt 10:5b–6 and 15:24. These sayings are among the so called “Israel-sayings”, which emphasize Jesus' and his disciples' mission for Israel and the Jews. With the “Israel-sayings” I refer to the following sayings, which are attributed to Jesus: Matt 10:6, 23; 15:24; 19:28/Luke 22:30. These sayings connect Jesus' and his disciples' mission to “the house of Israel”, to “the towns of Israel” and to “the twelve tribes of Israel”. All of these “Israel-sayings” are obviously Jew-centered, and some of them seem to be even anti-Gentile (Matt 10:5b–6, 23; 15:24). The “Israel-sayings” almost solely occur in the Gospel of Matthew. Moreover the Matthean version of the mission discourse contains two “Israel-sayings” (Matt 10:6, 23). The important question is whether the “Israel-sayings” of Matt 10:6, 23 were originally part of the sources of the mission discourse in Mark and possibly Q.

The authenticity of the mission discourse for the Twelve is of course dependent on the premise that Jesus actually gathered a group of disciples, who were close to him. Independent traditions of the Twelve are arguably found in Mark (3:14, 4:10 etc.), John (John 6:67, 70–71) and Paul (1 Cor 15:5). Besides these instances a more speculative tradition of the Twelve can be found in L and Q (Matt 19:28, Luke 22:30).³³⁸ The claim that Jesus actually gathered a group of twelve men is credible in light of the criterions of historical research. The authenticity of the

³³⁸ Meier, 2001, 141. Meier summarizes that “Mark, John, Paul, probably L, and probably Q give multiple attestation from independent sources that the Twelve existed as an identifiable group during the public ministry.” See Meier's full survey of the Twelve in the NT sources, pp. 128–147.

Twelve is supported by the criteria of multiple attestation and embarrassment. Jesus is told of giving the Twelve great roles in the eschatological future (Matt 19:28/Luke 22:29), however in the early Church their roles do not apparently fulfill the hope as they were expressed in Matt 19:28.³³⁹ The claim that Jesus gathered a group of Twelve is verified by most scholars. The tradition has preserved the Twelve, δώδεκα, as a fixed expression already in the early 50s (1 Cor 15:5). One of the Twelve, Judas Iscariot is remembered as the betrayer of Jesus. It would be difficult to prove that the early believers invented such embarrassing stories of the Twelve (Mark 14:10–11, 17–21, 43–45).³⁴⁰ Sanders has placed the existence of the Twelve disciples as one of the most certain facts we can know about Jesus.³⁴¹ Consequently, did Jesus have some specific purpose for gathering the Twelve? Were they called to take part in Jesus' mission?

4.3.2 The mission discourse

The mission discourse in Matt 10:5–25 uses Mark (Mark 6:8–11) as well as the hypothetical Q (Luke 9:2–5, 10:3–16) as its sources. Luke also uses both of the existing sources, Q and Mark, in his reconstruction of the mission discourse. Arguably the non-Markan parallels of Matt 10 and Luke 10 had a mission discourse of its own, which had its source in Q. Fitzmyer, Allison, Davies and Meier support this view.³⁴² Meier further argues that “both the Markan and Q forms of the discourse show signs of earlier traditions that have been edited.”³⁴³ Matthew's mission discourse contains eschatological sayings (Matt 10:17–25), and some of

³³⁹ Meier, 2001, 137.

³⁴⁰ Davies & Allison, 1991, 151–152.

³⁴¹ Sanders, 1985, 98–106.

³⁴² Fitzmyer, 1981, 751–752. Fitzmyer, 1985, 842. Davies & Allison, 1991, 163–164; Meier, 2001, 154–155.

³⁴³ Meier, 2001, 155, 186–187, n. 95. The citation is from p. 155. Uro, 1987, 115. Uro clarifies the scholars' common views concerning the source for the missionary discourse on p. 98. Uro himself maintains on p. 115 that “the oldest ‘kernel’ of the mission instructions was seen to be represented by the Q instructions in Luke 10:4–7ab. This piece of tradition was part of the unit which we have called the ‘early mission code’, a set of instructions forming the common pattern behind the mission charges of Mark and Q. This common antecedent has been preserved in the Q instructions of Luke 10:4–11 in a more original form than in Mark 6:8–11.”

these sayings find parallels in Mark's and Luke's eschatological discourses (Mark 13 and Luke 21).³⁴⁴ Matthew has also sayings which are totally absent from both Mark and Luke. These include the "Israel-sayings" (Matt 10:5b–6 and 23). Some scholars assume that this unparalleled material is founded in Matthew's special source (M). Others, for example Davies and Allison, have argued that Matt 10:5b–6 and 23 belong to Q, even though the sayings are not found in Luke.³⁴⁵ The source of these sayings is very difficult to determine and full certainty is not to be found.

Matthew's long mission discourse is compiled of several sayings originating from several different speeches and sources. This plentiful material of the mission discourse is then bound together in Matthew's mind. Scholars often divide the mission discourse into two main sections, which are argued to have different sources. First, verses Matt 10:5–16 form the core of the mission discourse, which has its sources in Mark, Q and possibly M.³⁴⁶ Secondly, verses Matt 10:17–25 recall, according to Meier, the history of the early Church, and therefore its sayings originate, most likely, from a prophet within the early Church who wanted to support and comfort the suffering witnesses of Jesus. It is apparent that the predictions of Matt 10:17–25 are "fulfilled" quite clearly in the mission of Paul (2 Cor 11:23–27; Acts 16:20–24; 18:12–17). Moreover a great deal of the verses Matt 10:17–25 originate from Mark's eschatological discourse (Mark 13:5–37) and not from his short mission discourse (Mark 6:7–11).³⁴⁷

Finally, does the mission discourse derive from a historical occasion in the life of Jesus? A positive answer sounds plausible. It would be understandable that Jesus had given the Twelve something to do during his mission. It would also be understandable that Jesus would have shared his mission with his closest disciples – the Twelve. The claim that Jesus sent disciples on an urgent, short and serious mission to proclaim and practice miracles in the towns of Israel is credible. Its basic

³⁴⁴ Davies & Allison, 1991, 163–164.

³⁴⁵ Davies & Allison, 1991, 165.

³⁴⁶ Meier, 1994, 339. Bird, 2006, 52.

³⁴⁷ Meier, 1994, 339.

historicity is supported by the criterion of multiple attestation in Q and Mark.³⁴⁸ The eschatological statement of Matt 19:28–29/Luke 22:29–30, which was not fulfilled in the early Church, suggests that the function of the Twelve concerned the gathering of the twelve tribes of Israel. I maintain with Meier that the gathering of the Twelve disciples was a symbolic act which recalled the eschatological gathering of the twelve tribes. The urgent mission of the Twelve to all of Israel further emphasizes Jesus' intention of symbolically restoring Israel.³⁴⁹ In the minds of the second temple Jews, the calling of the Twelve would have inevitably signaled the idea of regathering the twelve tribes of Israel and of restoration. Despite the fact that Jesus is associated with the motifs of Israel's restoration, the Jesus tradition does not suggest that he would have embraced the territorial and militaristic ideas associated with the hopes of restoration. Unlike the policy of the biblical Joshua and the later the Maccabees, the Jesus tradition does not imply that Jesus would have anticipated the departure of the Canaanites or the Itureans – i.e. the Gentiles and pagans.³⁵⁰ The passages of Mark 3:7–8, Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29, Mark 13:26–27 and Luke 14:15–24/Matt 22:1–10 reflect an inclusive attitude which is in contrast with an exclusive attitude. As Jesus and his mission is to be seen in the context of Israel's restoration, it is clear that Jesus would have been opposed by the Herodians. Jesus would not have embraced the pro-Roman ethos of Tiberias and Sepphoris.

³⁴⁸ Meier, 2001, 154–155, 158–159, 162–163. Allison (Allison, 1997, 104–119) suggests that Paul probably knew the mission discourse of Q (Luke 10:2–16). He states on p. 105 that “several have argued that there is enough evidence for the conclusion that Paul knew some version of Jesus' missionary discourse”. On p. 111 Allison concludes by stating the following: “The Jesus tradition circulated in blocks from a very early time; some of these blocks appear to have been known by Paul; Paul indisputably knew at least one saying that appeared in Q's missionary discourse; and the apostle's letters contain several lines that echo portions of Luke 10:1–16. Are we not invited to reckon seriously with the possibility that Paul knew a form of the missionary discourse related to Q 10:2–16?” Allison refers to following connections between the Pauline passages and the missionary discourse: 1 Cor 9:14/Luke 10:7b/Matt 10:10; 1 Cor 9:4, 7, 13/Luke 10:7a; 1 Thess 4:8/Luke 10:16. See Allison, 1997, 110–111. See also Uro, 1987, 106–108.

³⁴⁹ Meier, 2001, 154, 158.

³⁵⁰ See Ch. 2.4.1, 3.4.1 and 3.8.

4.3.3 Who and where were the “lost sheep of the house of Israel”?

The descriptive words of Matt 10:6 and 15:24, the “lost sheep of the house of Israel”, have mostly been interpreted among scholars as Jews in general and especially as Galilean Jews among whom Jesus drove his mission. The emphasis on the “lost sheep” has evoked references to the outcasts of society, the poor, the sick, the humble and to the sinners whom Jesus is recorded as having associated with.³⁵¹ Certainly the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” resonates with Israel’s fate in the OT. In the light of 1 Kgs 22:17 and Num 27:16–17 the lost sheep of the house of Israel could have referred to Jews who were living under poor political and religious leadership. In the light of Jer 23:1–8 the same epithet could have been a reminder of Jews and Israelis living in the Diaspora.³⁵²

The identity of the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” is connected with the question of their location: are these sheep lost in Galilee and Judea or in the Diaspora? According to Isa 53:6, Jer 50:6 and Ezek 34:5–6 all Jews can be counted among the lost sheep and not just the so called sinners.³⁵³ The genitive of the clause – τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ – can be understood as the lost sheep being lost *within* the land of Israel, but this is not the only possible reading. Pitre notes that in (LXX) Ezek 34:30 “the house of Israel” is connected to the lost sheep, and apparently in Ezek 34, as well as in Jer 23, the lost sheep of Israel refers to the Jews scattered in the Diaspora. Jer 23:3 and Ezek 34:13 promise that God will gather his flock, his lost sheep from all the count-

³⁵¹ Willitts, 2007, 191–195.

³⁵² Recently Willitts has proposed that in the Matthean narrative the lost sheep of the house of Israel refers mainly to the Jews who were in some way linked with the biblical people of Israel, i.e. the Northern Kingdom of Israel, which was exiled by the Assyrians in the 730s BCE: Willitts, 2007, 194–195, 200. Willitts further states that in the context of Matthew’s Gospel the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” designates the “Jews living in rural Galilee and the northern region of the ideal Land of Israel who were remnants of the old Israelite population of the Northern Kingdom of Israel”: Willitts, 2007, 179. According to my view Willitts’ thesis is credible for the Matthean Jesus, read in the context of the Matthean narrative, but for the historical Jesus such a mission for the former Israelites in Galilee is not convincing.

³⁵³ Davies & Allison, 1991, 167, 551.

ries and from all the peoples.³⁵⁴ Therefore τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ can refer to Israel who is lost in the Diaspora. If the sheep of Israel in Matt 10:6 are understood in such a way, then it is clear that the saying of Matt 10:6 does not restrict the disciples' mission to within the borders of Israel. More correctly, the saying of Matt 10:6 does not contain an explicit restriction, but rather states that the mission is to target the sheep of Israel, who are certainly to be understood as Jews. In Matt 10:6 the target group of the mission is defined ethnically but not geographically. In line with Ezek 34 and Jer 23 the lost sheep of the house of Israel would be in the Diaspora, scattered among "all the nations". If Matt 10:6 is interpreted in this fashion, then it would indicate that Jesus sent his disciples outside the borders of Israel in order to search for the Jews who were lost in the Diaspora. Pitre shows a convincing list of OT verses which can be found to support this interpretation.³⁵⁵ Certainly several Jews of the first century would have understood the phrase "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" as referring to the exiled Israel.

The Diaspora-interpretation, however, is not the only possible or plausible way of understanding the meaning of the sheep of Israel in Matt 10:6 and 15:24. In 1 Kgs 22:17 the expression "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" is used to describe the poor situation of the Israelis who were under bad leadership. The rhetoric of bad, drunk, sleepy, blind and careless shepherds (Isa 56:9–12) is connected to political criticism in the OT as well as in the intertestamental literature. In the light of such an interpretation the Jews are suffering under failing leadership of their king and priests.³⁵⁶ The congregation of Israel, in Num 27:16–17, needs

³⁵⁴ Pitre, 2005, 277.

³⁵⁵ Pitre, 2005, 276–277. Jer 50:4–8; Ezek 34:11–16; Isa 13:14; 53:6; Jer 23:1–5; Mic 2:12–13; 10:2, 6–12.

³⁵⁶ See especially Jdt 11:19, in comparison with the failures of the leadership: Jdt 7:23–24; 8:9, 11–14. In *1 En.* 89:72–77, a passage which deals with the second temple period from the time of Cyrus to the time of Alexander the Great, the priests are called "blind shepherds" and the people of Israel are called "blind sheep". They are blinded by the second temple which they have polluted with un-pure sacrifices, *1 En.* 89:73–74. Moreover, due to the bad shepherds – Jewish priests and rulers – the sheep were dispersed over the field, they were destroyed, and the shepherds did not save them from hands of the beasts, 89:75–77. Willitts, 2007, 128. Willitts states that the book of Judith derives from the Maccabean period, approximately around 100 BCE.

to have a leader so that the “congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep without a shepherd.”³⁵⁷ This meaning of the phrase well suits Matthew’s (Matt 2:1–6; 9:36) and arguably also Jesus’ use of it. The Jesus traditions contain harsh criticism towards the rulers of Jesus’ days – both the political and the religious leaders are targeted. Some of this critique against the leaders derives credibly from Jesus.³⁵⁸

The assumed geographical restriction of the disciples’ mission cannot be credibly based on Matt 10:6, but on the preceding verse, 10:5b. Recently Pitre has questioned the assumed geographical restriction of Matt 10:5b. Pitre maintains that Matt 10:5b–6 has almost systematically been mistranslated and misinterpreted. The saying of Matt 10:5b has been read “go nowhere among the Gentiles” but the Greek text literally says “along a road of the Gentiles do not go.” Scholars have understood Matt 10:5b–6 as Jesus commanding his disciples to go “nowhere among the Gentiles,” and prohibiting them from going into “Gentile territory” or outside “the land of Israel.” The translation according to which the disciples are not to go “nowhere among the Gentiles” of course excludes the possibility of preaching the message for the Gentiles. The more literate and exact translation of Matt 10:5b certainly emphasizes that the mission is for the Jews, but it does not restrict the preaching only to the Jews, if the disciples happened to meet Gentiles among the Jews.³⁵⁹ Bird interprets Matt 10:5b–6 as restricting the disciples’ mission geographically: “the disciples’ mission is limited to the confines of Galilee since Gentile territory lay to the west, north and east with the Samaritans to the south.”³⁶⁰ In a similar manner Jeremias states the following:

“By the instruction not to go to Samaria the south is closed to them, while the command not to go the Gentiles cuts them off

³⁵⁷ Willitts, 2007, 129–132. Willitts emphasizes that in the Targums of Num 27:17; Ezek 34:5 and Zech 10:2 the idea of Israel without a shepherd is stressed. The shepherd is seen as a king and leader. In the Targum Zech 10:2–4 the awaited king-shepherd is clearly connected with a messianic hope.

³⁵⁸ See: Luke 13:32; Mark 11:27–33; 12:1–12; 12:38–40.

³⁵⁹ Pitre, 2005, 275–277.

³⁶⁰ Bird, 2006, 52.

from the other three points of the compass: hence they are limited to Galilee.”³⁶¹

Pitre states that the correct translation of the Greek text (Matt 10:5b–6; 15:24) securely places Israel and the Jews as the main objects of Jesus’ and his disciples’ mission. Pitre, however, also argues that the saying does not totally exclude the possibility of a Gentile mission.³⁶² Matt 10:18–19 states that the disciples are to be brought in front of governors and kings for the sake of Jesus, and therefore this seems to suggest that the disciples will go beyond the borders of Jewish Galilee. Obviously the fact that Matthew includes Matt 10:18–19 in the mission discourse suggests that he did not understand them to be in conflict with Matt 10:5b–6. Davies, Allison and Pitre conclude that the words εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθῃτε in Matt 10:5b simply instruct Jesus’ disciples to avoid roads “leading to a Gentile city.”³⁶³ The passage of Mishnah *Abodah Zarah* 1:4 emphasizes that the roads, which solely lead to a certain kind of a city, are prohibited.³⁶⁴

In accordance to Matt 10:5b the disciples are not to wander on roads leading to purely Gentile cities such as Tyre, Hippos and Scythopolis/Beth Shean. Notably the Gospels do not mention of Jesus or his disciples visiting Gentile cities. According to Mark 7:24/Matt 15:21 Jesus traveled around the rural district of Tyre, but stayed out of the actual city. Similarly Jesus, according to Mark 8:27/Matt 16:13, moved around the small villages in the region of Caesarea Philippi, but did not enter into the city. This avoidance of the Gentile cities is also apparent in the story of the Gerasene demoniac: Jesus and his disciples never enter into the city (Mark 5:1, 17, 20). The saying of Matt 10:5b–6 is to

³⁶¹ Jeremias, 1981, 20.

³⁶² Pitre, 2005, 274–275.

³⁶³ Pitre, 2005, 275. Davies & Allison, 1991, 165.

³⁶⁴ Mishnah *Abodah Zarah* 1:4. “A city in which there is an idol – [in the area] outside of it is permitted [to do business]. [If] an idol was outside of it, [in the area] inside it is permitted. “What is the rule as to going to that place? *When the road is set aside for going to that place only*, it is prohibited. But if one is able to take that same road to some other place, it is permitted. A town in which there is an idol, and there were in it shops which were adorned and shops which were not adorned – this was a case in Beth Shean, and sages ruled, “Those which are adorned are prohibited, but those which are not adorned are permitted.”

be understood as follows: the disciples are to drive their mission for the Jews. Matt 10:5b does not restrict the mission geographically within Jewish Israel or within the biblical Israel. In the light of Jer 23 and Ezek 34 it is clear that the sheep mentioned in Matt 10:6 could be understood as referring to Jews residing outside of Israel's boundaries. It is clear that Matt 10:5b–6 does not explicitly prohibit the disciples from proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven for the Gentiles, whom they might meet along the way.

4.3.4 Evaluating the authenticity of Matthew 10:5b–6

Jeremias maintains that Matt 10:5b–6 and 15:24 originate with Jesus and that these sayings reflect his strictly opposing attitude towards Gentile mission (Matt 23:15).³⁶⁵ Regarding Matt 10:5–6 Jeremias states that “it is hardly accidental that this tristich, based on Aramaic tradition, has no parallel in Mark or Luke; it strictly prohibits the disciples from undertaking the Gentile mission.”³⁶⁶ Lüdemann argues that Matt 10:5b–6 and 15:24 are redactional. In the “lost sheep of Israel” he sees a clear allusion to 1 Kgs 22:17. Despite his skepticism Lüdemann claims that the sayings in Matt 10:5–6 and 15:24 have a basis in the tradition because, as he insists, Jesus and his disciples drove their mission only among Jews. Lüdemann is strict on this point. He argues that there is no proof for Jesus or his disciples healing any Gentiles prior to the Easter. Consequently Lüdemann denies any nucleus of tradition to be found in the stories of the Syrophenician woman or the centurion of Capernaum.³⁶⁷

In contrast with Jeremias, Meier argues that Matt 10:5b–6 is to be seen as a product of some “stringently conservative Christian Jews”, who opposed widening the proclamation of the gospel to groups other than Jews.³⁶⁸ Theissen argues that Matt 10:5b and 23 originate from a

³⁶⁵ Jeremias, 1981, 17–27.

³⁶⁶ Jeremias, 1981, 20.

³⁶⁷ Lüdemann, 2000, 50–51, 166.

³⁶⁸ Meier, 2001, 542–544. Meier argues that the mission discourse in verses Matt 10:5b–6 contains a prohibition of a mission to Gentiles and Samaritans. Such prohibitions are not found in the other missionary discourses: Mark 6:7–11; Luke 9:3–5; 10:2–12. According to Meier, though we cannot prove that the saying Matt 10:5b–6 originates from the early church it is difficult to prove that it originates from Jesus. Jeremias, 1981, 26–28. Jeremias states that it is improbable that a Jewish Christian congregation would have created say-

pre-Matthean tradition, which would probably have its *Sitz im Leben* in the groups found in the apostolic council. These groups, Theissen claims, opposed the Gentile mission and concentrated on the Jews. Theissen calls them Petrine groups.³⁶⁹ The claim regarding these Petrine groups can be criticized by the fact that Gal 2:7–10 states that the “acknowledged pillars” – i.e. Jacob, Cephas and John – accepted Paul’s mission for the Gentiles. The early Pauline writings, as well as Acts, recall that some Jews, who rejected the belief in Jesus as the Messiah altogether, also opposed the Church’s Gentile mission (1 Thess 2:16). Paul’s letters have no hint of Jewish Christians principally opposing the Gentile mission. Actually we do not know of any Jewish Christians who opposed the Gentile mission.³⁷⁰ Bird’s statement expresses the fact:

“the existence of an anti-Gentile-mission Jewish Christian faction which invented and projected these sayings (Matt 10:5–6, 15:24) onto Jesus is a form-critical myth. No anti-Gentile-mission Jewish group is known in the early church.”³⁷¹

The sayings of Matt 10:5b–6 and 15:24 have confused modern scholars as well as the early church Fathers,³⁷² and certainly the early transmitters of the saying material too. Only Matthew preserved these sayings. Matthew the redactor is certainly open to Gentiles on many occasions: Matt 12:18–21, 21:43, 24:9, 14, 25:32. In Matt 12:18 the narrator refers to Jesus by saying that he “will proclaim justice to the Gen-

ings such as Matt 10:5b–6 and 15:24. However, the idea according to which Matt 10:5b–6 is a product of a Jewish Christian group which opposed Gentile mission, has gained support among scholars: Sanders, 1985, 220. Funk & Hoover, 1993, 167–168. Theissen, 1991, 57. See also, Bird, 2006, 53, n. 42. On this question Sanders contradicts himself (Sanders, 1985, 220). Sanders states on p. 220 that “...the restriction of the mission of the disciples to Israel (Matt 10:5f., 23) comes from a section of the Palestinian church which itself opposed the Gentile mission.” On the same page, 220, Sanders claims the following: “As far as we can see from Galatians, as I have pointed out before, no Christian group objected to the Gentile mission; they disagreed only as to its terms and conditions.”

³⁶⁹ Theissen, 1991, 57–58.

³⁷⁰ Tuckett, 1996, 402. See Räisänen, 2010, 253.

³⁷¹ Bird, 2006, 56.

³⁷² Davies & Allison, 1991, 165. “For obvious reasons, ‘Do not go among the Gentiles’ created problems for the church Fathers. Many of them allegorized the words and applied them to pagan doctrine or behavior.”

tiles.” Matthew most probably did not understand the sayings of Matt 10:5b-6 and 15:24 as restricting the mission solely for the Jews. The sayings are admittedly pro-Jewish. Perhaps Matthew aimed at balancing the pro-Jewish sayings of Matt 10:5b-6 and 15:24 by emphasizing elsewhere the universal aims of Jesus.³⁷³ Even if Luke and Mark had known about the saying in Matt 10:5b-6, it is possible that they would have understood it in the same way as Jeremias, as if it would strictly forbid the practice of Gentile mission. If they had understood the saying in this manner, then they would have had plausible reasons for omitting it.³⁷⁴

In conclusion, the characterization of Jews as “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” resembles poetic and prophetic rhetoric from the OT. The basically twofold meaning of the phrase, deeply rooted in the OT and the ancient Jews’ self-understanding, would have suited Jesus’ mission and proclamation. Jesus often expressed his message of the kingdom of God in the form of a parable – i.e. in a creative fashion. The “lost sheep of the house of Israel” implicitly refers to the traditions of prophetic critique against Israel’s leadership. The characterization of the sheep of Israel as being lost also raises prophetic and eschatological hopes of an eschatological gathering of the scattered Jews (Luke 13:28–29, 34; 14:15–24; 22:29–30).³⁷⁵ All of these associations evoked by the lost sheep of the house of Israel would have suited the message of Jesus.

Jesus evidently drove a mission for the Jews. He shared this mission partly with his disciples. The mission was for the Jews but it did not explicitly exclude the possibility of proclaiming the Gospel also to the Gentiles. Jesus’ mission for Israel is stamped by urgency and it includes

³⁷³ See: Dunn, 2003, 435 n. 266, p. 537–538.

³⁷⁴ Concerning Matt 10:5b-6 and 10:23, Theissen states that “Luke would have had every reason to eliminate them, had he found them in Q.” Theissen argues for example that the reason for this elimination would have been the fact that in Luke Jesus wishes to travel through Samaria (Luke 9:51–52). See Theissen, 1991, 55. In Mark and Matthew Jesus never visits or even wishes to visit Samaria. Luke’s Jesus certainly relates positively towards the Samaritans (Luke 10:25–37; 17:11–19), and thus we have reason to maintain with Theissen that Luke would not have used Matt 10:5b had he found it from Q or from some other source.

³⁷⁵ This hope of the restoration of the “lost tribes”, of the scattered Israel, is apparent in the writings of the second temple period and also in the rabbinic writings: Sir 36:11; 48:10; 1QM 2:1–3; 11QTemple 57:5–6; 4 Ezra 13:32–50; 2 Bar. 78:1–7; Sib. Or. 2:170–173; T. Jos. 19:3–8; m. Sanh. 10:3. See Allison, 1997, 185–186.

an eschatological hope of gathering the scattered Jews.³⁷⁶ The salvation of the Gentiles belonged to the eschatological consummation,³⁷⁷ and thus the eschatological features in Jesus' mission imply the possibility of eventual openness towards the Gentiles. For this reason it is crucial to clarify whether Jesus' mission is to be seen in a context of realized eschatology.

4.4 Jesus and the idea of realized eschatology

4.4.1 The scholarly discussion about realized eschatology

There is a consensus among scholars that Jesus' message was centered at the proclamation of the kingdom of God.³⁷⁸ Despite this agreement scholars still dispute over questions such as how Jesus understood the kingdom of God. Did he regard that the kingdom had already come and that it had already been realized in and through his mission? Or did he solely anticipate the coming of the kingdom in the future? For us these questions are of central importance. Theissen and Merz sum up the scholarly history of Jesus' eschatological views and state that "nowadays" (1998) there is a scholarly consensus according to which Jesus thought that the kingdom was already present during his time, but that he also nurtured the hope of the coming of the kingdom in the future.³⁷⁹

In his treatment of the subject Meier reaches the conclusion that Jesus simultaneously conceived that the kingdom of God was in a state of coming and that it was already present. Meier claims that both of these aspects are strongly rooted in the Jesus traditions. Meier points out that the ancient Semitic mind was not restricted by western-style logical thinking, and thus a first century Jew could consider that the kingdom of

³⁷⁶ See Allison, 2000, 217–219.

³⁷⁷ Ware, 2005, 286. "In Jewish thought, the conversion of gentiles is an eschatological event."

³⁷⁸ Meier, 1994, 237–238. Sanders, 1985, 139. Dunn, 2003, 384–385, n. 8. Ollilainen, 2008, 150–153.

³⁷⁹ Theissen & Merz, 1998, 240–241, 244, 252–253. This paradoxical view that Jesus at the same time regarded the kingdom of God as yet to come and as already present is supported by perhaps the majority of scholars: Sanders, 1985, 150–156. Beasley-Murray, 1986, 338–339. Dunn, 2003, 465–467. Ollilainen, 2008, 151–152.

God is at the same time in some way present but that it is coming in its fullness in the future. Consequently this seemingly paradoxical result, in which Jesus is seen as supporting both the futuristic and the present view of the kingdom of God, is not necessary a sign of self-contradiction on the part of the Jewish Jesus.³⁸⁰ For our concern the important question follows: Can it be proved that Jesus actually believed that he drove his mission in the context of realized eschatology? Can it be proved that Jesus was convinced that the kingdom of God had already arrived?

Dunn states that the New Quest of historical Jesus-scholarship took a positive answer to this question almost as a universal fact concerning Jesus. The idea that Jesus' mission, his deeds and teachings were to be seen in a context of eschatological fulfillment and arrival of the kingdom of God was widely supported.³⁸¹ Dodd, for example, claimed that "in some way the Kingdom of God has come with Jesus Himself."³⁸² The basic arguments for the realized eschatology of Jesus have remained quite similar from Dodd to Dunn, Meier and Evans. In my judgment the validity of the arguments for Jesus' view of the realized eschatology have endured.³⁸³ In this respect and in this case the so called Third Quest follows quite neatly the New Quest for the historical Jesus. During recent decades, or during the time of the current Third Quest, the majority of scholars have agreed on the basic conceptions which were proposed so strongly by the scholars of the New Quest. It is still widely held that Jesus regarded that the kingdom of God, the eschatological fulfillment, had in some way arrived through his mission.³⁸⁴ Whether this present ar-

³⁸⁰ Meier, 1994, 398–399.

³⁸¹ Dunn, 1998, 187. See also Reiser, who clarifies the views of the New Quest: Reiser, 2001, 216–217.

³⁸² Dodd, 1935, 45. See also p. 44–54. Vermes, 1993, 146–148. On p. 147 Vermes states: "Imbued with eschatological enthusiasm, Jesus saw himself and his generation as already belonging to the initial stages of the Kingdom and called to expediate its final manifestation." On p. 148 Vermes claims: "He [Jesus] and his disciples entered whole-heartedly into the eschatological age and recognized a fundamental difference between their own time with no future, and the centuries that preceded it."

³⁸³ For the evidence for Jesus' realized eschatology see Dodd, 1935, 44–54. Meier, 1994, 398–506. Dunn, 2003, 437–487. Evans, 2001, 166–174. Ollilainen, 2008, 152–153.

³⁸⁴ Reiser, 2001, 231–232. Reiser states on p. 231 that "Jesus was convinced that the reign of God becomes present everywhere he appears and is accepted as Isaiah's messenger of good news." Evans, 2001, 169, 172–173. Evans states on p. 169: "The author of Daniel, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Aramaic paraphrase of Isaiah anticipate the coming of the

rival of the kingdom of God is regarded as partial, in a process of realization, symbolic or total, and even excluding any hopes of future coming of the kingdom of God, has remained in the focus of scholarly debate. There is no need for me to repeat the evidence for the realized eschatology in Jesus' mission in detail. Therefore we shall here present the evidence for the main claims for the realized eschatology and its connections with Jesus' mission only in a cursory manner.

4.4.2 A glance at the evidence for the realized eschatology
 Support for the claim that Jesus' mission is to be seen in the context of realized eschatology can be based on various sources: Q, Mark, M and L. In addition to the several sources, the presence of the kingdom of God is attested in various forms – in sayings and controversies (Luke 11:20; Matt 12:28), preaching of the gospel, healings and exorcisms (Luke 7:18–23; Mark 1:24–27), symbolical actions (Mark 3:13–19; 11:1–17) and parables (Luke 14:15–24). The saying in Matt 12:28/Luke 11:20 is often regarded as an important evidence for the claim that Jesus' mission is to be seen in the light of realized eschatology. According to Matt 12:28/Luke 11:20 Jesus' exorcisms, his driving out demons with the finger of God proves that the kingdom of God has arrived/come near (φθάνω). This central verse, presumably from Q, is held by the vast majority of scholars as authentic – i.e. it derives from Jesus.³⁸⁵

In accordance with Luke 11:20 it is noted that the exorcism stories realize the defeat of Satan and the demons. Secondly, it is often noted that Jesus called his disciples “blessed” or “happy” (μακάριος) because they hear and see what the prophets and the kings had only anticipated for the eschatological future (Luke 10:23–24/Matt 13:16–17). This passage, Luke 10:23–24, most probably also derives from the Q. In *Pss.*

kingdom of God. Jesus proclaims it as having come. This sense of fulfillment, which Jesus apparently linked to his own ministry and to his own time, involves some interesting, perhaps unique features.”

³⁸⁵ Laaksonen, 2002, 292, 298 (291–299). Meier, 1994, 413–414, 416. Dunn, 1998, 194–198. The Matthean and Lukan versions of the saying differ from each other in one notable aspect: According to Matthew Jesus drove demons with the power of God's spirit (ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ), and according to Luke he drove the demons with the finger of God (ἐν δακτύλῳ θεοῦ). Laaksonen credibly claims that the Lukan version which mention the finger of God is original. See Laaksonen, 2002, 283–285.

Sol. 17:44 and 18:7 we find two eschatological beatitudes. These beatitudes contradict with Luke 10:23/Matt 13:16–17 in the sense that in *Pss. Sol.* 17 and 18 the beatitudes concern the eschatological future when the Messiah, the Son of David, appears, whereas Luke 10:23/Matt 13:16–17 state that the eyewitnesses of Jesus, his disciples, are *presently* blessed.³⁸⁶ Moreover Q contains verses Luke 11:30–32/Matt 12:41–42, which recall Jesus saying that the Queen of the South came to Solomon and that the people of Nineveh repented in response to the proclamation of Jonah. Jesus then refers to his message and states that “*here is something greater than Jonah/Solomon*” (καὶ ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Ἰωνᾶ/Σολομῶνος ὧδε). Despite this the Galileans fail to respond with repentance and belief to the message of Jesus which is realised here *now* and which exceed the former message of biblical heroes – Solomon and Jonah. The “*someone greater*” clearly refers to Jesus’ message – i.e. the kingdom of God.³⁸⁷ All the above mentioned passages quite certainly derive from Q.

Mark too has transmitted material which clearly suggests that Jesus’ mission was embraced with a realization of something new breaking forth. This is apparent in Mark 2:18–20, followed by Matt 9:14–15 and Luke 5:33–35, in which Jesus explains that his disciples cannot fast because it would be inappropriate to fast during the wedding feast as long as the bridegroom is still with them – i.e. with the disciples.³⁸⁸ The claim that Jesus saw his mission and himself in the context of realized eschatology stands on a firm basis of evidence. Additionally the symbolic acts of gathering the Twelve, the entry into Jerusalem and the temple act can be counted as further proof for this claim. Leaning securely on solid evidence we can state that Jesus’ mission, his sayings, parables and actions are to be seen in the context of eschatological fulfillment. The

³⁸⁶ Reiser, 2001, 231–232. Meier, 1994, 436–439. *Pss. Sol.* 17:44: “Blessed are those born in those days to see the good fortune of Israel which God will bring to pass in the assembly of the tribes.” *Pss. Sol.* 18:6–7: “Blessed are those born in those days, to see the good things of the Lord which he will do for the coming generation; which will be under the rod of discipline of the Lord Messiah, in the fear of his God, in wisdom of spirit, and of righteousness and of strength.”

³⁸⁷ See ch. 8.3. See Dodd, 1935, 46–47.

³⁸⁸ Dunn, 2003, 441–442. Besides Mark 2:18–20, Dunn counts also Mark 2:21–22 as an evidence for Jesus’ mission in the context of realized eschatology.

kingdom of God had arrived, it had come near. By claiming this I do not neglect the futuristic aspect of the kingdom of God which is also clear in the Jesus traditions.

4.5 Were the Jewish sinners self-made Gentiles?

We have concluded that Jesus drove his mission for the Jews in a context of realized eschatology. The plausible premise that Jesus believed that the kingdom of God had in some manner arrived and that the eschatological restoration had been inaugurated through his mission, implies the possibility of openness towards the Gentiles. However, the Jesus tradition presents only a few occasions of Jesus helping individual Gentiles. It has been argued that during the first century Jewish sinners were associated with Gentiles and with the lifestyle of the Gentiles (1 Macc 1:15). If this was the case, does it imply that Jesus' fellowship with Jewish sinners relates something of his attitudes towards the Gentiles?

Did the Jews of the second temple period regard the sinners as Gentiles and the Gentiles as sinners? The Greek term for a sinner, ἁμαρτωλός, used in the LXX and in the NT, clearly resembles the Hebrew word שׁוֹטֵט, which can be translated as sinner and wicked.³⁸⁹ The meaning of the term sinner in the Gospels and in the writings of the second temple period has resulted in plenty of controversy among scholars.³⁹⁰ It seems clear that the meaning of being a Jewish sinner was understood as someone who had willingly defiled the Torah and abandoned the covenant between God and Israel. These Jewish sinners did not have the will

³⁸⁹ Winninge, 1995, 182. Dunn, 1990, 73. Holmén, 2001, 200–201. Sanders, 1985, 177.

³⁹⁰ See Sanders, 1985, 174–211. Sanders clarifies the scholarly discussion concerning the understanding of the sinners: see Sanders, 1985, 385. Note 14. In the Synoptics the Galilean “crowds” who are said to have followed Jesus, witnessed his miracles and listened to his teachings, are not called sinners by the evangelists or by anyone else. The accusation of being in contact and dining with sinners is only targeted on Jesus and his disciples (Mark 2:15–16). Moreover Jesus and his disciples are accused of ignoring the Torah and the traditions of the elders (Mark 2:24; 3:2–5; 7:5). See Meier, 2001, 28–29. John 7:49 is the only occasion which can be read as proof for the statement according to which the crowds, the people were regarded as sinners. Sanders notes correctly that the *am haarees* were not generally regarded sinners as such: Sanders, 1985, 176–187.

to repent. Idolaters, liars, adulterers, murderers and blasphemers were regarded as sinners.³⁹¹

In the OT, NT, in the writings of the second temple period and in the rabbinic writings a sinner could be seen as a synonym for a Gentile.³⁹² Such a comparison might lead us to assume that if Jesus dined with sinners (Mark 2:15–17) and if he drove a mission for the lost and for the sinners (Mark 2:17; Luke 19:10), it could imply that he was open to Gentiles. Perrin defined the sinners and the tax-collectors, among whom Jesus drove his mission and with whom he joyously dined, as “Jews who had made themselves as Gentiles.”³⁹³ Perrin even states the table-fellowship markedly with “tax-collectors and sinners” naturally gave rise to universal aims in Jesus’ mission. Perrin interprets Matt 8:11 as referring to Gentiles who will come from the east and the west.³⁹⁴ It is

³⁹¹ Sanders, 1985, 177–178. Dunn has pointed out that during the second temple period the religious sects often defined the out-groups as sinners because the groups outside of their inside-group did not observe their Halakhah or way of life. The sinners are seen in contrast to the righteous inside-group which discusses and defines the sinners. Thus Dunn understands the term sinner as a factional term. According to his definition, the term sinners described “those whose conduct was regarded as unacceptable to a sectarian mentality” – i.e. those who did not follow the sects’ way of life and its Halakhah (Dunn, 1990, 76). See Dunn, 2003, 529–532. Dunn, 1990, 73–77. In line with this factional way of defining sinners, the Pharisees would possibly have identified the *am ha'ares*, the people of the land, the ordinary Jews of Galilee, as sinners. Ironically the Qumranites identified the Pharisees as sinners because they opposed the Qumranites’ Halakhah. See Dunn, 1990, 75. The accusations and sinful identifications stated in 1QH 2 (10):14–16; 4 (12):6–8; 4QpNah 2:7–10 are most probably meant for the Pharisees. In the Qumran scrolls the sinners are those who are not part of the sect, and who oppose its Halakhah and do not observe it: CD 1:13–21; IQS 2:4–5; 1QH 2:8–19. Arguably in 1 Macc Jewish sinners and infidels are often simply associated with the enemies of the Maccabees and with those who abandoned certain parts of the Torah which were important for the Maccabees: 1 Macc 1:15, 34; 6:21–27; 7:5–9.

³⁹² Dunn, 1990, 73–74. Ps 9:17; Mark 14:41; Luke 6:33; Matt 5:46–47; 18:17; *Jub.* 23:23–34 and Gal 2:15. For the meaning of a sinner in the Rabbinic writings see Neusner, 2005, 275–306. Bauckham and Fredriksen stress that the Gentiles were not regarded as sinners due to the fact that they did not observe the ritual purity laws. The laws of ritual purity concerned the Jews, not the Gentiles. See Fredriksen, 1999, 68–70. Bauckham, 2005, 93–95, 96–97, 101. In accordance to the writings of the second temple period the Jews quite frequently associated the Gentiles with idolatry and sexual immoralities (*Jub.* 20:4–6; *Let. Aris.* 152–153; 2 *Bar.* 82:3–9; *As. Mos.* 8:4), which polluted the land. The Gentiles were regarded as sinners because of their moral impurities, mainly idolatry and fortifications. See Bauckham, 2005, 95–98.

³⁹³ Perrin, 1967, 92–93, 103, 106.

³⁹⁴ Perrin, 1967, 106.

to be emphasized that Jesus, even if he arguably dined with sinners, did not dine with Gentiles.³⁹⁵ If Jesus had dined with Gentiles the evangelists would presumably have mentioned it. It is important to investigate Perrin's idea of sinners as "Jews who had made themselves as Gentiles". Several scholars maintain that Gentiles indeed were *in one respect* regarded as sinners. Winninge clarifies that in Psalms of Solomon the Romans and the nations are repeatedly called "sinners" and "lawless".³⁹⁶

This tendency of calling and considering Gentiles as sinners can indeed be observed in texts from the second temple period.³⁹⁷ According to 1QM 1:1–2 in the eschatological war the sons of light, the Qumranites, will wage a final war against the Gentile nations and "their allies, the ungodly of the Covenant." Regarding the term sinner Borg states that it "had become a technical term for Gentiles, who were excluded from the holiness which was Israel's alone."³⁹⁸ It is important to notice that Israel regarded itself as a chosen and holy covenant-partner with God (Exod 19:5–6). This choice made by God excluded the Gentiles from the covenantal relationship, from the holiness and from certain laws. This logic leads easily to the conviction that the Gentiles are unholy, lawless, godless and unrighteous, i.e. sinners.³⁹⁹

For our concerns *Jub.* 15:33–34 makes an interesting statement regarding "the children of Israel" of the future. Many of them will forget the Torah and many of them will abandon the circumcision and worse, they will not circumcise their sons. Because of this, they have *made* their sons and themselves "like the Gentiles" (see *Jub.* 1:9; 15:33–34), and henceforth a terrible wrath will fall upon Israel and she will be lead into exile. The sinful Jews, who have become like Gentiles, are called "sons of Belial" and their exclusion from the land and community of Israel is explicitly pointed out. "There will no more be pardon or forgive-

³⁹⁵ Borg, 1998, 98–99.

³⁹⁶ Winninge, 1995, 185–186. *Ps. Sol.* 1:1; 7:1–2; 13:3; 17:3–4, 11, 13, 24.

³⁹⁷ 1 Macc 2:48, 62; *Jub.* 23:23–24. In *1 En.* 90:19 the Gentiles are symbolized by the beasts in comparison to the Israelis who are symbolized by the sheep. In 2 Macc 6:24 the righteous and old Jewish teacher, Eleazar, does not want to break the Torah by eating forbidden food. Such an act would give the Jewish people a conviction that he had become a Gentile.

³⁹⁸ Borg, 1998, 98–99.

³⁹⁹ See Winninge, 1995, 185.

ness unto them for all sin of this eternal error” (*Jub.* 15:34). Bauckham claims – most probably correctly – that several Jews did not share a meal with Gentiles (*Jub.* 22:16) because of their “corrupting influence of Gentile idolatry and immorality.”⁴⁰⁰ In *Jub.* 1:9, 11–12 we encounter the fear that the Jews would “walk after the Gentiles, and after their uncleanness, and after their shame, and will serve their gods.” Bauckham argues that the Gentiles’ morally polluting influence was observed with ill-will especially in Palestine but less in the Diaspora. This is understandable since the moral impurities offended the holiness of the land and the sanctuary.⁴⁰¹ In *Jubilees*, as elsewhere in Jewish and biblical writings, it is emphasized that the real sons of Abraham are not to walk in the ways of the Gentiles and they are to be separated from them.⁴⁰²

Dunn refers to *Jub.* 6:32–35 and 23:16, 26 in support of his claim that the Jewish sinners had crossed the line of the covenant, and therefore they had “made themselves like Gentile sinners.”⁴⁰³ A similar idea of excluding God’s forgiveness from the worst sinners and from the godless is found in *1 En.* 5:5–6. Perrin suggests that the godless here, i.e. *1 En.* 5:5–6, refers to the Gentiles.⁴⁰⁴ Josephus states that Eleazar, who was the commander of the Sicarii during the battle at Masada in the aftermaths of the Jews’ war against the Romans, led his rebellious subjects to regard and treat the Jews who sought peace with the Romans as foreigners (*ἀλλοφύλος*) and as their enemies (*Bell.* 7:254–255). In *T. Dan* 5:5 we get the impression that the way of the Jewish sinners is the way of the Gentiles: “And whensoever ye depart from the Lord, ye shall walk in all evil and work the abominations of the Gentiles, going a-whoring after women of lawless ones, while with all wickedness the spirits of wickedness work in you.” Neusner claims that in accordance to the thin-

⁴⁰⁰ Bauckham, 2005, 111–112, 121.

⁴⁰¹ Bauckham, 2005, 98.

⁴⁰² *Lev* 20:24–26; *Ezra* 9:10–12; 10:11; *Exod* 23:33; *Neh* 9:2; 10:29; 13:3; *Jub.* 1:9–10; 2:31; 3:31; 16:17; 22:16; *1 Macc* 1:11–15; 2:19–20; 2 *Kgs* 17:11, 15–17; *Let. Aris.* 151–153; 2 *Bar.* 42:5; 48:23. See, Bauckham, 2005, 125.

⁴⁰³ Dunn, 1990, 74, 150–151.

⁴⁰⁴ Perrin, 1967, 92–93. See *1 En.* 5:5–6: “Therefore shall ye execrate your days, and the years of your life shall perish, and the years of your destruction shall be multiplied in eternal execration, and ye shall find no mercy. In those days ye shall make your names an eternal execration unto all the righteous and by you shall all who curse, curse. And all the sinners and godless shall imprecate by you, and for you the godless there shall be a curse.”

king of the Rabbinic sages the Gentiles were regarded as sinners and idolaters. This is simply due to the fact that that the Gentiles had rejected God and his Torah.⁴⁰⁵ The Rabbinic sages maintained that if and when Gentiles recognize the one God and come to serve him, they cease to remain in the category of Gentiles and are placed “in the end of days” into the category of Israel. These former Gentiles would then belong to Israel and as *m. Sanh.* 9:6 states “all Israelites have a share in the world to come.”⁴⁰⁶

This cursory overview demonstrates that sinful Jews could be regarded as “self-made Gentiles” because they followed the ways and manners of the Gentiles. The Gospels, however, do not claim that the sinners with whom Jesus is said to have associated and dined were Gentiles in the ethnic sense. Jesus quite certainly dined and associated with sinners.⁴⁰⁷ This part of his mission reflects his aim to search for the lost sheep of the house of Israel – i.e. the Jews. In the light of the Synoptics, the fact that Jesus had fellowship with Jewish sinners does not relate that he would have expressed somekind of openness towards the Gentiles.

⁴⁰⁵ Neusner, 2005, 278, 281–283, 292, 300.

⁴⁰⁶ Neusner, 2005, 286–288.

⁴⁰⁷ Dunn, 2003, 526–528. See Mark 2:17; Matt 11:19/Luke 7:34; Luke 7:37, 39; 15:1–2; 19:7.

5 Jesus meeting a Gentile

5.1 Introduction

Scholars have often concentrated on the two most concrete occasions where Jesus is recorded as having helped a Gentile: the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7 and Matt 15) and the centurion in Capernaum (Matt 8 and Luke 7). Our main focus in this chapter will be on these stories. In addition to these two occasions of Jesus meeting a Gentile, we will also consider the story of the Gerasene demoniac, which is found in all the Synoptics (Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39; Matt 8:28–34). Everything in the story about the Gerasene demoniac suggests that the demoniac is to be regarded as a Gentile, although his ethnicity is not explicitly expressed.

5.2 The Syrophenician woman

The story of the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:21–28 and Matt 15:21–28), deals with Jesus meeting a Gentile woman on non-Jewish Tyrian territory. The woman takes the initiative and begs Jesus to heal her demonized daughter. At first Jesus seems not to regard the woman at all – Jesus remains silent and ignorant. According to Matthew, the disciples asked Jesus to do something for the persistently begging woman (Matt 15:23). Jesus insists to his disciples that he is sent only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 15:24). The woman crawls to Jesus' feet and requests help. Jesus and the woman share a dialogue or debate after which the woman's daughter is healed from a distance only by a declarative word of Jesus. This powerful and dramatic story resembles other healing stories. Matthew's version of it has clear similarities to Matt 8:5–13 and Matt 9:27–31/Mark 10:46–52. In Mark's version, some similarities are to be found with Mark 10:46–52. The Gospel traditions contain several similar stories of parents asking Jesus to help their children or servant.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁸ Mark 5:22–23; 7:25; 10:13–16; Luke 7:2–4; John 4:46–47.

Besides in the story of the Syrophenician woman, the Gospels tell of only two other incidents where Jesus heals a patient from a distance. These cases deal with the centurion's servant (Matt 8:5–13/Luke 7:1–10) and the royal official's son (John 4:46–54). If John 4:46–54 is a Johannine variant of the healing of the centurion's servant, then all the healings done from a distance, deal with Gentiles.⁴⁰⁹ Many scholars have noticed that the story about the Syrophenician woman is not a typical healing story. The center of the story is laid on Jesus' meeting and dispute with a Gentile woman on non-Jewish territory.⁴¹⁰ The dispute concerning the children and the dogs is highlighted.⁴¹¹ It is clear that also in the story of the centurion's servant (Luke 7:1–10/Matt 8:5–13) as well as in the story of the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1–20), the dialogue is emphasized.

In the argumentation between Jesus and the woman it is clear that the children (τέκνα) are the Jews and the Gentiles are the dogs (κυνάρια). In Jewish tradition, in the OT and other Jewish writings, Jews are called God's children.⁴¹² In a similar fashion there are passages which compare the Gentiles with dogs.⁴¹³ In the ancient Near Eastern culture it would have been deeply humiliating to call a person a dog. The Jewish law depicted both pigs and dogs in the same category of unclean animals. Understandably these humiliating words have called for long explanations from scholars. The words have been seen as being racist and as supportive for nationalistic chauvinism. Some see the words as creations of some stringent Jewish Christian community, which inserted its own

⁴⁰⁹ B. Ber. 34b relates a healing story where R. Hanina b. Dosa healed the son of R. Gamaliel from a distance by his fluent prayer. See Catchpole, 173–174. Vermes, 1973, 75.

⁴¹⁰ Lüdemann, 2000, 50.

⁴¹¹ Dunn, 2003, 218–219.

⁴¹² Exod 4:22; Deut 14:1; Isa 1:2; Hos 11:1; Jer 31:9; Matt 3:9; 17:25–26; Luke 15:31; Rom 9:4; *m. Abot* 3:15; *Jub.* 1:24–25, 28. Wis 18:13.

⁴¹³ Bird, 2006, 48–50. Theissen, 1991, 61–62. Davies & Allison, 1988. Ringe, 2001, 89. Marcus, 2000, 463–464. To call someone a dog was a great insult (1 Sam 17:43; Isa 56:10–11 etc.). Dogs recalled mainly negative representations as sinners and heretics (Matt 7:6; 2 Pet 2:22; Phil 3:2; Rev 22:15). Gentiles are pictured as dogs in some texts: *l. En.* 89:42, 46–47, 49 (Philistines); Pirque R. El. 29. On only a few occasions are dogs pictured in a positive light as pets: *m. Kil.* 8:6; *Jos. Asen.* 10:14; Tob 6:1; 11:4.

words into Jesus' mouth in order to forbid Christians from practicing Gentile mission.⁴¹⁴

In both Mark and Matthew Jesus insists that the children are to be fed. The dialogue regarding the bread, children and dogs is of course allegorical. The woman does not ask for bread but for healing for her daughter. Jesus' statement can be seen in the light of his primary call to drive a mission among and for the Jews. However, it is to be noted that nothing explicitly supports the claim that Jesus would have entered the foreign territory in order to drive a mission among the Jews. Jesus is not told of actually searching for the lost sheep of Israel or feeding the children in the context of his border crossing visits. The woman humbly admits the children's privileged position at the table, and her position as a Gentile "dog." Despite this humble position, she stands up for the *dogs'* right to eat the crumbs falling from the children. According to the Synoptics Jesus does not directly answer the woman's plea: "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs" (Mark 7:28; Matt 15:27). In both Mark and Matthew Jesus, as an answer, states simply that the woman's daughter is healed. According to Mark this is because of the woman's words (Mark 7:29), and according to Matthew, it is because of her faith (Matt 15:28).

The story attests that individual Gentiles, such as the woman, can get help from Jesus if they persistently request for it. Jesus' mission is for the Jews, the children, but even Gentiles can have a portion of the healings and blessings. This emerging picture can partly be suited to the theological dictum of Rom 1:16: "first to the Jew, then also to the Greek." I shall argue that the story suits well into the local first century context of the border districts between Phoenicia and Galilee. The story touches the sensitive questions regarding the difficult relationship between the Israelis (Jews) and the Tyrians and Canaanites (Phoenicians). Several scholars have argued that the story resembles Acts 10, where Peter preaches the Gospel for the first time to Cornelius, a God-fearing Gentile.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ See Catchpole, 2006, 174–177. Bird, 2006, 48–51. Bird presents the scholarly history of the interpretation of these words.

⁴¹⁵ Burkill, 1967, 174–175.

5.2.1 The question of source

In Matthew the story of the Syrophenician woman contains 140 words, while it contains 130 words in Mark's version of it. Out of these words less than 40 are held in common.⁴¹⁶ An almost verbatim connection is found on Jesus and the woman's dispute concerning the children and the dogs in Mark 7:27b–28 and Matt 15:25–27.

Matt 15:21-28	Mark 7:24-30
<p>Καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἐκεῖθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὰ μέρη Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος.²² καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ Χαναναία ἀπὸ τῶν ὀρίων ἐκείνων ἐξελθοῦσα ἔκραζει λέγουσα· ἐλέησόν με, κύριε υἱὸς Δαυὶδ· ἡ θυγάτηρ μου κακῶς δαιμονίζεται.²³ ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῇ λόγον. καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἠρώτουν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· ἀπόλυσον αὐτήν, ὅτι κράζει ὄπισθεν ἡμῶν.²⁴ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ.²⁵ ἡ δὲ ἐλθοῦσα προσεκύνει αὐτῷ λέγουσα· κύριε, βοήθει μοι.²⁶ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· οὐκ ἔστιν καλὸν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων καὶ βαλεῖν τοῖς κυναρίοις.²⁷ ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· ναὶ κύριε, καὶ γὰρ τὰ κυνάρια ἐσθίει ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τῶν κυρίων</p>	<p>Ἐκεῖθεν δὲ ἀναστὰς ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὰ ὄρια Τύρου. Καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς οἰκίαν οὐδένα ἤθελεν γινῶναι, καὶ οὐκ ἠδυνήθη λαθεῖν.²⁵ ἀλλ' εὐθὺς ἀκούσασα γυνὴ περὶ αὐτοῦ, ἧς εἶχεν τὸ θυγάτριον αὐτῆς πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον, ἐλθοῦσα προσέπεσεν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ.²⁶ ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἦν Ἑλληνίς, Συροφοινίκισσα τῷ γένει· καὶ ἠρώτα αὐτὸν ἵνα τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐκβάλῃ ἐκ τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῆς.²⁷ καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτῇ· ἄφες πρῶτον χορτασθῆναι τὰ τέκνα, οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν καλὸν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων καὶ τοῖς κυναρίοις βαλεῖν.²⁸ ἡ δὲ ἀπεκρίθη καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· κύριε· καὶ τὰ κυνάρια ὑποκάτω τῆς τραπέζης ἐσθίουσιν ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν παιδίων.²⁹ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· διὰ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ὕπαγε, ἐξελήλυθεν ἐκ τῆς θυγατρὸς σου τὸ δαιμόνιον.³⁰ καὶ ἀπελθοῦσα εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς εὗρεν τὸ παιδίον βεβλημένον ἐπὶ</p>

⁴¹⁶ Davies & Allison, 1991, 542.

<p>αὐτῶν.²⁸ τότε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῇ· ὦ γύναι, μεγάλη σου ἡ πίστις· γεννηθήτω σοι ὡς θέλεις. καὶ ἰάθη ἡ θυγάτηρ αὐτῆς ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκεῖνης.</p>	<p>τὴν κλίνην καὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐξεληλυθός.</p>
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The clear differences between the Markan and the Matthean version of the story concern the narrative, not the dialogue. Davies and Allison’s explanation according to which Matthew knew Mark’s story – in oral or written form – and retold it with a storyteller’s freedom is credible.⁴¹⁷ Dunn raises the possibility that Matthew and Mark knew the story from the same oral retelling of it.⁴¹⁸ This is unlikely due to the fact that the story of the Syrophenician woman is part of a “Gentile setting”, which is shared by Matthew and Mark (Mark 7:1–8:10 and Matt 15:1–39). This setting is totally absent from the Gospel of Luke. Thus it seems that in the case of the Syrophenician woman Matthew is relying on Mark.

5.2.2 The Gentile setting in Matthew and Mark

The setting of the story of the Syrophenician woman is very similar in both Mark (7:1–8:10) and Matthew (15:1–39). It is worth noting that the whole setting, in fact the whole section of Mark 6:45–8:26, and all of its separate stories, are absent from Luke. In NT scholarship this gap is often called the “great omission.”⁴¹⁹ The main incident for our concern, the story of the Syrophenician woman, is therefore also missing from Luke. Verses Mark 7:1–8:10/Matt 15:1–39 constitute a central *Gentile section* in both Mark and Matthew’s Gospel. In Mark 7:1–23/Matt 15:1–20 Jesus challenges and questions the Jewish dietary laws with his new teaching. These dietary laws formed a barrier between Jews and Gentiles. After this Jesus travels to un-Jewish territory and meets a Gentile.

⁴¹⁷ Davies & Allison, 1991, 542–543. Also Lüdemann and Luz argue that Matthew is relying on Mark in this story. Lüdemann, 2000, 50, 193. Luz, 1990, 430. Dunn sees this solution as a serious possibility. Dunn, 2003, 218–219.

⁴¹⁸ See Dunn, 2003, 218–219.

⁴¹⁹ Bock, 1994, 387, 821, 950–951.

In this incident the Markan Jesus says, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” This suits into Mark’s, as well as Matthew’s, narrative account: Jesus first feeds 5000 Jews on the Jewish side of the Sea of Galilee (Mark 6:30–44/Matt 14:14–21), and after this he feeds 4000 men on the Gentile side of the Sea (Mark 8:1–10/Matt 15:32–39). This order of salvation suggests that Mark and Matthew are leaning on the mission-theological dictum, which is expressed explicitly in Rom 1:16: “first to the Jew, then also to the Greek.” The same programme is also stated in Acts 1:8; 13:46 in the sense that both of the passages imply that the Gospel is first to be preached to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. It is true that Mark’s account (Mark 7:1–8:10) of the section has more positive Gentile references than Matthew’s. Mark for example concludes the story of the Syrophenician woman by saying that Jesus “went through Sidon” – (ἦλθεν διὰ Σιδῶνος, Mark 7:31) towards the Sea of Galilee.⁴²⁰ This statement – ἦλθεν διὰ Σιδῶνος – would have contradicted the idea of Matt 10:5b, and consequently it is not a surprise that these words are only in Mark. Sidon was indeed a Gentile polis.

5.2.3 The Syrophenician woman and Acts 10

Burkill treats the story of the Syrophenician woman and its preceding context in an interesting way. He argues that the Markan text concerning Jesus and the Pharisees’ dispute about clean and unclean food (Mark 7:1–23) raises a historical problem with Mark 7:24–30. According to Burkill, verses 7:1–23, and especially 7:19b, clarify that all food is clean, and therefore the separating barrier between Jew and Gentile is taken down. Burkill proposes that the dispute in Mark 7:1–23 derives from the Christian community, not from the historical Jesus. Burkill states the following: “a controversy that St. Mark has retrojected into the earthly ministry of the Messiah is thrown forward by the author of Luke-Acts into the life of the early church, where it properly belongs.”⁴²¹

⁴²⁰ Bird, 2006, 113. Marcus, 2000, 465–466.

⁴²¹ Burkill, 1967, 174–175. Meier, 1994, 660. Meier states the following: “The story of the Syrophenician woman fits well into Mark’s redactional framework, since it is preceded by the dispute about clean and unclean in 7:1–23. Having just declared all food clean,

Burkill puts much weight on the analogy between Mark 7:1–23/24–30 and Acts 10. In Acts 10 Peter had a heavenly vision in which he is told that all food is clean (Acts 10:9-16). Acts 10:15 states: Καὶ φωνὴ πάλιν ἐκ δευτέρου πρὸς αὐτόν· ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἐκαθάρισεν, σὺ μὴ κοίνου. After this revelation, which is in line with the statement of Mark 7:19b, Peter proclaims the Gospel to Cornelius who was a Gentile (Acts 10:34–48). Burkill argues that the writer of Luke-Acts, “who made an effort to produce a smooth and coherent narrative,” found a grave historical problem in combining Mark 7:1–23 with 7:24–30.⁴²² The nearest Lukan parallel to Mark 7:1–23 is Luke 11:37–41.⁴²³ It is worth noting that Burkill’s conclusion of the connection between declaring all food clean and the beginning of Gentile mission was already made by Chrysostom (*Homily on Matthew* 52.1). Chrysostom observed how Mark 7:1–23 and 24–30 corresponds to Acts 10 in which the declaring of all food clean is followed by an opening for the Gentiles.⁴²⁴ Davies and Allison argue that the connection is not obvious because, as they suggest, Matt 15:1–20 does not abolish OT laws. The idea that Matt 15 and Mark 7 are connected to Acts 10 depends on the conclusion that they deal with the same themes. This is, however, not evident. Davies and Allison are to be quoted in length:

“Indeed, one could perhaps even argue that the trailing of Matt 15:1–20 by 21–28 guarantees that the former will not be interpreted in any antinomian fashion, for in the latter the primacy of the Jews and of God’s covenant with them are unequivocally upheld. There is in any event nothing in 15:1–20 or 21–28, considered by themselves, to indicate that God has rejected his people or introduced a new way of salvation.”⁴²⁵

Davies and Allison’s argument is plausible in Matthew’s version of the story (Matt 15:1–20). Matthew has omitted several words and

Jesus now acts out the breaking down of the religious barrier separating Jew from Gentile.”

⁴²² Burkill, 1967, 174.

⁴²³ Burkill, 1967, 174.

⁴²⁴ Marcus, 2000, 466. Davies & Allison, 1991, 543.

⁴²⁵ Davies & Allison, 1991, 543. Davies and Allison deal with the question arising from Chrysostom’s interpretation of Matt 15 in comparison to Acts 10. Chrysostom, *Homily on Matthew*, 52.1.

clauses of the Markan parallel concerning the purity of food. These words and phrases, as Dunn points out, are found in the following verses: Mark 7:15, 18–19, 21 and 23.⁴²⁶ For our concern the omission of Mark 7:19c is certainly noticeable. We ought to recall Matt 5:17–20, a passage which reveals that Matthew’s Jesus did not come to abolish the Torah. Even in Mark’s version, Mark 7, the thematic and functional connection to Acts 10 is not certain. In Mark the evangelist interprets Jesus’ saying of 7:15 in 7:19c. The words of 7:19c – “declaring (or more correctly ‘cleansing’) all foods [clean]” (καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα) – are not found in Jesus’ mouth. Furthermore, in the following story, 7:24–30, Jesus calls the woman a dog. If Mark wished to express the same ideas as posed in Acts 10, he surely has found a strange and odd way of doing so. We may conclude that the evangelist’s interpretation in Mark 7:19c of 7:15 reveals his antinomian intention. It is not certain whether the interpretation does justice to Jesus’ own stance on this question. There are several reasons to assume that Jesus did not abolish OT laws concerning clean and unclean food. According to Mark 7:5 the Pharisees accused Jesus because his disciples did eat with unwashed hands.

This is quite a minor accusation compared to the accusation of eating unclean food. The accusation of Mark 7:5 does not suggest that the disciples ate non-kosher food. It is to be noted that impurities’ contracting by touch are issues of a long halakhic history in the OT and in the Mishnah. The Mishnah has a whole tractate devoted to the subject of “hands” – *Yadaim*.⁴²⁷ If the Pharisees had had evidence they would have raised a serious accusation against Jesus’ disciples eating non-kosher food. Eating of unclean food was a major issue in second temple Judaism (Dan 1:8–16; Tob 1:10–11; *Vita* 14). As 1 Macc 1:62–63 states, Jews were ready to face death rather than abolishing dietary laws. Acts 10:14 and 11:8 indicates that the issue of eating everything was not sett-

⁴²⁶ Dunn, 2003, 573.

⁴²⁷ Dunn, 2003, 571–572. Sanders (Sanders, 1985, 185–186, 264–265) has doubts whether the Pharisaic concern for hand-washing had been developed to this degree, as Mark 7:5 presupposes, before 70 CE. I maintain that the large amount of halakhic material (*m. Yadim*) dealing with this issue supports the conclusion that Mark 7:5 recalls a contemporary concern of the Pharisees already during the time of Jesus.

led for Peter. In Acts 10:14 Peter is recorded as saying: οὐδέποτε ἔφαγον πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ ἀκάθαρτον (“I have never eaten anything common or unclean”). Several scholars hold that Mark 7:15 does not derive from the historical Jesus because otherwise it would be very difficult to understand why the earliest disciples had such contradicting ideas regarding the matter of dietary laws.⁴²⁸ The evidence according to which Jesus would have “declared all food clean” is not convincing. We have no traditions remembering Jesus or his disciples eating non-kosher food.⁴²⁹

In sum, the chronology of Acts 10 – abolishing the Jewish dietary laws and preaching to Gentiles – is not apparent in Matthew 15. The evangelist might support such a reading of Mark 7, but this is not self-evident. The historical Jesus most probably did not abolish the OT dietary laws, and he did not launch a mission to the Gentiles. So to say, we do not have any traditions remembering Jesus as following the two-step chronology of Acts 10. The evidence does not reach Burkill’s conclusions according to which Mark 7:1–23 and 24–30 recall the same sequence of chronology as Acts 10, and according to which this chronology is based on the early church’s *Sitz im Leben*. Admittedly Mark 7:1–23 and 24–30 recall in an odd fashion the theological intentions posed clearly in Acts 10. However the theological, two-step chronology is too obscure in Mark 7 and particularly in Matt 15 to suggest that it supports the same intentions as Acts 10. It seems that Mark 7 is not a reflection of the theological plan apparent in Acts 10. If Mark had reasoned in line with Acts 10, he would have placed clearer antinomian statements in Jesus’ mouth (cf. Mark 7:15/Acts 10:13–16). Moreover he would not have recalled Jesus calling the Gentile woman a dog, but more likely as a devout woman who feared God (cf. Acts 10:2).⁴³⁰

⁴²⁸ Dunn, 2003, 574–575. Sanders, 1985, 266–268. Vermes, 1993, 25–26. Fredriksen, 1999, 108. The matters concerning food and eating are dealt in the following verses: Gal 2:11–14; Rom 14:1–15:6; 1 Cor 8 and 10:20–30.

⁴²⁹ Dunn, 2003, 574–575.

⁴³⁰ The narrative connection for the Syrophoenician woman has been investigated not only in Acts 10 but also in Judg 1. Admittedly, there are some similarities between Mark 7:27–29 and Judg 1:4–7. See Derrett, 1977, 155–156. Roure, 1997, 389. In both Mark’s and Matthew’s version of the story of the Syrophoenician woman, the woman encounters the pro-Jewish saying of Mark 7:27 by stating that “even the dogs *under the table* eat the children’s crumbs” (Mark 7:28). The words ὑποκάτω τῆς τραπέζης (under the table),

5.2.4 The story of the Syrophoenician woman according to Mark

The Markan version of the story contains clear Markan elements. They in their turn reveal Mark's theological intention and message in the story. Jesus' need to be in secret, Mark 7:24, (the Messianic secret) and the idea of "first to the Jews", which is apparent in Mark's Gospel have often been considered to redactional elements.⁴³¹ It is clear that according to Mark Jesus repeatedly seeks to be unnoticed but without success: the crowds are attracted to him and they find him in order to request for his help.⁴³² Thus also in Mark 7:24 Jesus enters a house in the region of Tyre in order to remain unnoticed. Jesus entering a house, naming of the territory and the two-fold characterization of the woman are other special features in Mark's story. Marcus points out interestingly that the neuter singular form of the word "first" (πρῶτος) is always used in Mark to indicate events of the eschatological timeline.⁴³³ The children are to be fed "first" (Mark 7:27), the first one of the two feeding stories is done on the Jewish side of the Sea of Galilee (Mark 6:30-44), and after this,

found in the mouth of the Canaanite Adoni-bezek in Judg 1:7, are identical with the Canaanite woman's words in Mark 7:28. The words occur nowhere else in the LXX or in the NT in this manner. Therefore these three words of Mark 7:28 and Judg 1:7 form a unique verbatim parallel. The verbal parallel could be accidental, as we are dealing with only three words, but the similar sequence of the stories suggests some kind of an intentional connection. In both Mark 7 and Judg 1 the person attesting these words - ὑποκάτω τῆς τραπέζης - stands as a representative of the Canaanite/Phoenician people. In both cases, Mark 7 and Judg 1, the person understands his/her place under the table as a dog begging for crumbs. In Mark 7 the lord is Jesus, in Judg 1 the leaders are the men of Judah, while in both texts the poor person submitting to his/her fate is a Canaanite/Phoenician.

⁴³¹ Marcus, 2000, 463, 467, 469. Catchpole, 2006, 174–175.

⁴³² Gundry, 1993, 372. Marcus, 2000, 467. See Mark 1:45; 2:1–2; 3:7–8, 20; 6:30–33; 9:30. Marcus states that "the hiding motif here primarily serves to demonstrate his (Jesus') charismatic power, which cannot be hidden – a point that will quickly be reiterated in 7:36." Marcus further comments on the theological message of the hiding motif: "Jesus' glory cannot remain a secret for the same reason that the good news will not stay permanently bottled up within Israel: 'The word of God is not chained', (2 Tim 2:9)."

⁴³³ Marcus, 2000, 463. Roure, 1997, 385–386. Satan must first be bound, before anyone can break into his house (3:27). The children are to be fed first (7:27), Elijah has come first (9:11–12), the Gospel must be proclaimed first to all the nations before the end comes (13:10). See also 4:28.

on the Gentile side of the Sea (Mark 8:1–10).⁴³⁴ The words “let the children be fed *first*” (Mark 7:27a) has been seen as connected to the theology of Rom 1:16.⁴³⁵

This notion supports the conclusion that the word “first” in verse Mark 7:27 is theologically loaded and redactional. Several scholars have argued that the mission theology of the Church, or at least the mission theology of some Christian community, is at the heart of this story. This argumentation finds support especially in Mark’s version of the story. This conclusion depends mostly on the word “first.” But Meier insists that even if this word is omitted as redactional, the story still carries, in its center, a lot of mission theology.⁴³⁶ However it should not surprise us that the Jew-centered Jesus saw that the children (the Jews) should be fed primarily and first. In the light of Jewish eschatological visions this order of salvation would be expected. If Jesus had proposed otherwise – first the dogs, then possibly the children – his statement and idea would be exceptional among the Jews of his time. In such a case, the theological affection of Paul would be quite suggestive (Rom 11:25–26).⁴³⁷ Catchpole claims that Mark 7:27a is redaction as it expresses the sequence of salvation and implies that the dogs will be eventually fed.

⁴³⁴ Bird, 2006, 51, 113.

⁴³⁵ Catchpole, 2006, 175. Meier, 1994, 660–661. We may also note that in addition to the word “first”, also the term “Greek” (Ἑλληνίς), links together Mark 7:24–30 and Rom 1:16. We are however moving on speculative grounds if we try to testify a binding link between the term “Greek” found in verses Rom 1:16 and Mark 7:26. Of course there is the possibility that the redactor or creator of the story (Mark 7:24–30) knew Paul’s mission theology, or the slogan “first to the Jew”, and used words connected to it: i.e. “first” and “Greek”.

⁴³⁶ Meier, 1994, 660–661.

⁴³⁷ Sanders, 1983, 184. Sanders argues on the basis of Rom 11:13–16 and 25 that Paul turns the traditional Jewish idea of Israel’s restoration upside down. In these verses the order of salvation is reversed: it is not first for the Jews and then for the Gentiles, but vice versa. Sanders poses that in spite of this reversal Paul, nonetheless, was still committed to the hope of the eschatological restoration of Israel. For Paul, so Sanders maintains, the rule of God had been realized and Israel would be restored within his own generation. Now, prior to this final restoration, Gentiles are joined to the people of God (Rom 11:17–24); see Sanders, 1983, 171. The salvation of the Jews – as a people – would occur immediately when the number of Gentiles had been fulfilled (Rom 11:25; 13:11–12). Against the background of such ideas, we are to understand Paul’s zeal and compulsive need to preach the Gospel for the Gentiles. He surely thought that the number of Gentiles was nearly fulfilled. This can be assumed by his statement according to which he had completed his task of proclaiming the Gospel to all the nations, Rom 15:19; see Sanders, 1985, 95.

Catchpole argues that the redactional saying of 27a aims to soften the authentic saying of 27b, which excludes the dogs' right to the food of the children.⁴³⁸ It is however difficult to prove credibly that Jesus would have cherished such excluding views. I maintain that the dialogue between Jesus and the woman (Mark 7:27b–29; Matt 15:26–28) cannot be seen in the light of a clear and powerful mission theology if Mark 7:27a is omitted. This crucial phrase - ἄφες πρῶτον χορτασθῆναι τὰ τέκνα – attributed by Mark 7:27a to Jesus is not found in Matthew's version of the same story. The Markan phrase resembles, however, the Jew-centered idea which is expressed solely in Matt 15:24 by the mouth of Jesus: οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ.

In accordance with Acts 13:46 the word of God was “first” to be preached to the Jews, but because they rejected it, it is now proclaimed to the Gentiles. The dialogue in Mark 7:27b–29/Matt 15:26–28 does not recall the same idea raised in Acts 13:46. Jesus is not told of condemning the unrepentant and unbelieving Jews of Galilee (Matt 11:20–24), while meeting the believing Syrophenician woman on the Gentile region of Tyre. If the redactor had followed the ideas posed in Acts 13:46, he would have had a great possibility to do it here. In this story the main concern of Jesus' mission does not switch from the Jews to the Gentiles, but remains for the Jews, for the children. It seems that Mark's and Matthew's Jesus was following the basic idea of Jewish restoration eschatology: first Israel, and then possibly the Gentiles would have a share in the blessings of Israel. Mark 7:24–30 has more to do with the Jewish restoration theology than with the centrifugal mission strategy of the early Church.

5.2.5 The twofold identification of the woman and the language of the conversation

In Mark 7:26 the woman is identified as a “Greek” – *Helene*. This epithet may simply indicate that she was a Gentile. Marcus argues for such a conclusion, because in Rom 1:16 and 1 Cor 1:22–24 the term “Greek”

⁴³⁸ Catchpole, 2006, 174–175.

clearly works as a functional equivalent of a “Gentile.”⁴³⁹ This, however, is not the only or the likeliest interpretation of the epithet in Mark 7:26. Marcus admits the possibility that the word “Greek” indicates that the woman was a Gentile or that she was to her social status a Greek-speaker.⁴⁴⁰ In Mark the woman is identified with a two-part characterization: ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἦν Ἑλληνίς, Συροφουνίκισσα τῷ γένει, Mark 7:26. The second part of the woman’s identification – “of Syrophoenician origin” – reveals that she is a Gentile. Therefore it is not convincing that the both parts of the woman’s identification relate basically the same thing: she was a Gentile. In verse Mark 7:26 the term “Greek” is to be interpreted as referring to the woman’s cultural status as a *Helene*, as the second part of the characterization would refer to her ethnic origin.⁴⁴¹ In Matthew’s version, the woman is identified as Canaanite woman (γυνὴ Χαναναία), Matt 15:22. Matthew does not imply in any way that the woman would have been a Greek/*Helene*.

Theissen has noted that a two-part characterization, which revealed both the cultural and ethnic identity, was common at the time. Theissen regards this as a supporting proof for the argument according to which the two-fold characterizing in Mark 7:26 originates from an early tradition.⁴⁴² Consequently Theissen has promoted the idea that the epithet “Greek” should be read as referring to her social status in society. “In the Hellenistic city-states the ‘Greeks’ made up the free citizenry. Education and civic status were closely connected...” This explanation makes the double identification understandable. Even though the woman was Syrophoenician by birth she belonged to the privileged upper class of the Greeks.⁴⁴³ Hengel supposes that at least to some degree during the time of Jesus in Jewish Palestine “Greek education, membership of the

⁴³⁹ Marcus, 2000, 462.

⁴⁴⁰ Marcus, 2000, 462–463, 467.

⁴⁴¹ Freyne, 2004, 89. Freyne indicates that from Mark’s identification the woman is most probably to be regarded “religiously pagan and culturally Hellenized, but also a person of a high social status.”

⁴⁴² Theissen, 1991, 68–69. See: *Vita* 427; *C. Ap.* 1:179–180; *Philo Abr.* 251; *Acts* 4:36; 18:2.

⁴⁴³ Theissen, 1991, 72.

upper class and loyalty to Rome went together.”⁴⁴⁴ It is assumable that Mark’s Gentile readers were capable of understanding the two-fold characterization of the woman found in Mark 7:26. In Mark 7:29 Jesus pays attention to the woman’s reasoning and he is prepared to learn from her intervention. Precisely due to her *words* Jesus heals her daughter: διὰ τοῦτου τὸν λόγον ὑπάγε.⁴⁴⁵ The Syrophoenician woman stands as the only one in Mark’s Gospel to best Jesus in an argument. Jesus’ words in Mark 7:27b are certainly humiliating towards the woman, but the woman does not answer Jesus on equal terms. On the other hand the woman, in quite a wise manner, turns Jesus’ hostile and humiliating metaphor of the dog into a friendlier and more familiar metaphor. The begging woman and her suffering daughter are more like friendly dogs eating scraps under the childrens’ table. In Mark’s version of the story the *Helene* woman challenges the Jewish prophet’s ethno-centric attitude. She requests for a more universalist attitude from Jesus, and due to her words (Mark 7:29) Jesus heals her daughter from a distance.

If the woman was Syrophoenician by origin and Greek by cultural status, then she must have spoken Greek. The question is obvious: in what language would the dialogue between Jesus and the Gentile woman been conducted? Jesus evidently spoke Aramaic as some sayings indicate (Mark 5:41; 7:34). The possibility that Jesus would have spoken Greek and Hebrew is recognizable. Hengel and Rajak state that at the time of Jesus Judea, Galilee and Samaria were bilingual, or more correctly trilingual. Aramaic was the language of the ordinary folk. Hebrew was the sacred language of the Bible, and it was used partly in worship and in scribal discussions. Greek had largely become the language of trade, commerce and administration.⁴⁴⁶ Jerusalem is seen as the center for Greek-speaking inhabitants.⁴⁴⁷ Archaeological and scribal evidence clearly suggest that Greek was the native language of the coastal cities

⁴⁴⁴ Hengel, 1989, 40. On page 17 Hengel states: “The better the knowledge of language a Palestinian Jew acquired, the more easily he could rise in the social scale.”

⁴⁴⁵ Ringe, 2001, 83, 90–91. See Perkinson, 1996, 61–69.

⁴⁴⁶ Hengel, 1989, 9–10. Rajak, 2001, 246–247, 251–252.

⁴⁴⁷ Hengel, 1989, 9–10. Meier, 1991, 258. Hengel and Meier assume that the population of the greater Jerusalem would have reached up to 80 000 – 100 000 residents. Out of them around 10-20%, or 8 000 to 16 000 inhabitants, would have been Greek speaking Jews.

and areas around Gaza, Dor, Ptolemais-Akko, Caesarea Maritima, Jamnia and Ashdod. Tyre and Sidon were the influential Greek speaking Hellenized centers close to Galilee. Besides these, also Caesarea Philippi/Banias, Hippos, Gadara, Scythopolis and Gaba spread the Hellenistic ethos and language to their surrounding areas, including Galilee.⁴⁴⁸ It has been noticed that Galilee was to a large extent economically dependent on the Phoenician cities, especially Tyre and Ptolemais.⁴⁴⁹

Because Galilee was encircled by Greek speaking Hellenistic cities, and because Herod Antipas clearly followed his father's Hellenistic policy, Hengel goes as far as to suggest that the poleis founded by Antipas, i.e. Sepphoris and Tiberias, could possibly have been Greek-speaking.⁴⁵⁰ It can be convincingly argued that Galilee had a notable Greek speaking minority, and that the upper class of the society, the Herodians and for example the tax-collectors, spoke Greek. Hengel refers to the stories of the centurion of Capernaum and the Syrophenician woman in order to support his claim that Jesus could lead a conversation in Greek.⁴⁵¹ We can securely assume that some of Jesus' disciples were at least bilingual, if not trilingual Jews. At least some of Jesus' disciples could speak both Greek and Aramaic. Nevertheless, Greek would not have been the most obvious language between Galilean Jews and the Phoenician Gentiles. Between the ethnic groups within Palestine or surrounding it, i.e. the Phoenicians, the Idumeans and Samaritans, the language would not have been the distinguishing and separating factor. In these areas Aramaic, not Greek, functioned as the *lingua franca*.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁸ Hengel, 1989, 14.

⁴⁴⁹ Hengel, 1989, 15. Theissen, 1991, 73–75, 79.

⁴⁵⁰ Hengel, 1989, 14–15.

⁴⁵¹ Hengel, 1989, 16–17. According to Matt 10:2–3 two of Jesus disciples had purely Greek names (Ἀνδρέας καὶ Φίλιππος). The Gospels relate that Jesus had followers from all classes of society. From the upper classes Johanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza (Luke 8:3) and the tax collectors – especially the rich Zacchaeus from Jericho (Luke 19:1–2) can be mentioned. Hengel goes on to state that as Jesus was a building craftsman living near the former capital Galilee, Sepphoris, he was possibly engaged in the rebuilding of the city in the 20s. This is of course a possibility, but it cannot be proved.

⁴⁵² Rajak, 2001, 246, 251–252. On page 246 Rajak argues the following: “For the ancients, at any rate, there seems to have been little sense of a common past among the peoples of the region, and it is hard to detect significant elements of a shared culture beyond the linguistic inheritance.” Goodblatt states that “it is generally agreed that Aramaic was the

Theissen correctly remarks that the Phoenician language and the Galilean Aramaic were so closely related that a native Galilean Jew and a Syrophenician Gentile could easily have a conversation with each other.⁴⁵³ Moreover, Josephus presents proof that the Tyrian population was bilingual well into the first century CE.⁴⁵⁴ The Markan twofold identification of the woman most likely indicates that she was bilingual, i.e. she spoke both Greek and Aramaic.

As another special element in Mark's story is the idea that Jesus entered a house in the region of Tyre (Mark 7:24). According to the rabbinic purity legislation, not however according to the OT, Jews contracted ceremonial defilement by entering Gentile houses.⁴⁵⁵ Mark's note does not necessary mean that Jesus visited a Gentile home.⁴⁵⁶ It is to be remembered that Jesus is only told of entering "Gentile country", Mark 7:31. In the regions surrounding Tyre, and in the territory of the Decapolis, the Jews and Gentiles lived side by side. It is quite likely that there were also separate Jewish villages in these areas.⁴⁵⁷ We will now survey more closely Matthew's redactional elements.

5.2.6 The story of the Canaanite woman according to Matthew

Even though Matthew and Mark clearly related the same incident, they contain many differences on a textual level. The redactional and theological coloring is more obvious in Matthew's version of the story than in Mark's version of it. On the basis of Matthew's special features in this story we can state that he emphasizes the woman's faith, Jesus' Jew-centered mission and the woman's pagan and Gentile identity as a Canaanite (γυνή Χαναανία) in the district of Tyre and Sidon. The woman's faith is evident in Jesus' answer to her plea (Matt 15:28): ὦ γύναι,

common spoken language of most inhabitants of the area (i.e. Palestine and its surroundings), including many or even most Judeans." Goodblatt, 2001, 11.

⁴⁵³ Theissen, 1991, 70. See: *C. Ap.* 1:173.

⁴⁵⁴ Theissen, 1991, 69. Josephus: *Ant.* 8:144; *C. Ap.* 1:116.

⁴⁵⁵ Bird, 2006, 118. *M. Ohal.* 18:7; John 18:28; Acts 10:1–11:18; *Bell.* 2:152. Gundry, 1994, 143.

⁴⁵⁶ Ringe, 2001, 85.

⁴⁵⁷ Theissen, 1991, 68.

μεγάλη σου ἢ πίστις γενηθήτω σοι ὡς θέλεις. Like the centurion of Capernaum (Matt 8:10, 13), she too becomes an illustrator of the faith which enables Gentiles to approach Jesus even during his earthly ministry.⁴⁵⁸ Faith is also apparent in other healing stories (Matt 9:28-29). The story of the Canaanite woman (Matt 15:21-28) is reminiscent of the healing story of the blind beggar Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52/Matt 20:29-34/Luke 18:35-43). Verbally the stories have several connections: “started shouting” (ἔκραζεν, Matt 15:22; Mark 10:48; Luke 18:39), “have mercy on me” (ἐλέησόν με, Matt 15:22; Mark 10:47-48; Luke 18:38-39), and the title given to Jesus, “Son of David” (υἱὸς Δαυίδ, Matt 15:22; Mark 10:47-48; Luke 18:38-39). Notably all of these features are absent from the Markan version of the story (Mark 7:24-30).

The words “have mercy on me, Lord” (Matt 15:22) are reminiscent of the Psalms. After Jesus stated that he has been sent only for the lost sheep of Israel, the woman “knelt before him” (Matt 15:25; 8:2; 9:18), and urged Jesus with the Psalmist’s words “Lord, help me” (κύριε, βοήθει μοι, Ps 43:27; 69:6; 78:9; 93:18; 108:28).⁴⁵⁹ The title “son of David” appears ten times in Matthew’s Gospel, and on eight occasions it is connected directly to Jesus. This epithet appears only three times in Mark (10:47-48; 12:35) and also three times in Luke (3:31; 18:38-39).⁴⁶⁰ The reference to Israel or the Jews as “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” has its roots in the OT, but in the NT it is uniquely Matthean (10:6; 15:24). This special feature of Matthew’s version of the story creates a slight contradiction in the story because neither Matthew nor Mark explicitly mention Jesus searching for the lost sheep of the house

⁴⁵⁸ Keener, 1999, 267-268, 414. According to verse Matt 8:10 Jesus is amazed by the Centurion’s faith. It exceeds the faith he has found among the Israelites. Davies & Allison, 1991, 542-543, 558-559.

⁴⁵⁹ Luz, 1990, 434-435. Pss. 6:3; 9:14; 26:7; 30:10; 40:5; 55:2; 85:3; 122:3 etc.

⁴⁶⁰ Matt 1:1, 20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42. The title *Son of David* was arguably pregnant with some messianic expectations prior to 70 CE, as Hengel suggests. Hengel, 1989, 298-300. The title is clearly connected to Jesus in order to legalize his Messianic status (Rom 1:3; Mark 10:47; 12:35; Matt 1:1-2; Luke 3:23-34 etc.). The importance of the title to the early Christians is explained by the Jewish messianic expectations connected to it. For the Jews’ hope of a Davidic Messiah, see Collins, 1995, 68. Sankamo, 2012, 295-301.

of Israel in the regions of Tyre and Sidon.⁴⁶¹ In Mark's version of the story this becomes quite evident due to Jesus' wish to remain in secret (7:24). Obviously the saying of Matt 15:24 would not have suited into the Markan version of the story of the Syrophoenician woman. Matt 15:24 brings forth the impression that Jesus was on a mission in these foreign areas. Despite this neither Mark nor Matthew have transmitted any mention of the practice of such a mission. The dialogue regarding the feeding of the children is not connected with a clear message of mission. As we shall see, it can plausibly be understood as a slogan which resembles the tense economic reality of the border area of Phoenicia and Galilee.

Jesus' despising attitude towards the Canaanite woman is also a Matthean specialty. Jesus first ignores the woman's plea (15:23), and thus his disciples urge him to answer something to the desperately screaming woman (15:24). This despising attitude of Jesus, and the disciples' request, is not stated in Mark's version of the story. The Matthean version raises seemingly anti-Gentile aspects and they are attributed to Jesus and not to the disciples. The anti-Gentile features are also apparent in the redactor's characterization of the woman as a Canaanite (15:22). The Canaanites have multiple references in the OT. In Matthew's genealogy two Canaanite women, Tamar and Rahab are mentioned as Jesus' foremothers (Matt 1:3, 5). In the OT and in second temple Jewish literature the Canaanites are seen mostly in a negative light (Gen 9:25, *Jub.* 22:20–22; Wis 12:3–11; Sus 1:56). It is to be noticed that the Baal-propagandist and the persecutor of the Lord's prophets, Queen Jezebel, was a Sidonian princess (1 Kgs 16:31; 18:4). Jesus, as it is pointed out, met the Canaanite woman in the territory of Sidon.⁴⁶² In the Pentateuch the land of Canaan is promised to the patriarchs and to the Israelites (Exod 6:4; 16:35; Lev 14:35; 18:3; 25:38). The Jews were to invade the land of Canaan (Exod 33:2), and to destroy all the Canaanite cities and towns without exception. The invading Hebrews were not to give any options

⁴⁶¹ For the discussion regarding the authenticity of Matt 15:24 see Davies & Allison, 1991, 550–551.

⁴⁶² Keener, 1999, 414–415. Mussies, 1997, 265. Davies & Allison, 1991, 547–548. See also: *m. Qidd.* 1:3; Sus. 1:56.

for the Canaanites to surrender (Deut 20:16–18; Num 21:1–3).⁴⁶³ On the basis of Pentateuch the reason for this total and merciless conquest and destruction was due to the fear of the Canaanites' pagan influences on Israel.⁴⁶⁴ Despite the holy war and the support of the Lord, the Hebrews failed to defeat and destroy the Sidonians (Judg 1:31–32), who thence became a constant source of problems for the Israelis, at least in accordance to the OT and its Prophets. The Canaanites' pagan practices and influence are considered only to be negative (Lev 18:24–30; Deut 12:31).

The Phoenicians were often seen as the descendants of the ancient Canaanites. According to Gen 10:15 and 1 Chr 1:13 Canaan was the father of Sidon. In LXX passages such as Exod 6:15; Josh 5:1, 12 Cana and the Canaanites (MT) are translated as Phoenicia and Phoenicians.⁴⁶⁵ Luz states that Canaanite was not just a biblical expression for pagan, but it was also, during the time of Matthew, the term which the Phoenicians used of themselves. Luz indicates that the Syrian Matthew, who possibly spoke Aramaic, had changed the western "Syrophoenician" with perhaps his own native translation of it: i.e. "Canaanite."⁴⁶⁶ Be that how it may, in the Jewish mind-set the woman's characterization as a Canaanite would not have been to her advantage. This negative point is further strengthened by Matthew's localization of the incident in the district of "Tyre and Sidon" (15:21). These two regions, "Tyre and Sidon", recall prophecies of doom (Jer 47:4; Joel 4:4; Zech 9:2).⁴⁶⁷ The

⁴⁶³ The laws for war in Deut 20:10–16 charge the Israelis to offer peace to their enemies, and an option to surrender, before attacking them. Such options and peace negotiations were not to be given to the cities and towns of Cana, Deut 20:16–18.

⁴⁶⁴ Deut 7:1–4; 12:29–31. The life, prosperity and peace in the Promised Land depended on the Israelis' loyalty towards their God. If they served other gods, they would lose their land, Deut 4:25–28; 7:4; 11:13–21. We may note that the enmity was not aimed against some ethnicity, but against certain behavior, i.e. on paganism. If a Jewish town served idols, it would meet the same total destruction and doom as the Canaanite cities, Deut 13:13–17; see also: 12:31; 18:9–14.

⁴⁶⁵ Freyne, 1980, 299, n. 24. See also Strabo, *Geographica*, 16:2.34; Isa 23:2; Job 40:30; Deut 3:9.

⁴⁶⁶ Luz, 1990, 432–433.

⁴⁶⁷ Occasionally in the OT doom prophecies where Tyre and Sidon are mentioned, the economic dependency and pressure is emphasized. In Joel 4:4–8 Tyre and Sidon are facing God's revenge because they have stolen the gold and silver of Jerusalem; they have sold the citizens of Jerusalem and Judah as slaves for the Greeks. In accordance to Ezek 26:2

names of Tyre, Sidon and Canaanite all strengthen the same theological point: Jesus is being asked to help the worst of the worst, the most bitter ancient enemies of Israel and the Jews.⁴⁶⁸ These identification markers of the woman recall anti-Gentile themes rooted in the OT. The hostile attitude towards the woman as a Canaanite/Syrophoenician Greek is apparent in both Matthew and Mark.

In Matthew's case the emphasis is on the negative remarks of the OT. However the Canaanite woman in the territory of Tyre and Sidon pleads like a psalmist-prayer. Many Galilean Jews felt hatred towards the Syrophoenicians, and particularly towards the Syrophoenician higher class consisting mainly of Greeks. This hatred towards the culturally Greek Syrophoenicians was due to the economic dependency and pressure posed by the Phoenicians on the Galilean Jews. The relationships of the more thoroughly Hellenized Tyrians and the Jewish minority population residing in Tyre or in its surrounding countryside, was somewhat strained. This difficult relationship, the aggressive prejudices, was, as Theissen puts it, "supported by economic dependency and legitimated by religious tradition."⁴⁶⁹ The dialogue concerning the children, bread and the dogs recalls the economic situation, which is arguably more emphasized in Mark's version of the story. The religious background for the fierce relationship of the Jews and the Canaanites is more apparent in Matthew's version of the story.

Tyre saw the destruction of Jerusalem only as a possibility to receive the riches of the world and thus be restored as an economic superpower (Ezek 26–28). The doom prophecies of Ezek 26–28 claim that due to the ill will and pride of Tyre and Sidon, they were doomed and desolated.

⁴⁶⁸ Davies & Allison, 1991, 547. Davies and Allison claim correctly the following: "Most modern exegetes have supposed the change to 'Canaanite' was made because of its OT associations: one automatically thinks of Israel's enemies. Thereby is evoked 'Israel's deeply-engrained fear of and revulsion towards Gentile ways' – which in turn allows one to see in Jesus the overcoming of such fear and revulsion."

⁴⁶⁹ Theissen, 1991, 78–79. Catchpole, 2006, 176–177. On p. 177 Catchpole states the following: Religious sanction for such attitudes was provided by extravagant prophetic denunciations of Tyre (cf. Isa 23; Jer 47:4; Ezek 27; Amos 1:9–10; Zech 9:3–4), which liturgical texts kept ever fresh and alive (cf. Ps 83:7). So the saying of Jesus to the woman from Tyre is heavy with Galilean prejudice, fuelled by ingrained social, political, historical, economic and religious experiences and attitudes."

5.3 The Syrophoenician woman and Jesus in the Palestinian context

5.3.1 The relationship between the Phoenicians and Galileans

Tyre and Sidon were great cities of Phoenicia, an adjacent territory to Galilee. At the time of Jesus these cities had been influenced by Hellenism for a long time. In spite of the remarkable influence of Hellenism we have to note that Phoenicia had remained culturally quite conservative, and not thoroughly Hellenized.⁴⁷⁰ As neighbours the Israelis and the Phoenicians had a long history, including stories of battles for land (Judg 1:31-32; 5:17). The history as it is narrated in the OT reveals religious and cultural influence (1 Kgs 18:19-21) as well as economic dependence (1 Kgs 5:11, 15-32; 9:11-13, *Ant.* 8:54, 141; Ezek 27:17; Acts 12:20) between the Phoenicians and Israelis. Passages such as Judg 1:31-32 and 1 Kgs 9:11-13 make clear that in the course of history the borders between Galilee and Tyre had gradually been moved. During the Jewish revolt Kedesh was clearly a village in the Tyrian district, and according to Josephus, “always at feud and strife with the Galileans” (*Bell.* 1:105). Earlier in history, during the time of Jonathan (152-143 BCE) the village had marked the border between Galilee and Tyre (*Ant.* 13:154). Josephus also mentions that Mount Carmel once belonged to Galilee but now belonged to Tyre, *Bell.* 3:35 (see 1 Kgs 18:19-21).⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷⁰ Freyne, 2001, 184-185. Freyne gives convincing evidence for his conclusions. He states that with the exception of Akko, none of the Phoenician coastal cities changed their names to Greek names. Even though the Phoenicians have not left any national literature, our knowledge of them is considerably good because of their maritime activity, the rise of a significant Diaspora within the Mediterranean world, and their frequent contacts with the Greeks long before Alexander's day. The Phoenicians had a long and honorable history which finds references in the OT: Judg 1:31-32; 5:17; 1 Kgs 5:1-12; 1 Kgs 18 etc. Josephus mentions that in Tyre there were ancient records dating from the times of the reign of Hiram (*C. Ap.* 1:155-158). Even though Josephus' data is, on this occasion, most probably false, it still shows that the Phoenicians regarded their past as valuable and important. Although Greek became more and more the language of administration and commerce, the Phoenician language was still used in inscriptions and coin legends, as Freyne states. Evidently the Phoenicians were culturally quite conservative.

⁴⁷¹ Theissen, 1991, 76-77. Marcus, 2000, 462, 471.

As perhaps the most obvious example of Tyrian influence on the Jewish world the Tyrian coins can be mentioned. The Tyrian coinage was one of world's most stable currencies in circulation during our period of concern. The stability of the Tyrian money was certainly one of the reasons why it was the only currency accepted as the half-shekel payment for the temple tax in Jerusalem (Exod 30:14–15). The Tyrian coinage had a high standard, the best quality and it had a high percentage (98 %) of silver.⁴⁷² Tyre's chief god was Melqart, which the Greeks identified as Hercules. The main temple of Sidon was the temple of Eshmun. Eshmun was regarded to be the god of healing, and was compared to the Greek god Asklepios. During the Greco-Roman Period Melqart's portrait appeared on the Tyrian shekels.⁴⁷³ The Phoenician religion had made its appearance into the Jewish world and especially into Jerusalem and its temple as Melqart's portrait was on the coin. The fact that great amounts of Tyrian coins have been unearthed in the archaeological excavations in Galilee suggests that the relationships between the Galileans and the Phoenicians were not solely negative during the first century.⁴⁷⁴ The Tyrian coins bear witness to commercial relations between different ethnic groups in first century Palestine, in Galilee as well as in Judea. These commercial bonds are apparent in written sources (Acts 12:20). Certainly during the first century there were quite serious tensions from time to time between the Phoenicians and the Galileans. The Phoenician *Helenes* formed the upperclass and their members were more favorable to having ties with the Romans. Hostility between the Phoeni-

⁴⁷² Rousseau & Arav, 1995, 310, 327. Theissen, 1991, 73.

⁴⁷³ Freyne, 2001, 185–187. Already in the sixth century Ezekiel seems to regard Melqart as the god of Tyre (Ezek 28:4–9). In the famous biblical episode (1 Kgs 18), where Elijah challenges Baal on Mount Carmel, Baal's profile strikingly resembles the profile of Melqart – the Lord of Tyre. Freyne, 2004, 85–87. Freyne refers to 1 Macc 1:11 which attests that the elite of Jerusalem arranged a collection in order to support the Tyrian games in honor of Herakles/Melqart. Freyne further attests that although the Tyrian coinage bore the image of Herakles/Melqart, we have no evidence that this would have troubled pious Jews. The Tyrian coinage was used in the Jerusalem temple, and it was regarded as “the coin of the sanctuary”.

⁴⁷⁴ Freyne, 2001B, 303. I maintain with Freyne: “Coins are less certain indicators than ceramic remains in terms of direct contacts. Nevertheless, the preponderance of Tyrian coins at various sites in Galilee (Upper and Lower) does seem to break the pattern of trading isolationism suggested by the ceramic ware.”

cians and the Galileans was not the only mood of their relations. The commercial relations, revealed by both textual as well as archaeological remains, suggest that the relations between the Phoenicians and the Galileans were not solely negative. Moreover the biblical history witnessed prophets such as Elijah helping both the people of Israel as well as individual Phoenicians (1 Kgs 17; 2 Kgs 5). In the dialogue between the Syrophenician *Helene* woman and Jesus, as presented particularly by Mark, Jesus seems to express the hostile mood of the relations between the Phoenicians and the Galileans. However the Gentile woman expresses the more positive side of these relationships between the two ethnic groups, and in the story Jesus listens to the woman's reasoning and heals her daughter because of her mother's words (Mark 7:29).

5.3.2 Mark 7:27 and the economics between Galilee and Phoenicia

Theissen has put much weight on the economic pressures and tensions between the rich Phoenician cities and the poor Jewish population in the surrounding districts of these Hellenistic cities. According to him the words of Mark 7:27 – οὐ γάρ ἐστιν καλὸν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων καὶ τοῖς κυναρίοις βαλεῖν – might recall a local well-known saying of the time. The Tyrians bought the field produce from the Jews who lived in the rural districts of the great Phoenician cities and in the border areas of Galilee. In times of bad season the Jewish peasants went hungry, because the Tyrians bought a great part of their fields' produce.⁴⁷⁵ The rich city of Tyre and its districts relied on the import of Galilean grain. Tyre was economically well off especially due to its metal work. According to Theissen the saying of Mark 7:27 criticized this economic situation. Theissen presents a convincing list of scribal evidence

⁴⁷⁵ Theissen, 1991, 72–75. Josephus mentions several occasions when a bad harvest resulted in famine and economic disaster for the Galileans: *Ant.* 14:28; 15:299–316; 365; 16:64; 18:18; 20:101. Freyne (Freyne, 1980, 178) lists passages from the Talmud which confirm the terrible influences of a bad harvest on the people: *b. Ta'an* 24b; *b. Ketub* 97; *b. Ta'an* 19b.

in support for his argument that the northern part of Galilee functioned as the “breadbasket” for the coastal cities of Phoenicia.⁴⁷⁶

It is possible that the saying of Mark 7:27b reflects the local economic situation, and that the saying was actually a more or less common local saying of the time.⁴⁷⁷ The economic situation and the question to whom the produce of the fields belonged was current in these border areas separating Galilee and the Phoenician regions. If the saying of Mark 7:27b is to be understood as referring to this ideological context, then it nevertheless emphasizes that Jesus held a pro-Jewish stance. The bread belonged primarily to the Jews.⁴⁷⁸ Undoubtedly some of the early Christians from the border regions of Galilee and Tyre would have understood the saying of Mark 7:27 as referring to economic oppression. The saying suits into the local context of the 30s and into the rural district of Tyre. Theissen correctly uses this as support for the saying’s authenticity:

“This study of the cultural context reveals that the story is probably Palestinian in origin. It presupposes an original narrator and audience who are acquainted with the concrete local and social situation in the border regions of Tyre and Galilee. As a result, it now appears more difficult to trace the origins of the story exclusively to early Christian debates about the legitimacy of the gentile mission – debates we read about in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Antioch. Something more concrete is at stake. In principle we cannot exclude the possibility that the story has a historical core: an encounter between Jesus and a Hellenized Syrophoenician woman.”⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ Theissen, 1991, 73–75. Acts 12:20; *Ant.* 20:212; *Vita* 71; 119; *y. Demai* 1:3; *Cant. Rab.* 5:14; *p. Abod. Zar.* 4:39d. See also Ringe, 2001, 84.

⁴⁷⁷ Theissen, 1991, 75. Theissen writes the following regarding Mark 7:27: “This saying, which at first is so offensive, would have to awaken the following associations: ‘First let the poor people in the Jewish rural areas be satisfied. For it is not good to take poor people’s food and throw it to the rich Gentiles in the cities.’ -- Perhaps Jesus, in replying, was able to make connections with a well-known saying shaped by the situation.”

⁴⁷⁸ Theissen, 1991, 75.

⁴⁷⁹ Theissen, 1991, 79.

5.3.3 Biblical doom for Tyre and Sidon – Another possible reason for Jesus to visit the district of Tyre

We can so far conclude that the Phoenicians and the Galilean peasants were economically dependent on each other. Ethnic enmity kindled by economic and political injustice embraced the popular mood around the borders between Phoenicia and Galilee. This statement gains support from the notion that the Jewish rebel leader John Gischala found his most loyal soldiers from the district of Tyre. The hatred against the Canaanites/Phoenicians seemed to be justified by the OT prophecies of doom. In the OT the city of Tyre, and to some extent also the city of Sidon, are objects of prophetic doom (Isa 23:1–17; Ezek 26:2–9; Amos 1:9–10; Zech 9:2–4).

In this territory surrounding Tyre Jews and Gentiles lived in an atmosphere of racial enmity – how strong this enmity was during the 30s is impossible to decide. According to the story of the Syrophenician woman Jesus entered the district of Tyre and there he is faced with a Gentile, who represent the doomed people in the OT, and moreover those who live currently in enmity with the Jews. Josephus states that the deep enmity between the two people, Jews and Phoenicians, was well known (*Ant.* 14:313–321; *C. Ap.* 1:70; *Bell.* 2:478; 4:105).⁴⁸⁰ The district of Tyre would not have been neutral ground for a Jewish religious teacher in the 30s. The area itself would have evoked aspirations. However, neither Mark nor Matthew states any clear reason for Jesus' visit to the district of Tyre. Mark solely emphasizes the hiding motif in Jesus' will to remain unnoticed. Jesus is not said to have gathered followers from around Tyre as John Gischala did (*Bell.* 2:588). In the overall context of both Matthew's and Mark's Gospel the most probable explanation for Jesus' visit to the territory of Tyre is related to the location of Tyre and its biblical roots. The area was located within the biblical greater Israel. Moreover Tyre had special interest for Jesus in particular because it had such a wide scale of reference in the OT prophecies of doom. These OT predictions of doom were, at that time, emphasized by the racial and economic tensions between the Galilean Jews and the

⁴⁸⁰ Bird, 2006, 113. Freyne, 2000, 164.

Phoenicians and Greeks living in and around Tyre and Sidon. By healing the Syrophenician woman's daughter Jesus can be seen as replacing vengeance with healing. He can be seen as overcoming ethnic fear and revulsion.⁴⁸¹ It is also worth noting that according to Matt 11:21–24/Luke 10:13–15 (Q) Jesus compared Tyre and Sidon positively with the unrepentant Galilean villages, Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida, in which he had done “most of his deeds of power.”

5.3.4 Deciding the historical validity of the story of the Syrophenician woman

Is there a historical core behind the incident portrayed in Mark 7:24–30 and Matt 15:21–28? Scholars such as Theissen, Bird, Gundry, Davies and Allison do not exclude the possibility of a historical incident behind the story of the Syrophenician woman.⁴⁸² Davies and Allison argue that the story does not answer the urgent missiological questions of the post-Easter Church regarding circumcision of the converts. The story does not give the disciples a commission or even hint at widening their mission also to the Gentiles.⁴⁸³ Moreover it would be hard to explain why the early Christians would create such a story where Jesus, and not the disciples or some other group, is the one who expresses the anti-Gentile attitudes (Matt 15:23–24, 26; Mark 7:27). Theissen claims that the story contains a local touch to the Palestinian economic culture and environment.⁴⁸⁴ Meier and Lüdemann argue on different grounds that the story is created by the early Church in order to support the Church's Gentile mission.

The story of the Syrophenician woman consists of two parts: the dialogue and the healing. The actual healing is clearly in the background. It is done from a distance, and the patient is absent. The story

⁴⁸¹ For a discussion concerning Jesus' views on eschatological vengeance see: Jeremias, 1981, 41–46. Meyer, 1979, 167. Jeremias' claim that Jesus omitted the eschatological judgment concerning the Gentiles from his message (Luke 4:18–22; 7:22; Matt 11:5) can find some practical evidence from the story of the Syrophenician woman. See also Davies & Allison, 1991, 547.

⁴⁸² Bird, 2006, 114–115. Theissen, 1991, 79. Davies & Allison, 1991, 544–545.

⁴⁸³ Davies & Allison, 1991, 543–544.

⁴⁸⁴ Theissen, 1991, 79.

really concerns a dispute between Jesus and the Gentile woman. The obscurity of the healing can be used as an argument for its lack of historical core. Of course the opposite is also true: the obscurity of the healing can also be used as proof for its historicity. According to this reasoning the early Christians did not feel free to invent a clear healing story, but preserved the obscure tradition, according to which Jesus healed a Gentile woman's demonized daughter from a distance simply by saying that her daughter was all right: γενηθήτω σοι ὡς θέλεις and ἐξελήλυθεν ἐκ τῆς θυγατρὸς σου τὸ δαιμόνιον. In the case of the daughter of Jairus Jesus is reported to have visited the dying girl in order to heal her (Mark 5:22–24, 35–43). No similar context has been created for the story of our concern.

According to Meier, the story (Mark 7:24–30) carries a lot of Christian theology of mission even after he has “cleansed” it of Markan redaction. As we have noted Meier's main focus is on the Pauline dictum (Rom 1:16), which he finds at the heart of the story. Meier acknowledges that such theological charges are not apparent in the story of the centurion's servant (Matt 8:5–13) or the story of the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1–20).⁴⁸⁵ Lüdemann holds fast to his strict conclusion that Jesus never healed any Gentiles, and thus the story of the Syrophenician woman does not derive from a historical meeting between Jesus and the Gentile woman.⁴⁸⁶ Lüdemann claims that the harsh disputes in the post-Easter community underline the tradition (Mark 7:24–30/Matt 15:21–28) and explain its origin. According to Lüdemann Jesus' opposition to the Gentile mission (Matt 10:5–6; 15:24) explains the anti-Gentile features in the texts.⁴⁸⁷ Lüdemann excludes the historical core of both the story of the Syrophenician woman and the story of the centurion of Capernaum. Lüdemann persistently insists that Jesus and his disciples strictly restricted their mission to the Jews – and only for the Jews.⁴⁸⁸ The fact that the healings of the Gentiles were done from a distance, suggests according to Lüdemann, that no direct healing of a Gentile by Jesus ever

⁴⁸⁵ Meier, 1994, 660–661.

⁴⁸⁶ Meier, 1994, 660–661. Lüdemann, 2000, 50, 194.

⁴⁸⁷ Lüdemann, 2000, 50–51.

⁴⁸⁸ Lüdemann, 2000, 50, 155–156, 194.

occurred.⁴⁸⁹ The dialogue between Jesus and the woman is found, as we have noticed, almost identically in both the Markan and the Matthean version of the Syrophoenician woman. It seems that at least regarding the dialogue Matthew is relying on a written passage of Mark. Could it be that Jesus met a desperate Phoenician woman in the territory of Tyre and that they had an impressive dispute, but that this dispute was never accurately settled? It is difficult to understand why the evangelists would have preserved the humiliating dispute with such accuracy, if the tradition of the dispute did not contain a reference to a healing. Without the healing, which nevertheless is vague, the dispute would end rather pessimistically. Presumably, if this had been the case in the early tradition, we would expect that the evangelists, who supported the Gentile mission, would have left the whole meeting and the dispute unmentioned. If the indirect healing from a distance was created later as a response to the harsh dispute the healing would be expected to be clearer and more precise.

The fact that the healing stories of the Gentiles share several similar features might suggest that the stories were created and redacted by the early Church in accordance with an intentional pattern. The story of the Syrophoenician woman and the centurion of Capernaum (Matt 8:5–13/Luke 7:1–10) have similar casts.⁴⁹⁰ The story of the Syrophoenician woman is, however, exceptional in several respects. As Marcus writes:

“Not only does it present the only example in the Gospels of a person who wins an argument with Jesus, but it also portrays a Jesus who is unusually sensitive to his Jewish countrymen’s claims to salvation-historical privilege and unusually rude about the position of the Gentiles.”⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁹ Lüdemann, 2000, 50.

⁴⁹⁰ In both stories Jesus does not take the active role, he does not take the initiative to search and heal, but he is asked or begged for help. In both stories the actual healing is done from distance. In both stories Jesus’ main mission to Israel is emphasized. Jesus is surprised by the faith of the centurion (Matt 8:10/Luke 7:9), because he has not found such faith among the Israelis, who are the main objects of his mission. In both stories, as well as in the story of the Gerasene demoniac, the dialogue is at the heart of the story.

⁴⁹¹ Marcus, 2000, 470.

The literary context – i.e. the Gentile section – of the story of the Syrophenician woman relates positively towards the Gentiles. Despite this the story of the Syrophenician woman contains features which can be seen as anti-Gentile. Accordingly Jesus first refuses to respond to the woman’s desperate needs and he also insultingly likens her to a dog. Despite these apparent anti-Gentile features Lüdemann and Meier argue that the story was created by some Christian group in order to support the Gentile mission.⁴⁹² Marcus insists that the story of the Syrophenician woman deals with the “transcendence of Jewish Particularism, and looks forward to the increasingly Gentile Church of Mark’s own day.” Marcus acknowledges the oddity of the story if these are its theological intentions.⁴⁹³ If this story was created in order to pose such a theological transcendence of Jewish particularism to some kind of universalism, why would Jesus first himself represent and support the Jewish particularistic point of view and call the woman a Gentile dog. On the basis of the Gentile setting of the story it would have been possible that the Pharisees or the disciples would have represented the view of Jewish particularism.⁴⁹⁴ They could have called the woman a dog. After all the Pharisees are described as stringent Jews, who held on to the traditional dietary laws, which separated them from the Gentiles (Mark 7:5).⁴⁹⁵

The disciples are often pictured as having difficulties in understanding and believing in Jesus.⁴⁹⁶ According to Luke 9:54 the disciples of Jesus wished to cast a heavenly vengeance of fire on the Samaritans. In light of these negative notions regarding the disciples, they would have suited as representatives of Jewish particularism or accountable for the disgraceful words concerning the woman. For example the “Petrine

⁴⁹² Meier, 1994, 660–661. Lüdemann, 2000, 50–51.

⁴⁹³ Marcus, 2000, 466.

⁴⁹⁴ See Meier, 1994, 660–661.

⁴⁹⁵ Of course there is the possibility that the Pharisees would not have objected to the pleading Gentile woman harshly. According to Jeremias the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, desired to win converts from the Greeks. Thus Keener states that “some Jewish teachers” would not have given the woman such a harsh answer. Quite the contrary, they would have hoped to make her a convert. Keener, 1999, 416. See *Ant.* 20:34–36; *C. Ap.* 2:210; *m. Abot* 1:12; *b. Sanh.* 99:b; *Shab.* 31a.

⁴⁹⁶ See Mark 4:13; 6:51–52; 7:18; 8:18–21; Matt 14:30–31; 15:16.

groups,” with the lead of Peter himself, might have called the Gentiles dogs. Davies, Allison and Bird correctly point out that the story itself does not answer to the Church’s urgent questions dealing with the need of circumcising the Gentile converts. In the story Jesus does not address his disciples in any way.⁴⁹⁷ These matters of course stand against the assumption that the story is a Christian creation in order to support the Gentile mission.

The nucleus of Mark 7:24–30 is likely to be historical. As Theissen has shown the dialogue is historically plausible in the context of the district of Tyre in the first half of the first century. The story recounts a memory of Jesus meeting a Gentile woman in the district of Tyre. The story does not support the Gentile mission of the early Church. Jesus holds fast to his Jewish mission, though he heals the Gentile from a distance as an exception, due to the woman’s persistent appeal and faith.

5.4 The centurion (Matthew 8:5–13 and Luke 7:1–10)

5.4.1 The setting of the story of the centurion of Capernaum

The story of the centurion is preserved in Matthew’s and Luke’s Gospel. John has preserved a similar story about the official of Capernaum (John 4:43–54). The story of the centurion (Matt 8:5–13/Luke 7:1–10) has apparent similarities with the story of the Syrophenician woman. In both stories the healing concerns a Gentile. Additionally, both the healing and the exorcism are done from a distance. In both the stories Jesus never meets the patient and faith is emphasized. In both of these stories the actual healing is left in the background and the center of the story deals with Jesus’ dialogue with the “patient’s representative,” who is a Gentile. In Luke’s version Jesus actually does not meet the Gentile centurion but only his messengers. Differences between the story of the centurion and the Syrophenician woman are also evident. The story of the centurion is located in Capernaum – i.e. at the geographical center of Jesus’

⁴⁹⁷ Davies & Allison, 1991, 543-544. Bird, 2006, 114.

ministry (Mark 2:1; Matt 11:23–24; Luke 10:15). The story of the Syro-phenician woman is located in the periphery, in the territory of Tyre.

Comparing the Matthean and Lukan text side by side, we notice the striking differences between them. Close textual parallels are written in bold. Textual differences are underlined in double.

Matt 8:5–10	Luke 7:1–10
<p>Εἰσελθόντος δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰς Καφαρναούμ προσήλθεν αὐτῷ ἑκατόνταρχος παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν</p> <p>⁶ καὶ λέγων· κύριε, <u>ὁ παῖς</u> μου βέβληται ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ <u>παραλυτικός</u>, δεινῶς βασιανιζόμενος.</p> <p>⁷ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ἐγὼ ἐλθὼν θεραπεύσω αὐτόν. καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος ἔφη· κύριε, οὐκ εἰμὶ ικανὸς ἵνα μου ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην εἰσέλθης.</p> <p>ἀλλὰ μόνον εἶπέ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήσεται ὁ παῖς μου.</p> <p>⁹ καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ ἔξουσίαν, ἔχων ὑπ' ἐμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω τούτῳ· πορεύθητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ ἄλλῳ· ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται, καὶ</p>	<p>Ἐπειδὴ ἐπλήρωσεν πάντα τὰ ῥήματα αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς ἀκοὰς τοῦ λαοῦ, εἰσῆλθεν εἰς Καφαρναοῦμ.</p> <p>² Ἐκατοντάρχου δὲ τινος <u>δοῦλος</u> <u>κακῶς ἔχων ἤμελλεν τελευτᾶν</u>, ὃς ἦν αὐτῷ ἔντιμος.</p> <p>³ ἀκούσας δὲ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτὸν πρεσβυτέρους τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐρωτῶν αὐτὸν ὅπως ἐλθῶν διασώσῃ τὸν δοῦλον αὐτοῦ.</p> <p>⁴ οἱ δὲ παραγενόμενοι πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν σπουδαίως λέγοντες ὅτι ἄξιός ἐστιν ᾧ παρέξῃ τοῦτο·</p> <p>⁵ ἀγαπᾷ γὰρ τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν καὶ τὴν συναγωγὴν αὐτὸς ᾧκοδόμησεν ἡμῖν.</p> <p>⁶ ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἐπορεύετο σὺν αὐτοῖς. ἤδη δὲ αὐτοῦ οὐ μακρὰν ἀπέχοντος ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας ἔπεμψεν φίλους ὁ ἑκατοντάρχης λέγων αὐτῷ· κύριε, μὴ σκύλλου, οὐ γὰρ ικανός εἰμι ἵνα ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην μου εἰσέλθης·</p> <p>⁷ διὸ οὐδὲ ἐμαυτὸν ἤξιωσα πρὸς σὲ ἐλθεῖν· ἀλλὰ εἶπέ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήτω ὁ παῖς μου.</p> <p>⁸ καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι</p>

<p>τῷ δούλῳ μου· ποιήσον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ.</p> <p>¹⁰ ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐθαύμασεν καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς ἀκολουθοῦσιν· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, παρ’ οὐδενὶ τοσαύτην πίστιν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ εὔρον.</p> <p>¹³ καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ ἑκατοντάρχη· ὑπάγε, ὡς ἐπίστευσας γεννηθήτω σοι. καὶ ἰάθη ὁ παῖς [αὐτοῦ] ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.</p> <p>Matt 8:11–12 / Luke 13:28–29 are left out of this comparison.</p>	<p>ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν τασσόμενος ἔχων ὑπ’ ἐμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω τούτῳ πορεύθητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ ἄλλῳ ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται, καὶ τῷ δούλῳ μου· ποιήσον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ.</p> <p>⁹ ἀκούσας δὲ ταῦτα ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐθαύμασεν αὐτὸν καὶ στραφεὶς τῷ ἀκολουθοῦντι αὐτῷ ὄχλῳ εἶπεν· λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ τοσαύτην πίστιν εὔρον.</p> <p>¹⁰ Καὶ ὑποστρέψαντες εἰς τὸν οἶκον οἱ πεμφθέντες εὔρον τὸν δοῦλον ὑγιαίνοντα.</p>
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The texts show clear verbatim connections (Matt 8:8–10/Luke 7:6b–9) in the dialogue of Jesus and the centurion or his delegates, but there are also clear differences. In Matthew the centurion meets Jesus personally, while in Luke Jesus only meets the centurion’s advocates, some Jewish elders and the “friends” of the centurion. Matthew’s version of the story contains the famous words concerning the banquet in the Kingdom of heaven (Matt 8:11-13). Luke knows this saying, but in his Gospel these words are located in a different section (Luke 13:28-30). Whether these words belonged to the original story of Jesus meeting the centurion is a subject of scholarly dispute.⁴⁹⁸

5.4.2 The boundary breaking faith of a Gentile centurion

Matthew and Luke make the same theological point: Jesus’ authority and his word’s ability to heal are emphasized, as well as the centurion’s humility and faith. Jesus’ ability to heal even from a distance simply by

⁴⁹⁸ For the discussion see Meier, 1994, 309–310. Davies & Allison, 1991, 26.

saying a word is highlighted especially in Matthew's version of the story. The importance of faith in Matthew's theology is to be noticed. Faith is the boundary-breaking media through which individual Gentiles are healed by Jesus. Davies and Allison supply the following commentary:

“The fundamental importance of faith for Matthew is revealed by this, that in the only two places where Jesus grants a Gentile's request, it is because of his or her faith (8:5-13; 15:21-28). Although Jesus has come only for the lost sheep of Israel, the restriction is overcome when he meets genuine belief. Faith conquers the separation between Jew and Gentile... Regardless of social status or ethnic origin, faith is salvation.”⁴⁹⁹

Certainly the centurion is portrayed as a Gentile whose genuine faith surpasses the faith of the Israelis (Matt 8:10; Luke 7:9). I concur with Bird in his statement that the centurion

“expresses the eschatological faith that Israel was meant to have in God's eschatological salvation and, consequently, the centurion and his servant are beneficiaries in the present of the future saving power of the kingdom.”

This message which places the believing Gentile in contrast with the disbelieving Israel would, of course, have suited the early Christians' theological views on Gentile mission. The Fellows of the Jesus seminar concluded that the Matthean and Lukan version of the story intends to justify the Church's Gentile mission.⁵⁰⁰ The Jesus tradition contains several sayings and parables which transmit the message of eschatological reversal.⁵⁰¹ It is plausible to claim that Jesus actually did contrast the faith of the Jews and the Gentiles for the benefit of the Gentiles.⁵⁰² All these aspects make it difficult to decide the historicity of the story in our concern.⁵⁰³ Despite the fact that the story has valuable themes in common

⁴⁹⁹ Davies & Allison, 1991, 25. See Matt 8:13; 9:22, 29.

⁵⁰⁰ Funk, 1998, 45.

⁵⁰¹ Dunn, 2003, 412–417. Ollilainen, 2008, 155–156. Allison, 1998, 46–50, 131–136.

⁵⁰² Matt 8:10/Luke 7:9; Matt 11:20–24; Luke 10:13–15; Matt 12:41–42; Luke 11:30–32.

⁵⁰³ Bird, 2006, 120.

with the early Christians' theology of Gentile mission, it is noteworthy that nothing in the story suggests that the centurion or his servant would have become Jesus' disciples or followers. In this story Jesus does not make any reference to the disciples' or his own possible Gentile mission.⁵⁰⁴

It is interesting that the saying of the royal banquet is missing from the end of Luke 7:1–10. Perhaps Luke did not know any context for this saying. The likeliest explanation is that the saying did not originally belong to the story of the centurion.⁵⁰⁵ It is, however, also possible that Luke intentionally avoided combining the saying with the story of the centurion's servant. This proposition can be supported by the notion that the saying (Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29), if placed at the end of Luke's version of the story, would have posed quite a confusing interpretation, which would suggest that the ones left outside the feast of the kingdom would be the Jewish elders who are portrayed positively in Luke 7:3–5. Elsewhere Luke introduces Jewish authorities, the Pharisees, in a positive light (Luke 13:31; Acts 5:34). In the current form of the Lukan version of the story (Luke 7:1–10) the saying of the feast in the kingdom would not have suited Luke's narrative concerns. At this moment Luke would not have wished to condemn the helpful Jewish elders into the darkness and place them outside of the kingdom-feast. After all, in the Lukan version of the story, the Jewish elders bring Jesus' aid to the centurion. Their help is portrayed as a necessity – the Jewish elders are urging Jesus to help a Gentile! This point suggests that the first delegation, the Jewish elders, do not reflect the early Christians' practice of Gentile mission. If Luke had wished to bring in the situation of the Church's Gentile mission, he would rather have had the Jewish leaders oppose Jesus' will to aid the centurion.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁴ Bird, 2006, 120–121.

⁵⁰⁵ Meier, 1994, 309–310. Davies & Allison, 1991, 26.

⁵⁰⁶ It seems clear that the Jewish elders, the first delegates, do not find representatives from the reality of the early Christians' Gentile mission. If this indeed was the case, then it would mean that some Jewish elders actually encouraged the Christians' Gentile mission. In the NT nowhere do we find any support for such a reality – i.e. Jewish elders urging Christians to help Gentiles. According to Acts we find that the opposite was true. The Jewish leaders fiercely oppose the Christians' Gentile mission (Acts 13:44–51; 17:4–8, 13; 1 Thess 2:15–16). Paul writes that the Gentiles who have converted from paganism into the

5.4.3 Textual differences between Matthew 8:5–10; Luke 7:1–10 and John 4:43–54

Matthew and Luke are almost identical on the dialogue which emphasizes the faith of the centurion. Besides faith, Luke also emphasizes the centurion's worthiness. The centurion considers himself unworthy (οὐ γὰρ ἰκανός εἰμι) to meet Jesus personally (Luke 7:6–7). This is why he sends Jewish elders to meet Jesus. The elders on the other hand testify of the centurion's worthiness (ἄξιός ἐστιν) to Jesus (Luke 7:4–5). The theme of worthiness and humility is also, but less explicitly, seen in the Matthean version (Matt 8:8). The message of the story also emphasizes the authority of Jesus to heal from a distance simply by giving a word of command (Luke 7:7–8; Matt 8:8–9).

Concerning the Lukan version of the story Jonathan Marshall, Bruce Malina, Richard Rohrbaugh, John Crossan and David deSilva have argued that it recalls a patron-client relationship between the centurion and the Jewish elders.⁵⁰⁷ In the Matthean version this idea of a patronage system is absent due to the fact that Jesus meets the centurion

Christian faith and obedience provoke the Jews into jealousy (Rom 11:13–14). In Luke 4:16–30 the Jewish audience at the synagogue of Nazareth raged at Jesus who refers to exemplary Gentiles from the OT. Regarding the scholarly views of Luke 4:16–30, see Meier, 1994, 270. Bird, 2006, 64. Tuckett, 1996, 227. Bird states the following (2006, 64): “The account in Lk.4.16-30 probably functions similarly to Mk 1.14–15 as a programmatic unveiling of Jesus’ ministry and overtures the various motifs of Luke-Acts: spirit, mission, Christology, Israel’s rejection and God’s acceptance of outcasts.”

⁵⁰⁷ Marshall, 2009, 75–76. deSilva, 2000, 123–124, 191. Crossan & Reed, 2001, 91. Malina & Rohrbaugh, 2003, 252. David deSilva (deSilva, 2000, 123–124) portrays the story’s sequel from this point of view, and accordingly the centurion becomes the local benefactor. He offers aid, benefits and help to the local community: he built a synagogue. The centurion has heard about Jesus’ reputation as a healer (Luke 7:3) – i.e. broker of God’s favors. Jesus could meet the need of his seriously ill servant. The centurion does not directly urge Jesus’ help because he is an ethnical outsider, a Gentile among the Jews, but he sends Jewish elders, whom he presumably thinks the Jewish healer would respect. As thankful clients to the centurion the Jewish elders urge Jesus and claim that the centurion is worthy of his help as he is the local benefactor/patron. Jesus answers positively to their request, but at this point, the centurion does a surprising move. He sends other messengers, his friends, to hinder Jesus’ visit to his house. In light of the patronage system, the centurion’s move is to be understood as him showing astonishing humility, and great faith and trust in Jesus’ ability to heal his servant even from a distance.

face to face and there is no mention of any delegations.⁵⁰⁸ In Matthew's version of the story the centurion personally urges Jesus to heal his servant-boy (παῖς), who is lying inside the house as a paralytic (παρὰ λυτικός) in terrible pain. Both Matthew and John differ from Luke in the sense that only Luke states that the centurion did not meet Jesus personally, but used emissaries – Jewish elders and his own friends (Luke 7:3–6, 10) – to request Jesus for help. Regarding the patient Matthew and John have some noticeable similarities. Both Matthew and John call the patient a servant-boy of the centurion/officer. John, however, uses three different terms for the patient: υἱός/παιδίον/παῖς, (John 4:46, 49, 51, 53). According to Matthew the patient was the centurion's servant-boy (παῖς). Luke's version of the story states that the patient was the centurion's servant (δοῦλος). In John the son of the official was close to death (ἤμελλεν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκειν, 4:49) and he had a fever (πυρετός, 4:52). Here a verbal connection to Luke's version which claims that the servant was ill and close to death (ἤμελλεν τελευτᾶν, 7:2) can be seen. Matthew alone claims that the patient was a paralytic (Matt 8:6).

The Gospel of John does not talk about the centurion of Capernaum but of the royal official (βασιλικός) of Capernaum (4:46). Moreover John does not give any hints that the son of the royal official was a Gentile. Meier notes that John is the most "Jewish" of the Gospels at least in the sense that in John Jesus never heals or talks to a Gentile during his mission. The Samaritan woman with whom Jesus is told to have discussed was not a clear Gentile but a Samaritan (John 4:1-42). We are secure in arguing that John's theological aim is to pose that Jesus came for the Jews, and did not seek contact with Gentiles prior to his death.⁵⁰⁹ John's identification of the man as a royal official is not necessarily in contradiction with the Matthean and Lukan identification of the man as a

⁵⁰⁸ We are to observe that a memory according to which some Gentiles took contact with Jesus by intermediaries is stated in John 12:20–21 (see Luke 8:49). The procedure of sending a messenger or some kind of a delegate is attested in the OT: 2 Kgs 19:20–34.

⁵⁰⁹ Meier, 1994, 722. John states that some Gentiles inquired to meet Jesus in Jerusalem during the Passover, but Jesus is never related to have accepted their request (John 12:20–26). John indicates that after Jesus' death and resurrection the mission would be widened for the whole world (John 12:24–32). These notions clarify John's theological views. For him, for the moment, Jesus' earthly mission concerned solely the Jews.

centurion of Capernaum. A Herodian official could be called a centurion.⁵¹⁰ The idea that the centurion was a Roman centurion has been widely and rightly doubted. The evidence suggests that the centurion of Capernaum is to be understood as an officer of Antipas' army. This statement in itself leaves open the centurion's ethnicity. The centurion and the royal official, as titles, do not give us any clear indications of the man's ethnicity. The royal official would naturally be an official of Herod Antipas.⁵¹¹ It is worth noting that all the three versions of the story locate the patient in Capernaum, although John claims that Jesus met the official, who was from Capernaum, in the town of Cana in Galilee. In the version of John the mention of Capernaum does not serve any clearly emphasized aim, but the mention of Cana is highlighted. For John Cana is the town where Jesus' glory is first revealed (John 2:1–12). This suggests that the story's connection with Capernaum is traditional, and the mention of Cana is a redactional creation of John.

Matthew and John mention the healing words of Jesus (Matt 8:13; John 4:50, 53). John, in particular, highlights these words of Jesus – ὁ υἱός σου ζῆ – as proof that the boy had actually been healed from a distance by Jesus (John 4:53). John stretches the connection between Jesus' words and the healing of the boy. According to Matt 8:13 Jesus said to the centurion: ὕπαγε, ὡς ἐπίστευσας γενηθήτω σοι. Immediately following these healing words Matthew narrates that the servant-boy was healed: καὶ ἰάθη ὁ παῖς [αὐτοῦ] ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐκείνῃ. The healing words of Matt 8:13a are reminiscent of other healing words found in the Gospel of Matthew: 9:22, 29 and 15:28. The verbal similarities between these healing words suggest that the words of Matt 8:13b did not belong to the primitive tradition. A similar conclusion is the likeliest regarding John – John edited the primitive tradition by adding the assuring words of Jesus. These redactional additions underline that the servant-boy did not get well coincidentally, but by the words of Jesus and at precisely the moment when Jesus spoke them. Luke does not mention any healing words of Jesus. This is perhaps due to the fact that in Luke's version Jesus meets the friends of the centurion and not the centurion himself.

⁵¹⁰ Meier, 1994, 720–721.

⁵¹¹ Meier, 1994, 721. Chancey, 2005, 51–55.

Jesus does not say anything to these “friends” – he does not talk directly to them but to the crowd surrounding him (Luke 7:9). According to Luke Jesus was left marveling at the faith of the centurion, and he is told to have challenged the Jewish by-standers by noting that he had not found such great faith in Israel (Luke 7:9). The question as to whether the healing words belonged to the primitive tradition is quite dependent on the question regarding the authenticity of the Lukan delegations. Luke leaves the delegates in confusion: they are not addressed in any clear manner. It is noteworthy that the “dialogue” between the centurion and Jesus is one-sided: the centurion speaks and Jesus is silent. In the Matthean version he speaks directly to the centurion only twice and even then only briefly: Matt 8:7, 13. In the Lukan version Jesus does not say anything to the delegations – neither to the Jewish elders nor to the centurion’s friends. Jesus does not comment on the centurion’s “worthiness”, his building of the synagogue or his love for the Jews. Interestingly Jesus does not even speak the healing word for which the second delegation is asking for. All the sayings from the Matthean version, which are presented as Jesus’ answers to the centurion, are absent in the Lukan version. In Luke Jesus only speaks to the Jewish crowd surrounding him. Surely we can conclude that the two delegations were not created in order to “attribute” answers into the mouth of Jesus. Jesus’ two short sayings for the centurion in Matthew’s version are not theologically impressive. The saying in Matt 8:13 of course reveals that the healing was not coincidental – additionally, as we have noted, this saying is reminiscent of other assertive healing words of Jesus which are found in Matthew. The silence of the Lukan Jesus seems to be dependent on the plot of the two delegates.

5.4.4 The source of the story of the centurion of Capernaum

The similarities between Matt 8:5–10 and Luke 7:1–10 verify that they both recall the same incident.⁵¹² It also seems reasonable to maintain that

⁵¹² Dunn, 2003, 214. Davies & Allison, 1991, 17. Marshall, 1978, 277. Bovon, 2002, 258–259.

John 4:46–54 recalls the same story of Matthew and Luke concerning the healing of the centurion’s servant.

Perhaps the majority of scholars insist that the story of the centurion (Matt 8:5–10/Luke 7:1–10) derives from the Q-source.⁵¹³ Traditionally scholars have claimed that this assumed Q-story is more originally preserved in its Matthean version.⁵¹⁴ This, despite the fact that the question is complicated as we shall see, seems natural according to several scholars since the Matthean version is shorter and lacks the complicating mention of the double delegation. The assumption of the Q-source is surprising considering the fact that the hypothetical Q is a source consisting mainly of sayings. If the story of the centurion derives from Q, then it is the only miracle story of Q developed in such length.⁵¹⁵ It is true that Q does not deny Jesus’ role as a healer and miracle worker (Matt 11:5 and Luke 11:20).⁵¹⁶ Dunn argues that the story derives from an oral tradition, and is not to be included to the written Q. According to Dunn, the verbal connection is not a fully convincing argument for the Q-source behind the story.⁵¹⁷

Dunn is certainly right in his observation that Q does not contain any similar narrative material to Luke 7:1–10/Matt 8:5–13. And, if we assume Q as the basis of the tradition, then we are to explain the striking differences between the versions of the same story. Why would Matthew and Luke have redacted the same Q-tradition so strongly and differently? The differing points of Matthew and Luke are even more surprising when we see how these two evangelists at the central feature of the story clearly follow the same tradition. Dunn argues that the story would have left an impact on the disciples, and this explains why the central feature of the story, the dialogue between Jesus and the centurion, is so securely preserved. As Dunn states, “the story’s point hangs entirely on

⁵¹³ Bovon, 2002, 258–259. Meier, 1994, 718. Bird, 2006, 117–121. Bultmann, 1963, 39. Lüdemann, 2000, 302.

⁵¹⁴ Lüdemann, 2000, 155, 302. Judge, 1989, 477, 479. Judge concludes on p. 479: “The majority position is that the centurion story was found in the common source of Matthew and Luke, in a form more faithfully represented by Matt 8:5–10, 13 (with but few exceptions, vv. 11–12 are considered a secondary insertion).”

⁵¹⁵ Meier, 1994, 718.

⁵¹⁶ Theissen, 1991, 227.

⁵¹⁷ Dunn, 2003, 212–213. Dunn, 2001, 93–99.

the central exchange between Jesus and the centurion; that is maintained with care and accuracy.”⁵¹⁸ Dunn’s solution to the question of source is that all versions of the story have their basis in an oral tradition. Dunn argues that the Matthean and Lukan versions of the story show how the communities could quite flexibly make use of such traditions and highlight different lessons: faith, worthiness and openness to Gentiles.⁵¹⁹ Bird admits that Dunn’s hypothesis of an oral tradition lying behind the story of the centurion is certainly possible. However according to Bird the written Q-source is a more convincing source for this story. Bird lists three aspects in support for the Q-source. 1) The heart of the story, the “*dialogue*” (Luke 7:6c, 7b–9/Matt 8:8b–10), as we have already noted is almost verbatim in Matthew and Luke. 2) It is also true that the theological emphases in Q are apparent in our story: the faith of the Gentile is compared with the faith of the Jews, Israel and this generation (Luke 10:13–15/Matt 11:20:24 and Luke 11:29–32/Matt 12:39–42). 3) Both Matthew and Luke have placed the story right after the sermon on the mount/plain.⁵²⁰

In agreement with Bird Davies and Allison also give their support for the idea that the story has its origin in Q. Davies and Allison put weight on the fact that the narrative framework of the story is very different in both Matthew and Luke, while the verbal link at the heart of the story is almost verbatim. According to Davies’ and Allison’s reasoning, as scholars comprehend that Q was a source consisting mainly of saying material, it could be assumed that Matthew and Luke had quite a considerable freedom in editing the narrative framework of the story.⁵²¹

The evidence suggests that the core of the story, the *dialogue* between Jesus and the centurion, has its basis in Q. Dunn’s claim of an oral tradition, other than Q, behind this story is admittedly possible. However the most credible argument is represented by Davies and Allison. According to their conclusion the “*dialogue*” derives from Q, while the narrative framework is shaped more freely by the evangelists’ theological

⁵¹⁸ Dunn, 2003, 212–215. Dunn’s quotation is from page 215.

⁵¹⁹ Dunn, 2003, 215–216. See Dunn, 2001, 84–145.

⁵²⁰ Bird, 2006, 117–118.

⁵²¹ Davies & Allison, 1991, 7, 17

aims. The question about the range of freedom is a complicated matter. The dialogue does not make sense without a framework and consequently the dialogue of Q must have had some kind of a narrative framework.

The differences in John's version of the story would suggest that he knew the same story from an independent tradition. Thus Bird maintains that John 4:46–54 is an “interlocking independent tradition of the same story.”⁵²² However, there are also considerable differences between John's and Q's versions of the story in concern. Notably the dialogue, which is almost identically shared by Luke and Matthew, is absent from John 4. Funk and the fellows of the Jesus Seminar propose that the healing of the centurion's/official's servant-boy has its origin in two sources: Q and John. This view, so far, is accepted by several scholars including Meier, Bird, Crossan, Davies and Allison.⁵²³ Funk, following the suggestion of Meier, goes on to claim that the tradition behind John is more original than the tradition found in Q.⁵²⁴ I hesitantly maintain that John is most probably deriving the story (John 4) from an independent tradition. Nevertheless, it is impossible to gain full certainty in this question.

On the basis of John's version of the story it is possible, as Funk and the Jesus Seminar do, to discern a quite casual meeting between Jesus and an official, who begged for Jesus' help for his ill servant-son. Jesus, according to this reasoning, assured him that the servant-son was well. The official returned home to Capernaum and coincidentally the boy was well, and this was interpreted as a healing on the part of Jesus. Funk claims that the Q-tradition was redacted with the references to a Gentile – i.e. the centurion, who was understood as a Roman soldier. Funk and the Jesus Seminar are convinced that the Q-version of the story intends to support the Church's Gentile mission.⁵²⁵

⁵²² Bird, 2006, 117. The hypothetical Q, as we understand it, includes only a minimal amount of narrative material.

⁵²³ Bird, 2006, 117. Crossan, 1991, 327. Meier, 1994, 724–725. Davies & Allison, 1991, 17–18. Theissen & Merz, 1998, 35. Funk, 1998, 45–46.

⁵²⁴ Funk, 1998, 45–46. Meier, 1994, 723–725.

⁵²⁵ Funk, 1998, 45–46.

I am hesitant to diminish the value of the verbal similarities of the ‘dialogue’ in Q. The dialogue as such suggests that the centurion was a Gentile as he does not feel worthy of having Jesus enter into his house (Luke 7:7; Matt 8:8). Importantly also the narrative sequence shared by both Q and John can be seen as supporting this claim of the centurion’s ethnicity precisely because the narrative does not recall Jesus actually visiting the centurion’s house. The idea of not being worthy to receive Jesus is absent from John’s version of the story. In John the official explicitly requests Jesus to come (4:47, 49). It is noteworthy that in John 4:47 and 49 we do not find any explicit reference to the “home” of the official. Jesus is simply asked to *come down* and heal the servant-boy: καταβῆ καὶ ἰάσηται. The request is due to the fact that the boy is near to death. The absence of the aspect of unworthiness might be explained by the assumption that John represents the official as a Jew – the mentioning of the official’s unworthiness can be seen as reference to his Gentile background. As we have seen, Jewish purity regulations forbid Jews from visiting the homes of the Gentiles (m. Ohal. 18:7).⁵²⁶ In the Synoptics Jesus is reported to have visited several kinds of apparently Jewish homes: the homes of tax collector Levi and Zacchaeus (Mark 2:15; Luke 19:1–10), Pharisees (Luke 7:36) and Peter (Mark 1:29–34). In Q (Matthew and Luke) the centurion’s Gentile identity is the reason for the sayings regarding the ability of giving orders, which are fulfilled from a distance. It is important to notice that in John Jesus does not enter the house of the official even though the official urged him to come down all the way from Canaan to Capernaum. Even according to the “Jew-centered” John Jesus did not visit the home of the official and the patient: this in itself is a similarity between John’s and Q’s version of the story. Jesus implicitly refused the request of the official and healed the patient from a distance. Both the ‘dialogue’ in Q and the fact that Jesus does not enter into the house of the centurion, implicitly support a Gentile identity for the centurion.

Meier suspects that the primitive story, which is behind John and Q, did not give any indication of the centurion’s ethnic or religious

⁵²⁶ Bird, 2006, 118. Davies & Allison, 1991, 21–22. See: John 18:28; Acts 10:28; 11:12; Bell. 2:150.

background, and therefore both John and Q had the possibility of portraying the petitioner in accordance with their own theological intentions. Meier further claims that in the case of clarifying the possible historical core of the story, Q's portrayal of the petitioner as a Gentile should not be given automatic preference. According to Meier there is the possibility that the centurion was a Gentile due to the fact that Antipas' troops included both Gentile and Jewish soldiers and officers.⁵²⁷ According to my view there is convincing support for the claim that in both of the earliest traditions, in Q and John, the centurion/official was regarded a Gentile. Both the narrative and the dialogue support this conclusion. The Gentile identity of the centurion-official is also plausible in the Galilean context as we shall see in chapter 5.5.

In sum, the earliest tradition (Q and possibly John) contained the idea that Jesus was requested to come down to heal the centurion's servant-boy. The actual coming of Jesus is also part of the early tradition (Q), although Jesus never reached the destination. The monologue regarding Jesus' ability to heal from a distance is to be seen as a reaction for the coming of Jesus. In the tradition concerning the Syrophenician, as far as we are aware, it did not contain any hint that Jesus would have been asked to visit the demonized daughter or that Jesus himself would have taken the initiative of visiting the patient. In contrast, in the story of Jairus' daughter, all the Synoptics, including Matthew, note that Jesus was explicitly requested to visit the daughter (Mark 5:23; Matt 9:18; Luke 8:41). Moreover all the Synoptics claim that Jesus actually did so – he entered into the house where the daughter lay dead. These notions suggest that the request to come, as in Luke 7:3 and John 4:47, 49, should be presupposed for the actual coming of Jesus (Luke 7:6/Matt 8:7–8).

5.4.5 The source of the double delegate in Luke

The Lukan double delegate (Luke 7:3–6) forms a central source-critical problem in our story. According to Fitzmyer it would be difficult to explain why Matthew would have omitted this information (Luke 7:3–6) if

⁵²⁷ Meier, 1994, 721, 723.

he had known about it. Therefore he further states that these verses (Luke 7:3b–6d) about the double delegation, do not derive from the Q, but they are to be regarded as a “Lukan composition.” Fitzmyer supports this conclusion by further noting that Luke 7:3–6 contains Lukan vocabulary.⁵²⁸ This view represented here by Fitzmyer can be criticized at some principal points. Several scholars support the basic claim that the delegations are due to a Lukan redaction and that the reference to the delegations were not part of the original Q-tradition. For example Meier claims that the both of the delegations of Luke 7 are Lukan creations. He supports this conclusion by stating that the Jewish delegation aims at emphasizing the centurion’s ethnic origin as a Gentile.⁵²⁹ It is also important to note that the delegations in Luke 7 parallel the delegation in Acts 10, where Cornelius, the Roman centurion (ἑκατοντάρχης), sends a delegation to request Peter to come to his house (Acts 10:4–9).⁵³⁰ The primitiveness of the double delegation is also questioned due to the fact that John does not mention them, although he claims uniquely that messengers arrived to tell to the official that his boy was well (John 4:51–52). There is reason to assume that John would have preserved the tradition of Jewish elders addressing Jesus for the sake of the official. After all, in John 12:20–22 some Greeks request Jesus’ disciples to talk to their master about their cause.

As noted, according to Luke Jesus did not meet the Gentile centurion face to face, but rather through emissaries. Luke has not preserved a single story in which Jesus would have actually met a Gentile on positive terms. Of course the Gerasene demoniac was most probably a Gentile, but his ethnicity is not explicitly stated in the Synoptics. In Luke Jesus stays almost entirely within the borders of Jewish Palestine – in contrast to the other Synoptics Luke does not mention of Jesus visiting the territory of Tyre and Sidon or the surrounding areas of Caesarea Phi-

⁵²⁸ Fitzmyer, 1981, 649. Lukan vocabulary can be seen at least in the word *παραγίνομαι* (Luke 7:4a), which is found 37 times in the NT, and 28 times in the Luke-Acts. Marshall, 1978, 278. Also Marshall argues that Luke 7:3–6 contains some Lukan vocabulary. Gagnon (Gagnon, 1994, 133) states that during the last 70 years scholars have argued for the view represented here by Fitzmyer – so to say, the original source did not know anything of the double delegate of Luke 7.

⁵²⁹ Meier, 1994, 722.

⁵³⁰ See Bird, 2006, 116–117.

lippi. The fact that Luke, who certainly supported the Gentile mission, did not reveal any clear occasions when Jesus would have met a Gentile face to face, suggest that Luke intended to represent Jesus within a salvation historical plan where Jesus' pre-Easter mission was strictly only for the Jews and on Jewish land. The schema from Galilee to Jerusalem also formulates the Lukan Gospel. Jesus does not depart from his path to the Holy city (Luke 9:31, 51; 13:22; 14:33; 17:11; 19:28). In light of the theological intention of Luke in which he aims to reveal Jesus' mission as supremely Jewish, it becomes more reasonable to claim that the idea of the double delegation is to be understood as a Lukan creation. Because of the delegation Jesus does not directly meet a Gentile.

In 1994 Gagnon summed up the scholars' views regarding the question of the source of the double delegations over the last 70 years. He stated that "the trend has been to regard the motif of the double delegation as a piece of Lukan redaction." It has been argued that the original Q-tradition of the story of the centurion of Capernaum, which was used by Matthew in the formation of Matt 8:5–10, did not contain the delegations.⁵³¹ The trend, which was referred by Gagnon, has been weakened. In 2006 Bird stated that concerning the question as to whether the original Q contained the delegations or whether Luke created them, the scholarly support for both views are fairly evenly balanced.⁵³² Gundry and Gagnon have proposed that Matthew would indeed have had reasons to abbreviate the Lukan story of the double delegate if he had known it.⁵³³ According to Gundry the centurion is a prototype for Gentile believers and therefore Matthew does not wish the Jewish elders to praise him for loving their people and building a synagogue for them, as Luke has it (7:3–5). Matt 21:43 states that the kingdom of God is transferred to another nation (ἐθνός), and the synagogue is referred as "*their* synagogue" in opposition to the Church (Matt 10:17; 23:34).⁵³⁴ It is ap-

⁵³¹ See Gagnon, 1994, 133.

⁵³² Bird, 2006, 116–117.

⁵³³ Gagnon, 1994, 133–142.

⁵³⁴ Gundry, 1994, 141. Gagnon, 1994, 139, 141–142.

parent that Matthew has abbreviated certain passages, which have longer parallels in the other Synoptics (Matt 9:2, 18–19; 11:2–3).⁵³⁵

Despite the fact that Matthew has included some anti-Gentile and pro-Jewish statements of Jesus in his Gospel (Matt 10:5–6; 15:24), it is obvious that Matthew is positive to the Gentile mission of the Church (Matt 28:18–20). Matthew mentions Jesus occasionally meeting with Gentiles and helping them – the Syrophoenician woman, the Gerasene demoniac and the centurion’s servant. Matthew does not hesitate to recall Jesus crossing over the political borders of Galilee and Judea into the Gentile lands of Tyre, Sidon, Gerasa and Caesarea Philippi. In the context of Matthew’s theology we can credibly argue that Matthew had omitted the mention of the delegations which obscured one of Jesus’ rare meetings with a Gentile. We have reason to suppose that Matthew would not have left unmentioned any tradition which dealt with Jesus meeting a Gentile on positive terms. At the same time we have to note that Luke – as he seems to be concerned with Jesus’ Jewish mission – could have readily recalled the delegations. The presence of these delegations prevented Jesus from meeting face to face with the Gentile. Consequently, the absence of the delegations suits well with Matthew’s theology, and their presence suits well with Luke’s theology. If the delegations were already found in the tradition, neither Luke nor Matthew would have related to them in a neutral manner. The question arises: if they were not in the early tradition, would Luke have invented them?

If the narrative about the double delegate has a basis in the tradition, does it contradict Matthew’s claim that Jesus met the centurion? In accordance with the inner logic of the Matthean and Lukan narrative our answer would, in principal, be negative although not necessarily credible. The words of the centurion’s friends are said as if the centurion

⁵³⁵ See Theissen, 1983, 177. Theissen notices that Matthew has shortened many miracle-stories. In the case of Jesus healing Peter’s mother-in-law we get the implicit impression that Jesus was alone with the woman – i.e. there were no other guests (Matt 8:15; in contrast with Mark 1:31/Luke 4:39). Also in Matt 9:20–21 we get the impression that the woman with an issue of blood met Jesus more intimately, not surrounded by a crowd. However from Mark 5:27/Luke 8:44–47 we read that there was a great crowd surrounding Jesus. In the Matthean versions of the stories concerning the Gerasene demoniac (Matt 8), the healing of Jairus’ daughter (Matt 9) and the “epileptic boy” (Matt 17), as well as in the story of blind man of Jericho (Matt 20) we see that Matthew has shortened the stories.

himself had said them to Jesus (Luke 7:6) – i.e. in first person singular. These words of the centurion’s friends are found to be almost identical as those from the mouth of the centurion in the Matthean version of the story (Matt 8:8): κύριε, οὐκ εἰμι ἱκανὸς ἵνα μου ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην εἰσέλθῃς, ἀλλὰ μόνον εἰπὲ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήσεται ὁ παῖς μου. In Luke 7:6–7 the centurion speaks to Jesus through his emissaries, but despite this, the message is almost identical with Matt 8:8. Both sayings are in first person singular. Thus Matthew need not necessarily have explicitly mentioned the messengers. This argument again finds support from Matthew’s tendency to abbreviate stories.

The Lukan narrative, contextualizing the dialogue of Jesus and the centurion (or his agents), is slightly controversial. According to Luke 7:3 the centurion sent (ἀπέστειλεν) the Jewish elders (πρεσβυτέρους τῶν Ἰουδαίων) to ask Jesus to come (έλθῶν) and heal his servant. The elders are said to have convinced Jesus that the centurion deserves his aid. According to 7:6 Jesus responded positively to the centurion’s request and went with the emissaries (ἐπορεύετο σὺν αὐτοῖς) to meet the centurion. But as Jesus was already near the centurion’s house the centurion surprisingly changed his mind and refused to allow Jesus to come under his roof because he was not worthy of such a visit: οὐ γὰρ ἱκανὸς εἰμι ἵνα ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην μου εἰσέλθῃς (7:6). This self-contradicting feature, which portrays the centurion as indecisive, may be seen as a support for the traditional character of the Lukan version of the story. It can of course be claimed that Luke uses the intermediates to emphasize the centurion’s humility, but his character as an exemplary believer and as a humble man becomes evident also in the dialogue itself, which is shared by Matthew (Matt 8:8–10/Luke 6d, 7b–9). The double delegation gives an indecisive impression of the centurion. Besides, as the Jewish elders are seen in a rather positive light, the centurion and his actions are peculiar. He does not give clear orders. In Matthew’s version these peculiar contradictions are absent. The centurion, as Matthew tells us, did not ask Jesus to come to his home, but only plead that his servant was seriously ill (Matt 8:6). Due to the use of delegates the Lukan version of the story raises the impression that Jesus came from afar. The second delegation, the friends of the centurion, met Jesus as “he was not anymore far” (ἦδη δὲ αὐτοῦ οὐ μακρὰν) from the centurion’s house. To be sure in Caperna-

naum the distances were never long. Thus the idea of Jesus arriving through the town to meet the centurion and encountering a delegation on his way seems artificial. We are to notice that the word μακρὰν is Lukan.⁵³⁶

In light of the several aspects, it may be asked if the Lukan double delegate to be held as part of the primitive story of the centurion of Capernaum? Marshall claims the following: “It is at least as possible that he (Matthew) has abbreviated here as that Luke has creatively expanded the story.”⁵³⁷ Gundry maintains:

“The unlikelihood of the centurion’s sending two successive delegations is matched by the unlikelihood of an invention of such an awkward literary device.”⁵³⁸

However, as the delegations seem to suit Luke’s theological themes, and as they are absent from John and Matthew, and as the passage contains Lukan vocabulary, I prefer to regard them as a Lukan creation.

5.5 The identification of the centurion: Jew or Gentile?

We have already briefly noticed that in none of the versions of the story of the centurion’s or official’s servant (Luke, Matthew and John) is it clearly stated that the centurion/official or his servant-boy would have been a Gentile. We shall now examine more profoundly the questions of the centurion’s and official’s ethnicity. Needless to say that these are crucial questions for our concern, as we are clarifying Jesus’ attitude towards the Gentiles. The Lukan and Matthean story as such implicitly support that the centurion was a Gentile.⁵³⁹ This conclusion is reached

⁵³⁶ The word μακρὰν appears four times in Luke (7:6; 15:13, 20; 19:12), but only three times all together in Matt, Mark and John (Matt 8:30; Mark 12:34; John 21:8). The words μακρὰν ἀπέχοντος are found identically only from Luke 7:6 and 15:20.

⁵³⁷ Marshall, 1978, 278.

⁵³⁸ Gundry, 1994, 147.

⁵³⁹ Bird, 2006, 118–120. John certainly had theological reasons to present him as a Jew, while Luke and Matthew had theological reasons to claim that he was a Gentile (p. 119). According to Bird the centurion was regarded as a Gentile in the early tradition.

due to the fact that the centurion's faith is compared with the faith of Israel and none of the versions of the story claim that Jesus would have actually visited the home of the centurion. Scholars have traditionally taken it for granted that he was a Roman centurion. This view is still supported by several scholars such as Davies and Allison.⁵⁴⁰ Perhaps the majority of current scholars hold that the centurion was not a Roman official, but an official of Antipas' soldiery.⁵⁴¹ Incidentally, we may be certain that if the centurion was a Roman centurion, he would not have been a Jew. This certainty is based on the notion of Josephus (*Ant.* 14:204, 226–228, 232) according to which since the time of Julius Caesar Palestinian Jews were exempt from Roman military service.

Presumably both Matthew and Luke, as evangelists and redactors, would have been tempted to portray the officer as a Roman centurion. Both evangelists portray Roman centurions in a positive light.⁵⁴² This is surprising because the Roman troops were hated among the Jews, particularly during the two decades following the Jewish War. Although the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were composed during this period, they do not mediate any obvious enmity felt towards the Romans. It is explicitly stated that Jesus was tortured and crucified by Roman soldiers. These soldiers would have been led by a Roman centurion (Luke 23:36; Matt 27:27–31, 32–37). According to Matthew and Mark a Roman centurion recognized Jesus as the Son of God right under the cross (Matt 27:54; Mark 15:39). Luke states in Acts 10 that the exemplary and first Gentile to become a Christian was the God-fearing Roman centurion (ἑκατοντάρχης) named Cornelius. After the Jewish war the hatred of the common Jews was usually targeted especially towards the centurions, who were local Roman leaders (Sifre Dtn. 309.1.1). Jewish wri-

⁵⁴⁰ Davies & Allison, 1991, 18–19. Keener, 1999, 264. Malina & Rohrbaugh, 2003, 55, 252–253. Malina & Rohrbaugh state that the story itself does not directly answer whether the Roman centurion was an Israelite or a non-Israelite. According to Malina & Rohrbaugh there were Israelites who served in the Roman army in various ranks (p. 252). This is in contrast with the argument of Gnllka: Gnllka, 1997, 36, 309. According to Gnllka Jews were exempted from the duty of serving in the Roman army. Gnllka states that the Roman army active in Judea consisted most probably of Arabs, Samaritans and Syrians, p. 36.

⁵⁴¹ Bovon, 2002, 259. Crossan & Reed, 2001, 88–89. Marshall, Jonathan, 2009, 75. Marshall, 1978, 279. Bird, 2006, 118–119. Meier, 1994, 721. Sanders, 2002, 9, 11–12. Chancey, 2005, 50–56.

⁵⁴² Davies & Allison, 1991, 19.

tings of the first century and later testify deep and understandable enmity felt towards the Romans.⁵⁴³

Both Luke (7:6; 23:47) and Matthew (8:5, 8; 27:54) use the Greek term *ἐκατοντάρχης*, which means a centurion. Mark (15:39, 44–45) uses the Latinism of the same term in his Gospel: *κεντυρίων*.⁵⁴⁴ These were titles of Roman army-officials, but the Latin term *κεντυρίων* referred more clearly to Roman troops. Neither Luke nor Matthew use this term in the case of the centurion of Capernaum. Chancey notes that in Josephus' use the term *ἐκατοντάρχης* refers in most cases to Roman officers, but occasionally also to non-Romans, to soldiers who are part of the biblical narrative. Noteworthy the term appears frequently in the LXX of course without any Roman associations.⁵⁴⁵ Herod Antipas had a soldiery (*Ant.* 18:113–114), which consisted most probably of both Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers.⁵⁴⁶ Antipas' soldiery actually became an object of Romans suspicion at the beginning of Gaius Caligula's reign (37–41 CE). It is to be noted that the ethnicity, i.e. the possible Jewishness of the army, was not at stake when Antipas was accused.⁵⁴⁷ Jose-

⁵⁴³ Keener, 1999, 265, n. 16. In the early Jewish texts Rome is often seen as the new Babylon and the place of captivity (*Sib. Or.* 5:143, 159; 2. *Bar.* 11:1; 67:7; 4. *Ezra* 3:1–2, 28; Rev 14:8). The Amoraim frequently call Rome by a humiliating nickname, 'Edom' (*b. Mak.* 12a; *Gen. Rab.* 37:2; 44:15, 17; 63:7; 76:6; *Ex. Rab.* 1:26; 18:12; 23:6; 31:17; 35:5; *Lev. Rab.* 13:5; 23:6; *Num. Rab.* 11:1; 14:1; 15:17; *Deut. Rab.* 1:16; *Qoh. Rab.* 5:7 §1; 11:1, §1; 11:5§1; *Pesiq. R.* 10:1; 13:2; 14:15; 15:20). In the later texts of the Qumran community, the 'Kittim', who are objects of the sectarian hatred, are to be identified with the Romans.

⁵⁴⁴ Davies & Allison, 1991, 19. Marshall, 1978, 279.

⁵⁴⁵ Chancey, 2005, 52–53. The term *ἐκατοντάρχης* refers to a Jewish officer in *Bell.* 2:578. In the LXX it appears in several places: Exod 18:21, 25; Num 31:14, 48, 52, 54; Deut 1:15; 1 Sam 8:12; 2 Sam 18:1; 2 Kgs 14:1; 1 Chr 29:6.

⁵⁴⁶ Luke 23:11 states that in Jerusalem Herod Antipas mocked Jesus together with his soldiers: *ἐξουθενήσας δὲ αὐτὸν [καὶ] ὁ Ἡρώδης σὺν τοῖς στρατευώμασιν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐμπαίξας περιβαλὼν ἐσθήτα λαμπρὰν ἀνέπεμψεν αὐτὸν τῷ Πιλάτῳ.*

⁵⁴⁷ Josephus states that the new Emperor Caligula suspected Antipas of preparing war against his government. Such an accusation was posed against Antipas by Agrippa I. The accusation was supported by the statement that Antipas had collected armor to equip 70 000 men (*Ant.* 18:251). At the end of Antipas' reign king Aretas, who was the king of Arabia Petrea, launched war against Antipas' army, with the consequence that Antipas' army was destroyed (*Ant.* 18:101–119). Josephus writes that this destruction was God's judgment against Antipas because he had executed John the Baptist, who was a just and good man, and who urged the Jews to exercise virtue and righteousness (*Ant.* 18:116–118).

phus informs us that Herod the Great had required foreigners to be in his army (*Ant.* 17:198–199). He even had Gentiles as his close bodyguards.⁵⁴⁸ We have no reason to suppose that Antipas would have differed from his father in these respects.⁵⁴⁹ This is even more assumable because Antipas ruled Perea, an area consisting of a mainly Gentile population. Perea would quite likely have provided him soldiers.⁵⁵⁰ An important aspect to note is that Antipas' troops were organized in line with the Roman army.⁵⁵¹ Antipas eagerly adopted Roman and Greek terminology for his officials,⁵⁵² and the title *centurion* belonged to Roman military terminology. The adopted language of Herod is one of the reasons why we should not automatically assume that the centurion was a Roman centurion because he is characterized with a Roman title (ἐκατοῦ τάρχης).

Historical information based on Josephus indicates that there were no Roman troops permanently stationed in Galilee.⁵⁵³ When revolts occurred and Roman soldiers were needed to secure peace, the troops had to come from Syria, where three to four Roman legions – that is about 20 000 soldiers – were stationed.⁵⁵⁴ It is true that at the time of Jesus there were Roman troops, perhaps 3000 soldiers, stationed in all of Palestine, but they were in Caesarea Maritima, Jericho, Jerusalem and Ashkelon – not in Galilee.⁵⁵⁵ The permanent presence of Roman centurions or soldiers in Galilee in the 30s is quite unlikely and it is based on

Antipas' fate was poor: he lost his army, he did not gain kingship over the Jews and the new Emperor sent him to exile.

⁵⁴⁸ *Bell.* 1:672; 2:58.

⁵⁴⁹ Chancey, 2002, 102, 175–176.

⁵⁵⁰ Chancey, 2005, 51–52.

⁵⁵¹ Chancey, 2002, 102.

⁵⁵² Marshall, Jonathan, 2009, 75.

⁵⁵³ Chancey, 2002, 52–53. The assumption that prior to the direct Roman rule in 44 CE there would have been Roman troops stationed in Galilee, and Roman soldiers patrolling in the Jewish villages and highways, is erroneous. In 44 CE all of Palestine was incorporated into the Judean province which was under direct Roman administration and led by Roman procurators (*Bell.* 2:218–220; *Ant.* 19:360–363) and under the surveillance of the Roman governor of Syria. The Herodian rulers of Galilee, namely Antipas and Agrippa I, were from the Emperor's point of view friendly client kings. It would have been very unusual and against the Romans' policy to station their troops in such peaceful regions.

⁵⁵⁴ Stegemann, 2011, 2297.

⁵⁵⁵ Chancey, 2005, 47–49. Stegemann, 2011, 2296–2297.

a thin layer of evidence. Sanders states that the only support found for the presence of Roman soldiers in Galilee during the reign of Antipas, is precisely the debatable story of Luke 7:1–10/Matt 8:5–13.⁵⁵⁶ In addition to this story of the Capernaum centurion, there is the passage of Matt 5:41, which is sometimes used as an evidence for presence of Roman soldiers in Jewish Galilee during the time of Jesus. If there was a Roman centurion stationed with a small group of soldiers in Capernaum, their duty could have been to patrol the highway, and secure peace, and perhaps support and consult the troops of Antipas. However, the mere existence of Roman troops in Galilee is unlikely, and it is even less likely that the Roman troops would have oppressed the Galileans in the 30s.⁵⁵⁷

The presence of a Roman centurion in Capernaum during the reign of Antipas has also been doubted because of practical improbabilities. Meier clarifies that a Roman centurion was technically a leader of 100 men, but depending on circumstances, places and times, a centurion could also be a leader of only 30–60 foot-soldiers.⁵⁵⁸ If there had actually been 30–60 Roman foot-soldiers in Capernaum it would have meant that a notable percentage of the residents of Capernaum had been non-Jewish soldiers. As we have seen in chapter 3.6.1, according to Reed and Horsley the population of Capernaum reached about 1000 inhabitants. It is incredible that such a great Roman presence in Capernaum would have escaped Josephus' and the evangelists' notice.

⁵⁵⁶ Sanders, 2002, 12. See also Bird, 2006, 119. Chancey, 2002, 53.

⁵⁵⁷ There are no reasons or evidence for the Roman soldiers' assumed oppressive military presence in Galilee during the 30s. Abusive and offensive behavior would not have been tolerated by the Galilean Jews, and assumedly it would have been recorded in the written sources of the first century. Evidence of the Roman soldiers' abusive behavior in Palestine is apparent when we move to the 50s and 60s CE. These kinds of abusive actions became sparks for the Jews' revengeful reactions (*Bell.* 2:223–227, 229–230). In 40 CE, during the Caligula crises, the Jews, and especially the Galilean Jews, had positive experiences of Petronius, the Syrian legate from the Roman army. Petronius indirectly opposed the Emperor's command to force his image to be erected in the temple of Jerusalem. The history of the Caligula crises has been preserved by several ancient writers. See Josephus (*Bell.* 2:184–203; *Ant.* 18:256–309), Philo (*Leg. Gai.* 197–337) and Tacitus (*Annales* 12:54).

⁵⁵⁸ Meier, 1994, 721. Meier defines in length the office of a Roman centurion. They had a vast amount of responsibilities which varied depending on several factors. It is impossible to regard the centurions as a homogenous group with clearly specified functions and duties in the army. This is the reason why it is difficult to make generalizations about the centurions. See Davies & Allison, 1991, 19. Keener, 1999, 264–265. Marshall, 1978, 279.

The most plausible argument is that the centurion was a soldier from Antipas' army.⁵⁵⁹ This conclusion also gains indirect support from John's version of the story. John 4:46 and 49 calls the man a "royal official" (ὁ βασιλικός). An officer of Antipas' soldiery could be called a royal official. However a Roman officer could hardly be called a royal official (ὁ βασιλικός) in the Galilee of the 30s. Our conclusion that the centurion belonged to Antipas' troops does not reveal his ethnic identity since Antipas' soldiery consisted of both Jews and Gentiles. However both the dialogue and the narrative sequence of the episode (Luke 7:1-10; Matt 8:5-13) support the view that he is to be regarded as a Gentile. As an officer of Antipas' troops he would most likely have been Syrian.

5.6 The historicity of the healing of the centurion's servant

Deciding the historicity of the story of the centurion is a complicated matter. The story is quite probably preserved in two traditions (Q and possibly John). Concerning the Matthean and Lukan version of the story the majority of scholars, among whom I stand on this question, suggest that Matthew has been more loyal to the tradition than Luke.⁵⁶⁰ There are also scholars who claim that Luke has preserved the original tradition in a more authentic form.⁵⁶¹ The claim that the story has a historical core has been supported by several observations. The story suits the pre-70 context of Galilee. The Jewish town of Capernaum was on the border area of Antipas' territory and it lay close to the tetrarchy of Philip. Consequently there would quite naturally have been a centurion or official of Antipas' bureaucracy stationed in Capernaum. It can be assumed that this border town would have had toll stations and a military garrison.⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁹ Meier, 1994, 721. The army of Herod the Great consisted of both Jewish and Gentile (Syrian) soldiers. It is improbable that Herod Antipas would have changed this functioning practice of having Gentile soldiers.

⁵⁶⁰ Fitzmyer, 1981, 648–649. Lüdemann, 2000, 302.

⁵⁶¹ Gundry, 1994, 141, 147. According to Gundry Luke is more loyal to the tradition.

⁵⁶² Meier, 1994, 720, 725. Bird, 2006, 118–120. Bird states the following (p. 118): "The story is plausible in a first-century setting where Capernaum, as a thoroughfare on the eastern Galilean frontier, was likely to have toll-collectors and Herodian officials in the vicinity."

The dialogue between Jesus and the centurion does not answer any of the pressing questions of the early Church regarding circumcision and observance of the Torah. It is not explicitly stated that the centurion would have become a disciple or follower of Jesus. It is peculiar that Luke does not, unlike Matthew and John, record in his version of the story any healing words of Jesus – the centurion is left unanswered. His servant is healed from a distance without any words or prayers. The lack of the healing words might reflect the primitive tradition.

The historicity of the story of the centurion of Capernaum has not been widely accepted. Bultmann for example concluded that the story of the Syrophenician woman and the centurion of Capernaum shared such clear thematic similarities that they must have been invented by the early Christians. These stories, so Bultmann insists, “are imaginary, and we must treat them as products of the Church.” He further states that “hardly anyone will support the historicity of a telepathic healing.”⁵⁶³ Davies and Allison on the contrary state that the story of the healing of the centurion’s servant is probably based on a concrete memory from Jesus’ ministry.⁵⁶⁴ Also Meier and Bird come to the conclusion that “behind the primitive tradition lies a historical event from the public ministry of Jesus.”⁵⁶⁵ Meier, Allison, Davies and Bird rely mostly on the same evidence for the support of the story’s historicity. The story of the centurion’s servant is quite possibly based on several sources (Q and John), there are indications that the earliest Greek tradition has an underlying Semitic substratum. The notion from the Q-source that Jesus was astonished by the great faith of the Gentile might have been embarrassing for the early transmitters (Matt 8:10/Luke 7:9). Meier additionally states that the notion of Jesus’ reaction is not found in John, which might be because John had the forceful intention of portraying Jesus as divine. Both Meier and Bird use the statement of surprise as an argument for the historicity of the reaction – i.e. Jesus’ reaction was embarrassing for the early Christians, and thus the historicity of the reaction

⁵⁶³ Bultmann, 1963, 39.

⁵⁶⁴ Davies & Allison, 1991, 18.

⁵⁶⁵ Meier, 1994, 726. Bird, 2006, 118. The citation is from Meier.

can be supported by the criterion of embarrassment.⁵⁶⁶ The words of Luke 7:9b/Matt 8:10b have a strong claim for authenticity. They cohere clearly with other sayings in Q in which Jesus compares the Gentiles with “this generation” and with Jewish villages.⁵⁶⁷

The evidence supports the conclusion that the core of the story recalls a historical event in Jesus’ mission. Jesus was remembered for having a *dialogue* or more precisely being challenged by a Gentile centurion-official in Capernaum.

5.7 The Gerasine demoniac (Mark 5:1–20)

5.7.1 Introductory remarks

The story of the Gerasene demoniac is sometimes noted as the third possible concrete encounter between Jesus and a Gentile. Even if the story itself does not exclusively state the man’s ethnicity, everything in the story emphasizes his non-Jewishness.

This exorcist story is transmitted in all the Synoptics: Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39; Matt 8:28–34. It is a long and detailed story.⁵⁶⁸ I maintain with Wright that the context and the details of the story emphasize the impurity and the non-Jewish elements encountered by Jesus. The story is located on the other side of the Lake (εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης), on Gentile territory. The tombs, the pigs, the demons that are called by the name of a Roman war-unit Legion and the pig-farmers transfer a clear message: Jewish Jesus has stepped into the non-Jewish

⁵⁶⁶ Meier, 1994, 725. Bird, 2006, 118. Meier clarifies on p. 725 that “the Q story presents us with the only occasion in the miracle stories of all Four Gospels where Jesus is said to be “surprised”, “astonished”, or “marveling” (ethaumasen, Matt 8:10 par.)... Indeed, it is not surprising that throughout all four Gospels – with the notable exceptions of Matt 8:10 par. and Mark 6:6 – references to Jesus’ being astonished are simply absent.”

⁵⁶⁷ Luke 10:13–15/Matt 11:20–24 and Luke 11:29–32 and Matt 12:41–42.

⁵⁶⁸ For the origin of the story see Fitzmyer, 1981, 733. Bock, 1994, 768. Fitzmyer (1981, 733) correctly states that the Lukan version of the “story is derived from “Mk” (5:1–20).” Luke has more closely followed Mark while Matthew has abbreviated Mark more freely. Matthew’s redaction is clearly seen in his version of the story. Regarding the Matthean special features see Davies & Allison, 1991, 76–77, 80. Matthew concentrates on purely Christological themes and he has omitted motifs associated with ritual exorcism – Jesus does not ask the name of the demon and thus Matthew does not mention the Legion. Matthew makes no mention about the dialogue between Jesus and the healed man (Mark 5:18–20).

world. Wright further states that in this story Jesus is surrounded by the traditional enemies of YHWH and his people.⁵⁶⁹

We may note that the story contains unique features: Jesus has a dialogue with the demoniac/the demons, and moreover, he gives in to their will. The demons are allowed to enter the pig herd (Mark 5:7–12). In other stories of exorcism Jesus is remembered as commanding the demons (Mark 1:25; 9:25), but not negotiating with them. The drowning of the 2000 pigs is also a quite unique feature among Jesus' miracle-stories (Mark 5:12–13). Precisely because of the terrible fate of the 2000 pigs, this miracle story can be labeled as a destructive miracle. With the exception of the withering of the fig tree (Mark 11:13–14, 20–21), the Gospels lack accounts of Jesus practicing destructive miracles. This might be surprising since Jesus is remembered of having proclaimed a fiery doom (Matt 11:20–24/Luke 10:13–15) and according to Luke 9:54–55 the disciples even expected Jesus to perform a destructive fire-miracle. In the OT destructive miracles are found in the Exodus story (Exod 7–12, 14) and in the prophetic traditions of Israel (2 Kgs 1:10–12; 2:23–24). Modern scholars have been confused by the “fantastic and grotesque” elements of the story of the Gerasene demoniac – especially the running of the 2000 pigs into the Sea and their drowning. For example Fitzmyer states the following:

“The flamboyant and grotesque details of this story reveal the tendency that was beginning to be associated with basic miracle-stories in the gospel tradition, a tendency that comes to full bloom in the apocryphal gospel tradition.”⁵⁷⁰

5.7.2 The location of the story

The manuscripts contain textual variations regarding the location of the exorcism. In some copies the location, which is stated in Mark 5:1; Luke 8:26 and Matt 8:28, is said to be on the region of the Gerasenes (τὴν χώραν τῶν Γερασηνῶν) while others name the place as Gedarenes, Gergesenes, Gergesines and Gergystenes. As has been noted by many, Ge-

⁵⁶⁹ Wright, 1996, 195–196. Bird, 2006, 109–110.

⁵⁷⁰ Fitzmyer, 1981, 734.

rasa (Γερασηνῶν) is the most likely original location of the story. There are two convincing reasons for this reading. First, this reading (Γερασηνῶν) was known in both the Alexandrian and Western traditions. Secondly, this reading contains a practical problem regarding the distance between the Lake of Galilee and the region of Gerasa. It would be strange if a later scribe had created such a practical dilemma for the story.⁵⁷¹ The Decapolis city of Gerasa was located 55 km from the Sea of Galilee. For sure its regions extended far, but probably not as far as the Lake. Even the demonized pigs would not have been able to run such distances. Such a long distance makes the story confusing.

Gerasa, the modern Jordanian city of Jerash, was one of the greatest cities of Decapolis.⁵⁷² During the Early Roman period Gerasa's inhabitants were probably mostly Semitic, and partly Greek. The Jewish presence in the city is attested by Josephus who states that the city spared its Jewish residents during the outbreak of the Jewish War (*Bell.* 2:480).⁵⁷³ From Josephus we learn that although the areas on the east side of the Sea of Galilee were inhabited by Gentiles, a Jewish minority also resided there (*Bell.* 3:51–58). Matthew differs from Mark and Luke by placing the story of the demoniac in the region of Gadara (Matt 8:28). It is to be recognized that even in the case of Matt 8:28 there are textual variations in the early manuscripts. Gadara was another city of the Decapolis. The driving of the pigs into the sea would have been more plausible from this city's vicinity than from the regions of Gerasa. This is because Gadara was located only 10 km from the Sea of Galilee, and it is possible that the city's regions reached to the shore of the Lake.⁵⁷⁴ Most probably Matthew changed the more traditional Gerasa to Gadara due to practical reasons.⁵⁷⁵ Both Gerasa and Gadara were Gen-

⁵⁷¹ Meier, 1994, 651, 665. Ådna, 1999, 295. Marcus, 2000, 342–342. Collins, 2007, 263–264, 266. Davies & Allison, 1991, 78–79. Bock, 1994, 782–784.

⁵⁷² Chancey, 2002, 134.

⁵⁷³ Chancey, 2002, 137. Collins, 2007, 267.

⁵⁷⁴ See Chancey, 2002, 137–138. Collins, 2007, 263. Chancey notes that “Gadara’s pagan character is evident from Josephus’s comment that its inhabitants complained about Herod the Great’s harsh rule and his ‘violence, pillage, and overthrowing of temples.’” See *Bell.* 1:396; *Ant.* 15:217, 354–359. At the death of Herod the Great, Gadara was not passed to Archelaus, but to Syria (*Bell.* 2:97; *Ant.* 17:320).

⁵⁷⁵ Marcus, 2000, 342.

tile cities. The fact that Jesus was, according to the Synoptics, on Gentile land is important.

5.7.3 Does Mark 5:1–20 contain an anti-Roman satire and a déjà-vu of the defeat of the Egyptians?

According to the story Jesus exorcised the demons, the Legion, which thereafter ran into the Sea. Some scholars have suggested that such an episode would have recalled nationalistic Jewish hopes regarding the nasty Romans and their legions.⁵⁷⁶ In the words of Crossan the idea of driving the Roman legions into the Sea was a “brief performancial summary, in other words, of every Jewish revolutionary’s dream!”⁵⁷⁷ Marcus suggests that the episode might originally have been a political satire of the Roman presence in the east.⁵⁷⁸ The Roman Legion consisted approximately of 5000 soldiers. The mention of the Legion and the 2000 pigs gives the impression that Jesus is at war on Gentile lands, combating Israel’s enemies who totally outnumber him. Nevertheless Jesus’ defeat of the Legion comes to glorify his authority and power.⁵⁷⁹ Marcus states that Mark 5:10, as the demons plea to Jesus that he would not drive them off the land, recalls the Romans’ will to have their military presence on the land: *παρεκάλει αὐτὸν πολλὰ ἵνα μὴ αὐτὰ ἀποστείλῃ ἔξω τῆς χώρας*. Admittedly in the narrative such an interpretation makes sense: there were Roman troops stationed in the areas of the Decapolis. In Galilee, as we have seen, there were no Roman troops and no pig herds, prior to 70 CE. In the pre-70 period Galilee and Judea were not colonized and the Romans military presence in the whole of Palestine was minimal.⁵⁸⁰ The interpretation of Mark 5:10 would not have suited the Galilean situation prior to 70 CE. The surrounding area of Gerasa, a Decapolis city, on the other hand, would have provided a suitable location for the request. Interestingly the boar was the symbol of the Roman legion in Palestine. The passage of *1 En.* 89:12 bears witness that some

⁵⁷⁶ Wright, 1996, 195–196. Theissen, 1991, 109–112. Marcus, 2000, 351–352. Crossan, 1991, 313–318.

⁵⁷⁷ Crossan, 1991, 314.

⁵⁷⁸ Marcus, 2000, 351.

⁵⁷⁹ Bock, 1994, 773–774.

⁵⁸⁰ Chancey, 2005, 55–56.

Jews symbolized Edom/Esau as a black wild boar. Later in Jewish thinking of second temple period Esau is often used as a symbol of Rome.⁵⁸¹

Admittedly the story of the Gerasene demoniac has a local touch which suits the context of the territory of Gerasa prior to 70 CE. As we have noted in chapter 3.4.3 these areas on the east side of the Sea of Galilee – the surrounding territory of the Decapolis – had formerly belonged to the Jewish Hasmonean kingdom (*Ant.* 14:74–76). In 63 BCE Pompey had joined these areas into the Roman Empire and they became part of the Syrian province of Rome. Due to Pompey’s conquest the Hellenistic cities east of the Jordan River were liberated from the Hasmonians’ rule by the Roman legions.⁵⁸² Theissen states that “most of the cities of the Decapolis saw the appearance of the Roman legions as the decisive moment in their history, the date from which they reckoned time.” The Gentile inhabitants of the Decapolis saw the Roman legions as guarantors of their independence. This historical background suits well with the story of the Gerasene demoniac. The demoniac, who presumably represents a Gentile, is ruled by a Legion of demons.⁵⁸³ The ‘Legion’ pleads not to be driven off the land (Mark 5:10) and later the citizens of the surrounding cities are requesting Jesus to leave the area (Mark 5:17). These features of the story recall nationalistic Jewish hopes of overthrowing the Roman Legions which ruled the territory east of the Sea of Galilee.

Besides the anti-Roman bias, the story of the Gerasene demoniac contains a reference to the Exodus narrative in which the Egyptians are defeated and drowned in the Sea (Exod 14–15). Marcus has plausibly clarified the connection between the story of the Gerasene demoniac with the story of the Egyptian soldiers and chariots drowning in the Sea

⁵⁸¹ Marcus, 2000, 344–345, 351. Theissen, 1991, 110. Theissen states the following: “The connection of the demon legion with swine could have been suggested by the Roman legions themselves. The tenth legion *Fretensis* had been stationed in Syria since 6 CE, had taken part in the Jewish war and the siege of Jerusalem, and was subsequently stationed in Judea. On their standards and seals they had, among other things, the image of a boar. Wherever the tenth legion was known, the story of the exorcism at the lake must have awakened associations with Roman occupation, and in the Syrio-Palestinian region it would have had more overtones and undertones than anywhere else. That is the place where it probably was told.”

⁵⁸² See Schürer, 1973, 239–241.

⁵⁸³ Theissen, 1991, 109–110. The citation is from p. 109.

(Exod 14:1–15:22). Between these stories there are apparent verbal, thematic and narrative similarities. Both stories contain the miraculous passing of the Sea in midst of a storm (Mark 4:35–41; 5:1; Exod 14:22; 15:16) and the drowning of the “enemies”, which are defined in war-terms (Mark 5:13; Exod 14:28–30; 15:19). In both stories the Gentiles are amazed, angry and shocked and they ran away (Mark 5:14–17; Exod 14:27; 15:14–15). As a result, in both stories the message of God is spread among the Gentiles (Mark 5:19–20; Exod 14:31; 9:16).⁵⁸⁴

Evidently the story of Mark 5:1–20 is pregnant with triumphant and nationalistic themes recalling the defeat of the Egyptians and making some implicit references to the Romans. The real battle in the narrative, though, is between Jesus and the demons, who are explicitly mentioned to be violent, strong and many.⁵⁸⁵ They are drowned as the Egyptians who refused to “let my people go” and they are called by the name of the Roman war unit. The ancient Egyptians and the current Roman troops were certainly viewed as traditional enemies of Israel in the eyes of many first century Jews. In the narrative of the Gerasene demoniac and within the overall theology of Mark’s gospel, it seems that the real enemy is not Rome and its Legions but Satan.

Mark 5:3 and 5 recall the parable of binding the Strong Man (Mark 3:27). Marcus states that in the narrative sequence the Gerasene demoniac receives his power from the Strong Man, i.e. Satan. He is bound and chained by him. No one can take control of the demoniac; no one can bind him (5:3–4) before the Strong Man, Satan, is defeated. The verbal similarities of the verses (Mark 3:27/5:3–4) are apparent: οὐδεὶς ἴσχυει αὐτὸν δαμάσαι (5:4).⁵⁸⁶ Is it plausible to relate such an idea, identifying the real enemy as Satan, with the historical Jesus? Surprisingly for the modern mind, the many exorcisms in the Jesus traditions are claimed to reflect a central part of Jesus’ mission – so quite many

⁵⁸⁴ Marcus, 2000, 348–349.

⁵⁸⁵ Notably the demoniac is acting in a violent manner, Mark 5:3-5/Matt 8:28. Demoniacs were often portrayed as violent and dangerous: Ep. *Let. Aris.* 289–290; *Ant.* 15:98–99; *T. Sol.* 1:10. See Davies & Allison, 1991, 80.

⁵⁸⁶ Marcus, 2000, 343.

scholars insist.⁵⁸⁷ At the same time we are to notice that an anti-Roman message hardly suits Jesus' mission, which included the message of loving one's enemies. Arguably the Gospel writers were not anti-Roman. There are no convincing reasons to deny that Jesus would have regarded Satan, the Strong Man, as the main enemy. Several writings from the second temple period refer to the belief that during the eschatological or/and current times Satan ruled or would rule over the Gentiles and over the sinners of Israel.⁵⁸⁸ During the eschatological times Satan would be defeated (Isa 24:21–22; *T. Mos.* 10:1; *T. Jud.* 25:3; *T. Levi* 18:12).⁵⁸⁹ It is credible that Jesus, as several passages indicate (Luke 13:16; Mark 3:27; Luke 10:18), would have held such views. There are also firm arguments to claim that Jesus held that the rule of Beliar was coming to an end through his mission: i.e. now, not in the future. Beliar was cast out, rebuked and tied. Dunn states that "Jesus saw his exorcisms as the defeat of Satan."⁵⁹⁰ Meier further claims that the parable of Mark 3:27/Luke

⁵⁸⁷ Funk, 1998, 60. Lüdemann, *Jesus 2000*, 13, Dunn, 2003, 670–673. Meier, 1994, 646–648. Wright, 1996, 451–453. Davies & Allison, 1991, 64–65, 78. For a detailed analysis of Jesus as an exorcist and for the argumentation for its historicity see: Dunn, 1998, 170–186. Meier, 1994, 405–406.

⁵⁸⁸ *Jub.* 1:20; 10:1–14; 12:20; 15:33–34; 19:28–29; CD 12:2–3; 1QS 1:24; 2:19–20; *1 En.* 15:11–12; 69:4–6; Wis 2:24. During the eschatological fulfillment and during the blessed age to come Satan would be defeated and doomed: Isa 24:21–22; *1 En.* 10:4–16; 1QS 4:18–19; *Jub.* 23:29; *T. Mos.* 10:1; *T. Jud.* 25:3; *T. Levi* 18:12; *T. Naph.* 8:4. During the end times the Lord would make war against Beliar and releases its captives, *T. Dan* 5:10–11; *T. Zeb.* 9:8. Jesus' exorcisms implied, if Matt 12:28/Luke 11:20 is to be credited, that the rule of God's kingdom had come over you. From a certain religious Jewish perspective of the time, the Roman legions would have been regarded as being driven by demons. It must be noted that the saying of Luke 11:20/Matt 12:28 is regarded among the vast majority of scholars as authentic: Borg, 1998, 260–261. Dunn, 1998, 194–198. Meier, 1994, 404, 411–414, 422.

⁵⁸⁹ See Horsley, 2006, 41–42.

⁵⁹⁰ Dunn, 1998, 181. Evans concludes in a similar manner: Evans, 2001, 173: "Part of the jubilee is the announcement of liberation from Satan. The exorcisms were for Jesus evidence of the powerful presence of the kingdom of God and of the binding and defeat of Satan." See also: Evans, 2006b, 215, 220, 226–228. Theissen & Merz, 1998, 258. Theissen and Merz state that some Jewish writings from the second temple period expected that Satan and his powers would be defeated during the eschatological future when the kingdom of God would arrive (*T. Dan.* 5:10–11; 1QM 6:6; *T. Mos.* 10:1–2), but that "only Jesus is certain that this victory has already been won." Theissen and Merz further state on p. 258 that Jesus "presupposes a fall of Satan. It becomes a certainty to him as a result of his exorcisms: if the demons flee, that is a sign that the power of evil has fundamentally been broken."

11:21–22, which he holds to be authentic, is to be understood as a reference to Jesus' victory over Satan. According to Meier Jesus' practice of exorcism is to be seen as a demonstration of this eschatological defeat.⁵⁹¹

Evans insists that the *T. Mos.*, which arguably was written around the 30s CE,⁵⁹² reflects an eschatological hope in accordance to which the reign of Satan would come to an end when the blessed time would begin and when "his kingdom will appear in his whole creation" (10:1). The defeat of Satan is regarded as a decisive mark in the fulfillment of the eschatological hope of Israel's restoration, which includes the gathering of the twelve tribes (*T. Mos.* 3:4–9/Mark 3:14–15).⁵⁹³ For our concern it is important to notice that the defeat of Satan is to be connected with the hope of God's eschatological promises being fulfilled. In the Qumran texts and in the Pseudepigrapha the hope of defeating Satan, the source of all evil, is an essential part of the eschatological visions. It is possible that Jesus would have vaguely compared Satan with Israel's traditionally and currently held enemies: Egypt and the Roman Legions.⁵⁹⁴

5.8 The historicity of the Gerasene demoniac

From a form-critical perspective it is apparent that the story follows certain patterns seen in the Gospel of Mark. In Mark Jesus is not recognized as the divine Son and as God's Holy by any humans before his death. Only in front of the cross does a Roman centurion confess that Jesus was the Son of God (Mark 15:39). Prior to his death only spirits, as well as God (Mark 1:11; 9:7), know his identity as the Son.⁵⁹⁵ In Mark Jesus rebukes the demons and forbids them to reveal his

⁵⁹¹ Meier, 1994, 418–419, 420–421.

⁵⁹² Evans, 2006b, 220.

⁵⁹³ Evans, 2006b, 222–230. Evans concludes on p. 226 that "the evidence does suggest that Jesus and the author of the *Testament of Moses* held in common several major ideas", such as the hope of gathering the tribes, defeating Satan and the arrival of the kingdom of God. Further he states on p. 226 that "what was anticipated in the *Testament of Moses* is, Jesus declares, taking place in his ministry." By this Evans means that Jesus' mission and proclamation assumed and initiated that the kingdom had arrived, the lost sheep of the house of Israel were sought and Satan was being defeated at the moment.

⁵⁹⁴ See Wright, 1996, 195–196.

⁵⁹⁵ Meier, 1994, 652–653.

identity.⁵⁹⁶ The story of the Gerasene demoniac contains these theological elements: unlike the disciples (4:41), the demon knows that Jesus is the “Son of the most high God”, 5:7. Because verses Mark 5:6–7 fit the Markan theological pattern perfectly, Meier considers them as non-historical.⁵⁹⁷ The words of the demon in 5:7 (τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί) recall almost identically the words of the unclean spirit in 1:24 (τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί). Moreover the words of Mark 5:7, τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, are identical to the plea of the Gentile widow of Zarephath to Elijah, the prophet from Israel (1 Kgs 17:18). It might be that the redactor of Mark 5:7 has created the question in order to draw a connection between an earlier encounter between an Israelite prophet and a Gentile. This is, however, not the only possible interpretation of the question: τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί. Most probably this question emphasizes that there is nothing in common with Jesus and the demons. The question could be translated: “What do we have in common?”⁵⁹⁸ The story of the Gerasene demoniac clearly resembles other stories of exorcisms in the Synoptics.

It is clear that the four exorcism-stories of Jesus found in Mark contain some typical elements which are often apparent in battles of exorcism. However in certain central matters Jesus’ exorcisms seem to have differed from the ways of the other exorcists of his time. During the first century the exorcists often adjured the demons by a great name. The Synoptics do not recall Jesus accompanying his exorcisms with prayer, physical elements such as amulets, or by adjuring in the name of God or in the Holy Spirit. The early Christians are told to have driven out demons in the name of Jesus. Jesus is simply told to have commanded (ἐπιτάσσω), rebuked (ἐπιτιμάω) and cast out (ἐκβάλλω) the demons.⁵⁹⁹ In many respects Jesus, as he is portrayed in the Synoptics, was

⁵⁹⁶ Mark 1:23–24; 34; 3:11–12; 5:6–7; 9:20.

⁵⁹⁷ Meier, 1994, 652–653.

⁵⁹⁸ Davies & Allison, 1991, 81. Compare Judg 11:12; 2 Kgs 3:13; 2 Chr 35:21; 2 Sam 16:10; 19:23; John 2:4.

⁵⁹⁹ Dunn, 2003, 669, 675–676. It was a general practice for the exorcist to adjure to a great name. See: 4Q560 2.5–6; Acts 19:13; *Ant.* 8:47; *T. Sol.* 5:9; 6:8; 11:6; 15:7; 18:20, 31, 33; 25:8. Jesus arguably did not exorcise in anyone’s name: Matt 12:27/Luke 11:19. The early Christians exorcised in the name of Jesus: Mark 9:38–39; Acts 19:13–19. See also Ådna, 1999, 291–292. Ådna compares Mark 5:1–20 with *Ant.* 8:46–48.

unique in his way of practicing exorcism.⁶⁰⁰ In the story of the Gerasene demoniac it is to be noted that Jesus is not adjuring the demon-possessed person, but the other way around. In Mark 5:7 the demoniac adjures Jesus: ὀρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν. According to Dunn “it was apparently not uncommon for demoniacs to engage the would-be exorcist in a verbal duel.” In such cases the demon-possessed would call the name of some god in order to put a spell on the people or on the exorcist. Dunn claims that the demoniac is trying to “put a spell on Jesus by calling on the power of God (Mark 5:7).” Dunn further states that the question of the demoniac’s name is natural in the exorcist stories, Mark 5:9.⁶⁰¹

The epithet, the “most high God”, mentioned in Mark 5:7, was familiar to the Jews as well to the Greeks. According to Bauckham’s calculations the epithet, “the Most high God”, appears 31 times in the OT, not including the book of Daniel. Bauckham states that the epithet appears altogether 284 times in the writings which can, with good probability be dated between 250 BCE–150 CE. Importantly for our subject he states that “of the 284 occurrences, 250 are in Palestinian Jewish literature”, and that the epithet is rare in the writings from the western Diaspora.⁶⁰² The words of Mark 5:7, τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου, are found identically in Gen 14:18.⁶⁰³ In *T. Mos.* 10:7 it is stated that the “Most High will arise, the Eternal God alone, and He will appear to punish the Gentiles, and He will destroy their idols.” Son of the Most High God recalls Luke 1:32, 35 and 4Q246. References to the Most High God are found elsewhere in the NT: Heb 7:1 and Acts 16:17. Notably for our case, the

⁶⁰⁰ Dunn, 1998, 175–176, 197. Meier, 1994, 406.

⁶⁰¹ Dunn, 2003, 675–677. Dunn, 1998, 173. Theissen, 1983, 57. The citations of Dunn are from Dunn, 2003, 675–676.

⁶⁰² Bauckham, 2008, 110–111. The citation is from p. 110. Bauckham mentions that curiously the epithet is not mentioned in 1 Maccabees and the Psalms of Solomon. Notably in the huge literature corpus of Philo and Josephus the “Most High God” is mentioned only 14 times. The Hebrew name אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל is always translated in the LXX as ὁ θεὸς ὑψίστος, p. 111. On pages 123–126 Bauckham gives a table which consists of the occurrences of the mention of the “Most High God” in Jewish literature during the time of 250 BCE–150 CE. The name is especially common in the following works: *4 Ezra* (68 times), *Ben Sira* (47), *2 Bar.* (24), *Jub.* (23), *1 Enoch* (17), *Daniel* (14). In the literature of the Western Diaspora the name occur frequently in *Joseph and Aseneth* (35) and in the *Testament of Abraham* (10). In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, whose dating and origin is more doubtful, the epithet occurs 17 times.

⁶⁰³ See also: Gen 14:18–20, 22; *1 En.* 6:30; 8:19; 9:46; Jdt 13:18; LXX Ps 57:3; 78:35.

pagan god Zeus was called the most high God.⁶⁰⁴ Chancey clarifies that one of the earliest datable constructions in Gerasa was a temple to Zeus Olympios. This temple was quite likely built in the 20s CE.⁶⁰⁵ The temple of Zeus in Gerasa and the reference to the “most high God” in Mark 5:7 further supports our conclusion that the story of Mark 5:1–20 was originally connected to the areas of Gerasa. The idea of the demon identifying Jesus might indicate that verses Mark 5:6–7 are a Markan creation in line with his theological pattern, as we have noticed earlier.

Another exceptional point in the story is the reaction of the villagers and the citizens of the surrounding Gentile areas. They became scared (ἐφοβήθησαν), and they asked Jesus to leave their areas, 5:15, 17. The story perhaps implies that the people were confused and angry due to the drowning of the pigs. In several other healing and exorcist stories the result is positive: people praise God and request further help.⁶⁰⁶ In this story the people press to leave, and not stay. A somewhat similar reaction of the witnesses of a miracle is to be found in Mark 3:6; John 5:16; Acts 16:19–23.⁶⁰⁷ As we have already noted, this exorcist story is the only one in which Jesus discusses with the demoniac/with the demons (Mark 5:7–12). The story actually recalls Jesus twice ordering the demons to leave the man (5:8, 13). At first the demons did not obey Jesus – this would have tended as an embarrassing notion for the early Christians. Moreover, in the second ordering Jesus allows the will of the demons to be realized: they are to enter the pigherd (5:13).⁶⁰⁸ The historicity of such a dialogue can be supported by the criterion of embarrassment. It can be maintained that the redactor of the Gospel or the early Christians would not have created a dialogue in which Jesus answers

⁶⁰⁴ Marcus, 2000, 343–344. As Zeus was often called “Most High God” the Gentiles evidently referred to the God of the Hebrews as the God Most High. See Num 24:16; 1 Esd 2:2; Dan 3:26; 4:2; 2 Macc 3:31; 3 Macc. 7:9. Interestingly in Acts 16:17 a Gentile demoniac calls Paul as “servant of the Most High God”. See Evans, 2006b, 228. Bock, 1994, 772.

⁶⁰⁵ Chancey, 2002, 135. Collins, 2007, 268. Interestingly during the crisis of Antiochus Epiphanes the temple of Jerusalem was transformed according to 2 Macc 6:2 to the temple of Zeus Olympios. This indicates that the pagans regarded the temple of Jerusalem as the temple of Zeus.

⁶⁰⁶ See Mark 1:27, 33–34, 37; 2:12; 3:10.

⁶⁰⁷ See Marcus, 2000, 346.

⁶⁰⁸ Theissen, 1983, 176.

positively to the demons' request. On the other hand the outcome of the dialogue, the drowning of the pig herds, can be seen as serving theological intentions. In second temple Judaism there was a belief that demons and wicked angels would be driven into a place of judgment (*Jub.* 10:5, 9–11; *1 En.* 21:10). Arguably the Sea often functioned as a symbol of chaos and destruction. The pigs are drowned in the Sea as were the ancient enemies of the Hebrews, the Egyptians (Exod 14–15). The sending of the demons into the pigs does not require the dialogue of Mark 5:7–12, even if the dialogue leads to the destruction of the demons.

Several scholars insist that the story (Mark 5:1–20) has a historical core. Jesus, they claim, met a demoniac in the area of Gerasa and freed the man from the demons. However, often the same scholars state that the episode concerning the pigs did not belong to the original tradition.⁶⁰⁹ Admittedly the pigs running into the Sea create a practical problem, namely the great distance between the land of Gerasa and the Sea of Galilee. Suspicions regarding its authenticity also arise. As we have noticed the 2000 drowning pigs are reminiscent of the narrative in Exod 14–15. It is clear that the story of the drowning pigs has Jewish nationalistic features. These features of the story recall notably Jewish, but not Christian or Christological aspects.⁶¹⁰ It is of course possible that the story of the pigs drowning into the Sea was originally part of a Jewish folktale, which later, at an early stage, was incorporated into the story of the Gerasene demoniac.

The drowning of the pigs seals their destiny. The fate of the demons, after they have been driven off the person, seems to have been an important question for the transmitters of the tradition and for the early Christians. How can it be ensured that the demons do not enter into the person again? In *Ant.* 8:45–49 Josephus states that a certain Jewish man named Eleazar drew a demon from Emperor Vespasian. Josephus writes that after the driving of the demon, the exorcist forbade the demon from entering the person ever again, *Ant.* 8:47.⁶¹¹ In a similar fashion Jesus is

⁶⁰⁹ Meier, 1994, 651–653. Ådna, 1999, 297–300.

⁶¹⁰ Theissen, 1991, 111.

⁶¹¹ Eve, 2002, 326, 340–343, 349. Eve has studied the Jewish exorcism stories of the first century. He concludes that exorcisms were rare during this time period. According to Eve the impression that exorcisms were popular among the Jews is based on the NT evidence

told to have renounced the demon from re-entering into the demonized boy in Mark 9:5.⁶¹² Certain texts from the second temple period reflect the fear of being led by demons.⁶¹³ The book of the *Jubilees* states that Noah and Abraham prayed that their sons would be spared from the control of the demons/Mastema (*Jub.* 10:3–7; 19:28–29). Noah even pleads that God would *bind* the demons so that the sons of his servant, the son of the righteous would not be led astray, *Jub.* 10:5–7. Abraham prays that God would deliver himself “from the hands of evil spirits”, *Jub.* 12:20. In 11Q5 XIX, 15, which is part of the “plea of deliverance”, we encounter the following phrase: “Let no Belial dominate me, nor an unclean spirit.” In *Jub.* 1:20 the plea of being freed from demonic rule and accusations concerns not the individual but the people of God, Israel: “Let not the spirit of Beliar rule over them to accuse them before Thee, and to ensnare them from all the paths of righteousness.”

In light of such fears of being led and bound by demons (see Matt 12:43–45/Luke 11:24–26), it is understandable that the Gospels’ exorcist-stories state that the demons were strictly forbidden to enter into the person again (Mark 9:25; *Ant.* 8:47; Tob 8:3). Satan is to be bound (Mark 3:27). The demons were driven into the place of destruction and doom – into the Sea (Mark 5:13). It seems reasonable to conclude that the original story, which quite likely reflected a historical occasion, contained the dialogue between Jesus and a certain Gerasene demoniac, and the reference to the pigs. The running of the pigs into the Sea is legendary, and it ends the story of the demons: they are no longer running around but are destroyed.

and not on the writings of Josephus. Eve claims further that the only clear exorcism story dating from the first century which Josephus mentions is the story of Eleazar (*Ant.* 8:45–49). On p. 341 Eve concludes: “This indicates that Jewish exorcists existed; but it does not show that they were common. If they were common, one might have expected Josephus to allude to additional examples of the continuing effectiveness of Solomon’s wisdom.”

⁶¹² See Dunn, 1998, 173–174.

⁶¹³ See Stuckenbruck, 2006, 146–165.

5.9 The Gerasene demoniac and the Church's Gentile mission

The story of the Gerasene demoniac is complicated in the view of the early Church and its Gentile mission. First, the healed demoniac, a Gentile in Mark's view, is not admitted to be with Jesus (μετ' αὐτοῦ ἦ), even though he does request that (Mark 5:18). At this stage the status of being with Jesus (ὄσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ) belongs only to the Twelve disciples (3:14). Secondly, the Gentiles from the surrounding Gentile cities and villages are not amazed in a positive sense of the exorcism. They are angry and ask Jesus to get out of their lands. Thirdly, Jesus sends the Gerasene ex-demoniac to his home (εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου) in order to tell (ἀπαγγέλλω) others what the Lord has done for him (5:19–20). In contradiction with the commission of Jesus, the man does not go home, but he goes to Decapolis (ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει) and proclaims (κηρύσσω) what Jesus had done for him. None of these three points suit the idea of the Church's mission among the Gentiles very well. Of course the fact that in Mark 5:19 Jesus gives the ex-demoniac a commission to relate what the Lord has done for him to his family, resonates somewhat with the idea of mission for the Gentiles. In Mark Jesus often commissions people to remain silent about their healings (1:44–45; 7:36; 8:26). A similar commission is given to the demons (1:24; 3:11–12; 9:20). However we can observe that Jesus is not recorded to have sent the ex-demoniac into the Decapolis, i.e. into the Gentile cities, in order to proclaim the message. He is simply asked to go home and tell his family. Nowhere is the ethnic identity of the Gerasene demoniac explicitly expressed, but the story portrays his context in Gentile features: he is possessed with demons, he lives amongst the tombs on Gentile territory, pig-herds surround him, he acts violently and the demons inside of him are called by the name of a Roman war unit. It is also obvious that the Gerasene demoniac is not portrayed as a Jew, a lost son of Abraham (Luke 19:9; 13:16), living in exile.

The evidence suggests that the story of the Gerasene demoniac was not created in order to support the Gentile mission. On the other hand, the story reflects a historical occasion where Jesus met a Gentile

demoniac in the area of Gerasa. The story was preserved in the tradition and it recalled that Jesus had helped a Gentile.

5.10 Concluding remarks

The story of the Syrophenician woman and the story of the Gerasene demoniac are both reminiscent of themes arising from Israel's biblical and current history. Additionally both stories reflect current political struggles and difficult realities. These stories are deep-rooted in the Palestinian environment and religio-political context. Notably the stories are not intertwined with the early Christians' current and actual questions. In the story of the Syrophenician woman the Gentile is called a dog, in the story of the Gerasene demoniac the Roman Legion is driven into the Sea and destroyed. These remarks would have been problematic for the non-Jewish Christians outside of Jewish Palestine. The stories of Jesus meeting and helping a Gentile reveal that Jesus did not drive a Gentile mission. These stories as such do not contain any commissioning of Jesus to reach for the Gentiles. The story of the centurion's servant emphasizes faith as the media through which a Gentile could receive help from Jesus. Faith is also strongly present in the story of the Syrophenician woman. It seems that the three stories of Jesus healing a Gentile do not serve a clear or obvious theological intention. These few stories are accounts of Jesus occasionally helping individual Gentiles who sought his help.

6 Meals and table-fellowship in late second temple Judaism

6.1 Introductory remarks

In this chapter considerable emphasis is laid on studying the social and religious implications of dining and banqueting in the second temple Judaism. The habit of dining with all kinds of people is strongly attested in the Jesus tradition in both sayings and narrative material.⁶¹⁴ According to Chilton Jesus' practice of eating socially was the factor that most clearly distinguished him from other Jewish teachers.⁶¹⁵ Nearly all scholars agree that Jesus had the practice of dining, even with sinners and publicans. The Jesus traditions suggest that Jesus regarded the meal as a symbol of salvation. In this respect Jesus suits well into the religious mind-set of late second temple Judaism. The Jesus traditions make it obvious that Jesus' table-fellowship was not exclusive but inclusive in the sense that he dined even with sinners and publicans.

6.2 Dining in second temple Judaism

In the writings of late second temple Judaism, richness, festive meals and abundance is often connected in a negative manner with leading a sinful life.⁶¹⁶ In one of the several woes to the sinners (*I En.* 94–103) we read the following:

“Woe unto you who eat the best bread! And drink wine in large bowls, trampling upon the weak people with your might. Woe unto you who have water available to you all the time, for soon you shall be consumed and wither away, for you have forsaken the fountain of life”.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁴ Bird, 2006, 104. Holmén, 2001, 205. Borg, 1998, 93. Meier, 1994, 303. Wright, 1996, 149. Blomberg, 2009, 61. Ottenheim, 2011, 3.

⁶¹⁵ Chilton, 1996, 80.

⁶¹⁶ *I En.* 102:9: “Now I tell you, sinners, you have satiated yourselves with food and drink, robbing and sin, impoverishing people and gaining property, and seeing good days.”

⁶¹⁷ *I En.* 96:5–6.

In addition to these passages luxurious and indulgent feasting is criticized for being sinful in *As. Mos.* 7:7–8. To be sure, festive feasting was not seen in such a negative light, but rather feasting, table-fellowship was to be shared in good company. This becomes apparent in *Sir* 9:16: “At table choose the company of good men whose pride is in the fear of the Lord.”⁶¹⁸ Overall, Jewish writings of the second temple period emphasize that the righteous are to avoid the company of the sinners.⁶¹⁹ In *m. ’Abot* 1:4 Yose b. Yoezer says, “Let your house be a gathering place for sages. And wallow in the dust of their feet. And drink in their words with gusto.” In the context of these writings, which portray some of the social and religious atmosphere of the first century Galilee and Judea, we understand that if a Jewish religious teacher or sign prophet had table-fellowship with sinners and publicans, the act was provocative and exceptional.

6.3 Meals (contemporaneous and eschatological) in second temple Judaism: The meal as a symbol for nationalism and separatism

For religious Jews dining was regarded as an important religious symbol. Scholars have inquired how the current feasts and meals were understood in connection with the eschatological fulfillment and the eschatological banquet. J. Priest has studied how the eschatological and/or messianic banquet was understood during the time of second temple Judaism. He concludes that even though the eschatological banquet is often taken for granted, as an evident factor in the eschatological expectations, surprisingly outside the canonical sources the eschatological banquet is clearly mentioned only twice in the Jewish sources of se-

⁶¹⁸ See: *Sir* 9:9: “Never sit down with another man’s wife or join her in a drinking party, for fear of succumbing to her charms and slipping into fatal disaster.”

⁶¹⁹ See *Pss* 1:1, 26:5. In Jewish writings of the second temple period it is emphasized that the righteous are to avoid the company of the sinners: *1 En.* 104:6; 91:3–4. Be separated from the company of the sinners: *Sir* 7:16; 11:9, 29–34. You are to offer your help for others, but not for the sinners, 12:1–8: “Give to the god-fearing, but never help the sinner”, 12:4. God hates the sinners, 12:6. If you join the company of the wicked, you will get involved in their wickedness, 12:14. The righteous and the sinners are not to be in company of each other, *Sir* 13:17; 33:14. See *m. ’Abot* 1:7; *Jub.* 22:16.

cond temple period: *1 En.* 62:12–16 and *2. Bar.* 29:1–8.⁶²⁰ Among these two references to an eschatological banquet we are also to note 1QSa 2:17–22, which relates the eschatological and messianic meal envisioned by the Qumran community. Despite the fact that the clear references to the eschatological banquet are scarce, it is widely held that during the first century CE the great meal had become a symbol of deliverance and eschatological fulfillment. Wendland for example states that

“several pertinent intertestamental passages support the conclusion that the notion of a “messianic banquet” was one that would not only have been current in the minds of Jesus’ audience but also highly relevant as well.”⁶²¹

This tradition of thought, symbolizing deliverance with a meal, reached its roots at least to the prophecies of *Isa* 55:1–5 and *Jer* 31:10–14, in which the renewal of the covenant between Israel and YHWH, the gathering of the scattered people of God, the national restoration is accompanied by an abundance of wine, water, bread and food. The vision of *Isa* 25:6–8 has been especially important for the idea of the pilgrimage of the nations to the Mountain of the Lord, where a great banquet is held.⁶²²

Throughout the second temple period and the Tannaitic period (70–200 CE), the NT is the richest and the most important document for the idea of eschatological banquet.⁶²³ The Gospels’ material of Jesus makes references to the eschatological meal.⁶²⁴ In *Matt* 8:11–12/*Luke* 13:28–30; *Luke* 14:15 the basic meaning of the banquet in the kingdom of God seems to be self-evident for the audience of Jesus. It requires no further explanation, and therefore it suggests that in the minds of first

⁶²⁰ Priest, 1992, 223–224. For other important treatments of the subject of the messianic/eschatological meal see especially the following texts: Smit, 2008, 1–34. Smith, 1991, 64–73.

⁶²¹ Wendland, 1997, 171–172. The quotation is from p. 172. As evidence for the well-known concept of the banquet as a symbol of salvation Wendland refers to *2 Esd* 2:38; *1 En.* 60:7–8; 62:14; 1QSa 2:11–23; *Midrash Genesis* 62:2 and *b. Sanhedrin* 153a. See also Wright, 1996, 532.

⁶²² Horsley, 1993, 173–174.

⁶²³ Priest, 1992, 229–232.

⁶²⁴ *Matt* 8:11–12; *Luke* 14:15–24; *Mark* 14:25.

century Jews the idea of the great feast could quite easily be understood as symbolizing the eschatological deliverance.⁶²⁵ The part of the rabbinic literature, which can be dated prior to 200 CE, namely the Mishnah, does not describe the eschatological banquet, and has only two references to the eschatological banquet. R. Akiba states according to *m. 'Abot* 3:16 that “the judgment is a true judgment. And everything is ready for the meal.” In *m. 'Abot* 4:16 Rabbi Jacob says that “this world is like an antechamber before the world to come. Get ready in the antechamber, so you can go into the great hall.” These two references are short and cryptic. According to Priest these two passages from the Mishnah testify that the theme of the eschatological/messianic banquet was so well known during the Tannaitic period that the authorities of the Mishnah could refer to the eschatological meal in such a bypassing manner.⁶²⁶ We can securely state that the Jews of Jesus’ time could understand a great meal as a symbol of the kingdom of God or of eschatological deliverance. The biblical tradition (Isa 25:6–8; 55:1–5 etc.) would have given rise to such beliefs. A great and festal meal could work as a metaphor for the eschatological deliverance, but the visions of the eschatological fulfillment did not necessary involve an eschatological meal.⁶²⁷

It seems that the daily meals in the ancient Jewish worldview were connected with theological significance. The OT states that joyful and festive meals were willed by God on certain festival occasions (Deut 12:7–18). Eating a meal could be accompanied with religious rituals and offerings (2 Sam 6:18–19; Exod 24:1–11). A sacred meal could imply the idea of dining before the Lord and seeing Him (Exod 24:1–11). At the time of Nehemiah a joyful meal, dining with the family, was practiced in the connection with the confirmation of the covenant (Neh 8:9–12). Also covenants and contracts between humans were confirmed with a shared meal (Gen 26:26–32; 1 Kgs 1:22–26).⁶²⁸ To offer a meal to one’s enemies was a sign of peace, 2 Kgs 6:21–23 and 2 Chr 28:14–15. It is noteworthy that in these two cases the Israelites or the Judeans are

⁶²⁵ Priest, 1992, 231.

⁶²⁶ Priest, 1992, 233.

⁶²⁷ Priest, 1992, 238.

⁶²⁸ Priest, 1992, 235. For the meals in the OT see also Blomberg, 2009, 38–41.

not mentioned as sharing in the meal: they just served it. We may state that in the OT festive banquets shared by the Hebrews and the Gentiles are rare, but not exceptional as Neh 5:17 and 2 Kgs 4:8 proves.⁶²⁹ We hear of the prophets' criticism towards the Israelites' banquets which were often connected with religious motives. In these more or less clear references to the banquets Gentiles are not explicitly mentioned: Isa 28:7–9; Hos 4:18–19; Aam 6:4–6; Mic 2:11. In Isa 25:6–9 the eschatological banquet is prepared by the Lord for all the nations (הַעַמִּים לֹבֵב/πασι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν). It is to be noted that the presence of Israel around the table is not explicitly stated, although its presence can be presupposed.

Blomberg has correctly claimed that during the second temple period, and especially since the Maccabean uprising the food restrictions of the Jews became stricter. Also the restrictions deciding with whom it was suitable to dine were tightened. The Jews' food table became more excluding towards ethnical outsiders and towards other Jews who did not belong to the same sect or socio-religious group. This strictness and exclusive attitude is most apparent in the Qumran community, but is also seen among other religious groupings such as the Pharisees.⁶³⁰ Notably in the texts of the second temple period portraying the eschatological banquet (*1 En.* 62:12–16; *2 Bar.* 29:1–8 and *1QSa* 2:17–22), the Gentiles are not mentioned. *1 En.* 62 attests that the meal of the Son of Man is for the righteous and for His elect (*1 En.* 62:12–13, 15). All the sinners are slain with the word of the Son of Man's mouth, and all the unrighteous are destroyed. All the kings and the mighty, all the rulers of the world, who have oppressed the elect, are terrified as the Son of Man is revealed to them and they will face their judgment: *1 En.* 62:2–11. According to *2 Bar.* 29 the eschatological meal and the manna from heaven are given at the consummation of time, and it is served to all of those who are left and who are residing in Israel after the doom (29:3, 5, 8).

Interestingly Tobit (Tob 1:6–8) clarifies that every third year he used to travel to Jerusalem and serve and share a festive meal with the

⁶²⁹ See Räisänen, 2010, 250.

⁶³⁰ Blomberg, 2009, 41–44.

orphans, widows and the proselytes that had settled themselves among the sons of Israel (προσηλύτοις τοῖς προσκειμένοις τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραηλ). This practice, he states, was in accordance with the Law of Moses, Tob 1:8. In Tob 2:1–2 Tobit, then living in exile in Nineveh, requests his son to find and invite some poor brother of his people (πτωχὸν τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν), who have remained faithful (ὃς μέμνηται ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ), to dine with him on the holy feast of Pentecost. Apparently during the feasts Tobit made a great meal and chose with special care those with whom he would share the food. Religious and national festivals were the occasions for festal dining. During the second temple period the meaning of dining, especially the dining in connection with the festivals as Sukkot and Passover, reached sacral dimensions.⁶³¹

Table fellowship made a social claim: with whom are you willing to eat? In a Jewish religious and national context the table fellowship formed a statement concerning who would have a share among the holy ones of God, among the people of God. The great banquet was to be prepared for the elect. Bryan states that the Pharisees

“very probably viewed their eating with others as an expression of election, an idea which also easily could be and clearly was expressed with the image of the eschatological feast.”⁶³²

By sharing a meal the participants confessed in action mutual respect. The participants of the shared meal considered each other as brothers. Besides food and drink, also acceptance and forgiveness was embraced over the table fellowship.⁶³³ Precisely due to this great significance of a shared meal it is understandable that the Jews – even those Jews who in principle anticipated the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles – were hesitant to share the eschatological banquet with the Gentiles. Jesus’ dining with sinners and publicans understandably come as a shock for many (Mark 2:15–16). By dining with sinners and publicans

⁶³¹ Meyer, 1979, 159. Holmén, 2001, 204. See the following passages: Gen 31:51–54; Exod 18:12; 24:11; 1 Kgs 3:15.

⁶³² Bryan, 2002, 80.

⁶³³ Borg, 1998, 94. McKnight, 1999, 44–45. Meyer, 1979, 159–160. Holmén, 2001, 204–205. Bauckham, 2005, 110.

Jesus called into question the normative views as to who were the elect and who were not.

Prominent scholars such as Jeremias, Perrin, Borg, Chilton, Sanders, and Horsley maintain that the festive and open meals of Jesus are to be regarded as representing the messianic-eschatological banquet/meal in the kingdom of God already realized in the company of Jesus (Mark 2:15–22), or that these meals are to be regarded as representations of the future reality when the actual eschatological banquet begins (Matt 8:11–12).⁶³⁴ Meyer states that Jesus put his preaching into perfect action through the public meals. The meals embraced God’s forgiveness and they were a realization of the restoration of Israel. According to Meyer “Jesus himself conceived his dining with sinners as an anticipation of the banquet of salvation with the patriarchs in the reign of God.”⁶³⁵ In a similar fashion Chilton maintains that

“meals in Jesus’ fellowship became practical parables whose meaning was as evocative as his verbal parables (which have consumed much more scholarly attention). To join in his meals consciously was, in effect, to anticipate the kingdom as it had been delineated by Jesus’ teaching.”⁶³⁶

Jesus was welcoming the lost sheep of the House of Israel; he was celebrating the turning of the sinners towards God. I maintain that the practice of communal and cheerful dining and the practice of teaching about the kingdom of God in words connected to dining and to a banquet were habitual for Jesus.

Jesus’ public meals worked as “acted parables,”⁶³⁷ symbolic and prophetic acts in line with his other prophetic-symbolic acts, such as the gathering of the Twelve, the entrance into Jerusalem riding on an ass

⁶³⁴ Perrin, 1967, 102–108. Chilton, 1996, 86. Borg, 1987, 101–102, 131–133. Sanders, 1985, 208–209, 307. Horsley, 1993, 178–180. Jeremias, 1981, 59–65. Bryan, 2002, 80–81.

⁶³⁵ Meyer, 1979, 161, 166. The quotation is from p. 166.

⁶³⁶ Chilton, 1996, 86.

⁶³⁷ Bird, 2006, 104. Borg, 1998, 97–98, 107. Several scholars have argued that some of Jesus actions were meant to be understood as prophetic signs for Israel. See especially: Sanders, 1993, 253–254. Wright, 1996, 168–170, 415–418. Borg, 1987, 154–165, 174–176.

and the temple act. According to Jeremias and Perrin Jesus publically dining with the sinners and tax-collectors indicated that the age of forgiveness had dawned. Jeremias states that “these feasts for publicans are prophetic signs, more significant than words, silent proclamations that the Messianic Age is here, the Age of forgiveness.”⁶³⁸ Borg himself, even though not neglecting Jeremias’ and Perrin’s conclusion, states that such a view in itself is too narrow, too theological and too religiously orientated, and he suggests that the acted parable of Jesus dining meant that he was in practice explaining what he believed Israel should be.⁶³⁹ I follow Jeremias, Perrin and Borg on their overall thesis that Jesus’ public meals (Mark 2:15-17; Luke 19:7-10) with outcasts are to be seen in relation to his overall mission of searching for the Lost. The parables of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-6), the lost coin (Luke 15:8-9) and the lost son (Luke 15:11-32) all end up in the joyful celebration when the lost one is found. Apparently Jesus’ joyful feasting with sinners and publicans resembled this joy of the Lost being found.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁸ Jeremias, 2003, 227–228. Perrin, 1967, 102, 106–108.

⁶³⁹ Borg, 1998, 107–108. McKnight, 1999, 44–49.

⁶⁴⁰ Borg, 1998, 101–109. Jeremias, 2003, 227–229. Perrin, 1967, 90–108. Ollilainen, 2008, 153–154. Scholars continue debating whether the three ‘lost and found’ parables of Luke 15 derive from Jesus. It is clear that Luke has in a creative manner placed and formed the three parables into a literal unit which embraces his theological views. For a discussion, see Fitzmyer, 1985, 1071–1075. Bock, 1996, 1296–1297. Notably the parables of the lost coin (Luke 15:8–10) and the lost son (15:11–32) do not have any parallels in the other Gospels. The parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4–7) has a parallel in Matt 18:12–14, and thus the parable quite likely derives from Q. The Lukan parables of ‘lost and found’ are typically Lukan as Luke emphasizes God’s love and mercy for the unprivileged, the sinners, the poor and the sick, see Fitzmyer, 1985, 1071. It is not necessary for us to deal here in detail with the question of these parables’ origin. The fact remains that Jesus dined with outcasts and sinners, he preached the gospel of God’s kingdom for them and he sought them. In the context of Jesus’ mission to search for the lost, it is clear that parables of the ‘lost and found’ would have suited him. In sum, Jesus might well have taught with such parables.

6.4 The meals of the Qumran community and the Pharisees

6.4.1 The meals of Qumran and the Essenes

In this sub-chapter the meals of the Qumran community and the Pharisees' practice of dining are examined. We will first deal with the Qumran community. Clarifying these issues will give us a useful perspective in studying Jesus' parables and practices regarding dining. First, the Qumran documents contain only two explicit clarifications of its meals: 1QS 6:1–8 and 1QSa 2:17–22. The text of 1QS 6:1–8 arguably deals with the communal meals. The text most probably reflects the daily meals of the Qumran community.

The text of 1QS 6:1–6:⁶⁴¹

“These are the ways in which all of them shall walk, each man with his companion, wherever they dwell. The man of lesser rank shall obey the greater in matters of work and money. They shall eat in common and bless in common and deliberate in common. Wherever there are ten men of the Council of the Community there shall not lack a Priest among them. And they shall all sit before him according to their rank and shall be asked their counsel in all things in that order. And when the table has been prepared for eating, and the new wine for drinking, the Priest shall be the first to stretch out his hand to bless the first fruits of the bread and new wine.”

The text of 1QSa 2:17–22:⁶⁴²

“And [when] they shall gather for the common [tab]le, to eat, [to drink] new wine, when the common table shall be set for eating and the new wine [poured] for drinking, let no man extend his hand over the first fruits of bread and wine before the Priest; for [it is he] who shall bless the first fruits of bread and wine, and shall be the first [to extend] his hand over the bread. Thereafter, the Messiah of Israel shall extend his hand over the bread, [and] all the congregation of the Community [shall utter a] blessing, [each man in the order] of his dignity. It is according to this statue that they shall proceed at every me[al at which] at least ten men are gathered together.”

⁶⁴¹ Translated by Geza Vermes. Vermes, 2004.

⁶⁴² Translated by Geza Vermes. Vermes, 2004.

The communal meal described in the Community rule (1QS 6) is quite similar to the meal accompanied by the Messiah (1QSa 2). In both meals the participants at the meal sit according to their rank in the community. In both meals first fruits of the bread and new wine are served, and in both meals the priest says a blessing before the table fellowship starts the dining. In the messianic meal, 1QSa 2, the Messiah and the other participants around the table bless the food after the priest has blessed it.⁶⁴³ The communal meals practiced by the community in accordance to 1QS 6 was regarded as a representation of the soon to become messianic meal described in 1QSa 2. The community believed that it was living in the end of days, and that the Messianic fulfillment was about to be realized in the near future. The messianic banquet (1QSa 2) is based on the regular communal meal practiced by the community (1QS 6).⁶⁴⁴ Schiffman describes the communal meals and the messianic meals as follows:

“These meals, conducted regularly as part of the present-age way of life of the sect, were preenactments of the final messianic banquet which the sectarians expected in the soon-to-come end of days. Again, the life of the sect in this world mirrored its dreams for the age to come.”⁶⁴⁵

Russell has noted that in these meals portrayed in 1QS 6 and 1QSa 2 there are implicit references to two religiously and nationally powerful symbols of Israel, namely the Temple and the Messiah.⁶⁴⁶ The meals’ implicit reference to the temple and its sacrificial cult is made by the fact that the meals emphasize the role of the priest as the one who prepares the meal in purity and who says a blessing over it. Furthermore the food mentioned is to be the first fruits of the bread. According to Exod 23:19 and Lev 23:10 the first fruits were to be brought into the temple and to the priest. Russell supports the connections of the Qumran meals with the temple and its liturgy by referring to the prohibitions according to

⁶⁴³ Russell, 2006, 89.

⁶⁴⁴ Russell, 2006, 90, 98–99. Wassen, 2008, 120. Wassen indicates that due to the concrete details of the dining in 1QSa 2, it seem that the messianic banquet mirrors and is based on the present practice of the dining in Qumran community. For further discussion concerning the connections between 1QS 6 and 1QSa 2 see Priest, 1992, 228–229. Smith, 1991, 71.

⁶⁴⁵ Schiffman, 1989, 67. See also pp. 56–57, 68.

⁶⁴⁶ Russell, 2006, 101.

which a handicapped person or anyone afflicted could not enter the congregation because “the Angels of Holiness are with their congregation”. We can assume with Russell that as the handicapped could not enter the congregation they could not participate in the meals (1QSa 2:4–9).⁶⁴⁷ Wassen clarifies that in Qumran literature the restrictions prohibiting people with some kinds of disabilities, from entering the communal meetings (CD 15:15; 1QSa 2:4–9) and from participating in the final battle (1QM 7:4–6), were due to the community’s firm belief of the Holy Angels’ presence amongst them.⁶⁴⁸ In short, due to the holy Angels, it would have been inappropriate if physically handicapped, the mentally ill, or demonized persons had been among the congregation. It is telling that the list of people forbidden to enter into the congregation coheres with the list of people who were, according to Lev 21:17–23, forbidden to enter the temple and function as priests fulfilling cultic duties.⁶⁴⁹ It has generally been noted that the list of 1QM 7:3–7, which mentions certain individuals who are not allowed to enter into the battle camp of the saints, resembles the passage of Deut 23:10–14, which concerns the purity of the battle camp of the Hebrews.⁶⁵⁰ Wassen observes that the scrolls of Qumran reveal a strong emphasis and belief in the heavenly hosts, the Angels being present among the congregation’s worship, communal meetings, and in the eschatological war (1QM 7:6) between the sons of darkness and the sons of light.⁶⁵¹ It is apparent that in these lists certain individuals are excluded from the Qumran community’s activities because of the presence of the holy Angels.

⁶⁴⁷ Russell, 2006, 94. It must be pointed out that according to CD 13:6; 14:15 and 1QSa 1:19–22; 2:9–10 people with mental and physical problems were living within the Qumran community. They were, however, not allowed to participate fully in the activities of the community, Wassen, 2008, 121.

⁶⁴⁸ Wassen, 2008, 115, 120–121, 127–129. Sanders, 1974, 265. Sanders notes that both of the lists, which state who are not to join the eschatological battle and the eschatological meal, are rooted in the list of Lev 21:17–23. This list forbids certain people to participate in priestly duties in the temple because the Holiness of God would be offended. Interestingly in 1QSa 2 and 1QM 7 the Holiness of God is replaced by the presence of the Holy angels: Sanders, 1974, 262–265.

⁶⁴⁹ Wassen, 2008, 115–116. For the lists that exclude certain individuals from taking part in the communal activities see CD 15:15–17; 4Q266:8 1 6–9; 4Q270:6 2:8–10; 1QSa 2:3–9; 1QM 7:4–6. See also Dunn, 1992, 263–264.

⁶⁵⁰ Wassen, 2008, 120.

⁶⁵¹ Wassen, 2008, 127–128.

Lastly, the evidence suggests that the participants of the meal were purified in the immersion pools, the mikvaot, before they entered the dining hall (1QS 5:13; *Bell.* 2:129).⁶⁵² Concerning the routines of the Essenes Josephus states that they

“bath their bodies in cold water. And after this purification is over, they all meet together in an apartment of their own, into which it is not permitted to any of another sect to enter; while they go, after a pure manner, into the dining room, as into a certain holy temple (ἅγιόν τι τέμενος).”

Even though the meals correlated with the temple cult, they also differed from it in the sense that the meal most probably did not contain any atoning function. The community regarded itself as a living Temple atoning for the Land, but this function of the community was not specifically connected with the community's dining.⁶⁵³ Participation in the regular community meals stated, in practice, that the member was regarded as pure and righteous, one of the full members of the community, the true Israel. He would also have a place in the messianic banquet.

Food and dining was a serious matter for the Essenes/Qumranites. Josephus claims that some Essenes who had been expelled from the Essenes' community, starved to death because they could not eat food which was not prepared in a proper manner (*Bell.* 2:143–144).⁶⁵⁴ We may be quite certain that any non-Jew, if not converted, could not have taken part in the Qumran community's or the Essenes' table-fellowship. Having table-fellowship with sinners and publicans would have been unthinkable for the Qumranites and the Essenes. The texts of 1QS 6 and 1QSa 2 strongly suggest that the community regarded their regular meals as mirroring the messianic banquet. This situation and practice of the Qumranites may have important implications for understanding the meals of Jesus and their relation to the eschatological future. Additionally, we may state that Jesus' and his disciples' practice of

⁶⁵² Russell, 2006, 94–95.

⁶⁵³ Russell, 2006, 97–98, 101.

⁶⁵⁴ Holmén, 2001, 204.

dining around Galilee and their freely accepting invitations to dine would have been unthinkable for the Essenes (see: *Bell.* 2:143–144).

A short survey of the Qumranites has shown that they had an exclusive tendency, and this is seen in their attitude towards the Gentiles. Dining with Gentiles, Jewish non-members or sinners was prohibited, 1QS 6 (*Jub.* 22:16). The communal meals were eaten in a state of ritual purity, 1QS 5:13. Even buying or receiving food from Gentiles was not allowed, CD 12:8–10; 1QS 5:15–16. Further, the Qumranites had a decree according to which Shabbat should be spent a good distance away from Gentiles, CD 11:14. The Qumranites were prohibited from selling grain, animals, wine or servants to the Gentiles, CD 12:8. Interestingly, CD 12:7 stipulates that it is prohibited to shed the blood of the Gentiles for the sake of riches and gain. Even stealing from the Gentiles was prohibited. According to 1QS 4:19–20 the world is presently under the “dominion of injustice” and wickedness. In 1QM 15 the end of the final war between the sons of light and the sons of darkness is envisioned, and accordingly the company of God will be delivered and all the nations of wickedness are destroyed. The Romans, referred to as the “Kittim” are prophesied to spread their wicked and lawless rule over the whole world (1QpHab 2:11–4:13; 6:1–8). According to the War Scroll the Gentiles, the sons of darkness, are destroyed in the end. Consequently the Gentiles or the Jewish non-members have no share whatsoever in the messianic/eschatological meal envisioned by the Qumran community.⁶⁵⁵

6.4.2 The meals of the Pharisees

According to Neusner’s well-known thesis Hillel transformed the sect of the Pharisees from a political party into a table-fellowship sect.⁶⁵⁶ He supports this claim by referring to the rabbinic laws attributed to the main Pharisaic authorities – the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai, and by studying the relevant material in the Gospels and in the works of Josephus. According to Neusner’s calculation approximately 67 per cent of the Laws attributed to the House of Hillel and to the House of Shammai concern matters related to food, dining and table-fel-

⁶⁵⁵ Blomberg, 2009, 43–44.

⁶⁵⁶ Neusner, 1973, 13.

lowship.⁶⁵⁷ In the Gospels the Pharisees are pictured as being mainly concerned about the purity of food-stuff and dining. The Gospels state both directly and indirectly that the Pharisees accused Jesus on three main issues: Jesus and his disciples dined in a bad fellowship, with sinners (Mark 2:16), his disciples did not fast (Mark 2:18), and Jesus profaned the Sabbath by healing on that holy day (Mark 3:2).⁶⁵⁸ As the rabbinic material also confirms the Pharisees were occupied with questions concerning who to eat with, and who they would accept into their table-fellowship.⁶⁵⁹ Neusner's basic thesis, according to which the Pharisees formed at the time of Jesus a "table-fellowship", is convincing and it has received considerable support from other scholars.⁶⁶⁰

Neusner also claims that the Pharisees followed strict purity laws, which were obligatory for the priests in the temple, and applied them to themselves while dining. Thus, they dined in a state of cultic purity. The Pharisees, so Neusner contends, adopted the purity regulations meant for the priests in the temple, and applied these to themselves in their everyday life. The only place where these purity rules could be applied in the everyday life was around the table.⁶⁶¹ Interestingly, the Pharisaic laws do not deal with communal matters concerning the synagogue and the religious services practiced there. On the contrary, private purity of everyday life and sectarian laws clearly mark the Pharisaic law traditions of the first century CE.⁶⁶² On the basis of the later rabbinical writings it is certainly problematic to reconstruct the social world of Jesus' time and to associate it with a particular Jewish group such as the Pharisees. However, texts *m. Toharot* 7:6 and *m. Demai* 2:3 imply that food, dining and purity matters were of outstanding importance for religious Jews. Mishnah *Demai* 2:3 states the following:

"He who undertakes to be a *haber* does not sell to an *am haares* wet or dry and does not purchase from him wet and does not ac-

⁶⁵⁷ Neusner, 1973, 86.

⁶⁵⁸ Neusner, 1973, 78.

⁶⁵⁹ Neusner, 1973, 67, 78, 80, 91.

⁶⁶⁰ Chilton, 1992, 143. Borg, 1998, 94–96. Dunn, 1992, 257–258.

⁶⁶¹ Neusner, 1973, 67, 83–84. Borg, 1998, 95.

⁶⁶² Neusner, 1973, 84–86.

cept the hospitality of an *am haares*, and does not receive him as his guest while he [the *am haares*] is wearing his [the *am haares*] own clothes.”

How does the information concerning the arguably sectarian dining practices help us understand Jesus’ open table-fellowship? We can see the meals of the Qumranites, the Essenes, the Pharisees and Jesus as making social claims: who is to belong to the community, the future Israel or the Kingdom of God. I maintain with Borg in his statement that “for the Pharisees the meal had become a microcosm of Israel’s intended historic structure as well as a model of Israel’s destiny.”⁶⁶³ From this perspective with whom Jesus is dining becomes important. According to Neusner’s interpretation the Pharisees’ meal was a central way of living out Israel’s priestly and national calling to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy people” as Exod 19:6 attests. Before the meal the Pharisees and the Jews allowed to dine in their company regarded themselves as priests dining before the Lord.⁶⁶⁴ The dining itself, as Neusner states, was quite similar in the Qumran community and in the Pharisaic circles. In both of these sects the meals – in which the purity regulations were applied – were everyday meals. Other than the blessing of the food, the Pharisees’ dining did not contain mentionable ritual elements, as far as we know.⁶⁶⁵ The idea of regarding the meal as being practiced “before the Lord”, and therefore as holy, is attested in *m. Abot.* 3:2–3. According to *m. Abot.* 3:3 R. Simon states the following:

“Three who ate at a single table and did not talk about teachings of Torah while at that table are as though they ate from dead sacrifices (Ps 106:28),” as it is said, “for all tables are full of vomit

⁶⁶³ Borg, 1998, 95.

⁶⁶⁴ Neusner, 1973, 83. It is worth noting that the depiction of Israel or of some Jewish sect as the “kingdom of priests”, as recalled in Exod 19:6, was not commonly in use during the second temple period. The Jews as people, or perhaps some pietistic faction of it, are called a kingdom of priests only occasionally in the OT and in the writings of the second temple period: Isa 61:6; *Jub.* 16:18; 33:20; 2 Macc 2:17. See Schwartz, 1992, 66. Schwartz clarifies that in the scholarly discussion some have argued that the Pharisees regarded themselves as priests and that they had a mission to reclaim the whole people as priests, pp. 66–70. This claim, Schwartz states, is not solidly grounded in the evidence of the second temple writings, p. 66.

⁶⁶⁵ Neusner, 1973, 87–88.

and filthiness [if they are] without God (Ps 106:28).” “But three who ate at a single table and did talk about teachings of Torah while at that table are as if they ate at the table of the Omnipresent, blessed is he,” as it is said, “And he said to me, This is the table that is before the Lord (Ezek 41:22).”

6.5 Conclusions

There is no explicit evidence of religious Jews dining with non-converted Gentiles during the first century. As far as I am aware the writings of the second temple period do not mention any occasions where religious Jews were dining with Gentiles. Of course we may speculate that table fellowship was shared with Jews and Greeks in the Jewish communities of Antiochia. Josephus mentions that Gentiles were visiting the synagogue of Antiochia (*Bell.* 7:45). Antiochia became the first center for the Church’s Gentile mission (Acts 11:19–21), and according to Gal 2:11–14 Cephas, who had first dined together with Gentile-converts, later refused to dine together with them because of his fear of those Jewish disciples of Jesus who required that the non-Jewish believers must be circumcised. Arguably dining together meant full acceptance and it had a social claim: who is taken into the congregation?

7 Jesus' vision of the eschatological meal and the eschatological gathering

7.1 Introductory remarks

In this chapter we shall survey the saying (Matt 8:11–13/par.) and the parable of the great banquet (Matt 22:1–10/par.) which are found in the Jesus tradition. In addition to these passages which deal with the great banquet, we shall also concentrate on the parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4:31–32/par.), in accordance to which the birds of the skies would find their rest on the branches of the shrub-like kingdom of God. It may be argued that all these passages are connected with the theme of eschatology and gathering. In the passages dealing with the banquet the meal symbolizes the eschatological consummation, while in the parable of the mustard seed the arrival of the birds of the skies implies that the kingdom of God has appeared in its fullness. The kingdom has become so great that the birds can find their rest in the shadows of its branches. In the light of Jewish eschatological visions the eschatological restoration is frequently associated with the gathering of the scattered Jews and the possible pilgrimage of the Gentiles. Notably in the passages in concern none of those who arrive are identified – this is a typical feature in the Jesus traditions. However some scholars have seriously argued that particularly in the case of the saying of the great banquet and the parable of the mustard seed a reference to the Gentiles was implied by Jesus.

7.2 Matthew 8:11–13 and Luke 13:28–29

For the last 50 years the words of Matt 8:11–13/Luke 13:28–29 have been regarded as the most central by the scholars who have studied whether or not Jesus promised the kingdom of God also to the Gentiles. Jeremias' main theses regarding the salvation of the Gentiles are the following: 1) Jesus promised the kingdom of God also to the Gentiles, but the Gentiles would enter into the kingdom only in the eschatological future. 2) For the moment the kingdom of God and Jesus' mission were only for the Jews. Both of these theses are strongly based on his interpretation of the saying of the royal banquet (Matt 8:11–13). Jeremias ar-

gued that the saying is authentic and derives from Jesus. He concluded that the many coming from the east and west, and from the north and south, were to be regarded as Gentiles answering the call to enter the eschatological banquet in the kingdom of God. Today perhaps the majority of scholars maintain, in line with Jeremias, that Jesus most probably promised the kingdom of God also for the Gentiles, but only in the eschatological future. The same majority of scholars often claim, in line with Jeremias' theses, that Jesus did not intend that his disciples would practice Gentile mission. Jeremias insisted that God would, perhaps with the help of his angels, call the Gentiles to the banquet. Human missionaries would not be needed.⁶⁶⁶

Since the 1990s Jeremias' widespread theses have been seriously questioned. Allison states that Jeremias and the majority of scholars are "almost certainly wrong" in their view that Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29 contains a Gentile reference. Among other prominent scholars such as Davies, Horsley and Sanders as well as Allison claim that Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29 does not refer to the Gentiles, but to the Jews from the Diaspora.⁶⁶⁷ However, Dunn, Meier, Gnilka, Meyer, Bird and Theissen argue that the passage does refer to Gentiles. Theissen and Bird suggest that the many coming from around the compass refers both to the Diaspora Jews and to the Gentiles.⁶⁶⁸ Nowadays the views of the scholars are also more fragmented on the question of Jesus' intentions concerning the disciples' mission: Did Jesus intend and foresee that his disciples would also preach to the Gentiles? Recently Bird, Pitre and Schnabel have claimed that the disciples' preaching to the Gentiles was indeed in line with Jesus' will and intention.⁶⁶⁹ Evidently the scholarly views are not unanimous regarding the saying of the royal banquet.

⁶⁶⁶ Jeremias, 1981, 22–24. Meier, 1994, 315–317. See: Mark 13:27; Matt 13:41.

⁶⁶⁷ Allison, 1998, 143–144. Allison, 1997, 176–182. Horsley, 1993, 174. Sanders, 1985, 219–220. Davies & Allison, 1991, 27–29. Laaksonen, 2002, 301–305.

⁶⁶⁸ Dunn, 2003, 538. Gnilka, 1997, 195. Catchpole, 2006, 144. Theissen, 1991, 45–46. Meyer, 1979, 167–8. Jeremias, 1981, 51. Meier, 1994, 309–317. Bird, 2006, 93–94.

⁶⁶⁹ Bird, 2006, 173–177. Pitre, 2005, 256–292. Schnabel, 2004, 386.

7.3 Textual considerations and authenticity

Matthew 8:11–12	Luke 13:28–29
<p>11 λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν ἤξουσιν καὶ ἀνακλιθήσονται μετὰ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν,</p> <p>¹² οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἐκβληθήσονται εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων.</p> <p>¹³ καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ ἑκατοντάρχη· ὕπαγε, ὡς ἐπίστευσας γενηθήτω σοι. καὶ ἰάθη ὁ παῖς [αὐτοῦ] ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.</p>	<p>28 ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων, ὅταν ὄψῃσθε Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ καὶ πάντας τοὺς προφῆτας ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὑμᾶς δὲ ἐκβαλλομένους ἔξω.</p> <p>²⁹ καὶ ἤξουσιν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν καὶ ἀπὸ βορρᾶ καὶ νότου καὶ ἀνακλιθήσονται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ.</p> <p>³⁰ καὶ ἰδοὺ εἰσὶν ἔσχατοι οὓ ἔσονται πρῶτοι καὶ εἰσὶν πρῶτοι οὓ ἔσονται ἔσχατοι.</p>

The Matthean and Lukan texts show that we are dealing with parallel sayings. The contexts are, however, totally different. The contexts of the saying, as transmitted in Luke and Matthew, forcefully interpret the saying and partly for this reason, and due to the indication that the saying had originally been independent from the context of both Luke (13:22–27) and Matthew (8:5–10), it is justifiable to treat and interpret the saying on its own terms.⁶⁷⁰ Especially the Matthean context of the saying has quite easily led scholars to see a Gentile reference in Matt

⁶⁷⁰ Meier, 1994, 310. Meier claims that “it appears that neither Matt 8:11–12 nor Luke 13:28–29 had anything to do originally with its present context.” I follow the argumentation of Meier regarding the connection between Luke 13:22–27 and 28–30. We are dealing with two different traditions which Luke linked together because they had similar features: both traditions deal with the end of days when there will be a separation between the good and the evil. Despite this similarity the traditions contain differences. In 13:22–27 the Lord – presumably Jesus – denies some Jews entrance from the House of salvation. Hence the ones left outside plea on the grounds that they had formerly dined with *you* – i.e. the Lord – but the Lord answers harshly that he does not know them. In 13:28–30 the Lord Jesus is not mentioned at all. For a contesting view see Davies & Allison, 1991, 26. Davies and Allison claim that Luke 13:28–29 is part of a larger Q block of sayings consisting of Luke 13:23–30. Davies and Allison claim that Luke is more apt in preserving the Q material intact. Thus Luke 13:23–30 is to be seen as a block of Q material, which Matthew used and replaced in accordance with his theological intentions.

8:11–12, but when the saying is seen independently of the story of the centurion’s servant, the Gentile reference becomes less obvious. Mark has not preserved the saying of the banquet in the kingdom, and he also fails to mention both the Matthean and the Lukan context for the saying of the royal banquet.

The verbal differences between the sayings are not essential for the understanding of the saying. However in the Matthean version, the group which does not enter into the banquet are called υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας, while in Luke 13:28 they are referred to as “you” (ὁμᾶς). The word ὁμᾶς 13:28 refers to the πολλοί, 13:24, who strive to enter into the kingdom of God, but who are left outside (13:25, 28). The “sons of...” is a Semitism, which is frequently used by both Matthew and Luke. If Luke had found the expression in the saying of the royal banquet it is quite probable that he would have preserved it. It is likely that the expression is therefore a Matthean redaction.⁶⁷¹ The “sons of the kingdom” recalls other Jewish phrases with religious overtones such as “sons of the covenant” (1QM 17:8), οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου (Luke 16:8; 20:34) and οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος (Mark 2:19/Matt 9:15). The “sons of men” (οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, Mark 3:28; Eph 3:5) refers to humans in general. The “sons of the world to come” was a rabbinic expression. Certainly the “sons of the kingdom” does not comprise all Israel and all the Jews.⁶⁷² This conclusion finds support from the parable of the great banquet (Luke 14:15–24/Matt 22:1–10/GThom 64), in which the banquet certainly includes Jews, but possibly also Gentiles. A banquet, symbolizing the eschatological restoration of Israel, hosted by the Patriarchs, is totally implausible if there are no Jews.⁶⁷³ The Matthean “sons of the kingdom” are to be understood as referring to a religious-nationalistic group, which opposed the mission of Jesus. The words, in Matthew’s

⁶⁷¹ Meadors, 1995, 214–215. Luke 1:16; 4:35; 6:8 (2x); 20:34, 36 (2x).

⁶⁷² Meier, 1994, 315–316. Davies & Allison, 1991, 30–31.

⁶⁷³ Allison, 1997, 184–187. It is totally unlikely that Jesus would have doomed Jews in general to hell. Jesus’ disciples were Jewish, he drove his mission for the Jews (Rom 15:8; Matt 10:5–6; 15:24) and eschatological visions from Q take it for granted that Jews would be in the eschatological kingdom of God (Q 6:20; 22:28–30). I maintain with Allison that Jesus – as Paul (Rom 11:26), the prophets, and as Jews in general (*m. Sanh.* 10:1) – anticipated the redemption of Israel: Allison, 1997, 184–185.

use, would have referred to Jewish religious-nationalistic groups such as the Pharisees, the Essenes and the Zealots, who saw themselves as obvious heirs of the kingdom.⁶⁷⁴

In the Matthean version of the saying, we also encounter the words εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον, which are missing from the Lukan parallel. The whole phrase - εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων - is found identically in Matt 8:12; 22:13 and 25:30. These words, not found in the Lukan parallel, are due to Matthew's redaction. The Matthean version, typically for Matthew, mentions the kingdom of heaven, while Luke refers to the kingdom of God. The words ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν are found as such only from Matthew, where they appear identically altogether six times: 5:19; 8:11; 11:11; 18:1, 4. As Lukan special elements, perhaps due to his redactional activity, can be counted the reference to "all the prophets" (πάντας τοὺς προφῆτας) and the "north and south" (ἀπὸ βορρᾶ καὶ νότου, Luke 13:28–29). Luke does not explicitly mention who is arriving from the east and west, north and south, while Matthew states that the "many" (πολλοί) are the entrees. These last mentioned differences between Matt 8:11–12 and Luke 13:28–29 do not change the saying's core meaning, which remains basically the same in both sayings.

The verbal differences and the different context of the Matthean and Lukan version of the saying can be explained by the evangelists' editorial activity – thus they would have redacted the original Q version of the saying. This solution is credible but I wish to make some clarifications. Although the saying most probably belonged to Q, it is assumed that it was known and spread in the Christian churches as an oral tradition. In the life of the early Christian communities the saying could quite naturally have been used as part of the liturgy and it could have been connected with different stories and teachings of Jesus in order to emphasize a particular message. In the prayers and liturgy the account of the royal banquet could have suited as part of the Eucharist (1 Cor 11:23–26). The futuristic hope of the kingdom's coming in the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4) resembles the futuristic hope of the

⁶⁷⁴ Meier, 1994, 315–316. Davies & Allison, 1991, 30–31. Allison, 1997, 186–187.

saying of the royal banquet.⁶⁷⁵ In *Did.* 9:4; 10:5 the Eucharist meal is connected with a similar idea as the saying transmitted in the royal banquet: the many are gathered for the feast from the ends of the earth, from around the compass. Despite the variations between the Matthean and Lukan version of the saying of the royal banquet it is noteworthy that Jesus was not “redacted” into the banquet at this stage. This in itself supports the authenticity of the saying. It was believed that it originated from a great authority, Jesus himself, and thus it was not redacted in central features.

The vast majority of scholars argue for the authenticity of Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29. The saying is quite widely believed to derive from Q.⁶⁷⁶ Scholars have usually tended to keep the Matthean version of the saying as reflecting the original saying more.⁶⁷⁷ In support of the authenticity of the saying Theissen and Merz state the following:

“This logion cannot come from primitive Christianity. There the notion was very soon established that the Gentiles do not find access to salvation only in the future end-time (beyond the frontier of death, as the appearance of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob shows), but already in present. At a very early stage there was no longer an expectation that God would bring the Gentiles from the ends of the earth in a miraculous fashion; rather, they were canvassed by active mission.”⁶⁷⁸

In the saying of the royal banquet Jesus’ role and his possible presence at the banquet is not mentioned even in an implicit manner –

⁶⁷⁵ See Dunn, 2001, 84–145. Dunn argues correctly that in several cases the verbal and contextual differences regarding certain periscopes, which derive from a same tradition, do sometimes depend on the fact that the evangelists have redacted these widely known stories in accordance to their use in the oral tradition (Dunn, 2001, 105). For example the Lord’s Prayer known from Q, has most probably been part of the early Christian communities’ liturgical prayer from an early stage. The living oral tradition which contained this prayer explains the verbal differences between Matt 6:7–15 and Luke 11:1–4, (Dunn, 2001, 108–109).

⁶⁷⁶ Meier, 1994, 309. Laaksonen, 2002, 299. Laaksonen: “Das Logion Mt 8, 11f par Lk 13, 28f stammt mit höchster Wahrscheinlichkeit aus Q.” Several scholars argue that Matthew (Matt 8:11–12) has preserved the more original form of the saying: Laaksonen, 2002, 299–301. Pitre, 2005, 366–367.

⁶⁷⁷ Meier, 1994, 309–314.

⁶⁷⁸ Theissen & Merz, 1998, 254. See also Davies & Allison, 1991, 25–26. Meier, 1994, 309–317.

neither in its Lukan nor Matthean version. In the preceding verses of the Lukan version Jesus is apparently called as the Lord (Luke 13:23, 25). Importantly this title is not transferred into Luke 13:28–30. The patriarchs – not the Messiah, the Lord or the Son of Man – are to be seen as the hosts of the banquet. The saying is totally un-Christological. In contrast to Mark 14:25 this anticipated meal does not mention that Jesus would be around the table. The saying does not suit the early Church’s Gentile mission, because it seems to look forward to the Gentiles’ salvation only in the eschatological *future*.⁶⁷⁹ The saying of the royal banquet coheres with Jesus’ style of referring to the eschatological consummation as a banquet or a feast. The futuristic meal is apparent in every level of the Synoptic tradition, and thus its historicity can be supported by the criterion of multiple attestations.⁶⁸⁰ In accordance with the Jesus traditions Jesus characteristically associated the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with the consummation of the kingdom of God (Matt 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37).⁶⁸¹ In Jewish writings of the second temple period and in the OT a combination of the eschatological banquet in the kingdom of God and the patriarchs is not found. The saying of the royal banquet is, in this respect, unique. The royal banquet, the arrival of the unnamed many, the presence of the patriarchs, and the exclusion of the “sons of the kingdom” are uniquely combined in this saying. As we have noted in chapter 7 a banquet was widely understood as a symbol of salvation in the OT and in the writings of the second temple Judaism.⁶⁸² Apparently Jesus used this symbol in a unique manner. The authenticity of the saying (Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29) is further strengthened by textual considerations: the Matthean and Lukan versions of the sayings are, as already noted, quite similar.⁶⁸³ Both versions of the saying form an antithetical parallelism: it is said that a certain group of people will enter into the banquet in the kingdom of God with the patriarchs, while

⁶⁷⁹ Meier, 1994, 316. Bird, 2006, 85–86. Laaksonen, 2002, 304–305.

⁶⁸⁰ Meadors, 1995, 217–218, 220. See Q Luke 13:29/Matt 8:11; Matt 22:2–14; Mark 14:25; Luke 14:15.

⁶⁸¹ Meadors, 1995, 214.

⁶⁸² Meadors, 1995, 217–218. See Ps 107:1–9; Isa 25:6–8; 49:10–13; Ezek 39:17–20; *1 En.* 62:14; 1QSa.

⁶⁸³ Smit, 2008, 146. Pitre, 2005, 279, 366. Gnilka, 1997, 195–98. Meier, 1994, 309–10. Horsley, 1993, 173. Sanders, 1985, 219–220, 394. Meadors, 1995, 219–220.

another group, currently privileged, will find itself outside the banquet in despair. Some will rejoice, some will cry.⁶⁸⁴ Horsley states that the saying of Matt 8:11 was originally a “prophetic warning.”⁶⁸⁵

7.4 Who are the ones coming from east and west?

The central question in Matt 8:11–13/Luke 13:28–29 concerns the identity of the many entering the kingdom of God. To be sure, they are not described in any way. They are not recorded as being meek, poor (Mark 10:24–27), sinners (Matt 21:31–32), child-like (Mark 10:15), chosen (Mark 13:27), Gentiles or Diaspora Jews. Luke and Matthew do not clarify on what grounds “the many” or “they” are entering from around the compass into the banquet. Are they coming because they are faithful to Jesus’ words or because they believe in him or for some other reason? In scholarly discussions those admitted have been identified as 1) Gentiles, 2) as Jews living in the Diaspora, or as sinful Jews – i.e. as Jews who were publicly regarded as sinners, and therefore their Jewishness was questioned (Matt 18:17). And lastly, 3) the many have been understood as referring to both Jews and Gentiles.⁶⁸⁶ The third option is the most plausible for this saying. In accordance to the Synoptics Jesus spoke about the banquet in the kingdom of God, but noteworthy this banquet is never connected to a geographical destination (Matt 8:11–12; Luke 14:15–24; Mark 14:25). The absence of any explicit references to Zion in the whole of the Gospels’ Jesus traditions is astonishing, particularly since in the OT and the Jewish writings of the second temple period the gathering of the scattered Jews and the pilgrimage of the nations are often connected with Zion-eschatology.⁶⁸⁷

The main reason for claiming that the arrivals refer solely to Jews is based on the words *ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν*, which appear identically in LXX Ps 106:3 and *Pss. Sol.* 11:2. Verses such as Ps 107:3, Isa 43:5, Bar 4:37 and 5:5 clearly connect the word-pair *ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν* with the far-lands from where the scattered Jews return to the promised

⁶⁸⁴ Meier, 1994, 310–311, 314.

⁶⁸⁵ Horsley, 1993, 174.

⁶⁸⁶ For a short overview of scholars’ interpretations, see Allison, 1997, 177.

⁶⁸⁷ Sanders, 1993, 185–186.

land.⁶⁸⁸ This interpretation is, however, only partly correct. The OT and the second temple literature contain several passages in which the crucial compass points are connected to the promise that God will regather the scattered Jews, accompanied with some Gentiles, from east and west, north and south.⁶⁸⁹ The reference to the Diaspora Jews in the context of the eschatological ingathering need not be seen in contradiction with the arrival of some Gentiles. The arrival of the Gentiles is, as Bird clearly states, part of the greater narrative of Israel's restoration.⁶⁹⁰

It is problematic to identify the "many" of Matt 8:11–12 as strictly Diaspora Jews, since it would mean that they would, for some reason, have a privileged position in comparison with the Palestinian Jews – i.e. the sons of the kingdom. The Synoptics give no hint that Jesus would have regarded the Diaspora Jews in a better position than the Jews of the Land.⁶⁹¹ There are no indications to suggest that Jesus assumed that the Diaspora Jews would have been more open to his message than the Jews of Palestine. There are sayings in the Synoptics which give the impression that Jesus thought that the Gentiles from outside the Land of Israel would be open to his message once they heard it.⁶⁹² According to Matthew and Luke (Q) Jesus compared the Jewish

⁶⁸⁸ Allison, 1998, 144. See LXX Deut 30:4; Zech 2:6; 8:7–8; Bar 4:36–37; 5:5; *1 En.* 57:1; Isa 49:12; Jer 3:18. Allison (Allison, 1997, 180) states the following: "In Jewish tradition 'east and west' first calls to mind not the Gentile world but the Jewish Diaspora. This is because, from a Palestinian perspective, Assyria and Babylonia, where there was a concentration of exiled Jews, were to the east while Egypt, which was also a center of the Diaspora, was in the other direction."

⁶⁸⁹ Bird, 2006, 90–92. Theissen, 1991, 45–46. See Jer 3:17–18; *T. Benj.* 9:2; Isa 66:20–21; Zech 8:7–8, 20–23; *1 En.* 90:33; *Ps. Sol.* 17:26, 31; Tob 13:5, 11; 14:5–7.

⁶⁹⁰ Bird, 2006, 92. See also Meier, 1994, 314. Meier states the following: "Since such ideas (=pilgrimage of the Gentiles) about the Gentiles were often connected with the hope that all Israel would be regathered to the Promised Land and Zion, and since Jesus seems to have shared this hope for a regathered or reconstructed Israel, there is nothing impossible or anachronistic about the historical Jesus speaking of the coming of the Gentiles in the context of the kingdom of God." See also Theissen, 1991, 46.

⁶⁹¹ Meier, 1994, 315–316. Catchpole, 2006, 144. See Kloppenborg Verbin, 2000, 192. Kloppenborg criticises the claim that at the level of Q the saying of the great banquet would have referred to Diaspora Jews and not to the Gentiles. According to Kloppenborg there is nothing extraordinary in the mention of Diaspora Jews in the company of the Patriarchs. On the other hand the mention of the Gentiles at the table with the Patriarchs would have been surprising. Kloppenborg states that "there is nothing at all in Q to suggest that its framers were interested in Diaspora Judaism."

⁶⁹² Luke 11:30–32/Matt 12:41–42; Luke 10:13/Matt 11:21–24; Luke 4:25–27.

Galilean villages to Gentile metropolises such as Tyre and Sidon. This comparison is to the advantage of the Gentile cities. Noteworthy, not one of the Twelve disciples of Jesus are said to have come from the Diaspora. They were all Judeans or Galileans.⁶⁹³ Unlike Saul from Tarsus, the Twelve disciples of Jesus are not said to have had any Diaspora identity. Admittedly in the OT the exiled Judeans are occasionally seen in a better light than those Judeans who remained in the Land. In Jer 24:4–10 Jeremiah declares that the exiled Judeans are “good figs,” and that God has set for them a blessed future, while the Judeans who have remained in the Land of Judah or who have escaped to Egypt, are “bad figs,” ripe for God’s doom (24:8–10).⁶⁹⁴ However, these kinds of ideas, which compare the Diaspora Jews with the Jews of Palestine, are not found in the Jesus traditions. In light of Matt 19:28/Luke 22:29–30 and Matt 10:5–6 Jesus envisioned an eschatological gathering, and thus we cannot totally exclude the Diaspora reference in the saying of the royal banquet. This conclusion is further strengthened by the allusion to LXX Ps 106:3, which regards the lost Jews, and not the Gentiles.

The reference to the patriarchs has rightly been understood by some as reflecting universal aims of the saying.⁶⁹⁵ Thus Freyne states that “the presence of Abraham at the banquet could scarcely be constructed as signifying anything other than a gathering from many nations.”⁶⁹⁶ The mention of the patriarchs can be understood as a strong underlining of Israel’s forefathers’ eschatological relevance. This is supported by the fact that the saying of the royal banquet refers to the future, to the eschatological banquet. At that time, in accordance with the belief stated in Mark 12:26, the long-dead patriarchs would be resurrected to the banquet in the kingdom, with the many coming from the

⁶⁹³ Gnilka, 1997, 187.

⁶⁹⁴ See Allison, 1997, 188–189. Allison supports his claim of the Diaspora reference in Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29 by noting that in the OT the Jews of the Land are occasionally compared unfavourably with the Jews living in the Diaspora: Jer 24:1–10; 29:10–32; Ezek 11:16–17, 21.

⁶⁹⁵ Bird, 2006, 92, 126–130. Bird notes that several texts from the second temple period or soon after this period represent Abraham as a link between Israel and the Gentile world. See: *Ant.* 1:161–167; *T. Ben.* 10:5–10; Rom 4:1–25; Gal 3:6–29; *b. Hag.* 3a; *Gen. Rab.* 14:6.

⁶⁹⁶ Freyne, 2004, 112. See also p. 84.

east and west to join them.⁶⁹⁷ This eschatological context, which implicitly includes the resurrection of the dead and the final doom and the full realization of the kingdom of God, supports the expectation that the banquet would also be open to some Gentiles. The appearance of Abraham in this context is significant, because in Jewish thought Abraham had a universal mission and role (Gen 12:2–3; *Jub.* 15:7–8; Sir 44:19–23).⁶⁹⁸

The Torah had explicitly made Abraham heir of an enlarged Promised Land stretching from the river of Egypt to the river of Euphrates (Gen 15:18–21). In Gen 27:29 God gave Jacob a promise of his forthcoming reign over the nations. Abraham’s significance for the world (Gen 12:2–3) was remembered during the second temple period, for example in *Jub.* 15:7–8 Abraham is depicted as the “father of many nations.” Although the OT does not explicitly state that God promised the whole world to Abraham, but only the Land, in later Jewish writings the focus at least partly and occasionally changes from the land to the whole world.⁶⁹⁹ In accordance to Paul, the righteous Abraham and his seed were to inherit the world (κόσμος), Rom 4:13.

Finally, we can conclude that the saying juxtaposes the “sons of the kingdom” and “the many coming from the east and the west.” The saying itself does not clearly discern, who the “sons of the kingdom” are or the “you” who are left outside the banquet. Plausibly the ones threatened to be left outside the banquet are Jewish groupings which opposed Jesus’ message and which saw themselves as obvious heirs of the kingdom. In my view the “many” that will come from the “east and west” signify Jews in general – these include outcasts, sinners, publicans, and possibly also sick people. The saying makes an allusion to LXX Ps 106:3 and it is credible to claim that originally Jesus’ saying had an implicit reference to the Jews of the Diaspora. Evidently the saying Luke 22:29–30/Matt 19:28–29 and the fact that Jesus gathered a group of twelve close disciples promote a prophetic message of gathering the scattered people of God – presumably the lost tribes from the Dia-

⁶⁹⁷ Meier, 1994, 317. Meadors, 1995, 214. Meyer, 1979, 134, 154.

⁶⁹⁸ Bird, 2006, 126–130.

⁶⁹⁹ See Sir 44:21; 2 *Bar.* 14:13; 51:3.

spora.⁷⁰⁰ In the light of the hopes of restoration eschatology and because of Jesus' message and mission, which contained positive acts and sayings regarding the Gentiles (Luke 7:1–10; Mark 7:15–24; Mark 5:1–20; Luke 11:29–32), it can be assumed that the many would *also* have included Gentiles. As we noted the eschatological gathering of Israel is often accompanied with references to the pilgrimage of the Gentiles. This saying of Jesus is, however, more a warning of exclusion for the Jews than a promise to the Jews of the Diaspora or to the Gentiles. Despite this we can note that the saying of Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29 contains the promise of Israel's eschatological restoration, and arguably the arrival of the Gentiles would complete this restoration.

7.5 The parable about the Great Banquet: Luke 14:15–24 and Matthew 22:1–14

7.5.1 The scheme of the parable of the Great Banquet

The parable about the great banquet in the kingdom of God is found in Luke 14:15–24, Matt 22:1–14 and GThom 64. The basic plot of the parables is the same: A banquet is prepared and ready. The guests have been invited to join the feast. The host of the banquet sends his servant/servants to invite the guests. One by one the invited make excuses and decide not to attend. The host who has prepared the banquet becomes angry, but he does not cancel the banquet. He sends his servants to urge people to join the feast. The outcasts are welcomed and they enter into the banquet while the ones who were first invited are left outside.

Jeremias and Beasley-Murray, among others, interpret the parable as an urgent call for the kingdom of God, for the great banquet, which is *now ready* (Luke 14:17; Matt 22:4, 8). The ones who were first invited fail to realize the crucial hour and the fulfillment of time.⁷⁰¹ Horsley emphasizes that this parable is not about a future eschatological feast in the kingdom. Nevertheless the parable is about the feast in the kingdom of God, but the emphasis is on the claim that the feast is *now ready and served*. The many have been invited, and surprisingly they

⁷⁰⁰ See Allison, 1997, 186. Theissen, 1991, 46–47. Allison, 2000, 217–219.

⁷⁰¹ Jeremias, 2003, 176–180. Beasley-Murray, 1986, 120–121.

have refused to join the feast. Therefore the unfortunate have been called, gathered and compelled to join the feast. Ironically the Lukan “crippled, the blind and the lame,” the ones excluded from the Qumran community (1QSa 2:6–10; 1QM 7:4–6), have taken the places of the “many” who were originally invited.⁷⁰² This parable has a twofold message: it conveys a warning to those who refuse to enter into the banquet, and a message of redemption to the ones who take their place. I maintain with Dunn that this parable follows a pattern of reversal. Dunn calls this and other similar parables “reversal parables.” Among these reversal parables or sayings Dunn mentions the account of the royal banquet (Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29), the parable of the rich man and the poor Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31) and the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matt 20:1–15).⁷⁰³

The theme of eschatological consummation is central for our subject, which concerns Jesus’ attitudes towards the Gentiles. The Jewish eschatological hopes were always, in some way, connected with the fate of the Gentiles. We have so far concluded that in accordance with eschatological views the meal as such, and the festal meals in particular, could be associated with the eschatological anticipation. Israel’s restoration and eschatological redemption was sometimes symbolized with a festal banquet. In the Qumran community the present table-fellowship mirrored the eschatological messianic feast.

7.5.2 Question of source

Determining the source or the sources of the parable of the great banquet is a complex issue. Most scholars argue that the parable derives from Q.⁷⁰⁴ Others suggest that both Luke and Matthew knew this parable from separate sources (L and M). The latter solution is more plausible. We are dealing with one parable, but it has come to us through two separate sources. The differences between Luke and Matthew can hardly be explained solely by the evangelists’ redactional activity. Davies, Allison and Luz claim that Matt 22:1–10 derives from an oral source, not from a

⁷⁰² Horsley, 1993, 179–180.

⁷⁰³ Dunn, 2003, 415–416.

⁷⁰⁴ Fitzmyer, 1985, 1052. Hagner, 1995, 627.

written Q-source. I maintain with Luz that Luke 14:16–24 is to be seen as an independent version of the parable.⁷⁰⁵ The parables share only a few similar words and structures, and the contexts of these parables are different. However the similarities between the two versions of the parable, the Lukan and the Matthean, indicate that the two different sources of the parable are based on one and the same parable.

7.5.3 Textual considerations

Despite the similarities in the main plot of the parable transmitted by Luke, Matthew and the Gospel of Thomas, there are nevertheless clear differences between them. To begin with, the longest verbal connection between Luke 14:15–24 and Matt 22:1–10 consists only of the words εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς (Luke 14:23/Matt 22:10).⁷⁰⁶ Both Luke and Matthew emphasize that the banquet is ready. According to Matt 22:4 “everything is ready” (πάντα ἔτοιμα), while according to Luke 14:17 the banquet “is already ready” (ἤδη ἔτοιμά ἐστιν). The idea of the banquet being ready, as expressed especially in Matt 22:4, recalls the words of R. Aqiba: “And everything is ready for the meal”, *m. ’Abot* 3:16. Both Luke and Matthew underline that the straightforward intention of the host is to get the house/wedding hall full of guests, and moreover, both versions of the parable notice the anger of the host (Matt 22:7/Luke 14:21, ὀργίζω) due to some of the called ones refusing to attend the banquet. In Luke this parable is told in the context of a Sabbath meal and as part of the travel narrative leading to Jerusalem (14:1–24). In Matthew the parable is taught in the temple of Jerusalem as 21:23 indicates. Both the Lukan and the Matthean versions of the parable are connected to its preceding context. In the case of Luke the parable is strongly linked with Jesus’ teaching on humility and hospitality (14:7–14) around the table. The Matthean version of the parable leans, in certain aspects, on the preceding parable of the wicked tenants (21:33–46).⁷⁰⁷ Davies and Allison suggest

⁷⁰⁵ Davies & Allison, 1997, 194. Luz, 2005, 47. Hultgren, 2000, 334–335. Beasley-Murray, 1986, 119.

⁷⁰⁶ Davies & Allison, 1997, 194.

⁷⁰⁷ For further textual differences between Luke 14:15–24 and Matt 22:1–10 we may note that in Luke the host is “a certain man” (ἄνθρωπός τις) while in Matthew he is “a man, a

that the Matthean version of the parable (Matt 22:1–10) has been redacted extensively in order for it to resemble verses 21:33–34. These verses are at the beginning of the parable of the wicked tenants. The links between the parable of the wicked tenants (Matt 21:33–46) and the banquet of the king’s son (Matt 22:1–10) are apparent. In both parables the Son is a central character. In 21:37–39 the Son is killed, in 22:3–7 the ones who are first invited to the Son’s wedding refuse to come.⁷⁰⁸

The anger of the king is expressed forcefully: he sent his army troops, executed the murderers of his servants and burnt their city (τὴν πόλιν αὐτῶν ἐνέπηρσεν) 22:7. Matthew explains the king’s anger by mentioning that some of the invited guests, who made excuses not to attend the wedding, had beaten the king’s servants and killed them, 22:6. Again this Matthean speciality resembles a similar idea in the parable of the wicked tenants (Matt 21:35). Luz concludes that Matt 22:7, referring to the burning of the city, must be post-70. According to Luz the reference to the burning of the city (22:7) reflects the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. If Luz is correct,⁷⁰⁹ then verses Matt 22:6–7 are to be regarded as redactional. Luz’s view can be doubted due to verse 22:7 speaking about the burning of the city, and according to Josephus the Romans burnt only the temple, not the city. Moreover, Jesus almost certainly said something critical against the temple and doomed it to destruction,⁷¹⁰ and therefore it is totally plausible that Jesus would have re-

king” (ἀνθρώπου βασιλεί). Luke deals with a great feast (δεῖπνον μέγα), while Matthew deals with the wedding of the king’s son (γάμος). The words ἄνθρωπος τις is clearly Lukan. It appears as such, seven times in Luke and altogether ten times in the whole of LXX and NT. The words ἄνθρωπος τις appear in the following places in the Bible: Job 1:1; Bel 1:2; Luke 10:30; 14:2; 16; 15:11; 16:1; 19:12; 20:9; Rom 7:24. The expression ἀνθρώπου βασιλεί is typically Matthean. The words are identically found in Matt 18:23 and 22:2. Other than these places there are no parallels in the Bible.

⁷⁰⁸ Davies & Allison, 1997, 197.

⁷⁰⁹ Luz, 2005, 54. Davies & Allison, 1997, 201. As Jesus quite certainly prophesied the destruction of the temple, it is possible that these ideas, the coming destruction of both the temple and Jerusalem, would have found their way into Jesus’ parables. Verse Matt 22:7 resembles the idea expressed in 2 Chr 36:16. Luz (2005, 54) mentions the rabbinic passage of *B. Sabb.* 119b, which reads as follows: “Jerusalem was destroyed only because people despised the scribes, because it is said: “and they mocked the messengers of the Lord.” See also: *Qoh. Rab.* 3.16 § 1.

⁷¹⁰ See Sanders, 1985, 70–77, 90. Pitre, 2005, 373. Crossan, 1991, 357–358. Holmén, 2001, 323. Horsley, 1993, 300. Bryan, 2002, 229. Dunn, 2003, 514–515, 631–633.

ferred to these ideas of judgment and destruction in his parables.⁷¹¹ The end of the Matthean parable, verses Matt 22:11–14, finds no equivalents in the Lukan parable of the great banquet. Moreover, verses Matt 22:10–14 are pointedly Matthean in their wording.⁷¹² The phrase in 22:13 (εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων) is Matthean and recurs in Matt 8:12 and 25:30. In 22:10 the servants go out and invite everybody, both the good and the bad (ποιηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς, 22:10; 5:45; 13:48), to join the wedding of the king’s son. The good and bad resemble the parable of the fishnet (Matt 13:47–48). The net captures all kinds of fish and comparably also all kinds of people are invited to the wedding. On the Day of Judgment the good and the bad are separated. For the bad ones there will be, once again, “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων), 13:50/22:13.⁷¹³

The Lukan version of the parable has certainly many intertextual resonances in Luke’s Gospel.⁷¹⁴ Luz states that the Lukan redactional elements are concentrated in Luke 14:21b–22.⁷¹⁵ The links between Luke 14:7–14 and 14:15–24 are obvious. Those admitted to the feast, i.e. the poor, crippled, blind and lame, are those whom Jesus urged his disciples to invite to a feast (14:13/21b–22). The uniting theme of Luke 14:7–24 is the feast and the invitation. The verb “invite” (καλέω) appears repeatedly in verses 12, 13, 16, 17 and 24. The noun “blessed” (μακάριος) functions as a link between 14:7–14 and 14:15–24, thus μακάριος appears identically in verses 14 and 15.⁷¹⁶ The word μακάριος, however, appears also in Luke 7:23 and 12:43. In the overall context of the Lukan Gospel the noun μακάριος gives rather a clear hint of who the final guests in the kingdom of God, at the great banquet, will be. The phrase ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ is clearly Lukan. It appears as such six times in

⁷¹¹ Hagner, 1995, 628–630.

⁷¹² Luz, 2005, 48–49. Smit, 2008, 161. Davies & Allison, 1997, 194–195. See *b. Sabb.* 153a.

⁷¹³ The description of the place of judgment with the words of ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων is typically Matthean. In the whole of the Greek Bible these words are found identically in the following verses: Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28.

⁷¹⁴ Wendland, 1997, 159–194. See also: Smit, 2008, 157–158.

⁷¹⁵ Luz, 2005, 47, n. 17.

⁷¹⁶ Wendland, 1997, 166–167.

the Greek Bible. It is found five times in Luke (7:28; 13:28, 29; 14:15; 22:16) and once in Mark (14:25). Interestingly Luke 13:28–29; 14:15 and 22:16/ Mark 14:25 mention these words in connection with the hope of dining in the kingdom of God. The parable of the great banquet parallels the saying of the great banquet in Luke 13:28–29/Matt 8:11–12. Both texts are connected with the idea of surprising eschatological reversal. The ones coming from afar, from all the corners of the compass, Luke 13:29, take the places of “you”, 13:24–28, who were close to “the Lord”, 25–26 – i.e. Jesus. In the parable of the great banquet the outsiders on the roads and hedges (ὁδοὺς καὶ φραγμοὺς) and who are compelled to come, take the places of those who were invited first, 14:23–24.⁷¹⁷

In Luke 14:15–24 the servants are sent three times, whereas in Matt 22:1–10 they are sent only twice.⁷¹⁸ However if the indirect notion of a calling in Matt 22:3 is counted, then also the Matthean version contains three callings. In GThom 64 the servants are sent four times. In Luke 14:21 the servant stays within the limits of the city. He goes to the broad streets and into the narrow alleys of the city in search of the city’s unfortunate persons (εἰς τὰς πλατείας καὶ ῥύμας τῆς πόλεως). It is noteworthy that he is not told of searching for the sinners, but rather for the poor and handicapped. The unfortunate whom the servant is to invite, are reminiscent of the group of people to whom Jesus’ mission is aimed according to Luke 7:22.⁷¹⁹ The saying of Luke 10:10 gives the impression that by proclaiming on the broad streets of the city, the whole city was reached with the message.⁷²⁰ After compelling the unfortunate of the city, the servant is subsequently sent, 14:23, outside the city, into the roads and hedges (εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς καὶ φραγμοὺς). In Matt 22:9 the servants are sent to the “entry points of the streets”: ἐπὶ τὰς διεξόδους τῶν ὁδῶν. Luz clarifies that the word διέξοδος means “a starting point or ending point, for example, the most distant part of a territory.” In the LXX the word διέξοδος appears frequently. The words, διεξόδους τῶν ὁδῶν,

⁷¹⁷ Wendland, 1997, 167–168.

⁷¹⁸ Bird, 2006, 77–78.

⁷¹⁹ Hultgren, 2000, 337.

⁷²⁰ See Fitzmyer, 1985, 1056–1057.

cannot, as Luz confirms, be translated as “crossroads.” Matt 22:9 compels the servants to go out of their city and continue all the way to the end of their kingdom, to its boundaries.⁷²¹ In Matthew the third calling would indicate travel beyond the borders and into Gentile lands. Perhaps the third calling is missing because in Matt 10:5 the disciples are prohibited from traveling on a road leading into a Gentile city (εἰς ὁδὸν ἔθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθῃτε). If the actual parable contained three callings, as Luke’s version has it, then the fact that the third group of people are not defined in any other way than by noting that they were found around roads and hedges (ὁδοὺς καὶ φραγμοὺς, Luke 14:23), can be seen as implicitly supporting the Gentile reference. It is of course possible that Luke created a third calling in order to make an implicit reference to the Gentiles. It is possible that Matthew has abbreviated the number of calls to two. The four calls of GThom 64 seem implausible. Bird suggests that the three calls recall the original number of calls in the parable as it was told by Jesus. Bird supports this claim by noting that a triplet is common in other parables.⁷²² Notably Luke has not redacted the last call to include an explicit reference to the Gentiles.

7.5.4 The core of the parable of the Great Banquet

The question about what in particular constituted the historical core of the parable is difficult to solve. Our survey of the textual details of the parable in L, M and GThom suggest the following solution. In principle we can plausibly claim that at its core the original parable contained the idea that the meal *is ready and served*, and therefore the elected were called to enter into the banquet. As previously noted, the triple call of Luke reflects the original number of the invitation. The ones who were first called refused to come by offering excuses. The excuses noted in Luke 14:18–20 and Matt 22:5 were quite certainly part of the original parable. They indicate that the ones who were initially invited did not consist of a religious group or religious people as such, but of rich and well-to-do people. The anger of the host is attested to by Luke and Mat-

⁷²¹ Luz, 2005, 55.

⁷²² Bird, 2006, 81. See: Mark 4:1–9, 13–20; Luke 19:11–17/Matt 25:14–30; Luke 13:20–21/Matt 13:33; Luke 10:30–37; 11:5–10.

thew. The host's persistent desire to fill his house was most probably part of the original parable.

It is attested indirectly in both Luke and Matthew's versions of the parable that in the end the house/the wedding hall was filled (Matt 22:10; Luke 14:22–23). To be sure Luke 14:22–24 does not explicitly state that the house became full, but it certainly was the intention of the host. The sending of the servant to gather and compel the poor and sick, everybody, the good and the bad, to enter the banquet, is clearly motivated by the host's desire to fill the house/wedding hall. This central theme of the parable was arguably in the parable in its original form: the banquet is not cancelled or delayed, and all the places around the table are to be taken. This point is crucial for the understanding the parable and its implications. The banquet is ready, there is still room because the ones who were first invited refused to come, therefore the poor and the sick, are all invited. Outcasts from the country's frontiers and possibly even beyond them are searched for and compelled to attend. The parable considers that the kingdom of God has come near – it has been inaugurated (Mark 1:15; Matt 12:28; 17:20–21). The consummation of the kingdom of God is symbolized by the meal which is ready to be served, and thus the host has an urgent need to fill the house/wedding hall with guests. The urgency, the host's desire to get the house full and the context of eschatological consummation were features which were part of the original parable of the great banquet.

7.6 Who will be at the Great Banquet and who will not?

7.6.1 The rich and the poor

In the parable, we are faced with two pressing questions for our concern. Who are those who refuse to join the feast? Who are those who surprisingly fill the house? Traditionally it has been argued that the ones who are first invited are the Pharisees and the religious establishment, while the ones who fill the house are the sinners and publicans, and perhaps even some Gentiles. This view maintains that the parable explains Jesus'

own practice of dining with the sinners and publicans (Mark 2:16–17).⁷²³ As Luz points out, this understanding does not make sense when the excuses of the ones who are first invited are taken into account. The excuses (Luke 14:18–20; Matt 22:5; GThom 64) are not in any way religious. Luke 14:18–20 states that the ones who were first invited, had bought a piece of land, five oxen and one of them had just got married.⁷²⁴ This is an important point of fact, and notably Luke’s Gospel contains parables in which the Pharisees and the priests are explicitly mentioned (Luke 10:31–32; 18:10–12) in a negative manner. However such critique against these religious groups is not found in the parable about the great banquet. According to Matt 22:5 the ones who excused themselves from attending the banquet went to their farms and to their businesses. In GThom 64 the parable ends with the following words: “But buyers and sellers shall not come into the places of my Father.”

I maintain with Fitzmyer that the parable of the great banquet is a caution for the rich.⁷²⁵ Also Luz and Horsley emphasize that the outsiders who enter into the banquet are poor people. This is the case particularly in Luke’s version of the parable. The excuses of those who were first invited, indicate that they were well-to-do people. The landowner must have been rich, and five oxen were capable of working a large piece of land. Of course, the third excuse mentioned in Luke 14:20, the marriage, does not presuppose that the man was rich. On the basis of the parable, as told by Matthew, Luke and the Gospel of Thomas, it is credible that those who made the excuses were first and foremost rich people.⁷²⁶ The Jesus traditions contain several sayings which put the poor in a favourable position (Luke 6:20),⁷²⁷ and on the other hand, the fate of the rich is difficult (Luke 6:24; Mark 4:19; 10:25). The warning against the rich and the promise to the poor and sick, which is apparent in the parable of the great banquet, coheres with several of Jesus’ say-

⁷²³ Dodd, 1935, 121.

⁷²⁴ Luz, 2005, 50–51.

⁷²⁵ Fitzmyer, 1985, 1051. Fitzmyer notes that two parables (Luke 12:16–21 and 14:15–24) are especially critical towards the rich.

⁷²⁶ Jeremias, 2003, 176–177. Horsley, 1993, 180.

⁷²⁷ Evans, 2001, 175. Dunn, 1992, 266–267. See: Matt 6:19–34; Mark 10:21; 12:42–43; Luke 6:20/Matt 5:3; 11:5/Luke 7:22; Luke 4:18; 12:15–21; 14:13, 21; 16:19–31; 19:8.

ings, parables and practises attested in the Jesus traditions. According to Luz's argumentation those brought and compelled to the banquet from the roads, streets and hedges are likely to be poor. As they are not brought from their work, they can be imagined to be unemployed, poor and beggars. The words of Luke 14:21, mentioning the "poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame", might reflect the original message of the parable.⁷²⁸

Those who are subsequently invited in the Lukan version (Luke 14:21) partly resemble the list of people who could not enter the Qumran community as full members (1QS*a* 2:6–10; 1QM 7:4–6). Additionally, the list in Luke 14:21 is reminiscent of the list in *m. Hag.* 1:1, which restricts entrance into the temple from certain groups of persons:⁷²⁹

"All are liable for an appearance offering [before the Lord] (Exod 23:14, Deut 16:16) except for (1) a deaf-mute, (2) an idiot, (3) a minor, (4) one without pronounced sexual characteristics, (5) one who exhibits the sexual traits of both sexes, (6) women, (7) slaves who have not been freed, (8) the lame, (9) the blind, (10) the sick, (11) the old, (12) and one who cannot go up on foot."

The mention of the crippled, blind and lame in these writings (Luke 14; 1QS*a* 2:6–10; 1QM 7:4–6; *m. Hag.* 1:1; Lev 21:17–21) suggests that these kinds of people were regarded as unable to join the people of Israel fully in its worship. As this kind of a categorizing of people is found in several sources (Luke 14; 1QS*a* 2; 1QM 7; *m. Hag.* 1:1) it is possible that Jesus could have reacted against a similar type of restriction. The clear contra-parallels of Luke 14:21 with the ideas of the Qumran community might indicate that Jesus was intentionally contradicting his practice of public table-fellowship (Mark 2:15–16) and his message, as

⁷²⁸ Luz, 2005, 51. See also: Luke 17:27–28/Matt 24:38–39.

⁷²⁹ See also *Bell.* 6:425–427. Josephus mentions that only the Jews, except for "those who have the leprosy, or the gonorrhoea, or women that have their monthly courses, or such as are otherwise polluted", can join the Passover meal and eat the cult offering, i.e. the lamb. This meal was not open for the Gentiles who were currently worshipping in Jerusalem. Josephus states that only the ones who had made themselves "pure and holy", the Jews, who numbered about 2.7 million, took part in the sacrifice.

expressed in his parables and sayings about the banquet in the kingdom of God (Matt 8:11–13/Luke 14:16–24), with that the Qumran community and their pure meals (1QS 6) which mirrored the expected messianic meal (1QSa 2).⁷³⁰

It is noteworthy that in Luke 14:16 actually “the many” (πολλοί) had been invited, but only three excuses are noted. “The many” has called for a variety of interpretations. According to Bird “the many” is to be understood as an all-inclusive Semitism, which means “all Israel.” Bird is correct in his definition that the banquet is to be understood as an apocalyptic symbol about the vindication of Israel,⁷³¹ but it is not convincing to claim that the “many” are to be understood as “all Israel.” James Sanders argues that the πολλοί denotes the Hebrew expression הרבים in a similar fashion as it appears in the Qumran texts.⁷³² In the Qumran, “the many”, הרבים, was used as a technical term to define the full members of the Qumran community (1QS 6:8; 7:25). This was the designation for the Qumran in-group. As Dunn states, in the Qumran community only full members of the sect, הרבים, were allowed to take part in the pure meals (1QS 6:2, 4–5, 16–17, 20–21).⁷³³ The Qumran community explicitly excluded the blind, the lame and the crippled (1QSa 2:4–9) from their congregation and thus also from their table-fellowship (1QSa 2:17–21; 1QS 6:4–5).⁷³⁴ The problem with understanding the πολλοί (Luke 14:16) as referring to all Israel is simple: the first invitation excluded the “poor, crippled, blind and lame”, although they certainly belonged to all Israel. It seems that the “many” in Luke 14:16 does not have any implicit or explicit reference to the Qumran community or to “all Israel” as a religious epithet.⁷³⁵ In the minds of the Jews of the late second temple period the vague epithet “the many” would have had religious, sectarian, national and even universal connotations. Con-

⁷³⁰ Dunn, 1992, 265–268.

⁷³¹ Bird, 2006, 80. Bird refers to the following passages in support for the claim that the full banquet symbolizes the restored Israel: Isa 25:6–8; Ezek 39:19–20; Matt 25:10; Rev 19:7–9; 4 Ezra 2:37–41; 1 En. 62; 2 Bar. 29; 1QSa 2:11–22; *m. Abot*. 3:16–17.

⁷³² Sanders, 1974, 260. In contrast with Fitzmyer: Fitzmyer, 1985, 1055.

⁷³³ Dunn, 1992, 262.

⁷³⁴ Dunn, 1992, 263–268. Sanders, 1974, 261–264.

⁷³⁵ “The many” (πολλοί / הרבים) can also simply be referring to “all” the people. See Isa 53:12; Mark 10:45; 14:24.

sequently we are incapable of determining who “the many” of Luke 14:16 are. However, their excuses reveal that they were rich and privileged men.

7.6.2 The Great Banquet in a context of eschatological fulfillment

At first glance it seems that the parable of the great banquet does not refer to the Gentiles, but to the whole of Israel, even to her unprivileged members, the poor and the handicapped. Luke 14:21–23 and Matt 22:9 do not explicitly state that the guests would be Gentiles. Recently Bird has argued that the parable – as told and intended by Jesus – can be understood in a way which makes the reference to Gentiles possible.⁷³⁶ Admittedly in the context of the Gospels both Luke 14:23 and Matt 22:9 can be understood as implicitly referring to the Gentiles.⁷³⁷ But such a reading of the Gospel, which is affected by the theological composition of the evangelist, does not necessary reveal the views of the historical Jesus. The claim that Jesus actually referred implicitly to Gentiles in this parable (Luke 14:15–24/Matt 22:1–10) is based on interpretations and assumptions, which are dependent on the scholar’s views of Jesus’ mission. The claim is dependent on the argument according to which Jesus saw that the eschatological consummation was in a state of being realized through his mission and person.

It is clear that in Luke 14:16–24 the first and second calling are for Jews: first for the privileged, then for the unprivileged. The third calling is practiced outside the city, and because the recipients are not specified in any way, it has been argued that they could even have been Gentiles. Jeremias states that Luke would have understood the third calling as a calling for the Gentiles. He claims that the early Church eagerly took this interpretation as support for its Gentile mission. Jeremias insists that this was not, however, Jesus’ intention. According to Jeremias Jesus did not predict or launch a Gentile mission, but rather looked forward to the pilgrimage of the Gentiles into the kingdom at the eschatolo-

⁷³⁶ Bird, 2006, 82–83.

⁷³⁷ Bird, 2006, 80. Perrin, 1967, 112.

gical hour (Matt 8:11).⁷³⁸ Bird contends that the parable of the great banquet deals with the themes of Israel's restoration, mission and Gentiles.⁷³⁹ Bird maintains that the parable, rightly as it is a parable of restoration, opens the possibility that the third ones to be invited (Luke 14:23) are Gentiles. This idea finds support from the motivation of the third call which is due to the host's persistent desire to fill the House with guests. I agree with Bird in the matter that "the House" (ὁ οἶκος) is a frequently used name of the temple of Jerusalem.⁷⁴⁰ This is the case also in the preceding chapter, Luke 13:35/Matt 23:38: ἰδοὺ ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν. In the context of eschatological fulfillment the mission of filling the House can certainly be understood as referring to Jews and Gentiles coming to the House of the Lord.⁷⁴¹ The possible Gentile reference in this parable is, as we have noted, dependent on the assumption that Jesus thought that the kingdom of God, i.e. the eschatological fulfillment, had arrived. In chapter 4.4 we noted that the traditions suggest, credibly, that Jesus regarded the kingdom of God to have arrived in some manner – be it mystically or partially. As this premise of realized eschatology is affirmed, the Gentile reference is possible.

7.6.3 The Great Banquet in a context of eschatological reversal

Lastly, it is worthwhile surveying the saying and the parable of the great banquet in the light of "eschatological reversal," which is a wide-spread theme embracing itself over the Jesus traditions. Bird and Dunn correctly argue that the saying of Matt 8:11–12 resembles Jesus' message concerning the eschatological reversal, which is firmly rooted in the message of Jesus.⁷⁴² The eschatological reversal is apparent in different sources in the Gospels, and it is expressed in different ways, in word (Matt 8:11–12; 21:32), in parable (Luke 14:15–24) and in action (Mark

⁷³⁸ Jeremias, 2003, 64–65.

⁷³⁹ Bird, 2006, 83.

⁷⁴⁰ Bird, 2006, 81. See: 1 Sam 1:7; Ezra 1:2–7; 2:68; 3:8–9; 11–12; 4:3, 24; Neh 10:32–39; Pss 26:8; 42:4; 65:4; 66:13; Isa 2–3; 5–6; 56; 66:20; Jer 7; 19:14; Mic 4:1.

⁷⁴¹ Bird, 2006, 82. See: Isa 2:2–4; 56:3–8; 1 Kgs 8:41–43; 2 Chr 6:32; Mic 4:1–4; *C. Ap.* 2:193; *Sib. Or.* 3:565–569, 616–634, 715–720; *1 En.* 90:32–33; *2 Bar.* 68:5–8; *T. Ben.* 9:2.

⁷⁴² Bird, 2006, 86. Dunn, 2003, 415, 538.

2:15–17). Dunn emphasizes that “a persistent theme in the Jesus tradition is that of eschatological reversal.” In the Jesus tradition it is emphasized that the poor, the meek, the children, the small, and the sinners, the sick and the despised in many ways are often connected with positive hopes of inheriting the kingdom of God and of receiving God’s comfort and a great reward for their sufferings and sacrifices. The saying and the parable of the great banquet (Matt 8:11–12; Luke 14:15–24) is to be seen in this context of reversal. The idea of eschatological reversal is also apparent in the sayings, which compare the exemplary Gentiles with *this wicked generation* (Matt 12:41–42/Luke 11:31–32).⁷⁴³ The parable of the great banquet (Luke 14:15–24) reflects the idea of eschatological reversal: those who are called first neglect the call. They make excuses not to enter into the banquet prepared for them. Therefore the lord of the banquet calls and compels the sick, poor, lame and perhaps even Gentiles to join the banquet. The “sons of the kingdom” are left out, while the “many” from the east and west enter into the company of Israel’s founding fathers.⁷⁴⁴

7.7 Authenticity of the parable of the Great Banquet

The parable of the great banquet is quite widely held as reflecting an actual parable of Jesus.⁷⁴⁵ The authenticity of the parable can be supported on several accounts. First, the parable has most probably reached us through two separate sources in Matthew and Luke. Secondly, as Jesus was certainly famous for his practice of dining with all kinds of people, a parable, concerning the great banquet, suits into this generally acknowledged practice of his. Thirdly, the parable coheres with other traditions of eschatological reversal. The idea of an eschatological reversal is well rooted in the sayings, actions and parables of Jesus. The parable of the great banquet suits Jesus’ style of likening salvation with a ban-

⁷⁴³ Dunn, 2003, 412–417. The quotation of Dunn is from p. 412.

⁷⁴⁴ See Borg, 1998, 219–221.

⁷⁴⁵ Dunn, 2003, 427, n. 236. Bird, 2006, 79–80. Hultgren, 2000, 339, n. 28. Luz, 2005, 50. Bryan, 2002, 76. Concerning the parable of the great banquet Bryan (Bryan, 2002, 76.) states that “its authenticity in some form is rarely questioned.”

quet or feast.⁷⁴⁶ The two-fold message of the parable, the message of redemption and doom, coheres with Jesus' other sayings and parables, which clearly contained this double-edged message of redemption and doom. The Lukan table-context for the parable is more plausible than the Matthean temple-context. If *m. 'Abot* 3:3 can be taken to describe the table-setting of early first century Jewish Galilee, discussions and teachings around the table would have been normal. The parable testifies to Jesus' urgent appeal. The parable transfers the urgent message of consumed time: ἔρχεσθε, ὅτι ἡδὴ ἔτοιμά ἐστιν. Thus the parable fits into the eschatological context of Jesus' mission and message. I maintain that the parable of the great banquet derives its core from Jesus. Luke's version of the parable, as it seems to be less redacted, has more truthfully preserved the original parable.

7.8 The parable of the mustard seed: Mark 4:30–32

The parable of the mustard seed does not deal with the banquet or with an eschatological meal, however this parable coheres with the central idea apparent in the saying and parable of the great banquet (Matt 8:11–12/par., Luke 14:15–24/par.). With this central idea I refer to the theme of gathering the outsiders inside the kingdom of God. In the parable and saying of the banquet the outsiders, the outcasts, are gathered around the table, while in the parable of the mustard seed the birds of the air find their rest in the shades of the shrub's branches. The eschatological climax of the kingdom of God seems to be the fact that it somehow results in the gathering of outcasts inside of it. The parable of the mustard seed has often been understood as referring to the inclusion of Gentiles (=birds) into the restored kingdom of God.⁷⁴⁷

The parable of the mustard seed is found in all the Synoptics (Matt 13:31–32/Luke 13:18–19) and the Gospel of Thomas (GThom 20). Scholars tend to argue that the parable derives from two or even three sources – from Mark, Q and possibly from GThom. All our sour-

⁷⁴⁶ Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29, Mark 14:25.

⁷⁴⁷ Marcus, 2000, 330–331. Bird, 2006, 71–77. Jeremias, 1981, 68–69. Allison, 1997, 183.

ces – be they two or three – emphasize that the kingdom of God grows from a tiny start to a magnificent fulfillment, from a tiny seed into a sizeable tree or shrub in the shade of which the birds find their rest.⁷⁴⁸

Mark 4:30–32

Καὶ ἔλεγεν πῶς ὁμοιώσωμεν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ ἐν τίνι αὐτὴν παραβολῇ θῶμεν; ³¹ ὡς κόκκῳ σινάπεως, ὃς ὅταν σπαρῇ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, μικρότερον ὢν πάντων τῶν σπερμάτων τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ³² καὶ ὅταν σπαρῇ, ἀναβαίνει καὶ γίνεται μείζον πάντων τῶν λαχάνων καὶ ποιεῖ κλάδους μεγάλους, ὥστε δύνασθαι ὑπὸ τὴν σκιὰν αὐτοῦ τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατασκηνοῦν.

The parable itself does not quote any explicit OT passage, although the parable (in all of its versions) recalls the image of a kingdom-tree in the OT (LXX Ps 103:12; Dan 4:10–12, 17–18; LXX Ezek 17:22–24; 31:3–7).⁷⁴⁹ For our concern the parable is especially important due to its possible Gentile reference. Admittedly the parable does not solely relate about the birds who build their nests in the shrub-like kingdom of God. The emphasis of the parable is on the great growth of the kingdom of God. Notably the climax of the kingdom's growth is the arrival of the birds. In the Jesus tradition the idea of growth from small to great is apparent.⁷⁵⁰ Obviously the aspect of growth and the birds are joined together in this parable. The great growth of the kingdom is highlighted by the fact that ultimately the birds of the sky settle on the branches of the shrub-tree.⁷⁵¹ The seed's growth into a great shrub evokes the idea of the eschatological consummation of the kingdom of God, and thus the parable indicates that the arrival of the birds belong to the era of eschatological fulfillment. As we have noted, in accordance with Jewish

⁷⁴⁸ For the discussion concerning the sources see Bird, 2006, 73. Davies & Allison, 1991, 416. Crossan, 1991, 276–278. Meadors, 1995, 204–206. On the differences between Mark and Q see Meadors, 1995, 271–272.

⁷⁴⁹ Meadors, 1995, 206. Davies & Allison, 1991, 420.

⁷⁵⁰ See Bird, 2006, 73. Dunn, 2003, 461–465. The parable of the leaven underlines this same message of growth: Luke 13:20–21/Matt 13:33–34; GThom 96.

⁷⁵¹ Bird, 2006, 73. The mustard seed certainly and explicitly underlines the humble beginning with the kingdom of God: See Marcus, 2000, 330. Marcus notes that the mustard seed as such was proverbial for its smallness as *m. Nid.* 5:2 and *b. Ber.* 31a indicate.

visions the possible salvation of the Gentiles was considered to be realized in the eschaton. The saying of the royal banquet in the kingdom of God also alludes to the eschatological future when the many Jews and Gentiles would arrive at the festive banquet (Matt 8:11–12).

Our crucial question is: To whom do the birds refer to? Of course in the light of Jesus' mission they could denote Jewish sinners and publicans, to the blind, lame and poor, and the scattered Jews around the Diaspora. Jeremias notes that in the Midrashic literature the birds of the heaven could mean the Gentiles,⁷⁵² and that the “verb κατασκηνοῦν... is often used as an eschatological technical term.”⁷⁵³ Notably in LXX Ezek 31:6 the birds of heaven refer to all great nations, and in later Jewish texts such as *4 Ezra* 5:26 and *1 En.* 90:30 the birds symbolize Gentile nations as well as individual Gentiles. The verb κατασκηνοῦν appears in Mark 4:32, Matt 13:32 and in Luke 13:19. The verb means to “dwell in” and to “nest.” Jeremias' claim, that the verb κατασκηνοῦν was understood as a “technical term” denoting the Gentiles who are seeking refuge in the eschatological city of God, is not convincing because the claim is based on only two examples where this verb is used in such a fashion: *Jos. Asen.* 15:7 and LXX Zech 2:11. Moreover as Bird notes the verb κατασκηνοῦν is frequently associated with Jews in the LXX.⁷⁵⁴ Despite this there are plausible reasons to assume that the birds nesting in the shadows of the branches refer to Gentiles. The parable as told by all our sources – Q, Mark and possibly GThom – has, in its center, the great tree or shrub on the branches of which the birds build their nests. This image is found in the OT and in the writings of the second temple period, and in these writings the respective image concerns the Gentiles (Ezek 31:6 LXX; (Ezek 17:23 LXX); Dan 4:18; *1 En.* 90:30; *Midr. Ps.*

⁷⁵² See Jeremias, 1981, 69. Jeremias lists the following passages: *Midr. Ps.* 104 § 13 on Ps 104:12; *1 En.* 90:33; *b. Aboda Zara* 41a; *j. Abod. Z.* III, 42c. 44; Num. R. 13 on Num 7:13.

⁷⁵³ Jeremias, 1981, 69. See also Jeremias, 2003, 147–148.

⁷⁵⁴ Bird, 2006, 75–76. See Num 14:30; 35:34; Deut 33:28; Judg 5:17; 2 Sam 7:10. See also Marcus, 2000, 324–325. Marcus too doubts that κατασκηνοῦν is to be understood as an eschatological technical term. Marcus states that “it is true that the later rabbis spoke of Gentile converts to Judaism as people who had come to dwell ‘under the wings of the Shechinah’. This image goes back to Ps 91:1–4, which may be in the background, since that psalm, like our parable, speaks of dwelling beneath God’s shadow as a symbol of divine protection.”

104:10). The fact that the parable of the mustard seed and the passages of the kingdom-tree in the OT and in Jewish writings use similar words and images, suggests that our parable is to be understood in the light of the OT images presented by Ezek 17 and Dan 4. In these passages the kingdom is portrayed as a tree on which branches the Gentiles, like birds, find their refuge. This connection suggests that the birds of the parable of the mustard seed are to be understood as Gentiles.⁷⁵⁵

Lastly, we are to address the question of the parable's authenticity. Davies and Allison state that "the parable in one form or the other is universally reckoned to Jesus."⁷⁵⁶ This claim is supported by more recent scholars too.⁷⁵⁷ The authenticity of the parable of the mustard seed can be supported by the fact that it has reached us through at least two independent sources – Mark and Q, but possibly also through GThom as Crossan insists.⁷⁵⁸ The parables concerning rural themes of the sowing of the seed and its growing are apparent in the Jesus traditions. I maintain that the parable of the mustard seed is authentic, and that although it does not explicitly refer to the Gentiles, the imaginary in the parable in the light of the OT and the eschatological message of the parable concerning the growth of the kingdom of God, makes the Gentile reference highly possible and presumable.

7.9 Conclusion

During the late second temple period dining had become a religious and ethnical symbol. The table-fellowship of the religious Jews posed a social claim, and thus their meals were not open to everyone. In the few references to the eschatological meal from the second temple period the Gentiles are never explicitly mentioned (*1 En.* 62:12–16; *2 Bar.* 29:1–8;

⁷⁵⁵ Marcus, 2000, 330–331. Bird, 2006, 76. Catchpole, 2006, 138–140. Catchpole states the following: "A tree with nesting birds is the biblical symbol of one nation's sovereignty over all others, whether of Israel over all the non-Israelites, or Assyria over the non-Assyrians, or Babylon over the non-Babylonians (cf. Ezek 17:22–24; 31:5–7; Dan 4:10–12). Jesus argues from that remarkable occurrence and declares that the fulfillment of the hope of the Jewish people is the means whereby God's rule touches the world."

⁷⁵⁶ Davies & Allison, 1991, 416.

⁷⁵⁷ Bird, 2006, 73. Allison, 1997, 183. Funk & Hoover, 1993, 59–60. Lüdemann, 2000, 32. Dunn, 2003, 462.

⁷⁵⁸ Crossan, 1991, 276–277.

1QSa 2:17–22). The parable and the saying of the great banquet (Luke 14:15–24/Matt 8:11–13) contain implicit openness to Gentiles. In the case of the account of the royal banquet the mention of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are noteworthy. These patriarchs evoked universal hopes for the eschatological consummation and therefore their presence around the table in Jesus' saying is interesting (Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29). It is to be noted that they are absent in the passages of *1 En* 62:12–16; *2 Bar.* 29:1–8 and 1QSa 2:17–22, which relate to the eschatological meal. Most plausibly both the saying and the parable about the great banquet contained no reference to Christ or to the Son of God in their original form. This is curious since the early Christians would certainly have expected to see Jesus as the Messiah around the table (Mark 14:25). Moreover it is worth noting that in the few passages known to us which describe the eschatological feast as envisioned by the Jews of the late second temple period, the Messiah (*2 Bar.* 29; 1QSa 2) and the Son of Man (*1 En.* 62) are explicitly mentioned, but not the patriarchs.

The parable of the mustard seed and the parable and the saying of the great banquet share certain themes. In all of them eschatological arrival of the kingdom of God is at the center and in all of these respective passages the ultimate climax is the arrival of the outsiders to become insiders. In none of these passages are Gentiles explicitly mentioned, but in the light of the eschatological fulfillment the Gentile reference is highly likely, at least in the cases of the parable of the mustard seed and the saying of the great banquet.

8 Jesus' positive comparisons of the Gentiles

In this chapter we will investigate the Galilean woes in which Jesus proclaims a devastating doom on Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida (Luke 10:13–15/Matt 11:20–24). According to the Galilean woes these small villages will have a more severe judgement than the worst Gentile cities in biblical history. We shall also concentrate on the double saying in which Jesus compares “this generation” with the Queen of Sheba and with the people of Nineveh (Luke 11:29–32/Matt 12:41–42).

8.1 The Galilean woes

8.1.1 Luke 10:13–15 and Matthew 11:21–23

Due to the many verbal similarities between the Galilean woes as represented in Luke and Matthew, it has been argued credibly that they (i.e. Luke 10:12–15 and Matt 11:21–24) derive from one source – Q.⁷⁵⁹ The verbal identical parallels concern mostly verses Luke 10:13–15 and Matt 11:21–23. It is to be noted that “forty-five words of Matt 11:21–23a are found to be identical in Luke 10:13–15”, as Fitzmyer notes.⁷⁶⁰ I have outlined the identical verbal parallels. The verbal similarities with grammatical differences are put in italics.

Luke 10:13–15	Matt 11:21–23
<p>Οὐαί σοι, Χοραζίν, οὐαί σοι, Βηθσαϊδά· ὅτι εἰ ἐν Τύρω καὶ Σιδῶνι ἐγενήθησαν αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γινόμεναι ἐν ὑμῖν, πάλαι ἂν ἐν σάκκῳ καὶ σποδῶ καθήμενοι μετενόησαν.</p>	<p>οὐαί σοι, Χοραζίν, οὐαί σοι, Βηθσαϊδά· ὅτι εἰ ἐν Τύρω καὶ Σιδῶνι ἐγένοντο αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γινόμεναι ἐν ὑμῖν, πάλαι ἂν ἐν σάκκῳ καὶ σποδῶ μετενόησαν.</p>

⁷⁵⁹ Fitzmyer, 1985, 851–852. Fitzmyer, 1981, 76. Davies & Allison, 1991, 265. Funk & Hoover, 1993, 181. Lüdemann, 2000, 173–174. Hagner, 1993, 312.

⁷⁶⁰ Fitzmyer, 1985, 851.

<p>¹⁴ πλὴν Τύρω καὶ Σιδῶνι ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται ἐν τῇ κρίσει ἢ ὑμῖν.</p>	<p>²² πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, Τύρω καὶ Σιδῶνι ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως ἢ ὑμῖν.</p>
<p>¹⁵ καὶ σύ, Καφαρναούμ, μὴ ἕως οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθῆσῃ; ἕως τοῦ ἕδου καταβῆσῃ.</p>	<p>²³ καὶ σύ, Καφαρναούμ, μὴ ἕως οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθῆσῃ; ἕως ἕδου κατὰ βῆσῃ· ὅτι εἰ ἐν Σοδόμοις ἐγένῃθησαν αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γεινόμεναι ἐν σοί, ἔμεινεν ἂν μέχρι τῆς σήμερον.</p>

8.1.2 Jesus’ “dashed expectations”

Despite the impression that Jesus was quite popular among the small Galilean villages and towns,⁷⁶¹ we encounter a harsh message of doom in the Synoptics due to the lack of repentance and acceptance of Jesus’ message among those who heard Jesus. At face value this picture might create a confusing picture. The synoptics have preserved several sayings which reflect the Jewish people in Galilee and Judea failing to respond to Jesus’ message in an appropriate manner. Due to this failure, the Synoptics’ Jesus tradition is embraced with predictions of eschatological doom. Small Galilean villages, Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida, are threatened with a doom more severe than the OT promises to the greatest national enemies of Israel, namely Tyre and Sidon. These two cities are doomed in a horrible manner in the prophetic traditions of the OT (Jer 47:4; Joel 4:4; Zech 9:2).⁷⁶² The relatively small villages of Galilee, at the heartland of Jesus’ mission, seem to be incomparable with these international polises. Certainly the alarming warnings to the Galilean villages for their failure to respond correctly to Jesus’ mission (Matt 11:20–24/Luke 10:13–15) seems to override all proportions.

Davies and Allison claim that Jesus experienced a deep disappointment and frustration in Galilee. We can assume that Jesus expected to be heard and understood in the midst of the people of Galilee. Assumedly he expected that the villages and “this generation” would react with repentance to his message accompanied by miracles. According to

⁷⁶¹ Sanders, 1993, 103.

⁷⁶² Uro, 1987, 163–164. See Ezek 26–28; Isa 23; Amos 1:9–10.

Davies and Allison Matt 11:21–23a is a testimony of “dashed expectations” which flung Jesus into the pit of “Galilean crisis.”⁷⁶³ This reasoning suggests that the hard words of Matt 11:21–23 could be understood as Jesus’ disappointed reaction to the unbelief of the Galilean villages and towns in which he, for the most, drew his mission. It is noteworthy that Jesus is not told to have launched or even predicted any mission to the Gentile cities on this occasion (compare Acts 13:46–47) – in the midst of his “dashed expectations.” The Galilean woes insist that the traditionally most sinful Gentile cities would have repented if they had experienced the “great works” of Jesus. These Gentile cities are told to have it more tolerable in the final judgment than the three Galilean towns. Interestingly in the Galilean woes Jesus is not reported to have referred to the persistent belief of the Syrophoenician woman in the district of Tyre (Mark 7:24/Matt 15:21). As we concluded in chapter 5.2 Jesus only hesitantly helped the Syrophoenician woman’s daughter, and he had no intentions of visiting the Gentile polises of Tyre and Sidon in order to drive his mission in them.

8.1.3 The Galilean woes in context: the Church

The historicity of the Galilean woes has been debated extensively. It has been argued that the “great works” (*δυνάμεις*), which summarize Jesus’ mission (Matt 11:20/Luke 10:13), actually refer to the early Christians’ failed mission in the area around the northern corner of the Galilean Lake. Thus the Galilean woes would recall the fierce polemic between the Jews and the early Christians. Sanders claims that the Galilean woes (Matt 11:20–24/Luke 10:13–15) “reflect the Gentile mission, as does the saying about this generation and the Ninevites” (Matt 12:41–42/Luke 11:31–32).⁷⁶⁴ Bultmann maintains that the passage of the Galilean woes (Matt 11:20/Luke 10:13) looks back into Jesus’ mission in these towns as a completed event. Bultmann argues that the saying (Matt 11:20) is a

⁷⁶³ Davies & Allison, 1991, 270.

⁷⁶⁴ Sanders, 1985, 110, 114. Sanders’ quotation is from p. 114. Bultmann, 1963, 112. Funk & Hoover, 1993, 181, 320. Lüdemann, 2000, 174. Funk and Hoover state on p. 181 that the curses of Matt 11:20–24/Luke 10:13–15 “are inspired, consequently, by the failure of the Christian mission in those towns.”

community formulation of the early Church, and that it actually signifies the failed Christian mission in these Galilean towns.⁷⁶⁵ Moreover some scholars have doubted that Jesus claimed that Capernaum would be exalted to heaven (Matt 11:23/Luke 10:15). According to my stance the claim that the Galilean woes indicate that Jesus' mission in these towns was considered as completed, is not convincing. Matt 11:20-24 is in the middle of Matthew's Galilean period, and thus it is apparent that at least Matthew would not have held the Galilean mission as a completed event at this stage.⁷⁶⁶

Theissen and Bird argue that Matt 11:20–24/par. contradicts the reality of the early Church due to the fact that there was a Christians community in Tyre and Sidon already in the 50s (Acts 21:3–6; 27:3). Matt 11:21–22 does not presuppose that there were Christians in Tyre and Sidon. Additionally, the saying does not contain any indication that the disciples should drive a mission in these Gentile polises in order that they would repent. These notions, Bird and Theissen suggest, support the primitiveness of the saying. Admittedly it is plausible to maintain that Matt 11:20–24 predated the Christian communities in Tyre and Sidon.⁷⁶⁷ It is noteworthy that these two cities, although they had a Christian community at least as early as the 50s, are not mentioned in the NT as exemplary cities for actually making repentance. Antiochia (Acts 11:19–27), the Judean congregations (1 Thess 2:14), Ephesus (Acts 19), Thessalonica (1 Thess 1:7) and Rome (Rom 1:8) are all city-congregations which were exemplary in love, faith and repentance. In the whole of NT the Christians of Tyre and Sidon are only referred to in passing in Acts 21:3–6 and 27:3.

Dunn insists that there is no evidence for the early Church's mission in the area of Galilee. Acts and every other early source is silent

⁷⁶⁵ Bultmann, 1963, 112. For a discussion concerning the woes on the Galilean towns (Luke 10:13–15) see Uro, 1987, 163–168. Uro is however hesitant in giving his absolute judgment on whether or not the Galilean woes derive from Jesus. On p. 165 Uro maintains that “one can hardly deny that Jesus himself could proclaim in a prophetic style and use OT images and allusions in his preaching. It is not impossible that he uttered a prophetic threat like Luke 10:13–15, had he felt that his message did not meet a response by the residents of his home district.”

⁷⁶⁶ Davies & Allison, 1991, 270. Bird, 2006, 62.

⁷⁶⁷ Bird, 2006, 62. Theissen, 1991, 51–52.

about the Christian's mission, accompanied with "great works" in Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida.⁷⁶⁸ Capernaum is well attested in the Gospels' miracle-stories, but there is no mention of Chorazin apart from Matt 11:21/Luke 10:13. In the earliest sources Bethsaida is connected with only one clear miracle story: i.e. the healing of the blind man (Mark 8:22–26). In Luke 9:10 (see Mark 6:45) the feeding of the multitudes is located close to Bethsaida. The Lukan location of this miracle is most probably not traditional.⁷⁶⁹ Matthew does not, even in passing, mention Chorazin or Bethsaida before the Galilean woes, and thus he does not in any way prepare the reader with the doom of Matt 11:20–24/par.⁷⁷⁰ The presumption that the woes against Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum reflect the failed mission of the early Christians is based on non-existing evidence.⁷⁷¹

Davies and Allison, as well as Dunn, conclude that the Galilean woes, resulting from the Galilean villages' hardheartedness towards "great works," suit better into the ministry of Jesus than into the ministry of the early Church.⁷⁷² A strong argument for this is the fact that we do not have any evidence that the three towns of Capernaum, Chorazin or Bethsaida functioned as centers of Christian mission during the following decades after Jesus' death. Moreover, we have even less evidence to suggest that such a Christian mission would have been accompanied by "great works." I maintain that the early Christians' assumed mission in the three towns does not introduce a plausible explanation for the formation of the Galilean woes.

⁷⁶⁸ Dunn, 2003, 421.

⁷⁶⁹ Nolland, 1993, 548. Nolland states the following: "...the materials of vv. 13–15 (i.e. Luke 10:13–15) have a strong claim to historicity precisely because of the failure of the tradition to report any mighty works of Jesus in Chorazin or Bethsaida (Luke locates the feeding of the five thousand there [9:10], but that is hardly original, and does not, in any case, function as a mighty work of which the people of the city are aware). Chorazin is not mentioned elsewhere in the NT."

⁷⁷⁰ Davies & Allison, 1991, 266–267.

⁷⁷¹ Davies & Allison, 1991, 270. Dunn, 2003, 421. Bird, 2006, 62.

⁷⁷² Davies & Allison, 1991, 270. Dunn, 2003, 421.

8.1.4 The Galilean woes and Jesus' message of doom

In the Synoptics the unrepentant Galilean Jews' attitude is compared to the admiring, obeying and trusting attitude of some gentiles towards the biblical heroes of Israel's biblical history (Matt 12:40–42/Luke 11:29–32; Luke 4:25–27). The idea of eschatological reversal is apparent in Matt 12:40–42/Luke 11:29–32 and in Luke 10:12–15/Matt 11:21–24. Due to the Galileans' failure to recognize Jesus, even Sodom will have it more tolerable on the Day of Judgment than they will.

The Galilean woes are prophetic oracles of doom addressed to the three towns.⁷⁷³ If Jesus' message was embraced with love, healing and forgiveness, is it then possible that Jesus could have spoken in such a judgmental manner as Luke 10:13–15/Matt 11:21–23 and Luke 11:29–32/Matt 12:41–42 imply? Did Jesus' message contain doom and judgment? The doom for Capernaum has verbal connections with Isa 14:13–15, which concerns the sinful pride of Babylon. The city of Babylon has boasted in her heart that she will “ascend to the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High,” Isa 14:14. In Isa 14:15 and Matt 11:23/Luke 10:15 the texts conclude that the prideful city will be “brought down to Hades.”⁷⁷⁴ Why would Capernaum have boasted of its status? The reference to Capernaum being exalted into heaven does not necessarily refer to an actual belief or anything concrete, but it can be understood as a hyperbolic rhetorical device which aims at introducing the town's abasement.⁷⁷⁵ Scholars have, nevertheless, suggested different reasons for Capernaum's assumed boasting. The synoptics indicate that Capernaum was the center of Jesus' Galilean mission (Matt 4:13; 8:5; 9:1; 17:24; Mark 2:1), and of course this can be understood as a great privilege and a reason for boasting. Perhaps, as Hagner suggests, the words of Matt 11:23/Luke 10:15 – “Will you be exalted to heaven?”, which borrow Isa 14:13–15 – refer to Capernaum's “unwarranted, pride-

⁷⁷³ Davies & Allison, 1991, 265. See Isa 5:11–17; 29:15–21; 33:1; Mic 2:1–5; Hab 2:9–11; *J En.* 94:8; 95:7; 96:4, 8; 98:9–11; 100:7–9.

⁷⁷⁴ Evans, 2006, 216. Hagner, 1993, 314. Theissen, 1991, 51. Nolland, 1993, 557, 560. Fitzmyer, 1985, 852, 855.

⁷⁷⁵ Davies & Allison, 1991, 268–269.

ful confidence in an exceptional degree of eschatological blessing.”⁷⁷⁶ Capernaum might also have boasted due to her prosperity, geographical location and fertility. Despite the fact that the northern corner of the Galilean Sea was an enormously fertile area (*Bell.* 3:42–43), there is no evidence that the residents of Capernaum would have dwelled in exceptional pride due to the town’s prosperity. Most plausibly the boasting of Capernaum in Matt 11:23 and Luke 10:15 serves as a rhetorical device. However if the boasting relies on a concrete matter, then, it would most probably refer to Jesus’ extended presence in the village. After all Capernaum was privileged to serve as Jesus’ hometown and as the arena for several of his “great works.”

The Galilean woes are to be seen in the context of other doom prophecies attributed to Jesus. Jesus almost certainly said something critical regarding the temple and predicted its destruction. Predicting the destruction of the temple would have touched on the fate of the nation, the city of Jerusalem and the people as a whole.⁷⁷⁷ In both the Galilean woes, as well as in the double saying, Jesus is remembered as speaking collectively. This kind of “communal judgment” where the community, and not only certain sinful individuals, is judged, has somewhat close parallels in the OT, from the Judaism of the second temple period and from the later rabbinic period.⁷⁷⁸ I agree with Wright, Dunn and Borg in their claim that the element of eschatological warning and the oracles of judgment were prominent in Jesus’ message. Borg states that “Jesus accepted the expectation of a final judgment” and he believed that “when-

⁷⁷⁶ Hagner, 1993, 314. See also: Davies & Allison, 1991, 268–269. Davies and Allison discuss the verse Matt 11:23 in some length. According to them it might be too much to read the saying of Matt 11:23 in the light of Isa 14:13. As they suggest “the phrase under discussion might be wholly rhetorical; that is, Capernaum’s exaltation may not be concrete but rather hypothetical, serving simply to introduce her abasement: ‘You shall be brought down to Hades.’” The citation is from Davies & Allison, 1991, 269.

⁷⁷⁷ Holmén, 2001, 278, 295.

⁷⁷⁸ According to the Synoptics Jesus posed his judgment on whole villages (Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum), cities (Jerusalem) and on “this generation”. In Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 10:4–6 we find this same collective sentiment. “The townsfolk of an apostate town had no portion in the world to come.” Other collective statements are in the same tract Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 10: “All Israelites have a share in the world to come” (10:1). “The generation of the flood has no share in the world to come” (10:3, I) nor the “generation of the dispersion” (10:3, II), nor “the men of Sodom” (10:3, III). “The generation of the wilderness has no portion in the world to come” (10:3, V).

ever that judgment did come, that generation would discover to its shock that Gentiles of the past were less culpable than it was.”⁷⁷⁹ Allison notes that as Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist (Mark 1:9), and as Jesus regarded John as the greatest of the prophets (Matt 11:9–15/Luke 7:26–28), it is plausible that Jesus was greatly influenced by John’s message which had the warning of doom and judgment at its core.⁷⁸⁰ Sanders, too, admits that “Jesus was not opposed to the idea of judgment.” He however insists that, as Matt 11:21–24/Luke 10:13–15 and Matt 12:42 compare Galilean Jewish villages and “this generation” in a very negative manner with Israel’s worst biblical enemies, Tyre and Sidon, and with a city as sinful as Sodom, these comparisons cannot have derived from Jesus, but rather they are expressions of the early Church’s mission theology.⁷⁸¹ Sanders’ assumption, that Jesus would not have compared the Galilean towns with Israel’s worst enemies and sinners in the biblical history, is not convincing because the OT and the writings of the second temple period do indeed contain such comparisons as we shall see.

8.1.5 Israel compared with the worst Gentiles in eschatological discourses

By comparing the people of God with Tyre, Sidon and Sodom the Galilean woes are not unique. The great prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel compared Israel to its Gentile neighbours to Israel’s disadvantage. According to Isa 1:9–10, Jerusalem’s leaders were like the leaders of Sodom. Ezekiel, perhaps the most radical of all the prophets, proclaims that Jerusalem and Judah broke the will of God more severely than its surrounding Gentile nations (Ezek 5:5–7). Ezek 3:5–7 states that if the prophet Ezekiel were to be sent to proclaim his message to the foreign nations, they would listen to him, but the people of Israel do not listen to him and hence they do not listen to their God. In Jer 23:14 the prophet Jeremiah proclaims in the name of God that the prophets of Jerusalem

⁷⁷⁹ Borg, 1998, 222. Wright, 1996, 182–186, 322–336. Dunn, 2003, 420–425.

⁷⁸⁰ Allison, 1998, 103–105. See Räisänen, 2010, 88.

⁷⁸¹ Sanders, 1985, 114–115. Along the same lines of arguments, see: Lüdemann, 2000, 173–174. “The threats are to be derived from the situation of later communities, all the more so as they look back on the completion of Jesus’ activity”, p. 174.

“have become like Sodom to me, and its inhabitants like Gomorrah.” Lam 4:6 looks at the destruction of Jerusalem in a devastating manner: “For the chastisement of my people has been greater than the punishment of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment, though no hand was laid on it.” In Deut 29:22 it is stated that in the later days the Promised Land will be entirely devastated so that it will become like the land of Sodom and Gomorrah. This devastation was owing to the people having forsaken the covenant of the Lord (Deut 29:23–26). In Ezek 16:48–57 the prophet compares the wicked Jerusalem with the cities of Sodom and Samaria. According to Ezek 16:52 Sodom and Samaria will look innocent when they stand by the side of the sinful Jerusalem on Judgment Day. Despite the harsh comparisons the message of forgiveness is, in the end, finally offered to Jerusalem (Ezek 16:60–63). The references to Sodomites are extensively doomful because in the OT and in the second temple Jewish writings Sodom as itself stands as the incarnation of wickedness.

Josephus also offers us somewhat comparable sayings with the Galilean woes. Immediately prior to the Roman destruction and burning of the temple of Jerusalem, Josephus – according to his own testimony, which of course may be doubted – gives a speech to the rebel leader John of Gischala and to the Jerusalemites. He urges them to surrender themselves to the Romans and thus save the temple from destruction. In his powerful and emotional speech he states that John of Gischala, as a Jew, committed worse sins than the Romans (*Bell.* 6:99–101).⁷⁸² Elsewhere, in another context, Josephus attests that the generation which rebelled and fought against the Romans in Jerusalem, was the most godless ever. Josephus compares the Jews fighting against the Romans with the Sodomites (*Bell.* 5:442, 566).⁷⁸³ Josephus admittedly had his reasons

⁷⁸² Winninge, 1995, 194. See: *Pss. Sol.* 1:8; 2:11–12, 16; 8:13; 17:15. Winninge notes that the idea, expressed occasionally in *Pss. Sol.* and in *Bell.* 6:99–102, claims that momentarily the Jews of Jerusalem extended the sinfulness of the Gentiles.

⁷⁸³ *Bell.* 5:442–443: “It is, therefore, impossible to go distinctly over every instance of these men’s iniquity. I shall, therefore, speak my mind here at once briefly:--That neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world. Finally, they brought the Hebrew nation into contempt, that they might themselves appear comparatively less impious with regard to strangers.” *Bell.* 5:566: “I suppose, that had the Romans made any

for condemning the hotheaded Jews for revolting against the Romans, as he was on the Roman side and as the Romans won the war and as the temple was destroyed. Despite his subjective and biased viewpoint, Josephus' views are important. The above mentioned passages show that a tradition of comparing Israel with the Gentiles was known to the Jews and that this tradition can be traced to the OT particularly the prophetic books. Such comparison of Israel with the worst Gentiles was often part of a doom-filled prophetic criticism against Israel.

Winnings has noticed that in the *Pss. Sol.* some Jews are occasionally said to be as sinful as the Gentiles, and according to some passages the Jewish sinners are said to be even more sinful than the Gentiles.⁷⁸⁴ In the book of *Jubilees*, the sinners of the Jewish people are called sons of Belial (15:33–34).⁷⁸⁵ In addition to this, Abraham warns his sons that if they do not keep the Torah, they will, in the end, become like the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah (20:6). *Pss. Sol.* 1:3–8 is similar to Jesus' judgment of Capernaum (Matt 11:23/Luke 10:15). As we have noted the judgment on Capernaum recalls Isa 14 and the destruction and doom of Babylon. In *Pss. Sol.* 1:3–8 the implied writer of the psalm boasts that he is full of righteousness, and as a sign of this he is rich in children. "Their wealth spread to the whole earth, and their glory unto the end of the earth. They were exalted unto the stars. They said they would never fall", (1:4–5). This passage portrays the golden age of Solomon which resulted in pride and became the false trust of the descendants of the one who was "full of righteousness" (1:3). The descendants are in reality sinners, though in secret (1:6–7). "Their transgressions (went) beyond those of the heathen before them" (1:8). Their self-exaltation and their self-assurance lack all solid bases. Instead of being exalted unto the stars they are doomed by the Lord. This passage of *Pss. Sol.* 1 has a clear parallel idea with the idea apparent in Jesus' woe on Capernaum. More-

longer delay in coming against these villains, that the city (Jerusalem) would either have been swallowed up by the ground opening upon them, or been overflowed by water, or else been destroyed by such thunder as the country of Sodom perished by, for it had brought forth a generation of men much more atheistic than were those who suffered such punishments; for by their madness it was that all the people came to be killed."

⁷⁸⁴ Winnings, 1995, 194. *Pss. Sol.* 1:8; 2:11–12, 16; 8:13; 17:15.

⁷⁸⁵ In the Dead Sea Scrolls the sinners of Israel are called "sons of Darkness" and they belong to the lot of Belial (1QS 3:13–4:25).

over both passages are reminiscent of the similar features of Isa 14:13. The falsely assured sinners, who think that they will be or are exalted into heaven, find themselves under God's fierce judgment with Babylon.

In the light of the OT and the writings of the second temple period we can state that the Galilean woes would not have been totally exceptional and unique in the Jewish circles of the first century. Jesus' message contained warnings, judgment and doom. Furthermore the Galilean woes suit the context of Jewish religion of the late second temple period.⁷⁸⁶ Jesus believed quite certainly that a crucial time was at hand, the kingdom of God had arrived/come near. His mission was marked by eschatological urgency.⁷⁸⁷ Jesus' high expectations of national revival and restoration failed, and certainly this could have resulted in Jesus proclaiming the Galilean woes as well as the doomful words against "this generation." It is understandable that the evangelists Matthew and Luke, who supported the Gentile mission of the Church, willingly preserved these saying precisely due to their positive view of the Gentiles.

8.2 Authenticity of the Galilean woes

As we have seen, there is no explicit evidence of a Christian mission in the three villages of Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin. Despite this, it is practically assumable that the early Christians preached the Gospel in Galilee (Mark 14:28; 16:7; Matt 26:32; 28:7–10, 16; John 21:1). It is interesting that the devastating history of the Jewish war in Galilee does not emphasize the destruction of these three villages – they were not central strongholds like Gamla and Yotapata. Raising the question as to

⁷⁸⁶ Witherington, 1990, 166. Fitzmyer, 1985, 851. See: Amos 6:4–7; Mic 2:1; Hab 2:6–7; Zeph 2:5.

⁷⁸⁷ See Meyer, 1979, 204–205. The motif of urgency surely marked Jesus' mission as the following passages bear witness: Luke 10:9/Matt 10:7; Matt 10:23. The urgency and shortness of time expressed in the Jesus traditions can be supported by the criterion of embarrassment as the statements of Mark 9:1 and Matt 10:23 did not obviously get fulfilled. Reiser (Reiser, 2001, 234.) emphasizes the urgency of Jesus' mission. He maintains that the call to forgive your opponents (Matt 5:25/Luke 12:57–59), the saying about the Flood (Matt 24:37/Luke 17:26–27), the demand for repentance, and several other sayings and parables (Luke 14:15–24) express the idea that the people should repent and believe, and so prepare themselves for the judgment, which would come very soon.

why the Romans' defeat of Gamla is not apparent in any way in the Gospels is revealing. The Jewish town of Gamla, embraced with a nationalistic and religious ethos, joined the Jewish war. The town was attacked and destroyed by the Roman legions at the beginning of the war, 67 CE (*Bell.* 4:1–83).⁷⁸⁸ The defeat was overwhelming: 10 000 Jews died. This strategically crucial fall of Gamla was not reflected back into the mouth of Jesus as if he had prophetically doomed this evidently Jewish town. No Christian prophet recalled the “words of the Lord” in the Gospels concerning this town, whose condemnation would seem perhaps just as natural as the condemnation of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. It is also worth noting that Jesus is not explicitly told of visiting Gamla, or other highly important cities or towns of the Jewish war: Jotapata (Yodefata), Arbela and Kefar Hananyah. The Gospels do not explicitly state that Jesus would have preached the Gospel of God's kingdom in these crucial towns. Both Jotapata and Gamla were significant Jewish towns and both of them were destroyed by the Romans at the beginning of the war (67 CE). The devastation of these towns is not noted – as far as we know – in the early Christian literature and in the NT.

The Galilean woes (Matt 11:20–24/par.) threaten the Galilean town of Capernaum with a harsher doom than that of Sodom. As previously noticed, in the context of OT and the writings of the second temple period (*Ps. Sol.* 1), Jesus' harshness is not totally exceptional and is not inconsistent with his religious Jewish context. Moreover the Galilean woes concern towns which most plausibly, in the light of our explicit evidence from the Gospels, are connected with Jesus, and not with the mission of the early Christians. I maintain that Jesus called for urgent repentance and that the message of doom and judgment was also part of his message. I concur with scholars such as Meier, Bird, Jeremias and Witherington who support the authenticity of the Galilean woes.⁷⁸⁹ I maintain that the likeliest conclusion is that the harsh words of Q recall Jesus' words and frustration regarding the heartlands of his Galilean mission.

⁷⁸⁸ Chancey, 2002, 129–130.

⁷⁸⁹ Bird, 2006, 62. Meier, 2001, 439. Jeremias, 1971, 16. Witherington, 1990, 166.

8.3 “This generation” in comparison with the Queen of Sheba and with the people of Nineveh: Luke 11:29–32 and Matthew 12:41–42

In Matt 12:39–42 Jesus is told to have answered negatively to the Pharisees and the scribes, or as Luke 11:29–32 has it, this generation’s, request for a sign. Both Matthew and Luke clearly use the same source. This is obvious because of the many verbal parallels. Verse Luke 11:32 and Matt 12:41, which state how the Ninevites will stand to judge this generation on Judgment Day, are identical. Also the claims stated in Luke 11:31 and Matt 12:42 are identical. Out of the fifty-five words of Luke 11:31–32 and Matt 12:41–42 fifty-three are the same.⁷⁹⁰

Luke 11:29–32	Matthew 12:39–42
<p>Τῶν δὲ ὄχλων ἐπαθροισμένων ἤρξατο λέγειν· ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη γενεὰ πονηρὰ ἐστίν· σημεῖον ζητεῖ, καὶ σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ εἰ μὴ τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωανᾶ.</p>	<p>ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ, καὶ σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ εἰ μὴ τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωανᾶ τοῦ προφήτου.</p>
<p>³⁰ καθὼς γὰρ ἐγένετο Ἰωανᾶς τοῖς Νινευίταις σημεῖον, οὕτως ἔσται καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ.</p>	<p>⁴⁰ ὥσπερ γὰρ ἦν Ἰωανᾶς ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας, οὕτως ἔσται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας.</p>
<p>³¹ βασίλισσα νότου ἐγεροθήσεται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινεῖ αὐτούς, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἐκ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς ἀκοῦσαι τὴν σοφίαν Σολομῶνος, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Σολομῶνος ὧδε.</p>	<p>⁴¹ ἄνδρες Νινευῖται ἀναστήσονται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν αὐτήν, ὅτι μετενόησαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωανᾶ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Ἰωανᾶ ὧδε.</p>
<p>³² ἄνδρες Νινευῖται ἀναστήσονται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν αὐτήν· ὅτι μετενόησαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα</p>	<p>⁴² βασίλισσα νότου ἐγεροθήσεται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινεῖ αὐτήν, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἐκ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς</p>

⁷⁹⁰ Fitzmyer, 1985, 932.

Ἰωνᾶ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλείον Ἰωνᾶ ὧδε.	ἀκοῦσαι τὴν σοφίαν Σολομῶνος, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλείον Σολομῶνος ὧδε.
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The double sayings concerning the Queen of the South and the Ninevites derive from the Q source.⁷⁹¹ This conclusion is suggested by the verbal similarities, although in both Matthew and Luke's versions the sayings are in a different order. In Luke the Queen of the South (11:31) precedes the phrase of the exemplary Ninevites (11:32). In Matthew the exemplary Ninevites (12:41) are mentioned prior to the Queen of South (12:42). Mark 8:11–12 states that Pharisees came to request a sign from Jesus and Jesus refused: τί ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη ζητεῖ σημεῖον; ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, εἰ δοθήσεται τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ σημεῖον. Q mentions the sign of Jonah (Matt 12:39/Luke 11:29–30).⁷⁹² Matthew (12:40) is the only one who reports that Jesus explained the sign of Jonah by referring to the three days which the Son of Man would be in the heart of the land (ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς). This explanation refers to the three days and nights which Jonah spent in the belly of the sea-monster (ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους). The explanation, as it is found only from Matthew, and as it explains the unclear sign of Jonah, is most often attributed to Matthew and not to the historical Jesus.⁷⁹³

The majority of scholars maintain that the request of a sign (Matt 12:38–39/16:1/Mark 8:11) did not originally belong together with the saying about the Queen of the South and with the Ninevites (Matt 12:41–42/Luke 11:31–32). This sounds reasonable to me. It seems that Matthew has placed the saying of the Queen of the South and the Ninevites in the context of Mark 8:11, where the Pharisees ask Jesus for a sign. This context of Pharisees requesting and pressing Jesus is absent from the Lukan version of the logion.⁷⁹⁴

During the early first century CE the biblical characters of Jonah and Solomon as well as the Ninevites and the Queen of the South were all well known to the Jews. Solomon in particular was glorified for his

⁷⁹¹ Davies & Allison, 1991, 351. Hagner, 1993, 352–353. Meier, 2001, 440. Fitzmyer, 1985, 930–931.

⁷⁹² The sign of Jonah appears also in Matt 16:4.

⁷⁹³ Davies & Allison, 1991, 352.

⁷⁹⁴ Davies & Allison, 1991, 351. Theissen, 1991, 44.

wisdom. Several psalms and proverbs, and cures against illnesses and spells against demons had been attributed to his person as Josephus clarifies in *Ant.* 8:42–49. Josephus claims that Solomon surpassed all wise men, even the ancient wise men of Egypt, in understanding and wisdom, *Ant.* 8:42–44. This fame for wisdom is clearly connected to Solomon in Jewish writings from the OT to the writings of the second temple period.⁷⁹⁵ In the ears of the Jewish hearers “the wisdom of Solomon” (τὴν σοφίαν Σολομῶνος, Luke 11:31/Matt 12:42) would have recalled the fame of the greatest symbol of Jewish wisdom.⁷⁹⁶ The “wisdom of Solomon” is mentioned with awe in *Ant.* 8:49, 168 and 182. It is noted in *Ant.* 8:165–168 that the “Queen of Egypt and Ethiopia” came to see Solomon and was amazed by his wisdom (8:168). Josephus also claims that “there went a great fame all around the neighbouring countries, which proclaimed the virtue and *wisdom of Solomon*, insomuch that all the kings *desired to see him*,” *Ant.* 8:182. “Solomon had a divine wisdom in all things” (*Ant.* 8:187).

In this double saying we encounter the epithet “this generation” twice. On the Day of Judgment the exemplary Gentiles of Israel’s history will be in a position of judging “this generation.” The epithet ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη appears several times in the Synoptics, in the mouth of Jesus, but elsewhere in the NT it is barely mentioned at all. Jesus is recalled criticizing “this generation” severely (Mark 9:19). “This generation” will reject the Son of Man (Luke 17:25–26/Matt 24:34–35). “This generation” has no faith in Jesus (Matt 11:16–17/Luke 7:31–32) and she requests for a sign, which will not be given to her (Mark 8:12). “This generation” will be doomed fiercely: Matt 12:41–42/Luke 11:30–32 and Matt 23:36/Luke 11:50–51.⁷⁹⁷ In the Synoptics “this generation” functions clearly as an epithet. The epithet “this generation” refers almost certainly to the Galilean and Judean Jewish contemporaries of Jesus – i.e. to Jesus’ generation – and not to the Jewish people or huma-

⁷⁹⁵ See Catchpole, 1993, 242. 1 Kgs 5:12; Wis 6:1–11; 11:23; 12:10, 19; Sir 17:24; 44:16; 48:15.

⁷⁹⁶ Lövestam, 1995, 33–34.

⁷⁹⁷ Lövestam, 1995, 18–20. Davies & Allison, 1991, 260. Outside the Synoptics “this generation” is found only twice: Acts 2:40 and Heb 3:10. Cf. Phil 2:15.

nity as a whole.⁷⁹⁸ The term has its roots in the OT: Gen 7:1; Deut 1:35; 32:5, 20. In these passages “this generation” refers to the generations which lived during the Flood and the Exodus.⁷⁹⁹ As a term this generation (הדור הזה) appears in the Mishnah and other rabbinic writings. Interestingly in the OT and in the Mishnah, as well as in the Synoptics “this generation” is connected with wickedness and sinful people. More particularly, in all of these three sources “this generation” is associated with the generation of the Flood (Gen 7:1; *m. Sanh.* 10:3; Luke 17:25–26). Apparently in Q “this generation” and the unrepentant representatives of Israel are compared to the Gentiles of the past (Luke 11:30–32) and future (Luke 10:11–15, 13:28–30). This comparison is made for the Gentiles’ advantage, in order to put “this generation” and the unrepentant Jews to shame for their tough-heartedness. Kloppenborg has studied how these sayings of “this generation” work within Q. He states the following:

“The rhetorical strategy at work is shaming. In an agonistic culture such as that of ancient Palestine, to point out the exemplary faith of a non-Israelite is a way of shaming Israelites.”⁸⁰⁰

Bryan states that “by most accounts Jesus’ rhetoric against ‘this generation’ forms part of the bedrock of Jesus tradition.”⁸⁰¹ Josephus curiously uses “this generation” when he describes the sinfulness of the generation which was under siege in Jerusalem during its destruction. According to Josephus’ description no other age ever, *Bell.* 5:442, “from the beginning of the world” had produced “a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was.”⁸⁰² In the book of *Jubilees* we find a description of the miseries of the end time. *Jub.* 23 predicts that in the end time a generation will arise, which bears the epithet “this generation” and the “evil generation” (23:14–16, 22). In the context of eschatological disaster and hope of restoration and deliverance, this “evil generation” is portrayed

⁷⁹⁸ Davies & Allison, 1991, 260–261.

⁷⁹⁹ Bryan, 2002, 81–82.

⁸⁰⁰ Kloppenborg Verbin, 2000, 191–193.

⁸⁰¹ Bryan, 2002, 81.

⁸⁰² See Davies & Allison, 1991, 261. See also: *Bell.* 5:566, 6:408.

as severely wicked. “This generation” will live in the midst of wars, famine, strife, death, sorrow and disaster as *Jub.* 23:14–16 attests. Finally God’s judgment will face “this generation” (*Jub.* 23:22).⁸⁰³ Arguably Jesus used the epithet “this generation” and applied it to his own contemporaries among whom he drove his mission. On the basis of what we have noted, it is highly possible that the contemporary Jews of the late second temple period would have understood the epithet “this generation” in a negative manner. “This generation” recalled the harshest sinners of Israel’s history. In accordance with *Jub.* 23 “this generation”, which is portrayed severely sinful, would appear again in the end-time.

8.4 The authenticity of the double saying

According to Bultmann the saying of Luke 11:31–32, as well as the saying of Luke 10:13–15, “have been constructed according to ‘a scheme of early Christian polemic’.”⁸⁰⁴ Bultmann’s conclusion can be questioned on several points. The authenticity of this saying can be supported by noting that it coheres with the Galilean woes (Matt 11:20–24/Luke 10:13–15), which I regard as having an authentic core. According to the saying of the Galilean woes (Matt 11:20–24/Luke 10:13–15) Jesus held that the worst Gentiles of biblical history would have been more ready for repentance than the Jewish towns of Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin.⁸⁰⁵ Additional Jesus traditions contain sayings (Luke 4:25–27; 10:30–37) which raise the Gentiles as examples of faith and repentance. We are to note that the historicity of these sayings is highly disputed, and the majority of scholars regard them as redactional creations of Luke.

⁸⁰³ See Davies & Allison, 1991, 354–355. In 1Qsb 3:7 the “generation of falsehood” is mentioned and its end is desired.

⁸⁰⁴ Bultmann, 1963, 113.

⁸⁰⁵ See Nolland, 1993, 651. Concerning the Gospel of Luke Nolland states the following: “Of the materials here, it is the basic content of Luke 11:29 that we can with the greatest confidence trace back to the historical Jesus. There is, however, a good coherence between the materials of vv 31–32 and those of 10:13–15, a text that constitutes something of a middle term between 11:31–32 and 11:20. This suggests that also in vv 31–32 we are dealing with materials that may be traced to the historical Jesus.”

The double saying (Luke 11:31–32) coheres with the idea of eschatological reversal which is widely represented in the Jesus traditions. Perrin notes that the double saying also resembles the message emphasized in several of Jesus parables, namely the theme of warning in the face of a major challenge.⁸⁰⁶ We may recall that in the parable of the great banquet the first ones invited refuse to enter and therefore they end up staying outside. Several of the original outsiders, the sick and the poor, and perhaps even some total strangers such as the Gentiles, accept the urgent call and attend the Banquet actually taking the places of the ones who were first invited (Luke 14:15–24/Matt 22:1–10; GThom 64). The saying of the great banquet (Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29) is most likely authentic and it is to be understood as referring to Jews and Gentiles joining the feast in the kingdom of God/ heaven, while some of the Jews, i.e. the “sons of the kingdom” are, surprisingly, left outside. Thus also this saying (Matt 8:11–12) supports the conclusion that Jesus regarded that some Gentiles would end up better than some Jews. Moreover the worst of the Gentiles, i.e. Tyre, Sidon and Sodom, would have repented if they only had seen what “this generation” – Capernaum, Bethsaida and Chorazin – had indeed seen and experienced.

In support of the primitiveness of the double saying we may state that the Christological aspects of the saying are not opened in any way.⁸⁰⁷ It should be noticed that the words refer to “something greater,” not to “someone greater.” According to Meier, this manner of speech reflects the “indirect, enigmatic style of Jesus.” Meier is right in his claim that the “something” greater (πλεῖον) here (ὧδε) is to be understood as the kingdom of God present in Jesus’ words and works. The “something” does not refer to the person of Jesus, but to the kingdom of God. The early Church did not proclaim the Christology of Jesus in this indirect manner.⁸⁰⁸ Catchpole also rejects the direct indication to Jesus’ person in this double saying. He claims the following:

⁸⁰⁶ Perrin, 1967, 195.

⁸⁰⁷ Davies & Allison, 1991, 357. Bird, 2006, 59. Lövestam, 1995, 35.

⁸⁰⁸ Meier, 2001, 440–441.

“The neuter form πλείον suggests that the specialness of the contemporary situation is not understood christologically, nor in the present (but not new) preaching of judgment and call for repentance, but rather in the accompanying δυνάμεις which anticipate the dawning new era.”⁸⁰⁹

The double saying strikes with originality, which suits the message of Jesus. Nowhere else in the NT is it stated that the Gentile-believers would judge the non-believing Jews, and nowhere else in the NT are the Ninevites and the Queen of South taken as exemplary representatives of honour and repentance. Conclusively, I maintain that the double saying is to be regarded as authentic. This view is shared by scholars such as Reiser, Perrin, Davies, Allison, Catchpole and Bird.⁸¹⁰

8.5 Conclusions

Jesus arguably warned “this generation” and the Galilean Jews that if they would not repent after seeing and hearing about the kingdom of God and the “great works,” they would face severe doom on the Day of Judgment. In this case even the sinful city of Sodom would end up better in the final Judgment. “Something greater” than Solomon and Jonah “is here” – i.e. the kingdom of God. The Queen of South and the people of Nineveh will judge this unrepentant generation. I do not see it as a credible argument that the Gospel writers would have, in its entirety, created the scheme which highlights exemplary Gentiles from Israel’s past history,⁸¹¹ and from the current time,⁸¹² and which has positive hopes regarding the Gentiles’ fate in the eschatological future.⁸¹³ We can confidently conclude that the idea of an eschatological reversal, hinting occasionally that some Gentiles would inherit the blessed and privileged

⁸⁰⁹ Catchpole, 1993, 242.

⁸¹⁰ Reiser, 2001, 235–236. Perrin, 1967, 195. Davies & Allison, 1991, 357. Catchpole, 1993, 243. Bird, 2006, 59.

⁸¹¹ Matt 12:41–42/Luke 11:30–32: The people of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba. Luke 4:25–27: The widow at Zarephath in Sidon and Naaman the Syrian.

⁸¹² Matt 8:5–10/Luke 7:1–10: The Centurion from Capernaum. Mark 7:24–30/Matt 15:21–28: The Syrophenician woman.

⁸¹³ Matt 11:21–24/Luke 10:13–15: Tyre, Sidon and Sodom. See also Matt 8:11–12/Luke 13:28–29.

places in the kingdom of God from the wicked members of “this generation” – i.e. from many Galilean and Judean Jews – has its roots in Jesus.

9 Summary and conclusions

The purpose of this study has been to contribute to our understanding regarding Jesus' attitudes towards the Gentiles. We have clarified the historical, geographical, ideological and religious context of Jesus' mission. As we are investigating Jesus' attitudes towards ethnic outsiders, the context of Jesus has been especially crucial and important. In this work the context of Galilee, as revealed by archaeological and written sources, is taken into serious consideration.

In chapter two we noted that in accordance to the writings of the second temple period it is evident that the eschatological fulfillment, Israel's eschatological restoration, would always affect the Gentiles and the world in some manner. The possible salvation or damnation of the Gentiles and the nations would belong to the eschatological era. The restoration of Israel would not be solely nationalistic and particularistic but would also have universal consequences. Jesus can be associated with the belief of realized eschatology (chapter 4.4), and thus it is interesting that despite this belief Jesus did not promote the salvation of the Gentiles in a more engaging manner. Jesus admittedly drove his mission solely for the Jews. Only occasionally did he aid individual Gentiles who sought his help. Nonetheless, Jesus implicitly addressed universal aspirations from time to time (Matt 8:11–12; Mark 4:31–32).

In chapter three we concentrated on the questions how Jewish was Galilee, and whether there were Gentiles residing in the neighbourhoods, towns and villages in which Jesus drove his mission. Both our written and archaeological sources suggest that Galilee was populated by Jews and that only a small minority of Gentiles resided there permanently. The context of Galilee, therefore could at least partly explain why Jesus rarely met and helped Gentiles. Notably two of the three of Jesus' contacts with a Gentile occurred outside Galilee and Judea, in the district of Tyre (Mark 7:24–30) and in the country of the Gerasenes (Mark 5:1–20). This outlook from the Synoptics suits with the impression reflected in the archaeological excavations and in the written sources: Galilee was Jewish although it was surrounded by areas where the population was strongly Gentile. The Jesus tradition indicates that

Jesus intentionally restricted his and his disciples' current mission to the Jews (Mark 7:27; Matt 10:5–6; 15:24). For Jesus the mission to the Jews was not merely a preliminary and obligatory phase which would lead ultimately to universalism. For Jesus the mission to the Jews, the restoration of the twelve tribes and the search for the lost sheep was central in itself. Jesus was searching and calling for Jews in general and these included even sinners and publicans. Even when Jesus had fellowship with the sinners, he did not turn to the Gentiles.

In chapter four we concluded that despite the fact that Jesus restricted his mission to the Jews, he occasionally healed Gentiles who requested his help. These healings were rare and it is crucial to note that Jesus himself did not take the initiative to heal the Gentile individuals. The healing stories do not reflect Jesus' openness towards the Gentiles; on the contrary, they indicate that Jesus thought he was not sent for the Gentiles but for the Jews. According to my view the stories of the Syro-phenician woman, the centurion and the Gerasene demoniac all derive from a historical core.

I maintain with Bird that Jesus' mission is to be understood in the context of partly realized eschatology. Jesus regarded that the kingdom of God, the eschatological era, had somehow begun, but simultaneously he hoped for the kingdom to come in the near future. For the most part the eschatological salvation for the Gentiles was looming in the eschatological future, but already through Jesus' mission certain individual Gentiles became partakers of the eschatological reality which was currently in a state of partial realization. The account of the royal banquet (Matt 8:11–12; Luke 13:28–30) awaits the eschatological banquet in the kingdom of God. In this saying a reference to the Gentiles who would come from around the compass is quite plausible, although only implicit. In the parable of the great banquet (Matt 22:1–10; Luke 14:15–24; GThom 64) the emphasis is on the claim that the meal is now ready and served, the eschatological salvation is now a reality. An implicit Gentile reference is possible in the Lukan version of the parable, and it is possible that such a reference also belonged to the core of the original parable told by Jesus. However the Gentile reference is uncertain and unemphasized in all versions of the parable.

It is noteworthy that the sayings and parables which emphasize an eschatological gathering (Matt 8:11–12; Luke 14:15–24; Mark 4:31–32; 13:26–27) do not explicitly mention the Gentiles. In these sayings and parables Jesus evidently did not address the question of who the entrees would be in a straightforward manner. These sayings and parables support the claim that Jesus primarily drove a Jewish mission. Admitting this, we are to note that the outcome of this mission could, in the light of Jewish ideas of eschatology, lead ultimately to universalism. Thus there is the plausible possibility that the sayings and parables concerning the eschatological gathering implicitly referred to Gentiles in accordance with Jesus' intentions. I maintain that at least the saying of the great banquet (Matt 8:11–12) and the parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4:31–32) are to be understood as containing an implicit reference to the Gentiles.

I follow Jeremias' main claim according to which Jesus anticipated the Gentiles' arrival at the kingdom feast in the end of days. According to my view Jesus, however, believed that the eschatological fulfillment was already partially realized and that the salvation of the Gentiles would mark the eschatological climax. Jesus arguably believed that this eschatological salvation of the Gentiles was naturally to follow as the aftermath of Israel's salvation. The proclamation of the arrival of God's kingdom, the gathering of the Twelve disciples and the healings transmitted a message of Israel's eschatological restoration. I maintain with Bird that the few individual Gentiles whom Jesus helped are to be understood as first representatives, first fruits of the eschatological blessings which are now being delivered for Israel, but very soon also for the Gentiles. Such an interpretation is dependent on our general view of Jesus. This view becomes tenable if Jesus and his mission are seen in the context of partially realized eschatology, and when the hopes of Israel's eschatological restoration are taken into consideration. Jeremias claimed that Jesus did not envision the Gentile mission of the disciples because he believed that God would, in a sovereign manner, gather the Gentiles at the eschatological banquet. This view is contested by the fact that, according to writings of the OT and second temple period, God often fulfills his eschatological mission by acting through and with human agents, Israel and his servants. Bird has highlighted this aspect: the early

Christians interpreted the sacred writings with the conviction that the eschatological era had begun, and thus God or the resurrected Christ spread the Gospel through the Jewish-Christians.

Jesus' open table fellowship constituted a central element in his mission. The vast majority of scholars maintain that Jesus did not dine with Gentiles although he is recorded as having dined with sinners and publicans. Jesus' openness towards all kinds of Jews, but his refrainment from dining with Gentiles is noteworthy. This can be explained as a practical reason: there was only a small minority of Gentiles residing in Galilee. On the other hand an intentional explanation is also reasonable: Jesus did not dine with Gentiles because the eschatological fulfillment had not yet fully arrived – the restoration of Israel, which was Jesus' primary focus, was yet to be fulfilled. For the moment Jesus' mission was solely for the Jews. Despite this, Jesus envisioned that in the eschatological consummation, which still was in the future, the Gentiles would have a share in the kingdom of God (Matt 8:11–12). Jesus gave the disciples no indication by what means this inclusion would take place. The early Christians were confused as to whether or not the Christ-believing Gentiles should obey the Torah and be circumcised (Gal 2; Acts 15).

In chapter eight we argued that both the Galilean woes (Luke 10:13–15/Matt 11:20–24) and the double saying (Luke 11:29–32/Matt 12:41–42) derive from Q and reflect Jesus' compelling words. In these sayings it is apparent that the contemporary Jews, "this generation", Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida, are put to shame when they are compared with the Gentiles. In these provocative and polemical accounts, the unrepentant contemporary Jews are never compared with those Gentiles who had accepted Jesus' message and repented. This once again strengthens the claim that Jesus did not practice his mission among the Gentiles, but rather that he assumed that in the end of days, at the final judgment, some Gentiles would end up better than his own contemporaries among whom he practiced his mission. These sayings are also to be seen as part of Jesus' hyperbolic rhetoric which aimed at pressing his contemporaries to repentance. Shocking comparisons between Jews and Gentiles are found in the OT and in the writings of the second temple Judaism, and often these comparisons are part of eschatological discourses and crucial historical shifts (Isa 1:9–10; Ezek 3:5–7; 5:5–7; Jer

23:14; *Bell.* 6:99–101). Jesus arguably believed that he and his contemporaries lived at the moment of an epoch shift, and thus it is plausible that he used shocking rhetoric to convey his urgent message concerning the kingdom of God.

The astonishing fact that as early as in the 40s the Christians began their Gentile mission requires a historical explanation. During his mission Jesus did not explicitly command the disciples to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles. Yet it seems that the early Christians' Gentile mission was rooted in their beliefs regarding the mission and person of Jesus, whom they believed to be Christ, the Messiah. The early Christians and the apostles' belief was that Jesus had risen from the dead and the eschatological time had arrived. In the light of the Jewish aspirations of eschatological consummation and Israel's restoration, Jesus' Jewish disciples would have reasoned that the Gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles because the eschatological time had arrived. In the context of Jewish eschatological visions the salvation of the Gentiles belonged to the era of eschaton. Jesus had convinced his disciples through words and deeds that the eschatological era was about to begin, and that it was actually already partially realized, but soon it would be realized completely. By practicing Gentile mission the early Church stated its belief in Jesus as Christ, and its belief that a new era, the eschatological era, had arrived. This, according to my view, is the most plausible reason to explain how the Jewish Jesus, who almost exclusively drove his mission among the Palestinian Jews, who lived among Galilean Jews and who, as far as we are aware, did not visit far off Gentile areas and cities such as Caesarea Maritima, the polises of Tyre and Sidon, or even Scythopolis and Tiberias, came to inaugurate a movement which felt itself obligated to practice Gentile mission to the ends of the world.

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Abbreviations

ABRL	The Anchor Bible Reference Library
AGAJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ASHJ	Academic Studies in the History of Judaism
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBNTS	Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series
CJAS	Christianity and Judaism in the Antiquity Series
DJJS	Duke Judaic Studies Series
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
JCPS	Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series
JNTSSA	Journal of the New Testament Society of South Africa
JSHS	Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSPS	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
NTS	New Testament Studies
NTSCE	New Testament Studies in Contextual Exegesis
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
NVBS	New Voices in Biblical Studies
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SJSJ	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
SNT	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
SNTS	Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Juho Sankamo

Jesus and the Gentiles

The early Christians were quite unanimous in their view that the Gospel should be proclaimed to the Gentiles, and not only to the Jews. This is surprising because Jesus had driven his mission almost exclusively among the Jews. This study emphasizes the context of Jesus' mission as revealed by archaeological excavations and literal sources. Galilee, the main arena of Jesus' mission, was populated by its vast majority of Jews, and thus in Galilee Jesus would certainly not have met Gentiles very frequently. Understandably the references to Jesus helping Gentiles in the Gospels are exceptional and few. The author converses on these accounts in detail.

The Christian movement sprang from its Jewish beginnings to its Gentile future. Sankamo sheds light to this development by paying close attention to the Jewish eschatological hopes of the second temple period. Most often these hopes contained some kind of a reference to universal questions. Israel's eschatological restoration would not affect solely the Jews, but also – in some way – the Gentiles as well. If Jesus and his message are seen in the context of eschatological fulfillment, then occasionally a more or less implicit positive reference to the Gentiles is attainable in Jesus' visions (Matt. 8:11–12). This in itself would partly explain the readiness of the early Christians to extend their mission beyond the Jews into the Gentile world.

