

Jewish-Christian Trajectories in Torah and Temple Theology¹

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The Torah and the temple were without doubt the two most prominent centres of theology in early Judaism.² Accordingly, New Testament scholars in the past often emphasized the attitude of opposition that Jesus and the first Christians supposedly assumed against these centres. Yet most recent studies in Judaism as well as in New Testament exegesis have shown that early Christian attitudes towards the law and the temple did not stand in striking contrast to early Jewish opinions. According to these findings, Jesus as well as the apostle Paul can and must be seen as participants in an inner-Jewish discussion. Only in hindsight can Jesus and Paul be interpreted as proponents of a new ‘religion’. But they themselves were not *aware* of forming – and certainly did not *intend* to form – a new religion apart from Judaism. This can be demonstrated at the most crucial points of early Judaism³: the observance of the law and the attitude towards the temple.

1. ‘Torah’ and ‘Temple’ in Early Judaism

1.1. Torah as cosmological order in early Judaism

In early Judaism, ‘Torah’ displays a broad variety of meanings. In the manuscripts found in Qumran ‘Torah’ can even assume a meaning apart from the Holy Scriptures. 11Q19 56.3–4 (*Temple Scroll*) for example states:⁴

¹ This essay further develops some ideas of my *Habilitation*-thesis: M. Tiwald, *Hebräer von Hebräern (Phil 3,5). Paulus auf dem Hintergrund frühjüdischer Argumentation und biblischer Interpretation* (Freiburg: Herder, 2008).

² Cf. G. Theissen and A. Merz, *Der historische Jesus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), p. 322.

³ ‘Early Judaism’ here is understood as the Hellenistic era of Judaism ending with the emerging of rabbinic Judaism after the Bar Kokhba revolt (so early Judaism in this understanding is not synonymous with ‘Second Temple period’); cf. Tiwald, *Hebräer*, pp. 28–30.

⁴ The quotations from Qumran texts in this essay follow F. García Martínez and E. Tigchelaar, *Dead Sea Scrolls* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1997, 1998).

And you shall act according to the law which they explain to you and according to the word which they say to you *Blank* from the book of the Law. They shall explain it to you accurately.

The passage mentions the ‘book of the Torah’ (ספר התורה), which is ‘certainly not the Pentateuch but a Book of Law proper’.⁵ ‘Torah’ here denotes particular prescriptions of the Qumran community – derived from the cosmological order of the world, according to which the Teacher of Righteousness made his judgments.⁶ According to CD 2.2–10; 1QH 9.7–14 and 4Q180, the cosmological order was fixed in a pre-existent way before creation, and now the path of history follows this eternal plan of God.⁷ Especially in the eschatological time now approaching, history is putting into practice what God decided before he built the world.⁸ That God created the world according to his ‘mysteries’ is also stated in 1QH 9.13. The word תָּו, which is used here, means the pre-existent order of creation.⁹ Only in eschatological times will the authentic interpretation of God’s mysteries – the master plan of God’s creation – be revealed. According to 1QH 12.27–29, the Teacher of Righteousness is capable of revealing God’s mysteries. His interpretation of God’s cosmological order is also the only authentic interpretation of the Torah (cf. 4Q171 3.15 and 4.8–9). Accordingly, ‘Torah’ for the Qumran community is nothing other than the fulfilment of God’s cosmological law, revealed by the Teacher of Righteousness in the now imminent end of days.

The parallel between the Torah and the order of the creation can also be found in other texts of early Judaism. For Philo of Alexandria, the Jewish

⁵ J. Maier, ‘Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation in the Qumran Literature’, in M. Sæbø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament. The History of Its Interpretation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), pp. 108–29, esp. 118.

⁶ Cf. H.-J. Fabry, ‘Der Umgang mit der kanonisierten Tora in Qumran’, in Zenger (ed.), *Die Tora als Kanon für Juden und Christen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1996), pp. 293–327, esp. 322: ‘Will man über die Tora, über ihre Kanonizität und über den Umgang mit ihr in Qumran reden, dann muß man über den *dôreš hattôrâh* reden. Er hat mit einem Gegenstand zu tun, der sich unter der Hand wegbewegt von einem Gesetzbuch mit gesatztem Recht zu einer Größe, die alle Konturen sprengt, die sich vom Buch weg transzendiert in den göttlichen, vielleicht sogar in den kosmischen Bereich hinein. ... Diese Totalität ist wohl am besten zu verstehen, wenn man die Torah als die von Gott der Welt eingestiftete kosmische Ordnung akzeptiert...’

⁷ Cf. A. Lange, *Weisheit und Prädestination. Weisheitliche Urordnung und Prädestination in den Textfunden von Qumran* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 219–20, esp. 297.

⁸ Cf. Lange, *Weisheit*, pp. 215, 297.

⁹ Cf. Lange, *Weisheit*, pp. 217–18: ‘Schon anderenorts wurde gezeigt, daß תָּו (“Geheimnis”) in den Texten von Qumran, aber auch in anderen Werken des Frühjudentums, die verborgene präexistente Seins- und Geschichtsordnung der Welt beschreiben kann...’

law is nothing else but the manifestation in words of the unwritten legislation of God's creation order. In *Vit. Mos.* 2.37 he refers to the translation of the Septuagint and explains the miracle of the identical translation carried out by all the translators through the inspiration of nature:¹⁰

Therefore, being settled in a secret place, and nothing ever being present with them except the elements of nature, the earth, the water, the air, and the heaven, concerning the creation of which they were going in the first place to explain the sacred account; for the account of the creation of the world is the beginning of the law (κοσμοποιία γὰρ ἡ τῶν νόμων ἐστὶν ἀρχή); they, like men inspired, prophesied, not one saying one thing and another, but every one of them employed the self-same nouns and verbs, as if some unseen prompter had suggested all their language to them.

Here Philo states: κοσμοποιία γὰρ ἡ τῶν νόμων ἐστὶν ἀρχή – meaning, that God has founded in the creation a natural order of this world. Accordingly, the Patriarchs, in spite of not having the Torah of Moses, were nevertheless able to follow God's commandments, for they knew God's will by observing the laws of nature, as Philo asserts in *Abr.* 6:

For these first men, without ever having been followers or pupils of any one, and without ever having been taught by preceptors what they ought to do or say, but having embraced a line of conduct consistent with nature from attending to their own natural impulses, and from being prompted by an innate virtue, and looking upon nature herself to be, what in fact she is, the most ancient and duly established of laws, did in reality spend their whole lives in making laws, never of deliberate purpose doing anything open to reproach, and for their accidental errors propitiating God, and appeasing him by prayers and supplications, so as to procure for themselves the enjoyment of an entire life of virtue and prosperity, both in respect of their deliberate actions, and those which proceeded from no voluntary purpose.

The Patriarchs were just 'looking upon nature herself to be, what in fact she is, the most ancient and duly established of laws'. Though they did not yet possess the written Torah, they themselves became ἔμψυχοι καὶ λογικοὶ νόμοι ἄνδρες by observing the laws of nature, as Philo concludes in *Abr.* 5:

For these men have been living and rational laws (οἱ γὰρ ἔμψυχοι καὶ λογικοὶ νόμοι ἄνδρες ἐκείνοι γεγόνασιν); and the lawgiver has magnified them for two reasons; first, because he was desirous to show that the injunctions which are thus given are not inconsistent with nature; and, secondly, that he might prove that it is not very difficult or laborious for those who wish to live according to the laws established in these books, since the earliest men easily and spontaneously obeyed the unwritten principle of legislation (ἄγραφος νομοθεσία) before any one of the particular laws were written down at all. So that a man may very properly say that the written laws

¹⁰ The Greek quotations of Philo's works follows the edition of L. Cohn and P. Wendland, *Philonis Alexandrini Opera quae Supersunt* (7 vols.; Berlin: Reimerus, 1896–1926). The English text is derived from C. Yonge, *The Works of Philo Judaeus, the Contemporary of Josephus* (4 vols.; London: Bohn, 1854–1855).

are nothing more than a memorial of the life of the ancients (τοὺς τεθέντας νόμους μηδὲν ἄλλ' ἢ ὑπομνήματα εἶναι), tracing back in an antiquarian spirit, the actions and reasonings which they adopted.

The unwritten law of nature is more important than the written law, because the written law is 'nothing more than a memorial of the life of the ancients'. In the same way, *2 Bar. 57.2* points out that in the time of the Patriarchs, the unwritten law was observed – the law given by the order of nature.

Interpreting the Torah as 'order of nature' has a long history,¹¹ as we can see in the *Letter of Aristeas*, where parts of the law concerning ritual purity are interpreted allegorically. The intention here is to explain purity laws as ethical prescriptions. For example, in *Ep. Arist. 143*, according to the λόγος φυσικός (the order of nature), food cannot be impure in itself. It is only the symbolic meaning that makes food impure, as *Ep. Arist. 144–50* concludes:¹²

... For you must not fall into the degrading idea that it was out of regard to mice and weasels and other such things that Moses drew up his laws with such exceeding care (χάριον περιεργίαν). All these ordinances were made for the sake of righteousness to aid the quest for virtue and the perfecting of character. For all the birds that we use are tame and distinguished by their cleanliness, feeding on various kinds of grain and pulse, such as for instance pigeons, turtle-doves, locusts, partridges, geese also, and all other birds of this class. But the birds which are forbidden you will find to be wild and carnivorous, tyrannizing over the others by the strength which they possess, and cruelly obtaining food by preying on the tame birds enumerated above and not only so, but they seize lambs and kids, and injure human beings too, whether dead or alive, and so by naming them unclean, he gave a sign by means of them that those, for whom the legislation was ordained, must practice righteousness in their hearts and not tyrannize over any one in reliance upon their own strength nor rob them of anything, but steer their course of life in accordance with justice, just as the tame birds, already mentioned, consume the different kinds of pulse that grow upon the earth and do not tyrannize to the destruction of their own kindred. Our legislator taught us therefore that it is by such methods as these that indications are given to the wise, that they must be just and effect nothing by violence, and refrain from tyrannizing over others

¹¹ Cf. H. Hoffmann, *Das Gesetz in der frühjüdischen Apokalyptik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), p. 336, who points out that in the Greek speaking communities of early Judaism apologetic and missionary attempts towards the Hellenistic world led to an allegoristic-ethical interpretation of the Jewish Law. On one hand the result of this can be seen in 'universalizing' the Torah in the way of interpreting the Torah as the universal law of nature. On the other hand this led to a 'reduction' and 'concentration' of the Tora, focusing only on some essential ethical principles.

¹² The Greek quotations of the *Letter of Aristeas* are derived from A. Pelletier, *Aristeas. Lettre d'Aristée à Philocrate* (Paris: Cerf, 1962). The English text follows H. T. Andrews, 'The Letter of Aristeas', in R. H. Charles (ed.), *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), pp. 83–122.

in reliance upon their own strength. For since it is considered unseemly even to touch such unclean animals, as have been mentioned, on account of their particular habits, ought we not to take every precaution lest our own characters should be destroyed to the same extent? Wherefore all the rules which he has laid down with regard to what is permitted in the case of these birds and other animals, he has enacted with the object of teaching us a moral lesson. ...

Ep. Arist. 144–50 thus emphasizes that impure animals are notoriously known for their immoral behavior and that staying away from such impurity is a good training for morality. But when purity laws are reduced to ethical aspects, it seems possible to concentrate on morality alone, leaving ritual aspects behind. The argumentation of the so called ‘radical allegorists’ that Philo criticizes in *Migr. Abr.* 89 obviously ran this way:

For there are some men, who, looking upon written laws as symbols of things appreciable by the intellect, have studied some things with superfluous accuracy, and have treated others with neglectful indifference; whom I should blame for their levity; for they ought to attend to both classes of things, applying themselves both to an accurate investigation of invisible things, and also to an irreproachable observance of those laws which are notorious.

Although Philo supports an allegorical (i.e., ethical) interpretation of the Bible, he still maintains that the allegorical interpretation must not replace the ritual observance of the Torah. Although it is evident to him, as *Migr. Abr.* 91–94 states, that the allegorical meaning is more respectable than the literal (i.e., ritual) meaning, he still demands the fulfilment of both – ethical and ritual – interpretations of the Torah. In *Migr. Abr.* 91–94 he compares the allegorical/ethical meaning to the soul and the literal/ritual meaning to the body of the laws:

For although the seventh day is a lesson to teach us the power which exists in the uncreated God, and also that the creature is entitled to rest from his labors, it does not follow that on that account we may abrogate the laws which are established respecting it, so as to light a fire, or till land, or carry burdens, or bring accusations, or conduct suits at law, or demand a restoration of a deposit, or exact the repayment of a debt, or do any other of the things which are usually permitted at times which are not days of festival. Nor does it follow, because the feast is the symbol of the joy of the soul and of its gratitude towards God, that we are to repudiate the assemblies ordained at the periodical seasons of the year; nor because the rite of circumcision is an emblem of the excision of pleasures and of all the passions, and of the destruction of that impious opinion, according to which the mind has imagined itself to be by itself competent to produce offspring, does it follow that we are to annul the law which has been enacted about circumcision. Since we shall neglect the laws about the due observance of the ceremonies in the temple, and numbers of others too, if we exclude all figurative interpretation and attend only to those things which are expressly ordained in plain words. But it is right to think that this class of things resembles the body, and the other class the soul; therefore, just as we take care of the body because it is the abode of the soul, so also must we take care of the laws that are enacted in plain terms: for while they are regarded, those other things also will be more clearly understood, of

which these laws are the symbols, and in the same way one will escape blame and accusation from men in general. Do you not see that Abraham also says, that both small and great blessings fell to the share of the wise man, and he calls the great things, 'all that he had', and his possessions, which it is allowed to the legitimate son alone to receive as his inheritance; but the small things he calls gifts, of which the illegitimate children and those born of concubines, are also accounted worthy. The one, therefore, resemble those laws which are natural, and the other those which derive their origin from human enactment.

Thus Philo – even though he is a supporter of an allegorical and ethical interpretation of ritual laws – underlines the necessity of observing the purity prescriptions in a literal way as well. Yet many Jews in these times seem to have thought like the 'radical allegorists'. *Ep. Arist.* 128 thus speaks of οἱ πολλοί who criticize ritual laws:

It is worth while to mention briefly the information which he gave in reply to our questions. For I suppose that most people feel a curiosity (literally: Νομίζω γὰρ τοὺς πολλοὺς περιεργίαν ἔχειν) with regard to some of the enactments in the law, especially those about meats and drinks and animals recognized as unclean. When we asked why, since there is but one form of creation, some animals are regarded as unclean for eating, and others unclean even to the touch (for though the law is scrupulous on most points, it is specially scrupulous on such matters as these) he began his reply as follows: ...

'In the narrative introduction (sect. 128–29) of this section the author first states the problem: *hoi polloi* (whoever they may be) take some of the prescriptions concerning food, drink, and unclean animals as περιεργία, i.e., something exaggerated or frivolous and superfluous (these are all meanings of the Greek term).'¹³ Perhaps among these πολλοί there were also Jews who denounced purity laws as being excessive (περιεργία). G. Stemmerger, for instance, takes this into consideration,¹⁴ and in *Ep. Arist.* 144 (the text quoted above) the author has to defend ritual laws against the 'contemptible view that Moses enacted this legislation because of an excessive preoccupation (χάρην περιεργίαν) with mice and weasels or such-like creatures'.

¹³ F. Siegert, 'Early Jewish Interpretation in a Hellenistic Style', in M. Sæbø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament. The History of Its Interpretation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), pp. 130–98, esp. 150.

¹⁴ Cf. G. Stemmerger, 'Der Dekalog im frühen Judentum', *JBT* 4 (1989), pp. 91–103, esp. 92: 'Dieser Text ... muß notwendig das Gesetz mit seinen Einzelheiten gegenüber Nichtjuden rechtfertigen (und vielleicht auch innerhalb seiner aufgeklärten jüdischen Gemeinde neu begründen).'

In Josephus' *Ant.* 4.145–49 we find a similar line of argument, now clearly uttered by a Jew. The Jew Zimri lashes out against a ritual interpretation of God's law:¹⁵

But Zimri arose up after him, and said, 'Yes, indeed, Moses, you are at liberty to make use of such laws as you are so fond of, and have, by accustoming yourself to them, made them firm; otherwise, if things had not been thus, you have often been punished before now, and had known that the Hebrews are not easily put upon; but you shall not have me as one of your followers in your tyrannical commands, for you do nothing else hereto, but, under pretence of laws, and of God, wickedly impose on us slavery, and gain dominion for yourself, while you have deprived us of the sweetness of life, which consists in acting according to our own wills, and is the right of freemen, and of those who have no lord over them. Nay, indeed, this man is harder upon the Hebrews than were the Egyptians themselves, as pretending to punish, according to his laws, everyone's acting what is most agreeable to himself; but you yourself better deserve to suffer punishment, who presumes to abolish what everyone acknowledges to be what is good for him, and aims to make your single opinion to have more force than that of all the rest; and what I now do, and think to be right, I shall not hereafter deny to be according to my own sentiments. I have married, as you say rightly, a strange woman, and you hear what I do from myself as from one that is free; for truly I did not intend to conceal myself. I also own that I sacrificed to those gods to whom you do not think it fit to sacrifice; and I think it right to come at truth by inquiring of many people, and not like one that lives under tyranny, to suffer the whole hope of my life to depend upon one man; nor shall anyone find cause to rejoice who declares himself to have more authority over my actions than myself.'

Zimri here condemns the ritual laws as being an invention of Moses – and not the will of God. Moses 'wickedly' invented such 'tyrannical commands' only 'under pretence of laws, and of God' to 'impose on us slavery, and gain dominion for yourself'. Zimri, as a 'freeman', no longer wants to be subject to the slavery of ritual prescriptions.

A similar point of view is taken in *Ant.* 20.17–53. Here Helena, the queen of Adiabene, and her son Izates want to 'change their course of life, and embrace the Jewish customs'. But Izates does not only want to live according to 'Jewish customs', but also wishes to become 'thoroughly a Jew' (βεβαίως Ἰουδαῖος). Hence the question arises whether circumcision is necessary in order to become a 'real Jew'. The liberal Jew Ananias, a Diaspora Jew in Adiabene whose counsel Izates is seeking, advises him that 'he might worship God without being circumcised' and that 'worship of God was of a superior nature to circumcision'. But Eleazar, a Jew originating from Palestine, instantly rejects Ananias' opinion and convinces Izates that circumcision is absolutely necessary in order to become a real Jew:

¹⁵ Greek quotations of Josephus' works follow B. Niese, *Flavii Iosephi Opera* (5 vols.; Berlin: Weidmann, 1888–1889). The English translation is taken from W. Whiston, *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus* (Bridgeport: M. Sherman, 1828).

And when he [Izates] perceived that his mother was highly pleased with the Jewish customs, he made haste to change, and to embrace them entirely; and as he supposed that he could not be thoroughly a Jew (βεβαίως Ἰουδαῖος) unless he were circumcised, he was ready to have it done. But when his mother understood what he was about to do, she endeavored to hinder him from doing it, and said to him that this thing would bring him into danger; and that as he was a king, he would thereby bring himself into great odium among his subjects, when they should understand that he was so fond of rites that were to them strange and foreign; and that they would never bear to be ruled over by a Jew. This it was that she said to him, and, for the present, persuaded him to forbear. And when he had related what she had said to Ananias, he confirmed what his mother had said; and when he had also threatened to leave him, unless he complied with him, he went away from him; and said that he was afraid lest such an action being once become public to all, he should himself be in danger of punishment for having been the occasion of it, and having been the king's instructor in actions that were of ill reputation; and he said, that he might worship God without being circumcised, even though he did resolve to follow the Jewish law entirely, which worship of God was of a superior nature to circumcision. He added, that God would forgive him, though he did not perform the operation, while it was omitted out of necessity, and for fear of his subjects. So the king at that time complied with these persuasions of Ananias. But afterward, as he had not quite abandoned his desire of doing this thing, a certain other Jew that came out of Galilee, whose name was Eleazar, and who was esteemed very skilful in the learning of his country, persuaded him to do the thing; for as he entered into his palace to greet him, and found him reading the law of Moses, he said to him, 'You do not consider, O king; that you unjustly break the principal of those laws, and are injurious to God himself [by omitting to be circumcised]; for you ought not only to read them, but chiefly to practice what they enjoin you. How long will you continue uncircumcised? But if you have not yet read the law about circumcision, and do not know how great impiety you are guilty of by neglecting it, read it now.' When the king had heard what he said, he delayed the thing no longer, but retired to another room, and sent for a surgeon, and did what he was commanded to do.

It is evident that Josephus immediately and emphatically criticizes the opinions of Zimri and of Ananias. But we can conclude that there must have been Jews who thought just like them. Ananias doubts that circumcision is necessary in order to become a good Jew. His line of argument exposes a liberal Jewish attitude that we can also find in 1 Macc. 1.11–15 and 2 Macc. 4.9–13. Josephus explicitly criticizes such an opinion as not being in accordance with the life of a 'real Jew', but obviously there were Jews in his time who lived out their Jewish faith in such a liberal way.

Finally, we can conclude that in early Judaism the interpretation of 'Torah' as the manifestation in words of God's creation order could lead to two different tendencies in the interpretation of the law. On the one hand, it could lead to an accentuation and intensification of ritual aspects (as can be seen in Qumran), on the other, it could lead to an alleviation and relaxation of ritual prescriptions (as shown by the radical allegorists, Zimri, Ananias and even some passages in the *Letter of Aristeas* and in the writings

of Philo). But never is the Torah – as God’s will – called into question *eo ipso*. Zimri, for example, does not criticize the Torah itself, but only the ritual interpretation of God’s law as an invention of Moses ‘under pretence of laws, and of God’.

1.2. Temple criticism in early Judaism

Temple criticism had a long tradition in Israel, as can be shown on the basis of various texts of the Old Testament¹⁶ (especially Amos), and became even more frequent in early Judaism. Examples of harsh temple criticism can be found in the Qumran manuscripts as well as in the positions of the Pharisees who democratized temple rituals by transferring temple purity to daily life. In early Judaism, claims that the temple in Jerusalem was cultically insufficient were very widespread.¹⁷ But never was the idea of the temple questioned as such. Instead, it was subjected to new interpretations. We can see this in the texts of Qumran: the expiatory function of the Jerusalem temple is no longer valid, but the new community of Qumran has replaced it, and the members of the community expect a new temple at the end of times.¹⁸ The temple is not abolished, but transformed and reinterpreted. This reinterpretation follows the same line as the reinterpretation of the ‘Torah’: not the temple *eo ipso* is called into question, but new concepts of temple worship are proposed by different groups of Jews. Particularly the question of purity laws represents an important point of debate: the contrast between inner purity of the heart and the ritual purity of customs and habits prompted the temple critique of prophets like Amos (Amos 4.1–5; 5.21–6.14) as well as those of early Jewish authors. The *Testament of Moses*¹⁹ thus lashes out against the temple priests: ‘They are not

¹⁶ Cf. Amos 5.21–27; Isa. 1.10–17; Jer. 7.4–28; Ezek. 9.7; the new temple in Ezek. 40.1–44.3; but also Pss. 40.7–8 and 51.18–19. Cf. K. Paesler, *Das Tempelwort Jesu. Die Traditionen von Tempelzerstörung und Tempelreinigung im Neuen Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), pp. 35–39, 124–35.

¹⁷ Cf. Paesler, *Tempelwort*, pp. 40–89 and 150–66. Especially on p. 150 he talks about the ‘cultic insufficiency of the temple in Jerusalem’ (author’s translation). Josephus, *Ant.* 20.181, 206–07, tells us about the bad deeds of the temple priests; cf. C. Evans, ‘Opposition to the Temple: Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls’, in Charlesworth (ed.), *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 235–53, esp. 236–41. For the temple-criticism in the texts of Philo and in Hellenistic early Judaism cf. J. Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), pp. 122–27.

¹⁸ Cf. Ådna, *Tempel*, pp. 99–106.

¹⁹ The quotation of the *Testament of Moses* follows the edition of J. Priest, ‘Testament of Moses’, in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, I* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), pp. 919–34. C. Evans, ‘Opposition’, pp. 237–38, and J. Priest, ‘Testament’, p. 920, consider the first half of the first century CE as time, when the *T. Mos.* was written.

(truly) priests (at all), but slaves, ... they will sell justice by accepting bribes' (5.5). '...priests of the Most High God ... will perform great impiety in the Holy of Holies' (6.1). 'They, with hand and mind, will touch impure things, yet their mouths will speak enormous things, and they will even say, "Do not touch me, lest you pollute me in the position I occupy..."' (7.9f.).²⁰ Also *Jub.* 23.21b states:²¹ 'They will pollute the holy of holies with their pollution and with the corruption of their contamination.' So – according to *Jub.* 1.29 – the second temple will not prevail in eschatological times, because God will create a new and pure temple in the end of times.²² The community of Qumran argued in a similar way. In 4Q174 3 (Frg. 1 + 2 + 21) three temples are mentioned: the temple in Jerusalem that now is disgraced by God, the present □□□ אֱדָנָא שְׁמַיָא, a temple built by living men of the Qumran-community, and the eschatological temple, which is to be built at the end of days.²³ According to 4 *Ezra* 10.46–55²⁴ the eschatological temple has to replace the temple in Jerusalem '...for no work of man's building could endure in a place where the city of the Most High was to be revealed' (4 *Ezra* 10.54).²⁵ 1 *En.* 90.28–29 also expects a new eschatological temple to be built.²⁶

As a parallel to the cosmological interpretation of the Torah (as seen above), there were also two tendencies discernible in the critique of the temple: The community of Qumran supported, on the one hand, a tightening of *ritual aspects* to avoid (ritual) impurity. On the other, there was in Qumran the tendency to spiritualize temple service. This way of spiritualizing temple service can also be found in Philo's *Spec. Leg.* 1.66–67.²⁷

We ought to look upon the universal world (σύνπαντα κόσμον) as the highest and truest temple of God (ἀνωτάτω καὶ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἱερόν), having for its most holy place that most sacred part of the essence of all existing things, namely, the heaven; and for ornaments, the stars; and for priests, the subordinate ministers of his power, namely, the angels, incorporeal (ἀσώματοι) souls, not beings compounded of irra-

²⁰ Cf. also *Pss. Sol.* 2.3–5, further *War* 4.323, 2 *Bar.* 10.18 and *Tg. Isa.* 28.1.

²¹ The quotation of *Jubilees* follows O. S. Wintermute, 'Jubilees', in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, II* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), pp. 35–142.

²² Cf. Ådna, *Tempel*, pp. 44–45 and K. Paesler, *Tempelwort*, p. 157.

²³ Cf. Ådna, *Tempel*, p. 104.

²⁴ The quotation here follows B. M. Metzger, 'The Fourth Book of Ezra', in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha I* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), pp. 517–59.

²⁵ Ådna, *Tempel*, pp. 47–48, points out that the temple in 4 *Ezra* is depicted as part of the old, destroyed city of Jerusalem (10.46), as well as of the heavenly, new city of Jerusalem (10.55). This makes it clear for him that in 4 *Ezra*, too, the soiled, human temple will be replaced by the temple of God.

²⁶ Cf. Paesler, *Tempelwort*, pp. 156–65.

²⁷ Cf. Ådna, *Tempel*, p. 123.

tional and rational natures, such as our bodies are, but such as have the irrational parts wholly cut out, being absolutely and wholly intellectual, pure reasonings, resembling the unit. But the other temple is made with hands (χειρόκμητος); for it was desirable not to cut short the impulses of men who were eager to bring in contributions for the objects of piety, and desirous either to show their gratitude by sacrifices for such good fortune as had befallen them, or else to implore pardon and forgiveness for whatever errors they might have committed. He moreover foresaw that there could not be any great number of temples built either in many different places, or in the same place, thinking it fitting that as God is one, his temple also should be one.

Here Philo distinguishes between the ‘highest and truest temple of God’ (ἀνωτάτω καὶ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἱερόν) – according to stoic philosophy this is the ‘universal world’ (σύμπαντα κόσμον), and the temple in Jerusalem which is only χειρόκμητος (made by human hands). The servants of the real temple of God have to be ἀσώματοι. This clearly puts the temple made with hands in the second place. The real temple (πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἱερόν) is not made by human hands. Thus, in *Somn.* 1.215 Philo does not even mention the temple in Jerusalem:

For there are, as it seems, two temples belonging to God; one being this world (κόσμος), in which the high priest is the divine word, his own first-born son. The other is the rational soul (λογικὴ ψυχὴ), the priest of which is the real true man, the copy of whom, perceptible to the senses, is he who performs his paternal vows and sacrifices, to whom it is enjoined to put on the aforesaid tunic, the representation of the universal heaven, in order that the world may join with the man in offering sacrifice, and that the man may likewise co-operate with the universe.

The two temples he names here are our world (κόσμος) and the rational soul (λογικὴ ψυχὴ). The temple in Jerusalem is not even mentioned.

Summarizing we can conclude: in early Judaism there were tendencies to spiritualize the temple service.²⁸ Philo did so, but so did the community of Qumran. According to 4Q174 3.7 in the present מִקְדָּשׁ אֱדָנָא, a temple formed by the living community of the Qumran members and not by stones, sacrifices of animals are replaced by מַעֲשֵׂי הַתּוֹרָה, by works of thanksgiving and praising God.²⁹

2. Temple and Torah in Early Christianity

2.1. Stephen, the ‘Hellenists’ (Acts 6.1), and Paul

First, I will here discuss persons like Stephen and the ‘Hellenists’ mentioned in Acts 6. They fit perfectly into the picture we have just seen. They did not seek to abolish the temple, but rather to reform temple worship in a

²⁸ Cf. Ådna, *Tempel*, p. 364.

²⁹ Cf. Ådna, *Tempel*, p. 105.

spiritualized way, i.e., by turning temple worship into a sort of synagogue prayer/worship which also granted access to Gentiles, as G. Theissen has already stated.³⁰ They adopted Jesus' temple criticism (cf. the cleansing of the temple in Mk 11.15–17 and the temple logion in Jn 2.19; cf. Mk 14.58, where the logion is placed in the mouth of Jesus' adversaries) and added their own theology, as we find it in Mk 11.17: 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.' This quotation of Isa. 56.7 (LXX) presents Gentiles with access to the temple and allows for a reinterpretation of temple worship in a spiritual sense. These 'Hellenists' also interpreted the purity laws and ritual prescriptions in the same way as Philo describes the position of the 'radical allegorists' – living out these prescriptions only in an ethical, and no longer in a ritual way. In Acts 6.13–14 Stephen is accused of 'talking against this holy place (= the temple) and the law'. He is charged further with 'changing the traditions (ἔθνη) which Moses gave to us'. Even when the accusers of Stephen tried to present his position as amounting to an abrogation of the law and the temple, it is historically more probable that Stephen only intended a new interpretation of temple worship. When Luke uses the word ἔθνη he always refers to cultic traditions (Lk. 1.9: priests; 2.42: Pascha; Acts 15.1: circumcision). It is therefore very likely that in Acts 6.14 only the ritual aspects of temple worship are criticized, but not the temple itself.³¹ This proves true when we read Acts 7.42. Here Stephen quotes Amos 5.25–27 with the purpose of postulating a temple service without sacrifices: in its forty years of wandering in the desert, Israel did not offer any sacrifices to God. Hence, sacrifices might not be necessary for God. Then, Stephen's reasoning based on Act 7 connects this argument to a second one: a temple worship consisting of sacrifices is

³⁰ Cf. G. Theissen, 'Hellenisten und Hebräer (Apg 6,1–6). Gab es eine Spaltung der Urgemeinde?', in H. Lichtenberger (ed.), *Geschichte – Tradition – Reflexion III* (M. Hengel; Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), pp. 323–43, esp. 335. Cf. also W. Kraus, *Zwischen Jerusalem und Antiochia. Die 'Hellenisten', Paulus und die Aufnahme der Heiden in das endzeitliche Gottesvolk* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1999), p. 46. As for the historical implications of Jesus' temple prophecy, cf. Theissen & Merz, *Jesus*, p. 381. Cf. also A. Weiser, 'Zur Gesetzes- und Tempelkritik der "Hellenisten"', in K. Kertelge (ed.), *Das Gesetz im Neuen Testament* (Freiburg: Herder, 1986), pp. 146–68, esp. 159–63.

³¹ Cf. the argumentation of W. Kraus, *Jerusalem*, pp. 48–49, and Theissen, 'Hellenisten', pp. 335 and 334 n. 26. But cf. the directly opposed interpretation of U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer I* (Zürich: Benziger, 1987), pp. 240–41, who mentions the 'abrogation of the Jewish temple-service in early Christianity' and in the 'Hellenistic Christian traditions' (meaning especially the Hellenists around Stephen and Paul; author's translation). For my part I cannot see such an 'abrogation' by Paul and Stephen – this would also be unique in early Judaism! The main concern in early Judaism was the authentic interpretation of the Torah and the temple, the question of an 'abrogation' never arises (not even in the temple-critique of Qumran). We strictly have to distinguish between a harsh critique of the temple and a so-called 'abrogation'.

also unnecessary, for – as Acts 7.48–50 states (with a quotation of Isa. 66.1–2) – ‘the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands (ἐν χειροποιήτοις), as the prophet says: “Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool. What house will you build for me? says the Lord, Or what is the place of my rest? Has my hand not made all these things?”’ Therefore – according to this twofold argument – sacrifices in the temple are not necessary a) because God did not wish for them in the forty years of wandering in the desert and b) because God does not even dwell in a handmade temple. It is very likely that the other ‘Hellenists’ shared this opinion. They were driven out of Jerusalem (Acts 8.1) because of their reinterpretation of the Torah and of temple worship, but not because they believed in Jesus: the ‘Hebrews’, in contrast to the ‘Hellenists’, could stay in Jerusalem and were not persecuted. Later on, the ‘Hellenist’ Philippus begins the mission of the Samaritans and baptizes the Ethiopian. All of these events prepare the way for the mission of Gentiles without circumcision, which according to Acts 11.20 was begun in Antioch by the ‘Hellenists’ driven out of Jerusalem. It seems quite likely that the ‘Hellenists’ were convinced already in their pre-Christian period that ritual laws – like temple sacrifices and circumcision – should be interpreted in a spiritual way and not be practiced as a cultic reality. Their belief in Christ now triggers the last stage in this trajectory: belief in Christ now replaces a cultic understanding of the Torah and the temple and opens up the possibility of a spiritualized interpretation. It is obvious that in this setting the temple and the Torah were reinterpreted – but not abrogated! Indeed, such a reinterpretation was an actual possibility already in pre-Christian Judaism.

In Acts 11.26 and 13.1 we read that it was in Antioch that the apostle Paul obtained his Christian formation and adopted the ideas of the ‘Hellenists’. And indeed, Paul’s theology fits exactly into this trajectory: according to Rom. 3.25 the true ἱλαστήριον³² which brings us justification can no longer be found in the temple of Jerusalem but in Jesus Christ. The temple itself is thus *not abolished* but *replaced* by the living community of Christians, as stated in 1. Cor. 3.16–17 and 1. Cor. 6.19–20. This clearly finds a parallel in the Qumran community. And – as in Qumran too – the offerings in this temple are spiritualized: in Qumran the temple of Jerusalem is replaced by a sanctuary consisting of the living members of the Qumran community (מִקְדָּשׁ אָדָם), who no longer sacrifice animals, but offer God their ‘works of thanksgiving’ (מַעֲשֵׂי הַתְּוָדָה). In the same way Rom. 12.1 argues that a ‘reasonable service’ (λογικὴ λατρεία) consists in the presenting of ‘your bodies as a living, holy sacrifice, acceptable unto

³² Kraus, *Jerusalem*, p. 53, puts forward the opinion that Rom. 3.25–26 was a pre-Pauline hymn, derived from similar circles as the ‘Hellenists’.

God'. Here we also find a parallel to Philo, who states that the reasonable soul (λογικὴ ψυχὴ) is the real temple of God.

These trajectories can be traced up to Eph. 2.19–21, where the Gentiles are integrated into the temple of living men, and to 1 Pet. 2.5, where the temple of living men offers πνευματικὰς θυσίας ('spiritual sacrifices').

2.2. Paul and the law

It is often stated that Paul's theology was based on an 'abrogation of the Torah',³³ and broke with 'Jewish self-understanding',³⁴ with the 'Jewish consensus',³⁵ or with 'Jewish way of thinking'.³⁶ Sometimes such statements still refer to the (anachronistic) idea of a 'normative Judaism', maintaining the opinion that rabbinic Judaism was the normative way of thinking already in the second temple period. This opinion must be rejected, for as B. Chilton points out:

The rabbis themselves believed their ideal reached all the way back to the biblical exposition of Ezra (cf. Neh. 8.1–8). But until the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 there was more variety in Judaism than the adjective 'rabbinic' would suggest. Teachers such as Jesus might be called 'rabbi', while deviating from the practice of exposition developed in the rabbinic academies of a later period. Moreover, the groups responsible for intertestamental literature and the writings discovered near the Dead Sea appear to have pursued ideals of interpretation which were not rabbinic, and the priestly aristocracy had yet other ideals. The Judaism from which the rabbinic movement emerged as the dominant force was characterized by more ferment and variety than is evident in the rabbinic corpus.³⁷

The question thus remains as to whether or not something we could describe as 'mainstream Judaism' can be defined for the time of the late se-

³³ U. Schnelle, *Wandlungen im paulinischen Denken* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1989), p. 74 (author's translation).

³⁴ H.-W. Kuhn, 'Die drei wichtigsten Qumranparallelen zum Galaterbrief: Unbekannte Wege der Tradition', in R. Bartelmus, T. Krüger and H. Utschneider (eds.), *Konsequente Traditionsgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), pp. 227–54, esp. 229, mentions that Paul's theology is 'against Jewish self-understanding' (author's translation).

³⁵ F. Siegert, *Argumentation bei Paulus. Gezeigt an Röm 9–11* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985), p. 164, thinks that it 'can be seen, how far away from Jewish consensus Paul has come' (author's translation).

³⁶ U. Schnelle, *Wandlungen*, p. 68, points out that Paul 'left the Jewish way of thinking' (author's translation) and D. Zeller, 'Zur neueren Diskussion über das Gesetz bei Paulus', *TP* 62 (1987), pp. 481–99, esp. 497, underlines Paul's 'un-Jewish' way of argumentation (author's translation).

³⁷ B. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum. Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1987), pp. XX–XXI. Cf. also G. Stemmerger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch* (München: Beck, 1992), p. 15.

cond temple period. Such a ‘mainstream Judaism’ would have agreed on at least one ‘common denominator’, as L. V. Rutgers wishes to see it:

Arguing against the view that holds that Judaism in first-century Palestine was divided into a variety of parties, including the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, ... the different parties were too peripheral and not powerful enough to be able to impose their particular views on sizeable portions of the Jewish population ... Thus according to Sanders’ definition, the term ‘common Judaism’ is a convenient concept to indicate that in first-century Palestine (and probably in the Greek-speaking Diaspora during this period) most Jews agreed what were the most fundamental characteristics of their religion.³⁸

But it seems impossible to find such a ‘common denominator’ because – as J. Neusner says – the criteria are ‘either too general to mean much (monotheism) or too abstract to form an intelligible statement’.³⁹ Hence we can conclude with G. Stemberger: ‘We could reduce such a basic unity beyond all possible differences to a few elementary items, one of them ... Judaism as a “biblical religion”...’⁴⁰ But even here we have to admit: ‘Nothing separated the individual currents of Judaism more than the common Bible.’⁴¹ There thus remain no criteria to define in a strict way the Jewish ‘mainstream’ of the late second temple period. And, as we have already seen in the texts of the *Letter of Aristaeus*, Josephus and Philo, there was no consensus in early Judaism as to what a ‘real Jew’ (βεβραίως Ἰουδαίος) needed to believe and to practice. The pluriformity of early Judaism must not be underestimated. There simply was no overall accepted ‘Jewish way of thinking’ or ‘Jewish self-understanding’. We therefore cannot declare that Paul broke up with the ‘Jewish consensus’ or with ‘Jewish way of thinking’. On the other hand, we can discern a clear connection between Paul and a number of Jewish concepts. There is a link between Paul and the ‘Hellenists’, as mentioned in Acts 6.9, where persons coming from ‘Cilicia’ try to argue against Stephen, and Paul is depicted as one of them in Acts 7.58. It seems very likely that Paul in his pre-Christian time obtained a Pharisaic education in Jerusalem and not in Tarsus, for we have no evidence of Pharisees living in the Diaspora. This is the position of G. Stemberger: ‘Although the phenomenon of Diaspora Pharisees is frequently mentioned in scholarly literature, we have no evidence that there ever existed Pharisaic groups in the Diaspora. ... as for Paul, he probably joined the Pharisees while living in Jerusalem and thus would not be an example

³⁸ L. V. Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome. Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), p. 208.

³⁹ J. Neusner, *Rabbinic Literature and the New Testament. What We Cannot Show, We Do not Know* (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press, 1994), p. 119.

⁴⁰ G. Stemberger, ‘Was there a “Mainstream Judaism” in the Late Second Temple Period?’, *RRJ* 4 (2001), pp. 189–208, esp. 202.

⁴¹ Stemberger, ‘Mainstream’, p. 203.

of a Diaspora Jew.⁴² Paul in his youth might thus have been a liberal Hellenistic Jew, perhaps similar to the ‘radical allegorists’ mentioned by Philo or the ‘Hellenists’ mentioned in Acts. During his pre-Christian stay in Jerusalem he possibly experienced his first conversion and became a Pharisee in order to observe the law in a very strict manner: he persecuted the ‘Hellenists’ because they reminded him of his own positions before his Pharisaic conversion. With the Damascus event he then had his second ‘conversion’. Here he ‘converted’ to Christ, but regarding his attitude towards the law and the temple this represented a ‘re-version’: he returned to the ‘liberal’ views of his youth – now presented to him in the position of Christians like the ‘Hellenists’ in Acts 6. These ‘Hellenists’ had a firm link to Antioch in Syria (cf. Acts 6.5; 11.19–20), where Paul also received his Christian formation (cf. Acts 11.26, confirmed by Gal. 1.21 and 2.11). The ‘Hellenists’ did not intend to abolish the law, but to interpret it symbolically, concentrating on an ethically correct behavior (as did the radical allegorists, Zimri, Ananias and as is discernible in some passages by Aristean and Philo). The same was now intended by Paul. In this respect, Rom. 10.4 does not talk about the end of the law, but about the fulfilment of the law in Jesus Christ: τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς. Paul, the apostle of Christ, still remained a Jew, and felt like a Jew, and argued like a Jew (at least like ‘liberal’ Jews of his time). In his own opinion, he never abandoned his Jewish identity (cf. Rom. 11.1; 1 Cor. 9.20; 2. Cor. 11.22; Phil. 3.5). Instead, he simply adopted a different mode of interpreting the law and temple worship. Through the Damascus event he did not change his religion from Jewish to Christian, but rather changed his inner-Jewish position.

3. The Historical Jesus: Apocalyptic Aspects

3.1. Torah versus basileia?

It has been repeatedly observed that for Jesus the imminent *basileia*⁴³ had more importance than the Torah as a legislative document. The order of the now approaching *basileia* finds a parallel in the order of God’s creation, for in apocalyptic times a correspondence was perceived between *protology* (the time of creation) and *eschatology* (the time at the end of the world). In early Jewish thought, God as creator of the world will restore the lost integrity of his creation in the end of the times.⁴⁴ Eschatology thus

⁴² G. Stemberger, ‘The Pre-Christian Paul’, in J. Pastor and M. Mor (eds.), *The Beginnings of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2005), pp. 65–81, esp. 67.

⁴³ On behalf of Jesus and the *basileia* cf. H. Merklein, *Jesu Botschaft von der Gottesherrschaft* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1989).

⁴⁴ Cf. J. Becker, *Jesus von Nazaret* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996), pp. 155–68.

corresponds to protology. J. Becker lists some cases in which the *basileia* and its protologic order of creation comes into conflict with aspects of the Torah.⁴⁵ For example, the fifth of the Ten Commandments (following early Jewish enumeration), ‘honor your father and your mother’ (Exod. 20.12 and Deut. 5.16), seems to be repealed in the gospel source Q 14.26, according to which the disciple of Jesus has to ‘hate’ father and mother for the sake of discipleship and – in one special case – even is denied the duty of burying his dead father according to Q 9.59. These sayings fulfill all the criteria for an authentic Jesus tradition: the breaking up of family structures in eschatological times is an often repeated pattern in Jesus’ teachings (cf. Q 9.59; Q 14.25–27 and its parallel in Mk 10.29–31 and in *Gos. Thom.* 55.2; Mk 3.35; Mt. 10.35) and fits well into early Jewish theology: in eschatological times God will create his own new family (cf. Mk 3.35) that is not bound to human duties, but to the will of God.⁴⁶ But do these verses really indicate an abrogation of the Torah by the *basileia* – as Becker suggests?⁴⁷ It is more likely that here a *new interpretation* of the ‘Torah’ is suggested (as also a new interpretation of ‘family’ is proposed). As a parallel, we also can refer to Q 6.35 (also an authentic saying of the historical Jesus⁴⁸): the new commandment to love one’s enemies is bolstered by the argument that one should become ‘sons of your Father who is in heaven’ and further developed by the argument ‘for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous’.⁴⁹ God is thus the father of the new eschatological family (cf. the Lord’s Prayer) and the order of this eschatological family is established by the (protologic) order of nature: God who causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good. But this order of nature is nothing else than the Torah. It is necessary to consider that in early Judaism ‘Torah’ was never seen as a narrow legislative prescription, but as the living will of God, as it had been manifested at the beginning of the world (*protology*) and as it would be manifested in the end of days (*eschatology*). For the Qumran community,

⁴⁵ Cf. Becker, *Jesus*, pp. 353–56.

⁴⁶ As proof of this conception in early Judaism cf. S. Bieberstein: *Verschwiegene Jüngerinnen – vergessene Zeuginnen. Gebrochene Konzepte im Lukasevangelium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), p. 120, esp. n. 399, and K. Berger, *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu. Ihr historischer Hintergrund im Judentum und im Alten Testament. Teil I* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972), p. 508.

⁴⁷ J. Becker (*Jesus*, p. 356) asserts that there are situations for Jesus in which *basileia* and Torah oppose one other diametrically, with the *basileia* breaking the dominance of the Jewish law in those cases.

⁴⁸ Cf. D. Kosch, *Die eschatologische Tora des Menschensohnes. Untersuchungen zur Rezeption der Stellung Jesu zur Tora in Q* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), p. 367.

⁴⁹ Cf. Kosch, *Tora*, p. 367.

at least, ‘Torah’ is nothing other than the fulfilment of God’s cosmological law, as we have already seen. And for Philo, ‘Torah’ corresponds to the order of the creation. Here Jesus can be located along the same trajectory. *He does not abolish the Torah by referring to the basileia, but rather the approaching basileia reveals the true meaning of the Torah as established by God at the beginning of time and as it will be restored at the end of times.* This proves right when we look at the question of divorce (Mk 10.2–12), where Jesus seems to revoke Deut. 24.1–3 (bill of divorce). This tradition must also be judged as being authentically Jesuanic.⁵⁰ Yet if we read the text carefully, we must acknowledge that Jesus actually does not repeal a commandment of the law, but only that he confronts Deut. 24.1–3 by referring to Gen. 2.24. Opposing two different traditions in the Torah and deciding which one is authentic clearly does not mean an *abrogation*, but rather an *interpretation* of the Torah. When Jesus argues explicitly by referring to the Torah (by quoting Gen. 1.27; 2.24; 5.2), then the Torah is obviously still valid for him.⁵¹ He is simply replacing one interpretation of the Torah with another. The question is not whether the Torah is still valid, but rather how the Torah as the will of God needs to be interpreted in the eschatological reality of the *basileia*. And here – as we have already seen – the protologic order that God has established in his creation (as we read in Gen. 2.24) prevails over the later tradition of Deut. 24.1–3. Now, in eschatological times, the true meaning of the Torah – as God established it at the beginning of the world – is being restored (but obviously not abolished).

The same is valid for Mk 7.1–23 (which – perhaps not in its wording but in its core – is also an authentic Jesus tradition⁵²), the question of pure and impure. Jesus is not intending to challenge the laws of the Torah. His scope is to reveal the authentic meaning of the laws of God. ‘You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition’ says Jesus in v. 8 criticizing the practice of offering sacrifices in the temple instead of caring for one’s parents. Then he cites the Torah, i.e., the Decalogue (Exod. 20.12 and Deut. 5.16), the commandment to honor father and mother. Thus, he refers to the Torah and replaces a wrong interpretation with the right understanding.

⁵⁰ Cf. T. Holtz, “‘Ich aber sage euch“. Bemerkungen zum Verhältnis Jesu zur Tora’, in I. Broer (ed.), *Jesus und das jüdische Gesetz* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), pp. 135–45, esp. 140.

⁵¹ Q 16.18 offers a shorter version without quoting Gen. But it is likely that the original Jesuanic saying contained the citation of Gen. So for example CD 4.21 also quotes Gen. 1.27 in the context of remarriage and gives us the proof that Jesus here might have adapted an already existing interpretation of the Tora. Cf. Theissen & Merz, *Jesus*, pp. 181, 209, 330, 333, 517.

⁵² Cf. Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung*, pp. 461–507; and W. Loader, *Jesus’ Attitude towards the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1997), p. 71.

Likewise, reducing the numerous commandments of the Torah to the great commandment to love God and one's neighbor in Mk 12.29–31 or reducing the Torah commandments to the ethical parts of the Decalogue in Mk 10.19 – also two authentic traditions of the historical Jesus⁵³ – are always based on *quoting* and *interpreting* the Torah – and do not intend to abrogate the Torah. The Great Commandment to love cites Deut. 6.4–5 and Lev. 19.18, while Mk 10.19 cites Exod. 20.12–16 and Deut. 5.16–20; 14.14.

The same can be demonstrated with regard to the conflicts about keeping the Sabbath. Here Jesus does not oppose the prescriptions of the Torah, but reveals their true meaning. When he declares in Mk 2.27, 'the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath', he is alluding to Exod. 23.12 and Deut. 5.14, where both texts use the important word שָׁבַת (to have rest).⁵⁴ In 1QpHab 11.8 and 1QM 2.9, this word indicates the gift of God's peace on the day of the Sabbath and denotes in 4Q174 3.7 God's gift of eschatological peace by saving mankind from the demonic influence of Belial. For Jesus, therefore, the eschatological salvation of God should become manifest especially on the day of Sabbath. It could therefore have been *deliberate* that Jesus expelled demons and healed persons on the Sabbath, in order to show on this very day that the power of Satan was now broken.⁵⁵ By acting like this, he does not abrogate the law, but suggests a new, eschatological interpretation of the Torah.

We can thus conclude: Jesus does not seek a *confrontation* between the Torah and the *basileia*, but rather pursues an eschatological *interpretation* of the Torah as the living expression of God's will. This point of view also helps us bridge the gap between two opposing, fundamental alternatives: did Jesus accentuate and intensify the commandments of the law or did he alleviate the burden of the Torah?⁵⁶ Presumably, his intention was to carry out neither the one nor the other, but simply to put forward an eschatological interpretation of the Torah. 'Torah' here, of course, does not denote a legislative corpus, but – as we have seen in Qumran and in Philo's theology – is perceived as the cosmological order of the world revealed in eschatological times. For Jesus, this cosmological order implies a universalistic perspective: when Q 6.35 tells us that God 'raises his sun on the bad and good, and rains on the just and unjust', this implicit universalism finds a parallel in Philo's work, whose law of nature is evident and valid for Jews

⁵³ Cf. Berger, *Gesetzesauslegung*, pp. 56–257.

⁵⁴ Cf. H. Preuß, 'שָׁבַת', *ThWAT* 5, pp. 297–307.

⁵⁵ Cf. Becker, *Jesus*, p. 377: 'Sind nicht Jesu Endzeit und der erwartete endzeitliche Sabbat darin gleich, daß sie Tag des Segens für die Menschen sind? Also können Jesu Sabbatheiligungen nicht unter den Einspruch des Sabbatinstituts gestellt werden.'

⁵⁶ Cf. Theissen & Merz, *Jesus*, p. 323: 'Normverschärfung' and 'Normentschärfung'.

and Gentiles alike – as Paul states in a similar way in Rom. 1.20 and 2.14, by referring to the natural way of understanding God’s law.

3.2. *Jesus’ temple criticism*

Jesus’ criticism of the temple is not directed against the temple itself, as the great number of positive Jesus traditions linked to the temple clearly show.⁵⁷ But when worship in the temple conflicts with the approaching *basileia*, then the temple service has to be corrected.⁵⁸ Therefore, the reason for Jesus’ cleansing of the temple might have been a criticism of the false security it offered to the believers. They thought that their sacrifices would automatically work for their salvation according to the principle of ‘*do ut des*’. This wrong self-assuredness might have led persons to neglect the urgency of the *basileia* and of conversion. Perhaps Jesus argued in similarity to Jer. 7.4–7: ‘Trust not in lying words, saying: “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord is here.” For only if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings... then will I cause you to dwell in this place...’

The temple logion in Mk 14.58, announcing the destruction of the temple, shows no intention of *abolishing* the temple, but of *replacing* the temple made with human hands (τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον τὸν χειροποίητον) by a temple which is ἀχειροποίητος (not wrought by human hands). This fits in well with the ideas of early Judaism, as we have seen in the temple theology of Qumran, Philo, the book of Jubilees and many others. In all these early Jewish traditions, there is no doubt that in eschatological times the temple in Jerusalem, built with human hands, will be replaced by the eschatological temple of God and an eschatologically renewed temple community. In Q 13.29 Jesus announces that ‘many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the *basileia*’. This is the concept of God’s eschatological gathering of his holy people (Isa. 43.5; 49.12; 59.19) combined with the pilgrimage of Gentile nations to the holy Zion (Isa. 2.3). In Jesus’ thought, the new eschatological community of the universalistic *basileia* fulfils the biblical prophecies about a new, eschatological temple and an eschatologically renewed temple community. Now – at the time of inaugurating the *basileia* – not the man-made institution of a human temple is necessary, but instead the living community of believers in God’s reign. This does not lead to an abol-

⁵⁷ Cf. Ådna, *Tempel*, pp. 130–31 and 434–40, who mentions Mk 1.40–44 (‘show thyself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded’) and 12.41–44 (Jesus in the temple seeing the widow’s offering) as well as Jesus’ repeated visits in the temple as reported in the Gospel of John.

⁵⁸ Cf. Paesler, *Tempelwort*, p. 262. The different scientific opinions in the history of research on this topic are highlighted by Ådna, *Tempel*, pp. 364–76.

ishment of the temple itself, but rather, the living community of believers now substitutes the man-made temple. The same concepts can be found in Paul's theology (1. Cor. 3.16–17; 1. Cor. 6.19–20 and 2 Cor. 6.16; as already stated above) but also in Rev. 21.22, where we find the notion that there will be no temple in the eschatological city of Jerusalem, 'for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it'. In Revelation the temple is not abolished, but replaced by the presence of God and Jesus and the whole town now becomes a temple – similar to the conception of Paul.⁵⁹ The fact that this idea was obviously widespread in early Christianity – there are not many convergences between Paul and Revelation – indicates that these concepts might have their roots in the historical Jesus himself. Rev. 21.22 might have understood Jesus' intention quite well: in the *basileia* now beginning there is no need for a temple-building, because the living presence of God is transforming the whole city of Jerusalem into a temple. Such a theology does not abrogate the idea of the temple but opens up the horizon for a new interpretation: in the *basileia* everybody is now living in the direct presence of God (cf. Joel 3.1–5).

And all people – including the Gentiles – are invited to experience God's presence. The prophecy of the Gentile pilgrimage in Isa. 2.2–3 seems to be important for Jesus' own theology (cf. also Rev. 21.24). He reflects such concepts in sayings like Q 13.29: 'And many shall come from Sunrise and Sunset and recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God...' It is quite possible that Jesus also expected an eschatological 'temple' as the new centre of God's *basileia*. But this 'temple' is now no longer reduced to a special building, but to the living presence of God. Thus, according to Rev. 21.22 there will be no temple in the eschatological city of Jerusalem, because the living presence of God will transform the whole city of Jerusalem into a temple. In Jn 4.20–23 as well we can read that God's presence transforms every place in a temple: the presence of God is not restricted to a special place because 'the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers'. And in Jn 2.19–21, the logion of destroying the temple and rebuilding it in three days is interpreted as referring to the 'temple of his body'. This is clearly an interpretation in the light of Jesus' resurrection, but already Rom. 3.25 talks about Jesus as ἱλαστήριον – the place of atonement is now replaced by the presence of Jesus himself. All these ideas may have their roots in Jesus' theology: The historical Jesus

⁵⁹ Cf. J. Roloff, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1987), p. 203: 'Johannes will herausstellen, daß die endzeitliche Gottesstadt selbst zum Tempel geworden ist. ... Die Verschmelzung von Tempel und Stadt ist von besonderer Tragweite im Rahmen des Kirchenverständnisses der Apk.' Roloff also points out that the two conceptions of Paul and Revelation seem to converge here.

saw his ministry for the *basileia* as a sign of God's forgiveness, which now at the end of times is no longer limited to the place of the temple, but connected to belief in God's reign. According to Jesus, in his own message and in his own person people were capable of encountering the forgiveness of sins in God's *basileia*. Jesus therefore legitimately claimed the right to forgive sins in his own name (cf. Mk 2.10). This finds a parallel in the ministry of John the Baptist:⁶⁰ although John was the son of a temple priest (if Lk. 1.5 is accurate), he announced forgiveness of sins *outside of*, and in *contrast to*, the temple – but not by presupposing an abrogation of the temple.⁶¹ The same is true for Jesus in so far as he replaces the sign of baptism with the coming *basileia*. God's forgiveness is no longer restricted to a place, but is open to the hearts of all persons believing in Jesus' message. For Jesus, the eschatological temple might also have been a temple of living men standing in the direct eschatological presence of God – the eschatological community in the centre of the approaching *basileia* in Jerusalem sanctified by this direct presence of God.

This could fit well to Jesus' concepts of purity and impurity. These concepts do not correspond with a ritualistic interpretation, but follow another theological assumption. The all pervading purity of the coming *basileia* is now cleaning away all impurity. Gerd Theissen has called this the concept of 'offensive purity':⁶² it is not impurity that is contagious, but the purity of the *basileia* is transforming the whole world, as a small piece of leaven leavens the whole meal in Q 13.21. In the same way, the purity laws are not abolished by Jesus, but reinterpreted in an eschatological sense: in the coming *basileia* the whole world will be purified by God's holy presence that transforms everything into holiness and purity. It is in this sense that Jesus himself acted when he did not avoid the presence of sinners, but believed in the contagious spirit of conversion and holiness triggered by the now coming *basileia*. Normally Israelites obtained purity, atonement and salvation in the temple. Now Jesus and his message of the coming *basileia* are the place, where all this can be obtained – not only for Israel but also for the Gentiles.

⁶⁰ Cf. Merklein, *Botschaft*, pp. 31–32.

⁶¹ Cf. I. Broer, 'Jesus und das Gesetz. Anmerkungen zur Geschichte des Problems und zur Frage der Sündenvergebung durch den historischen Jesus', in I. Broer (ed.), *Jesus und das jüdische Gesetz* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), pp. 61–104, esp. 99.

⁶² G. Theissen, 'Das Reinheitslogion Mk 7,15 und die Trennung von Juden und Christen', in K. Wengst and G. Sass (eds.), *Ja und nein. Christliche Theologie im Angesicht Israels* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1998), pp. 235–51, esp. 242 n. 19.

4. Conclusions: Trajectories

The main concern of early Judaism can be seen in the correct interpretation of God's will – and here a wide range of different positions was possible, especially in the interpretations of the Torah and the temple service. Sadducees, Pharisees, Qumran manuscripts, Philo, Josephus and apocryphal writings testify to this diversity.

The historical Jesus fits into this picture very well. He never thought of abrogating the Torah or of abolishing the temple. His intention was to put forward the right understanding of the Torah and of temple worship in accordance with the coming *basileia*. For the right understanding of the Torah and of the temple can only be derived from the eschatological proclamation: the approaching *basileia* is the all-dominating fact in Jesus' theology. The vicinity of the *basileia* places an urge in us to read God's will, the Torah, in a new light. This finds a parallel in the Qumran community. On the other hand, the concentration on the great commandment to love God and one's neighbor and on the ethical commandments of the Decalogue instead of ritual laws is paralleled by authors like Philo or by the letter of Aristeas.

Perhaps this is one point where the view of Gerd Theissen should be formulated more precisely: he states that Jesus neither interpreted nor criticized nor abolished the Torah, but rather that he simply 'transcended' the Torah.⁶³ This would be an accurate statement if the Torah had been a legislative corpus of well-formulated laws. But as we have seen, 'Torah' in early Judaism primarily meant the authentic will of God, a cosmological order of kinds, which would be revealed especially in eschatological times (and for Jesus in the now approaching *basileia*). Therefore, the *basileia* leads to the correct understanding of the 'Torah', i.e., God's fulfilment of his eternal plan with this world and the appropriate behavior of mankind according to God's eschatological intentions.

Jesus likewise did not intend to *abolish* temple worship but to *interpret* his understanding of the temple according to his eschatological view. In early Judaism, the idea was widespread that in eschatological times a new temple would replace the cultically insufficient old temple. In Qumran (4Q174 3.7) and in Philo's theology (*Somn.* 1.215) the temple in Jerusalem can be replaced by a temple of living men. As we have seen, the historical Jesus might have had a similar conception. In the so-called 'cleansing' of the temple Jesus does not 'abrogate' the temple. More likely the exact opposite is the case: Jesus – as the eschatological messenger of God – claims his right to the temple and puts its correct eschatological understanding at

⁶³ Cf. Theissen & Merz, *Jesus*, p. 325: 'Die Thora wird nicht interpretiert, nicht kritisiert, nicht aufgehoben, sie wird transzendiert.'

the centre of the now approaching *basileia*. It must be seen as a prophetic sign that Jesus deliberately seeks the decision for his own fate and the further fate of the *basileia* not in Galilee, but directly in the temple of Jerusalem. Now he himself and his message from the coming *basileia* replace (but not abolish!) the temple. Now he and the community of the *basileia* stand in the direct presence of God, as concepts like Rev. 21.22 later on have correctly interpreted the intention of Jesus. In Jesus himself and in his message of the *basileia* Jews and Gentiles now can experience atonement and salvation.

Jesus' theological concepts were entirely oriented towards the coming *basileia*. This is also the case with the first Christians, but in the later traditions of the New Testament the expectation of an immediately approaching *basileia* was no longer urgent. Accordingly, the aspect of spiritualizing temple service and the Torah begins to dominate the picture. Generally, the idea of such spiritualization can also be found in eschatologically-oriented groups of Palestinian Judaism – as we have seen in the Qumran texts and in Jesus himself. But even non-eschatological authors of the Diaspora, like the author of the Letter of Aristeas and Philo, saw the need for spiritualizing the ritual laws and temple worship. Hence, Jesus' interpretation of the Torah as an order for a new eschatological world found a parallel in the demands of liberal Hellenistic Jews who preferred a more allegoric and ethic interpretation of the Torah and the institution of the temple. This allegoric and ethic interpretation of the Torah – which is still valid in Christianity up to our present days – could therefore endure even when the eschatological hopes of an immediately approaching *basileia* failed. This trajectory therefore spans the entire stretch of time from early Judaism to Jesus, the 'Hellenists' and Paul up to our times.

We can thus finally conclude that Jesus, the 'Hellenists', and even Paul still remained Jews and were participants in an inner-Jewish discourse: the quest for the correct interpretation of God's will. They each assumed specific points of view, but there is no moment at which we can attest them to have broken with Judaism in a definite way. Even in their critique of special Jewish laws and of temple worship they remained Jews in their theology and reasoning. The beginning of 'Christianity' as a religion separate from Judaism is the result of later developments which could not be foreseen at the time of Jesus and Paul (both expected the end of history in their own lifetimes). But it is not legitimate to judge Jesus and Paul on the basis of the subsequent developments of history. The 'birth of Christianity' was a long process starting with the above mentioned trajectories. In the strict historical sense, there is no concrete person who 'founded' Christianity as a group separated from Judaism. Neither Jesus nor Paul did so. But they

were milestones in this trajectory which in the end – as a matter of historical fact – led to a distinct Christian religion.