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THE LORD IS THERE: CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE TEMPLE IN THE FIRST CENTURY

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the entirety of the Scriptures the temple and its service has been held in reverence as the worship of the one true God. From the very beginning to the last passages of Revelation the temple is a central theme. Yeshua (Jesus) taught in the temple and went to it for the principle feasts. After the resurrection, the disciples continued to meet there and even Paul showed reverence towards the temple by worshiping and sacrificing there. Also, the eschatological views of the New Testament were highly influenced by those of the Hebrew Scriptures and focused heavily on Jerusalem and the temple. So the Christians of the first century, both Jew and Gentile, held the temple in very high regard and viewed it as the legitimate dwelling place of God on earth. Even after the tearing of the veil, the resurrection and the destruction of the temple,[1] the earliest followers of the messiah still viewed it as a legitimate institution that would be present in the latter days.

Statement of the Problem

According to the Gospels, Yeshua worshiped at the temple during all the principle feasts (John 2:13, 7, 10:22 etc.). Indeed if he would have done otherwise, he would have been breaking the commandments found in the Torah and therefore would not have been considered a perfect sacrifice. Likewise, in the Old Testament Scriptures there is a high view of the temple throughout. The temple institution is a central theme of the history of Israel and from the standpoint of the prophets looms large in Israel's eschatological future. The prophet Daniel speaks of a coming abomination of desolation that will defile the temple (Daniel 8:11-13.). It has been argued that the abomination of desolation was accomplished by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. However, the messiah speaks of it as a future event (Matthew 24:15). It would still seem that this

[1] To see the treatment of these issues see below.

event was understood to be in the future in light of the rest of the New Testament and other early Christian writings because none of them claim that the destruction of the temple in AD 70 was that event, and that event did not fulfill all the proper criteria either. The futurist school of interpretation holds to the belief that there will be a future temple that will be defiled by the Antichrist. However, many that hold to a futurist interpretation claim at the same time that the temple system was abolished by the work of the messiah. However, how can God's temple be defiled if it is not approved as a temple that is holy? To make the temple desolate or an abomination it must first be set apart to God otherwise it cannot be defiled.

There is another eschatological problem with the view that the temple has been abolished. While many affirm the literal second coming of messiah and the millennial reign, these same groups assume (at least on the popular level) that the temple and sacrificial system have been abolished by the messiah. However, we see in the prophets, as well as the New Testament that the theme of the temple and especially a future temple are spoken of often. Therefore, there is an inconsistency. Many attempt to hold to a literal second coming but then attempt to spiritualize the passages that describe that time when it concerns the temple. A more consistent view of eschatology would affirm the future place of the temple.

The modern Christian church, whether liberal or conservative, has a common presupposition that has been passed down through the centuries; that the institution of the sacrificial system of the Jerusalem temple was abolished by Yeshua (Jesus) upon his crucifixion and resurrection. Yet, this viewpoint came about after the passing of the apostles. During the second great revolt (132-125 AD), Christians began to distance themselves from Judaism[2] resulting in Christianity becoming estranged from its roots and identity in Israel. The viewpoint

[2] I am using the term "Judaism" here in a broad sense to encompass all sects of the Israelite faiths including Christianity from the first to second centuries.

of the temple from the New Testament is one of respect as it is considered the dwelling place of Yahweh. Yeshua called it His Father's house (Matt. 21:13) and the disciples continued to meet there well after the resurrection. The apostle Paul, whose letters are often used to deny the carryover of many things from the Old Testament consistently affirms the temple. In many places he appeals to temple imagery and the institutions found in the Old Testament. Indeed it would be strange to think that Paul would be quoting and teaching from books (the only Bible the disciples had was the Old Testament) that he summarily dismissed as being a part of an abolished religion. The first century sources share the point of view that the temple is a part of God's plan from the past and into the future. However, a commonly held belief of many Christians is that the temple was abolished by the crucifixion and that the religion of Yeshua is distinct from that of Israel and the Old Testament. This thesis will attempt to demonstrate the veneration of the temple in the Christian writings, that the temple was a central feature of theology and the daily lives of the writers of the New Testament and other writings such as the Didache, First Clement, and Josephus' treatment of Christians and that it is consistent with the Old Testament view of the temple.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this thesis will be to illuminate the position of the first century church as depicted in the New Testament concerning the temple. It will also survey the impact of the theological implications of the rejection of the temple by later Christians and modern Christians. The goal will be to demonstrate that the temple institutions, including the sacrificial system was not abolished by the messiah and that the New Testament is not opposed to the Old Testament. Using historical research and exegesis, I intend to show that the view of the temple as obsolete is indefensible.

Statement of the Importance of the Problem

The importance of the problem is paramount to our understanding of the Scriptures. To deny the institution of the temple is to deny a central point of Yahweh's designs for humanity. Rejecting it as obsolete has given rise to such misinformed theologies as replacement theology and a denial that the Old Testament is directly relevant for believers in the messiah or even that the messiah is opposed to the Old Testament law which makes the Scriptures seem contradictory to each other or at least inconsistent. One's view of the temple informs the whole concept of the faith from the sacrificial system, the Torah, the centrality of Israel and Jerusalem is all contingent on the temple as part sacred history and eschatology. The view that the temple was rejected tends to lose sight of the importance of these other aspects that are very important to the faith and the fulfillment of prophecy and are central themes throughout sacred literature. To deny these things would be denying foundational aspects of the faith, found in the Torah and the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. Furthermore, to hold a consistent view of eschatology from both testaments one must affirm that the temple is a central feature of the literature and features heavily in the Old and New Testament treatment of the End of Days. Those who do not must "spiritualize" or otherwise reinterpret Scripture to reconcile inconsistencies within their systems. The importance of a correct understanding of the role of the temple in the New Testament and in eschatology is paramount. Without it we would be interpreting differently a large portion of what Scripture teaches concerning prophecy and the temple than what appears to be the case of the first century believers.

Statement of Position on the Problem

A central problem in modern theology is the lack of knowledge concerning the temple and its once and future central roles in the lives of believers. The temple was a central feature of the New Testament saints and the writers of the New Testament believed it would be a part of the future kingdom. Yeshua and the disciples including Paul affirmed the validity of the temple Many prophecies from both the Old and New Testaments affirm the centrality of the temple and of Jerusalem in Yahweh's plans. It is therefore the position of this thesis that the temple was not made obsolete by the new covenant and ministry of the messiah and that modern Christians, like the disciples and early Christians should inform their lifestyles, calendar of worship, and concept of prophecy by the temple.

Limitations

This thesis will be limited to the first century attitudes of Christians towards the temple and this study will be informed by Scripture, history and early Christian literature and other relevant works from the period dealing with this subject. There will also be a brief survey of modern positions on the temple and how a high[3] view of the temple is more consistent with the first century view as espoused in the New Testament and other literature.

[3] What is meant by high view is that the writers of the New Testament viewed the temple as an integral part of their faith. They worshiped there and saw it as God's dwelling place on earth, regardless of what abuses took place there. This also means that the apostles and the messiah saw the sacrificial system, liturgy and structure of the temple as legitimate parts of their faith and in no way opposed to the ministry of the messiah.

METHOD

Research Methods

The method used in this thesis will be research and analysis of the literature available such as, the New Testament, Apocryphal, and Pseudepigraphal literature, Josephus and other first century writings.

Tests or Questionnaires

There will be no tests or questionnaires used in this thesis.

Data Analysis

The data in this thesis will be gathered from books, articles, theses, dissertations, commentaries, and electronic resources. The data will be organized into three basic sections: (1) the problem, (2) a synthesis of the material in a coherent manner, and (3) the interpretation and solution of the problem.

PROPOSED OUTLINE FOR THESIS

Proposal of Chapter Divisions

Chapter one will be the statement of the problem, and the position being taken. It will contain the main thesis and the importance of the problem. Chapter two will be the main body of the paper. It will contain an exegetical look at the New Testament teaching concerning the temple. The treatment of the temple will be highlighted in the different types of literature found in the New Testament. Chapter three will survey the treatment of the temple in other first century Christian writings. It will be argued that most of these had a high view of the temple even after

its destruction. The Christian flight to Pella will also be discussed and its impact and meaning for early Christianity concerning the temple. Chapter four will be the summary and conclusion and will address the impact of a high view of the temple on modern Christianity.

Proposed Summary of Each Chapter

Chapter Two

Chapter two will consist of an exegesis of New Testament texts to explore the views of the temple contained therein. It will be argued that the New Testament writings hold the temple in reverence and that it had not been made obsolete through their faith in messiah or his ministry. The chapter will focus heavily on the book of Acts since it contains the attitudes of the Apostles and first Christians after the resurrection. The Gospels, as well as the epistles, will be considered for their views on the temple and it will be demonstrated that all writings concerning the temple in the New Testament consistently support a high view of the institution and do not reject it.

Chapter Three

Chapter three will focus on first century Christian writings that are not found in the New Testament. An overview of the nature of the writings and their content concerning the temple will be the main thrust of the chapter. It will be argued that most if not all of these writings held the temple in high regard and saw it as a part of the faith in the messiah. The flight to Pella by Christians during the Great Revolt of 66-70 will be discussed in light of its impact on the Christians and their views of the temple.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research Sources

The research for this thesis will be conducted through reading, some translation, and exegesis. The research will concentrate on the theological, eschatological and historical research housed at Liberty University as well as internet research through the university library tools.

Working Bibliography

The bibliography can be found at the end of this proposal.

RESULTS

This thesis will attempt to accomplish three things, it will show the inconsistency of the view of the temple's obsolescence and demonstrate the centrality of the temple to Scripture. It will demonstrate the high view of the temple and related themes in the New Testament and early Christianity. It will show that the early Christians, both Jew and Gentile saw themselves as Israelites and that they did not believe that they were a part of a new religion but were actually living in the fulfillment of the faith of their ancestors. Lastly, this thesis will demonstrate that a high view of the temple is consistent within the teaching of the New Testament. This last point will show the richness of our faith that is typically missed by rejecting the Old Testament as vaguely important but practically irrelevant.

The Importance of the Temple in the Old Testament

From the first pages of the Old Testament the theme of a sanctuary is present and runs through the literature of the Old Testament from beginning to end. The concept of a sanctuary is a place of meeting between the divine and mankind. The pre-temple sanctuaries hold to the same general pattern as the temple itself which was a later manifestation of the same concept of a holy

place set apart for the divine to dwell and man to approach Him, an axis between heaven and earth. The Garden of Eden is the first so called sanctuary. It is where man was placed to commune with God. Eden fits the description of the mountaintop shrine common to the Near East. The rivers that flow from it indicate that it was elevated higher that the surrounding area.[4] Furthermore, we learn that the garden was situated facing towards the east for that was the way Adam and Eve were expelled and that cherubim were placed there to keep them from returning. The later tabernacle and temple had this same feature of cherubim guarding the sanctuary on the veil as well as in the holy of holies. Adam and Eve then were expelled from the presence of God, which they had previously dwelt in, inside the garden. The later tabernacle and temple featured a system of regulations so that certain priests could approach God. However, there was still a barrier between God and man even in the holy of holies, namely, the smoke from the incense (Lev. 16:12-13). Remarkably, in an unholy world, the priests could enter the holy sanctuary, a place set apart for God's dwelling place.

The tabernacle in the wilderness is the first specific regulation of worship that God commands in Scripture. However, earlier accounts in Genesis seem to show evidence that sacrificial offerings were commonly understood and utilized for worship purposes. Offerings reach back to the narrative of Cain and Abel, as well as Noah upon leaving the ark. Also, the concept of priesthood is a theme in Genesis, from Adam in the garden to Abraham and Melchizedek. The revealed regulations then of the tabernacle in the wilderness was not an alien concept to the Israelites, but one of familiarity from their history.

[4] Lifsa Schachter. "THE GARDEN OF EDEN AS GOD'S FIRST SANCTUARY." Jewish Bible Quarterly. Apr-Jun2013, Vol. 41 Issue 2, p73-77. 74. cf. Genesis 2:10-14. During the second temple period the Garden of Eden likened unto a temple. *Jubilees* states there are three holy places, Eden, Sinai, and Zion (8:19) cf. Lawrence H Schiffman. "The Importance of the Temple for Ancient Jews." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations* .Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. 79.

The purpose of the tabernacle and its system of sacrifices and worship was to maintain the relationship between the holy God and a sinful people. The purpose of the sacrificial system of the tabernacle and later temple was not to provide salvation for the Israelites. There are several types of sacrifices mentioned in the book of Leviticus but there is no sacrifice for willful intentional sin. In fact, there is hardly if any mention of the afterlife or resurrection in the Torah, and certainly not a concern for salvation in regards to performing sacrifices. The concept of grace is an Old Testament concept. It is indeed by God's mercy that Adam and Eve were spared as well as Noah and the other patriarchs. The Epistle to the Hebrews mentions these figures of old as faithful. Not that they had to do certain things to merit salvation.

The tripartite design of the temple was also a feature of temples in the ancient Near East. Many argue that the Israelites were simply copying their neighbors in designing the temple and indeed Solomon hired Phoenicians as architects. However, it could also be argued that both the tabernacle and the pagan temples followed the same design from the previous pattern of the Garden of Eden.[5] The garden itself seems to be designed in the pattern of heaven. The Scriptures are replete with references to a heavenly sanctuary that corresponds to the terrestrial. During the Exodus, Moses and the leaders of Israel saw Yahweh in a motif like the temple, they "saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself" (Ex. 24:10) There are many other descriptions of heaven that correspond to the earthly sanctuary as well, such as Isaiah 6:1-7, Ezek. 10:1, Revelation 7:15, 14:17, 15:5, and 16:17. There are also instances in the intertestamental literature alluding to a heavenly temple that the New Testament writers were most likely aware of, Wisdom 9:8, 2 Baruch 4:2, the Sibylline

[5] This is simply speculation, but it is interesting that a similar pattern was utilized by Israel's neighbors. Critical scholarship would most likely attribute this feature as an influence on Israel by its neighbors and even if approved by God, the pattern could still correspond to something that would be familiar and not wholly alien.

Oracles et al. It is evident that there was a veneration of the temple throughout the scriptural period and it continues into the New Testament.

The temple was a major theme of the latter prophets. Throughout the writings of the prophets there is a sustained focus on Jerusalem and the proper worship of Yahweh. Isaiah depicts heaven and the throne room of Yahweh as the temple complete with its furnishings (Isaiah 6:1-8). The last chapters of the book speak of a time to come when all when come to the temple to worship. Indeed Isaiah is the prophet that Yeshua quotes as he cleanses the temple calling it a house of prayer for all people (Isaiah 56:7).

The book of Daniel which was written during the exilic period after the destruction of the temple focuses heavily on that subject. The prophecies found in Daniel were highly influential on the New Testament and are often repeated and interpreted therein.[6] Daniel prophesied concerning the desolation of the temple committed by Antiochus IV Epiphanes when he ordered a pig to be slaughtered on the altar and a statue of Zeus to be erected (Daniel 9:27).[7] The concept of desecration of the sanctuary is a recurring theme. It is in Daniel, Maccabees and is also repeated in the New Testament. The temple was defiled and destroyed in the first century, but it seems that there will be a third temple built which will also be defiled in the culmination of history. So it is with the view of the centrality and veneration of the temple throughout Old Testament and Intertestamental Periond that we turn to see the views found in the New Testament.

[6] Cf. Matthew 24:15, II Thessalonians 2:3-4.
[7] Cf. I Maccabees 1:54.

CHAPTER II

The Synoptic Gospels

The synoptic Gospels share similar material about the life of Yeshua. Throughout his ministry Yeshua went to the temple for the major festivals as was commanded in the Torah (Leviticus 23). He was also accused of threatening to destroy the temple by his opponents. However, a close reading of the texts of the synoptic Gospels shows that Yeshua in fact venerated the temple as his Father's house. Many others[8] in the first century had rejected the temple as defiled and corrupt because of its construction by Herod the Great, or on account of the corrupt and bought priesthood as examples. Yeshua himself however corrected his opponents but showed respect for the office if not the office holder. He also prophesied the temple's destruction, not because he was rejecting its system, but because of the corruption that had been brought to it.[9] He does not claim this out right but it can be inferred from his statements and the later prophecies of Yeshua's return and a temple being set up. Furthermore, the Gospels were written years after the events recorded in them. There is debate as to how late, but they are all thought to have been written in the second half of the first century, perhaps even after the destruction of the temple in AD 70[10] and Acts and the epistles were probably written before the Gospels. So the writers of these documents had been a part of this blossoming faith for years before recording these events. Even so, the documents show a high view of the temple. Many have argued that Yeshua's crucifixion abolished the temple system and the sacrifices. However, these documents, which may even be some of the latest documents of the New Testament, still

[8] See the Dead Sea Scrolls: *Damascus Document*, and *Temple Scroll*. It appears that the Qumran community rejected the temple as corrupt, but still waited on a new pure temple to be built.

[9] The priesthood of the temple was not the legitimate Zadokite priesthood but was bought by the influential members of society such as the Sadducees who often collaborated with Rome. There were also Roman images in the temple as well. Cf. Randall Price. *The Temple in Bible Prophecy.* Eugene OR: Harvest House, 2005. 144-145.

[10] Lack of mention of the temple's destruction in the Gospels could mean that they were written before AD 70.

show a high view of the temple, especially Luke 14:52-53 and evidence no sustained polemic against the temple, sacrifices, or the Old Testament practices portrayed by the characters peopling the narratives.

In the book of Matthew one of the first mentions of the temple is in Capernaum when the tax collectors for the temple came to collect the tax. This tax was not Roman but specifically for the temple. In 17:24-27, Yeshua explains to Peter that the son is exempt from such a tax because taxes are collected from others, not family. However, so as not to offend, he paid the tax. This short narrative records a miracle of Peter getting the money from a fish he caught, but it says much more than that. Yeshua could have used this opportunity to teach against the temple system, or to even argue because of his parentage that he was exempt and refuse to pay, but what we see is that he paid the tax and was compliant with the system. The writer, perhaps decades after the fact, chose to include this particular episode in his Gospel. Assuming this is a reliable account of the messiah's life it shows his opinion towards the temple, but it also shows the prevailing opinion among his followers in the first century. The Gospel was venerated as authoritative very early, so the views it expressed were orthodox for the nascent community.

The writer of Matthew also records Yeshua's entry into Jerusalem prior to his crucifixion and his teaching during that week before the event. In that period of time, Yeshua is in the temple teaching and mentions the temple in his teachings. Chapter twenty four records his sayings concerning the temple and its destruction. After a condemnation of that generation in the previous chapter, Yeshua states that the temple will be demolished. When his disciples ask him when this will occur, He gives a detailed account of the end times. In this account he states that the abomination of desolation "spoken of by Daniel the prophet" will be erected in the holy place, and instructs his disciples to then flee to the mountains (Matthew 24:15-16, cf. Daniel

9:27). Yeshua speaks of this abomination of desolation as a future event after the time of his ministry. He has just claimed that the temple would be destroyed but does not condemn it and then speaks of this abomination. What is key here is that he did not teach his followers that He or God was rejecting the temple. In fact, for the temple to be defiled it must first be holy. If the temple mount was not holy, that is, set apart for God, then it would just be common land. However, from the point of view of the Gospel, the temple was still going to be holy in this future event. Therefore, the disciples did not think that the temple had been abolished as a God-approved structure and system. It must be remembered that the Gospel accounts were written sometime after the events recorded in them. This being the case, the later teachings of Yeshua and of the disciples most of whom were presumably still living, could have perhaps colored such accounts or had further explanations appended. But what we see in the Gospels is a high view of the temple and even though there is prophecy of its destruction, there is not a condemnation of its practices.

One such alleged condemnation is the torn veil of the temple at the moment of Yeshua's death. By the tearing of the veil, some believe that this is a sign that the temple was rejected and it showed the emptiness of the building. However, that seems to go against all previous accounts in the Gospels of Yeshua's treatment of the temple. If his death was the point of abolishment, and his death is something that He prophesied, why did he not tell his disciples this, and why did they not record it in no uncertain terms? A better explanation is needed and one is available.

Randall Price argues that the rending of the veil fits into the apocalyptic theme of destruction and restoration found in the prophets of the Old Testament and the apocalyptic literature. The veil could possibly mean an unhindered approach to God because of the work of messiah. However, the early Christians,

> Apparently understood this as figurative usage, for they continued to regard the restrictions of holiness in the Temple precincts, and even though Paul was accused of attempting to violate the *Soreg* by taking an uncircumcised Gentile into the court of the Jews, the charge was unfounded…[11]

Therefore, the rending of the veil can be seen as pointing to a judgment on the leadership of the temple and of the cultic abuse therein but not as a complete rejection of the system. Indeed, Yeshua's actions and the prophecies of both Old and New Testament point to a future restored temple that will not suffer from such abuse. Although the temple veil was torn and the temple eventually destroyed, there is promise of a future restoration that is shared by both Old and New Testament believers. In fact, John Townsend states, "There is no evidence in the New Testament that any Christian rejected the temple at Jerusalem as long as that temple was still standing."[12] Concerning the tearing of the veil Townsend states,

> The account of the rending of the veil need not symbolize that the temple had fulfilled its usefulness. Since the temple veil cut off from the eyes of men the room in which dwelt the presence of God, the rending of this veil may well symbolize the removal of the barrier which stood between men and God.[13]

Although this barrier is removed at least symbolically, the apostles still viewed the temple system as remaining intact as Price stated above. The view of the destruction of the temple in first century Judaism was that it was only temporary and that is why it was not a severe blow to the faith. The Temple would be rebuilt in a future age just as it had been after the Babylonian exile. However, they did need to find an explanation for why it was destroyed.

The Christians had an idea that it was destroyed because of the rejection of the messiah and was prophesied by Yeshua and the Old Testament prophets. However, this predicted

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[11] J. Randall Price. *The Desecration & Restoration of the Temple in the Old Testament Jewish Apocalyptic Literature & the New Testament.* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas Austin, 1993.)

[12] John T. Townsend. *The Jerusalem Temple in New Testament Thought.* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1958.) 1.

[13] Ibid. 4.

destruction was not a rejection in principle of the temple cult but a punishment for the people who abused it. The New Testament is replete with prophecies of restoration for national Israel just as the Old Testament and that includes the restoration of the Jerusalem temple.[14]

Cleansing of the Temple

The other synoptic Gospels are very similar in their treatment of Yeshua's view of the temple. A feature all the Gospels share is the cleansing of the temple (Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 11:15-17, Luke 19:45-46, John 2:12-17). It is recorded at the triumphal entry in the synoptic Gospels and at the beginning of Yeshua's ministry in John's Gospel as well. However, these do not have to be conflicting. It is perhaps the case that Yeshua overturned the tables whenever he went to the temple because they were not in their designated place which is outside the temple proper. Multiple incidents of this nature, although unprovable, would be consistent with Yeshua's ministry and demonstrate that the synoptic Gospels and John are not in conflict concerning narrative and timing.

G. K. Beale argues for a symbolic interpretation of the Gospel narratives concerning the temple. He argues that the cleansing of the temple is definitive proof of the rejection of the temple by the messiah and God. He argues that the cursing of the fig tree and the narrative in Mark signify that Yeshua is the new creation and this cleansing of the temple is his rejection of the old creation to usher in the new.[15] Yeshua's resurrection was the beginning of this new creation. The new creation was however modeled on the old. First came the tabernacle, then temples and finally the body of messiah as the new creation relegating to the past the need for a

[14] Ibid. 12-14. The Sibylline Oracle 4:24-33 is a Jewish explanation of the destruction of the temple that is similar to the one espoused above. Cf. p. 16 of Townsend's dissertation.

[15] G. K. Beale *The Temple and the Church's Mission* Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press. 2004. 182.

structure.[16] However, this seems to be overstepping what the text of the Gospels is saying. Again, Beale states,

> Jesus not only begins to take over the role of the old temple but he forecasts its imminent doom. He prophesies that God will destroy the temple, not only because it was becoming obsolete but because of its flawed use and Israel's rejection of Jesus. Immediately after the cleansing of the temple, an acted-out parable provides further indication of Jesus' symbolic rejection of the temple.[17]

It is true that Yeshua foretold the destruction of the temple and it can be argued that it was punishment for the messiah's rejection and the conduct of the temple officials and people. However, even if this is the case, Yeshua himself never condemned the institution of the temple. In fact, when he cleansed lepers he told them to show themselves to the priests as per the Torah commands (Luke 17:14. Cf. Leviticus 14). Beale states that the cleansing of the temple and the parable of the withered fig tree are connected. The withered tree is an acted out parable with the cleansing of the temple that demonstrates Yeshua's rejection of the temple. However, that creates serious problems. It is very unlikely that Yeshua would cleanse a structure that he is rejecting. Furthermore, if he were rejecting it, why would he, in every recorded account, call it his father's house? It does not stand to reason that Yeshua would have such an affinity for a place and call it his father's house if it were in fact something he completely rejected. Otherwise he would have no problem with the merchants in the temple and probably would have used them to illustrate the problem of a physical structure, but we see no such thing in the Gospels. Yeshua showed concern for its ritual purity, such as the cleansing of the temple in the Gospel accounts.

> His 'reaction' was a calculated demonstration in the prophetic style to charge the Jerusalem leadership and priesthood with altering the divine ideal for the Temple. Instead of having become a house of prayer, in which Israel, as a light to the nations, had brought

[16] Beale, 170.

[17] Beale, 182. Beale's hermeneutic of Scripture is that the temple was replaced by Christ. Beale also argues that the book of Revelation was in the apocalyptic tradition of second temple Judaism and that John believed the end of days would happen in his generation. Cf. G. K. Beale. *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999.

> about Gentile conversion to the One true God and directed them in cultic obedience, it had become a ritual haven for cultic abuse and political and sectarian rivalry.[18]

Indeed in the Gospel of John, when the temple is cleansed of the money changers it is linked to Psalm 69:9 stating "zeal for your house will consume me." So it is Yeshua's Father's house, that is, Yahweh's house or dwelling place on earth, the zeal of the messiah for the temple consumes him and Yeshua is defending it against the corrupt practices of the people. Furthermore, Yeshua quotes the prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah concerning the temple and calls it a house of prayer for all nations.[19] It is doubtful he would use such language in this way if his goal was rejection. As James Charlesworth states, "Jesus' action might well have been intended to support the holiness of the Sanctuary against those who were polluting it and making God's House a house of trade."[20] Indeed one can only infer that rejection was Yeshua's message with scant evidence from the text and much evidence to the contrary that is not easily explained away. With this data in mind it makes the thesis of temple rejection by the messiah very difficult to hold.

The New Testament writers understood that the Jerusalem temple was not obsolete. The last verse of the Hebrew Bible is 2 Chron. 36:23 which is a command to rebuild the temple. This pairs nicely with how this subject is treated in Matthew in that Christ is the ultimate temple. However, it does not seem to be the case that the Gospel is arguing for a replacement of the temple. There are several references in both Old and New Testaments concerning a literal, physical temple and Messiah's statements indicate such a perspective in the Gospels. Yeshua could be considered the ultimate culmination of the temple as portrayed in Revelation 21:22, he will not function in this respect until the new heavens and earth. It should be noted that the

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[18] J. Randall Price. *The Desecration & Restoration of the Temple in the Old Testament Jewish Apocalyptic Literature & the New Testament.* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas Austin, 1993.) 498.

[19] See Jeremiah 7:11, Isaiah 56:7, cf. Randall Price. *The Temple in Bible Prophecy.* Eugene OR: Harvest House, 2005. 265-266.

[20] . James H Charlesworth. "Jesus and the Temple." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. 145-181. 155.

heavenly temple is coexistent with the earthly and exists now. So Yeshua is a priest in heaven but not on earth until the culmination of time (Hebrews 9:24-28). The book of Hebrews states that he is the high priest of a better temple, not one made with hands. This is the heavenly temple, which he entered upon his death into the holy of holies with his own blood. Also, the book of Revelation uses temple imagery to describe heaven and Yeshua is separate from this heavenly structure, so it seems that Beale's thesis is lacking in respect to a rejected temple since temple imagery is displayed in so many important ways in the New Testament.

Upon Yeshua's arrest, false witnesses were produced to convict him of blasphemy. Those false witnesses in Matthew and Mark accused him of claiming he could destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. This is obviously a reference to his resurrection as the Gospel writers identify in other places, but the accounts say that these false witnesses as Yeshua's trial did not even agree with each other they accused him of rejecting the temple (Matthew 26:61, Mark 14:58-59. Cf. John 2:19). What this tells us is that Yeshua was falsely accused. Therefore, he had not spoken negatively about the temple. He had prophesied its destruction, but that was not new and it was already recorded in the prophecies of Daniel to which Yeshua refers in his own foretelling of the destruction (Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11).

We even see in other literature that was popular at the time that there were calls for the destruction of the temple because of its defilement by various things.[21] These traditions, such as the *Temple Scroll*, found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, kept a high view of the temple and only wanted the temple to be destroyed, or thought it necessary for it to be destroyed, so that a new and better temple could be built in its place.[22] The Qumran community, which contained priests, had

[21] See 11QT The Temple Scroll.

[22] Randall Price. *The Temple in Bible Prophecy*. Eugene OR: Harvest House, 2005. 212. Cf. "The Temple Scroll." *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. Translated by Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, and Edward Cook. San Francisco: Harper, 2005. 593.

separated itself from what they considered a defiled temple that needed to be destroyed so a new one cold be built. So the idea that the temple would be destroyed was not something exclusive to the teachings of Yeshua, but held currency in other sects as well. The temple authorities, those present at his mock trial, had to use false witnesses to condemn Yeshua. They could not convict him on his own true statements, and did not even hold to the more extreme of the known teachings of other various sects that were current in the first century. So we see that he was in keeping with accepted prophetic tradition in what he said, as well as keeping a high view attested in his cleansing of the temple. Yeshua then is represented in all Gospel accounts in his dealings with the temple as having respect for it even when he foretold its coming destruction. This tells us two things. First, since the Gospel accounts are true, Yeshua had respect for the temple throughout his lifetime. Second, the Gospel writers, recording these events years after they happen, and the Gospels were perhaps the last of the New Testament to be written. The writers felt it necessary to demonstrate that Yeshua had a high view of the temple by highlighting his treatment of it in all the accounts.

The writers of the synoptic Gospels were quick to show that Yeshua did not call for the abolition of the central feature of his ancestral religion. The Gospels are not simply historical accounts, but also theological treatises attempting to convey theological points about the messiah. The fourth Gospel records much more of Yeshua's actions whilst in Jerusalem and at the temple. So it is there that we now turn.

Johannine Literature

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John, thought by some[23] to be anti-Semitic in nature is actually the complete opposite and shows that the messiah made the annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem and did not teach against the Torah or the temple. In fact, the clearing of the temple is the first act we see Yeshua perform in Jerusalem in (John 2).[24] However, after he clears the temple he states, "destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days" (John 2:19). This is similar to his statements found in the other Gospels stating that one greater than the temple was here (Matthew 12:6). He compared himself to and put himself higher than the temple, but this does not mean that the temple was a negative thing in his conception. In his earlier explanations concerning swearing and whether it counts if one swears on the gold of the temple or the altar or the sacrifice on the altar, he states that God is greater than these things that and they are representative of God. Yeshua himself proclaims himself to be God and so he would in fact be greater than the temple that was built to house his presence. Therefore the concept of messiah being greater than the temple is not antithetical to the affirmation of the temple at all but in complete harmony with it.

Chapter seven records Yeshua going to the Feast of Tabernacles or *Sukkot*, which was one of three required pilgrimage feasts to the temple for all male Israelites (Exodus 23:14-17). At the very least his attendance shows that Yeshua was obedient to the commands in the Torah. Indeed if he would not have been obedient he would have undermined the Gospel's claims that he was an unblemished sacrifice because he would not have been keeping the commandments of

[23] B. Dean Peterson. *A concise History of Christianity*. Belmont CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007. 46.

[24] Early twentieth century scholars such as Walter Baur and John Dominic Crossan emphasized Yeshua's Galilean ministry and argued that he only went to Jerusalem once. However, the Gospels of John and Luke show otherwise. James H Charlesworth. "Jesus and the Temple." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. 145-181. 151. Also, the third century text *Acts of Thomas* composed in the east which was more influence by synagogal worship claims that Yeshua performed sacrifices. Whether he did or not is not provable from this text, but it shows that early Christians believed that he did. . James H Charlesworth. "Jesus and the Temple." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. 181-212. 188.

God. Furthermore, John records Yeshua going to the temple for a minor feast as well that is not even commanded in Torah. Chapter ten depicts Yeshua at the temple during Hanukkah. Hanukkah is the celebration of the rededication of the temple after its defilement by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Yeshua had a specific mission and tailored message to speak at this time of Hanukkah, but we can look also to the fact that he traveled from Galilee, in winter, to a feast specifically celebrating the temple and the Gospel writer felt it necessary to include this in his account. This demonstrates that the attitude of the later first century Christians and Yeshua towards the temple was a positive one.

Jack Sanders highlights the Jewishness of the Gospel of John.

> We learn from the Gospel of John and from early rabbinic literature that Christians participated in synagogue worship with other Jews until they were forced out for their (from the mainstream perspective) absurd claims about Christ, and that the two groups then worshipped separately, living together with or in proximity to one another but in considerable tension. Such a situation allowed contact, doubtless cordial at times but intensely disapproved by the rabbinic leadership. [25]

From the beginning of the messianic movement it identified with the religion of Israel and the followers of the messiah saw themselves as holding to the religion of their fathers. Earlier the author (Sanders) stated that the believers still considered themselves good Jews,[26] they did not see their new found faith in the Messiah as the advent of a new religion. Sanders' research reveals that there were Christians in Jerusalem from the first century until the Bar Kochba rebellion and these Christians considered themselves "true and proper Jews."[27] Sanders goes on to say, "Before the first revolt at least some of these Jewish Christians were a regular presence at the temple, and there they came into at least sporadic conflict with the temple authorities."[28]

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[25] Jack T Sanders. *Schismatics, Sectarians, Dissidents, Deviants.* Valley Forge PA: Trinity Press, 1993. 79.
[26] Sanders, 70.
[27] Sanders, 80-81.
[28] Ibid. 80.

The author goes onto claim[29] that perhaps the reason for hostility was that some, like Paul were admitting Gentiles into the faith without making them proselytes to Judaism. This is definitely a possibility. As we read in Acts twenty one, many had been misinformed that Paul was teaching against the Torah and not requiring Gentiles to follow it at all. So many could have been misinformed about Paul and we also see that Stephen was stoned upon false charges as well. So hostility between the two groups is hardly surprising.

Epistles of John

The rest of the Johanine literature tells a similar story to the Gospel. The epistles do not contain much information concerning the temple, however, First John does use temple imagery in his epistle. The author claims that messiah is the atoning sacrifice for our sins (I John 4:10), hinting at the sacrificial system of the temple and how it foreshadowed the messiah. Also, the author tells his audience that sin is transgression of the Law (I John 3:4). Since the Law contains the stipulations for the tabernacle and sacrificial system, it would seem that John would, by this statement, uphold those things.

Revelation

The book of Revelation, compared with the other Johanine literature in which the temple is but a small feature, is inundated with references to the temple, both earthly and heavenly. The apostolic author of this work had a high view of the temple and used it as a main theme in his book concerning the revelation of the messiah. The book has often been dated to 95 AD and is thought to be an encouragement to the Christians being persecuted by Rome. This date would place the work at the end of the first century, two and a half decades after the destruction of the

[29] Ibid. 81.

temple in 70 AD. If Revelation was written at this late of a date, then the Author of the book did not see the destruction of the temple as the complete rejection of the temple system. In fact the temple imagery is all throughout the book. The temple itself is mentioned sixteen times in the book and is the major binding of the whole. The temple in heaven, as well as earth, is the dwelling place of God. So it should not be surprising that the temple is a major theme of Yeshua's second coming.

Also, the temple furniture is mentioned throughout the work.[30] In addition to the use of the temple furniture, John also depicts Yeshua as dressed in a white linen robe, which is, the Ben-Daniels argue, what the priest wore on the Day of Atonement and that Yeshua is being portrayed as such.[31] The Ben-Daniels argue[32] for an early date for the composition of Revelation, closer to the time of its destruction.[33] If it was early as the Ben-Daniel's state then we see temple veneration in the face of imminent destruction of the temple. However, if one is to accept the late date of 95 AD then it can be acknowledged that Christians still understood the centrality of the temple twenty five years after its destruction and did not view this destruction of the temple as the rejection of the system. This would mean that throughout the first century that the Christian attitude toward the temple would have been favorable. This might not have included the leadership of the temple, and the acknowledgement of the destruction as God's punishment, but it did not mean that the Christians did not have a rich theological tradition revolving around the temple.

It can be inferred in the text of Revelation that there will be a temple during the millennial reign of the messiah and the survivors of that time will be priests of God (Revelation

[30] 2:1 menorah, 4:6 the sea and cherubim, 8:3 the altar of incense.
[31] John and Gloria Ben-Daniel. *The Apocalypse in the Light of the Temple: a New Approach to the Book of Revelation.* Jerusalem: Beit Yochanan, 2003. 27.
[32] The Ben-Daniel's follow A. T. Robinson's minority view.
[33] Ben-Daniel, 4.

20:6). John was likely drawing on previous depictions of a temple at the culmination of history found in the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures such as Ezekiel and Zechariah. These prophets speak of a future temple that has not yet been seen in history. John, who was certainly influenced by the prophets understood them to mean that this future temple was the one present during Christ's reign as king.

Some have taken the temple imagery found in Revelation to be of a spiritual nature, and believe that John never meant for the temple depicted in the book to be taken literally.[34] Similar to Paul's use of the temple being the body and the church, so is John's temple according to this spiritualized view. The actual temple is Yeshua or our bodies. However, the problem with this point of view is that John is careful not only to mention that there is a temple in heaven, and during the millennial reign, but also that after the millennial reign and New Jerusalem comes to earth, that there will be no more temple (Revelation 21:22). Also the temple will be attacked by the nations in Revelation 11:2. Therefore there must be a literal temple. A literal temple is in keeping with Yeshua's teaching from the Sermon on the Mount. In verses 17-19, Yeshua says that the Torah will not pass until heaven and earth pass. Therefore, the temple in John's vision would have to exist until the new heavens and earth. So a temple will exist until the new heavens and earth and then God and New Jerusalem will fill that role. Even still, John states, "I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (Revelation 21:22). So there is still a temple, and looking back at the images of the heavenly throne room from the prophets and Revelation itself, it can be seen that God's throne room is strikingly similar to the temple and that New Jerusalem is a cube, like an enlarged holy of holies

[34] To see a case made for this position see John and Gloria Ben-Daniel. *The Apocalypse in the Light of the Temple: a New Approach to the Book of Revelation.* Jerusalem: Beit Yochanan, 2003.

to house God's presence.[35] The New Jerusalem's cube shape could possibly represent the holy of holies.[36] That is why there is no temple there and this view according to Townsend can reconcile the apparent contradiction of a heavenly temple and the absence of one in the New Jerusalem.[37] Also, with John's layman conception of geography he might have thought the large measurement of the city meant that it would cover the whole earth and then the whole earth would be the holy of holies.[38] So there is still some sort of function that serves as a temple even in the new heavens and earth, therefore it is quite certain that John held the need for a temple in high regard and thus showing that a theological tradition of the temple was a major part of Christianity in the first century.

The Book of Acts

Like the Gospels, the book of Acts records the first years of the Christian movement and is a continuation of Luke's Gospel after the ascension. The book begins with the ascension of the Messiah and the apostles returning to Jerusalem. Like its previous volume, the Gospel of Luke (Luke 24:53), Acts mentions that the disciples are constantly in the temple. The first major event of the book is the day of Pentecost, or *Shavuot*. This is the pilgrimage feast that occurs fifty days after the Sabbath of Passover week. As observant Jews, the disciples were commanded to be at the temple, which is in accord with the Gospel narratives of the messiah coming to the temple for the feasts as well. This also accounts for the presence in Jerusalem of the Jews from the diaspora mentioned in chapter two. It is also very likely that Peter's speech to these pilgrims took place in

[35] Randall Price. *Rose Guide to the Temple.* Torrance CA: Rose, 2012. 138.

[36] The description of New Jerusalem having twelve gates is not unique to Revelation. The *Damascus Document* describes the ideal temple as having twelve gates corresponding to the twelve tribes. Lawrence H Schiffman. "The Importance of the Temple for Ancient Jews." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations* .Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. 79.

[37] John T. Townsend. *The Jerusalem Temple in New Testament Thought.* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1958.) 227.

[38] Ibid. 230.

the temple courts or very close to the temple. The main entrance to the temple for the public was the southern steps. It is likely that Peter and the others were close to this point so he could address the large crowd.

The modern position held by many Christians is that Yeshua's sacrifice on the cross abolished the sacrificial system of the temple. Some even go as far as claiming that temple worship after the crucifixion would have amounted to apostasy. [39] This view arises from a misreading of the epistle to the Galatians which will be examined below. Proponents of this view claim that Peter was only at the temple because that is where the people would have been, but this view has problems and can only be inferred from the narrative while ignoring important passages that contradict their opinion. The evidence from the rest of the narrative does not speak disparagingly of the temple. Indeed a few verses later Peter and John go to the temple to pray at the time of sacrifice. Therefore, it is unlikely that Peter was only at the temple to evangelize for a new religion. However, Peter's speech to the pilgrims going to sacrifice at the temple on God's commanded calendar, was not a warning to stop them from going to the temple and sacrificing. His speech was to convince the crowd that the messiah had come. Also, those who believed were baptized which is another concept from the Old Testament concerning ritual cleansing. The place where these new believers would have been baptized would most likely have been the *mikvaot* located at the southern steps of the temple where worshipers would bathe before entering the temple courts.[40]

After the miraculous experience of *Shavuot*, the apostles are reported to have continued "daily in the temple courts" (Acts 2:46). This would be strange indeed if the messiah had taught his disciples that the temple was abrogated by his crucifixion. Instead what we see is that the

[39] Christopher Rowland. "Temple in the New Testament." *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel.* Edited by John Day. London: T&T Clark International, 2005. 480.

[40] Randall Price. *Rose Guide to the Temple.* Torrance CA: Rose Publishing, 2012. 78.

apostles continued to revere the temple as God's dwelling place on earth. The disciples did not see themselves as part of a new religion that was founded by their leader, but as the foretold progression and fulfillment of the faith of their ancestors. The book of Acts also records Peter and John going to the temple "at the time of prayer" (Acts 3:1). This time of prayer was the time of the evening sacrifice at about three in the afternoon. Peter and John were going to the temple to pray when the daily offering for Israel was being offered. This short sentence shows us that the head apostles were keeping with the tradition to pray at that time and that they were not opposed to the sacrifices taking place, but were indeed following the calendar of the temple to regulate their times of prayer. This is evidence that in the earliest Christians supported the temple as an institution congruent with their own faith and did not see the temple or the sacrificial system as opposing their faith in the messiah and his crucifixion.

Furthermore, chapter six states that many of the priests became believers. A few verses before (5:42) the author tells us that the disciples were daily preaching and teaching in the temple courts. It is very reasonable that the message was also preached to the priests ministering there and that many of them believed. These priests continued to minister in the temple and did not abandon their duties. Indeed they would have been privileged to minister in God's holy temple where his presence dwelt. As the rest of chapter six and seven tell us, the body of believers and Stephen, a leader among them revered the temple.

Stephen was arrested upon false charges that he had spoken against the temple and the Law (Torah) (Acts 6:13-14). The telling thing in this passage is that the witnesses were falsely accusing Stephen of speaking against the Torah and the temple. What Luke is telling his audience is that Stephen, a man who was a leader, and righteous among the faithful, did not speak against the temple or the Torah. To do so would have been against what the messiah had

taught as we have seen above. Many scholars claim that Stephen was in fact teaching that God had rejected the temple and the Law and even Israel and that God had replaced this with his church. J. Julius Scott claims that the temple was an anachronism to Christianity as well as Judaism.[41] Scott argues that both faiths moved beyond the need for sacrifice into an ethics based faith. Scott states that Stephen's adversaries were correct in their accusations. Stephen's speech, in which he quotes the Scriptures that the highest heaven does not contain God was a rejection of the temple because God was not a tribal deity living in a box.[42] This view contains many problems. First, the Scripture that Stephen is quoting is from the dedication of the first temple by Solomon (1 Kings 8:27). Are we then to infer that Solomon was rejecting the temple he had just built for Yahweh?[43] Solomon was stating the truth. The highest heavens cannot contain God, but that does not mean that God has not set a dwelling place among men for himself. Indeed the temple is simply a more permanent form of the tabernacle that God commanded to be built.[44] The temple was built in the place where Yahweh chose to place his name, Jerusalem (1 Kings 9:3). So having a temple does not conflict with God's omnipresence, and Stephen's speech was in no way indicating that. Furthermore, if Stephen had been speaking against the Law and temple, then his accusers would not have needed to produce false witnesses to convict him.

According to Philip Alexander, some Jews were "outraged by the antinomianism of certain Christian teachings,"[45] However, this position is not found in the New Testament, but its exact opposite. Acts six shows that the opponents of Stephen had to produce false witnesses to

[41] J. Julius Scott Jr. Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 1995. 155.

[42] Scott, 155. The box being the Ark of the Covenant.

[43] Second temple sources do not see a conflict between God's transcendence and immanence. God is both in his temple and everywhere. Lawrence H Schiffman. "The Importance of the Temple for Ancient Jews." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations* .Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. 81.

[44] See Exodus 25-28.

[45] Philip S. Alexander. Dunn, James D. G. (ed.) *Jews and Christians: the parting of the ways AD 70-135*. Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999. 19.

say that Yeshua would change the Law and was against the temple. Richard Bauckbam points out that the believers knew of Yeshua's prophecies concerning the destruction of the temple but, "they could well have thought that, while the temple stood, its cult remained authorized by God."[46] The Christians were unlike the Qumran community which also spoke of the temple's destruction but boycotted it:

> By contrast with the Qumran sect, the Jerusalem church did not hold itself aloof from the temple. On the contrary, its outstandingly devout participation in the temple cult maintained its place within common Judaism, a distinctive party, as Pharisees and Sadducees were, but not a sectarian or schismatic movement.[47]

Stephen's speech was not negative towards the temple. In fact, Stephen was arguing, that the temple built with human hands was not the ideal, but that the ideal was the heavenly and eschatological temple and "few Jews would have disagreed."[48] The reason behind Stephen's stoning was due to the perceived blasphemy of claiming that Yeshua is God.

Paul was also accused of the same thing later in the book.[49] From the witness of the book of Acts, we see that the apostles affirmed the Torah and the temple. There was obviously propaganda to the contrary that was believed by many at the time and sadly, by Christian scholars throughout the centuries as well, but this opinion does not hold any truth. Modern scholars ought to take note that the accusation of antinomianism was always false according to the book of Acts. There were Jewish sects that rejected or criticized the temple during this period and prior to it. However, these groups often criticized the temple because of who administered it,

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[46] Richard Bauckham. "James and the Jerusalem Community." *Jewish Believers in Jesus: the Early Centuries*. Edited by Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 60-61.

[47] Ibid. 61.

[48] Ibid. 64.

[49] Acts 21:17-26. Some scholars are skeptical of Acts portraying Paul accurately. However, there is harmony in the opinions of Paul towards the temple in Acts and his letters. See James H Charlesworth. "Jesus and the Temple." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. 181-212. 193 footnote 29.

or violations or abuses. To describe all dissidents as anti-temple is too simplistic and ignores the complexities of the arguments made by different sectarians.[50]

The book of Acts next turns to Paul and his ministry throughout the Roman Empire. During his decades long ministry, Paul traveled back to Jerusalem several times. Many scholars argue that Paul was the impetus for the break between Christianity and Judaism. Paul Johnson argues that it was the apostle Paul that rescued what would have been an obscure sect of Palestine and turned it into a universal faith divorced from its tribal origins. Johnson states that Paul's mission was in keeping with Diaspora Judaism and not the provincial version of Judea. He says Diaspora Judaism wished to distance itself from the "barbarous origins" of the temple slaughter house.[51] Johnson believes that Christianity basically took over the missionary efforts and outlook of the Hellenistic Jews, and that the original faith from the holy land itself was backward and xenophobic. Paul was the one who changed and rescued this obscure sect from what would have remained a local curiosity. Other authors also claim that the earliest efforts of Christianity sought to distance it from its Hebrew origins. Dean Peterson states that,

> They preferred to adapt ideas from Greek philosophy and other religions, rather than from Judaism, for understanding Jesus' mission and the Christian life. This separation from Judaism had several results. One was that the majority of Christians quit following Jewish Law.[52]

However, as Peterson notes, this change happened after the close of the first century.[53] So the original Christians, including Paul, saw themselves firmly in their ancestral faith, which the messiah commanded to be proclaimed to all nations and the Jerusalem council acknowledged years later (Matthew 28:19, Acts 15:16-18 cf. Amos 9:11-12). Johnson's claim that Christianity,

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[50] James H Charlesworth. "Jesus and the Temple." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. 145-181. 154.
[51] Paul Johnson. *A History of Christianity.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976. 14.
[52] R Dean Peterson. *A Concise History of Christianity.* Belmont CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007. 49.
[53] Peterson, 50.

like Hellenistic Judaism before it sought to distance itself from the temple and Hebrew origins is something that was a later development. Paul, throughout his journeys in Acts and in his letters continually mentions the temple in a high regard and uses it as a teaching tool for the believers.

During his missionary efforts in the empire, Paul kept to the schedule in the Torah around which the temple revolved. Chapter twenty states that he and his followers kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread and waited until it was finished to sail. Also, verse seven of the same chapter states that they came together on the first of the Sabbaths. This is possibly in reference to the seven Sabbaths that are to be counted between Passover and Pentecost.[54] Still, we see that Paul and Luke were regulating their lives on the temple calendar and using it as a reference point for the readers of the book. Furthermore, the entire section of this chapter is in reference to the principle feasts of the spring. Paul was attempting to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost, which means that he would have been counting the Sabbaths between Passover and Pentecost to keep track of time. Also, Pentecost is one of the principle pilgrimage feasts commanded in the Torah (Lev. 23:14-17). The pilgrimage is to the temple. So this passage not only shows us that Paul and his followers were keeping the feasts away from Jerusalem, but that Paul made pilgrimage to the temple for the feasts when possible as well. This action shows that Paul certainly had a high view of the temple and did not deride it as something obsolete since he desired to be there for a principle feast.

Paul arrived in Jerusalem and was immediately greeted with controversy. Many were under the impression that he had in fact been teaching his followers to forsake the Torah. However, the disciples' and Paul's response in chapter twenty one show us otherwise.

[54] Many claim that the phrase τή μία των σαββατων means the first day of the week. However, it would seem that it could be referring to the first of the Sabbaths after Passover and not the day after the Sabbath. The phrase is repeated in 1 Corinthians in a similar context cf. 1 Cor. 5:7-8, 16:2 and 16:8.

> Then they said to Paul: 'You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to the customs (Acts 21:20-21).

The disciples then told Paul to pay the expense of four men who had taken a vow so "everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you" (Acts 21:24). The expenses to be paid so the vow could be completed were designated for the temple and involved sacrifices. If Paul had indeed been teaching that the sacrificial system was abolished along with the Torah, then Paul would be committing apostasy or at the least he would be contradicting his own teaching. However, the record of Acts does not put the episode in those terms at all but consistently shows that Paul, along with the other disciples had a high view of the temple system.

Acts 22:17-21 Paul has a vision whilst in the temple. The vision was a commission to go the Gentiles. It seems that God is still working through his temple and the apostle to the Gentiles does not think that it is abolished and even received visions there. So, it would seem from the text of Luke, whose primary focus on Paul is as apostle to the Gentiles.[55] Paul also claimed to be a missionary to the Gentiles in Romans 11:13 and Galatians. 1:16. This is in normal keeping within Judaism according to Reidar Hvalvik. Paul was subsequently arrested at the temple and taken to Caesarea. Whilst in Caesarea, Paul gave his defense against the high priest before Felix the governor. Tertullus a lawyer, accused Paul of trying to desecrate the temple. Again, like the other disciples before him, Paul was falsely accused of being against the temple. However, Paul gives his defense before Felix and claims that the accusations were false. He also says, "I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the prophets" (Acts 24:14). Paul also states that he was following the rules of the temple when he was arrested. Also, after two years of imprisonment, Paul argues that he has done nothing wrong against the Law or the temple

[55] Reidar Hvalvik. "Paul as a Jewish Believer- According to the book of Acts." *Jewish Believers in Jesus.* 121-153.Edited by Oskar Skarsaune and Reider Hvalvik. Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 128.

(Acts 24:18, 25:8). From these first chapters of Acts that record Paul's ministry, there is a consistent record that he followed the Law and was in agreement with the temple which has its regulations found in the Law. When Paul explains that he at first persecuted the Way it was not because they forsook the Law or traditions. Acts records Christianity in its nascent years with the key figures that wrote most of the New Testament. What we see is a consistency between the Gospel messages, as well as the viewpoints of Paul with the other disciples. This Christianity held the temple and the Law in high regard and did not see itself as a religion needing to be separated and defined in contrast to Judaism. These first apostles saw themselves as following the foretold religion foretold by their forefathers and most certainly did not see Yeshua as someone who came to abolish what God had revealed before (Acts 26:27, cf. Matthew 5:17-19). Much of the confusion over the temple and the Old Testament in general comes from interpretations of the letters of Paul to which we will now turn.

Pauline Epistles

Paul's letters are the main source of confusion concerning the validity of the Old Testament for Christians. Many claim that Paul's letters show a Christianity that is in opposition to the Old Testament and the Law. The Law is something that was for a different age, or bondage opposed to Christian freedom. Jack Sanders argues that Paul abandoned Torah observance to win Gentile converts and that that was a main reason for his persecution by the Jewish authorities.[56] The record of Scripture tells a different story. Paul claims that he only knows sin by the Torah, and that it is the job of Torah, to define sin. Therefore, Paul would not break Torah to attempt to

[56] Sanders, 82.

gain converts. Furthermore, the many places Paul mentions the Torah in his letters speak against this position. He mentions the feasts that he keeps as well as Sabbath and many other regulations found in Torah. For Paul, the only Bible he had was the Old Testament, it seems quite unlikely that Paul would have told converts that they are to read this holy book but ignore what it says to do (Rom. 3:31, 7:16, I Cor. 5:7-8, 16:8). The point of view that Gentiles were not required nor encouraged to keep the Old Testament laws comes from the Jerusalem council in Acts chapter fifteen and also from various writings of Paul, especially Galatians.

The Jerusalem council was on the question of what was required by the Gentiles for salvation. Some of the dissenting party maintained that circumcision was required. However, the elders came to the consensus that new converts only had to begin with a few things concerning food and fornication. James states after those particular rules are given that Moses is preached in the synagogues in every city. The new converts would have been attending the synagogue services and learning the rest of the laws. The argument that only those four things are required of Christians is simplistic and contradicts the rest of the New Testament teachings aimed at Christians. Toby Janicki claims that the apostles did not "impose" the Sabbath or other commands from the Torah onto Gentile believers. In a sense, this is true as Acts 15 lays out the minimum requirements for fellowship for a new believer. However, these new believers will be learning Moses (i.e. the Torah) in the synagogue every Sabbath as verse 21 states. The apostles, being Torah observant, would know the many places in Torah where it is stated that there is one law for the home born and the foreigner. Therefore, even for Gentiles, the temple could have been a part of their faith. God does not have two codes of morality based on ethnic distinctions as many presuppose. Paul, the main source for those claiming the obsolescence of Torah, states over and over that there is no difference between Jew and Greek. That entails that both Jews and

Greeks were and are held to the same standards of morality which would include keeping Sabbath and feast days, things that were regulated by the calendar of the temple.

One problem that might be brought against this view is the exclusion of Gentiles in temple worship. Many state that while the apostles, being Jews, continued to worship at the temple but never considered Gentiles to be bound by such things. In a way this is the case, but the truth denies such simplicity. During the apostolic age the Sadducees were in control of the temple and believers in the messiah were in the minority in respect to the Israelite sects. Even if Christians believed former Gentiles could enter the temple they would not be able to act upon such beliefs since they had no power concerning admittance to the temple.[57] And we see that Paul was accused of bringing a Gentile into the temple and there was an ensuing riot, which Paul and the other apostles most likely would have anticipated if they were to act on their beliefs. Townsend states concerning Paul's attitude towards Gentiles, "he [Paul] probably intended that they [Gentiles] should show proper reverence toward God's temple at Jerusalem; and it is unlikely that he would have objected to them participating actively in its cult."[58]

Paul states in his letter to the Ephesians that the dividing wall separating Jew and Gentile had been broken down. He was referring to the *soreg*, the dividing barrier between the court of gentiles and the court of Israel in Herod's temple. Paul was speaking metaphorically about any believer being able to approach God, but it seems that he viewed Gentile Christians as having the same rights and responsibilities as the native born.

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[57] There are further regulations that are required of the convert for keeping feasts or temple worship than is found in Acts 15, so the convert might not have had full fellowship in such areas unless undergoing circumcision cf. Ex, 12:48, Num. 9:14 Acts 16:3 Isa. 56:6-7. Many other Old Testament texts state that Gentiles will flock to the temple cf. Zech. 14, Isa. 2:2. Also, Josephus mentions Gentiles that had previously sacrificed at the temple: Ptolemy III (*Against Apion* 2.48), Antiochus VII (*Ant.* 13.242) and perhaps even Alexander the Great (*Ant.* 11.329). So it is possible that Gentile converts were more frequent at the temple at different times. However, the rules of temple worship would still apply to Gentiles Lev. 22:25. Cf. James H. Charlesworth. "The Temple and Jesus' Followers." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. 209.

[58] John T. Townsend. *The Jerusalem Temple in New Testament Thought.* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1958.) 2.

Many think that Paul's letters give a clear view that the temple and Law was abolished and that the church was the new temple. However, this view has many problems that are not easily resolvable when all the evidence is brought to bear. So it is to Paul's letters and his own words we now turn to clarify this matter concerning the temple and the status of the Old Testament in Paul's view.

Romans

The epistle to the Romans is one of the most comprehensive letters concerning Paul's theology. Paul mentions and alludes to the temple in several different ways in the letter. Paul speaks of the advantage that a Jew has over others because the Jew was entrusted with the oracles of God. These oracles are the Old Testament and include the revelation concerning the temple (Romans 3:2). Also, he states that the advantages of the Jew are that Israel was entrusted with the Torah and the temple service as well as the promises (Romans 9:4). He speaks in no way disparagingly of the Old Testament or the temple in the letter but praises them, something that would be contradictory if he claimed such things were abolished in Christ as some would argue that Paul does in Galatians, which is the main source for an anti-Old Testament stance. In fact, Paul states that the law is established by our faith and that the commandment is "holy righteous and good (Romans 3:31, 7:12). So it is definitely the case that Paul still held a high view of the temple when this letter was written. This is in accordance with Acts which states that Paul was even performing sacrifices at the temple when he was arrested.

I Corinthians

Some of the criticism comes from I Corinthians 9:20, "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law." But to claim that Paul was only using the Law as a tool and feigned obedience he would have been a liar at worst and certainly disingenuous.[59] However, from Paul's speeches in Acts and the evidence in the letter to the Corinthians itself, we see that this interpretation is most certainly incorrect. In the letter itself, Paul encourages the Corinthians to keep Passover, a feast that is mainly held at the temple if it is possible for the person to go to Jerusalem. So Paul is telling his disciples, Jew and Gentile alike that keeping the feast is something a Christian should be doing (I Corinthians 5:6-8). Paul also mentions that he will be staying in Ephesus until Pentecost, another temple feast. So we see that Paul was ordering his life around the temple's schedule and observing the feasts (I Corinthians 16:8). Also, 1 Corinthians 9:13 Mentions that the priests ministering at the altar get their living from the gifts. Paul is making an analogy saying that workers of the Gospel should also reap material benefits. So he is using the temple as a paradigm case for work in the Gospel. This would be strange indeed if Paul did not believe that the temple was a legitimate structure and he would not be using it as the example for Christian practice.[60]

In this letter Paul states that the believer is God's temple. Many have taken this to mean that the Jerusalem temple was abolished in favor for a spiritual form of worship. However, what Paul was doing was drawing an analogy from the temple as treated in Scripture to show the believers the seriousness of their faith. As Randall Price states,

> The fact that Paul always uses *naos* (the Temple proper and especially the Holy of Holies) rather than *heiron* (the Temple complex and especially the precincts) shows that he is thinking about the *spiritual* nature of the Temple as the place where God's presence

[59] Price, *Temple in Bible Prophecy*, 285.

[60] Donald A. Hagner. "Paul as a Jewish Believer-According to his Letters." *Jewish Believers in Jesus: the Early Centuries.* Edited by Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 95.

> dwelt. If Paul was seeking to denigrate the Temple as a defunct institution and promote the view that the church was the new spiritual temple, then we would have expected him to abandon the term (*naos*) that emphasized the Temple's spiritual significance and incomparable holiness.[61]

It seems then that Paul has a very high view of the temple in this letter that is often used to denigrate the view that the temple was a legitimate structure for Christians. As Charlesworth states, "It is a cursory reading of Paul's letters that often give readers the opinion that he rejected the earthly temple in Jerusalem and substituted a heavenly temple for it." However, "contemplating the Heavenly Temple was a way of celebrating the Jerusalem Temple, which in terms of biblical geography was customarily assumed to be beneath it."[62] Second Corinthians and Ephesians continue the theme of the believer being a temple (II Cor. 6:16. Eph. 2:21). Second Corinthians even alludes to the concepts of cleanness and uncleanness, further filling out the picture of the temple system for the Corinthian church. Ritual cleanness for the worshiper and the sacrifice were required to enter the temple. Paul is here referring to the concept not only in regards to the spirit, but also to the body. So he was advocating that Christians should observe these things even in absence of the temple.[63] Nowhere in the corpus is there a disparaging word towards the Jerusalem temple. It is not until the second century that Christians started to distance themselves from the faith as practiced by the messiah and the apostles.

Galatians

[61] Price, *Temple in Bible Prophecy,* 288.

[62] James H Charlesworth. "Jesus and the Temple." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. 181-212. 190.

[63] II Cor. 6:17-7:1. Paul was similar in his view to later rabbinic literature in that *mitzvot* are done in the absence of the temple service. Paul's view is closer to that of the rabbis than the Qumran community that shunned the temple as corrupt and characterized their rituals as a replacement of the temple until the true and pure temple could be built. Lawrence H Schiffman. "The Importance of the Temple for Ancient Jews." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations* .Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. 85. Cf. *War Scroll, Rule of the Community* in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Another reason many have argued that the temple system was abolished comes from the epistle to the Galatians. It is commonly understood that Paul was arguing that the Torah had been abolished and that Christians not only do not have to follow it, but should not. Paul, in the epistle, is not arguing against Christians observing the Torah, he is arguing that observing the Torah for salvation is impossible. The opponents of Paul's position seem to be the same or similar to the ones mentioned at the Jerusalem council that argued that circumcision was required for salvation. Many conflate being a prisoner to sin as bondage to the Law, but that is not exactly what Paul is arguing. In fact, he states in Romans that the Law is not sin and that we only come to know sin by the Law (Romans 7:7). So the Law gives us the definition of sin in Romans, which is thought to be later than Galatians. Furthermore, there would be serious theological problems if Paul were in fact arguing that the Law was abolished. It would mean that God would be mutable in what he considers morally right and wrong. This would complicate not only God's unchanging nature, but also the nature of morality and its objectivity. It would mean that God can choose for things that were once sin to no longer be sin making morality arbitrary.

Also, Paul's other letters and the account of him in Acts show that Paul had a very high view of the temple system and the Law, so it would be very out of character for Paul to argue that the Law was abolished. It is my contention that Paul was arguing against misusing the Law and continued to view the Old Testament, which it must be stressed was the only Bible Paul had, as God's revelation not only to Jews but to the Gentiles that were being grafted in to the faith (Romans 11).

Paul's Christian viewpoint actually fit nicely in the broad framework of second temple Judaism. John Yoder points out that Paul's opponents could not be what later would become rabbinic Judaism. Paul did not necessarily find himself in total disagreement with the Pharisees,

a sect he did claim to be a part of (Acts 23:6, 26:5 Philippians 3:5), and if we look at the contemporary Jewish literature, we find that it is in substantial agreement with Paul concerning the status of the Torah. The Torah was given as a gift of grace, not in opposition to grace. Therefore, the Judaizers were not the representatives of normative Judaism,

> … authentic Jewish sources, i.e. the Tannaic or early rabbinic literature, speak of the Law of God as a privilege of covenantal grace, as divine enablement, not as a means for earning (or failing that, for losing) God's acceptance. The rabbis are closer to what Paul says than to what he is said to be attacking.[64]

So Paul's criticism of the Judaizers was not criticism of the Torah but of the Judaizers' interpretation of the Torah.

Paul states in two of his letters that the gentiles that are coming to the faith are now a part of Israel. Paul, as well as the rest of the New Testament is silent on the church being a separate entity.[65] In Ephesians, Paul tells the new believers that they are now citizens of Israel,

> Therefore, remember that formerly you who are called Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men- remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ… and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility (Ephesians 2:11-14).

Paul is informing his audience that since they are believers in Christ that they are citizens of Israel. He states that the dividing wall has been removed, this wall was the *soreg*, found in Herod's temple to warn Gentiles not to pass it on pain of death. Paul uses specific temple imagery in his argument that believers are part of Israel and now have access to God. This is yet another example of how the early faith for the apostles and the first century Christians viewed

[64] John Howard Yoder. *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*. Ed. Michael G. Cartwright and Peter Ochs. Scottsdale PA: Herald, 2008. 94.

[65] The Greek term *ekklesia*, translated 'church' in the New Testament, is used in the LXX of the assembly of Israel. It could be argued that since the writers of the New Testament were quite familiar with the LXX that they understood and used this term in its previously defined manner.

the temple as a central part of their faith, not only spiritually but also physically. The Scriptures make a "sharp dichotomy or distinction between those of the faith of Israel and Gentiles." Gentiles are pagans that sacrifice to demons etc. (1 Cor. 10:19). The reason New Testament writers continued to use the term occasionally for former gentile converts is to avoid confusion and to "communicate effectively with an audience."[66] This would seem to be a much better explanation considering Romans 2:28-29, 11 and Ephesians 2:11. Furthermore, the new covenant is made with Israel and Judah (Jer. 31:31), not with Gentiles. Wilson therefore argues that the word 'gentile' is not consistently used in the New Testament for the above purposes.

The high view of the temple in Paul's letters also concerns prophecy. Like the Old Testament prophets and Yeshua, Paul taught that the temple would be at the epicenter of the apocalypse. Also, Paul mentions the temple directly in his epistles only this once in II Thessalonians where the temple's desecration is the culmination of evil and the revelation of the anti-Christ.[67] Echoing the book of Daniel as well as Matthew, Paul lays out the criteria for the coming of the messiah and of the antichrist in his second letter to the Thessalonians. In this letter Paul states that the 'man of lawlessness' will set himself up in the temple (*naos*) proclaiming himself to be God (II Thess. 2:4). This passage echoes the scenario that Yeshua gives in Matthew twenty four and is also found in Daniel which designates it as the abomination of desolation. According to the letter this happens directly before the coming of the messiah, and therefore, at the end of the world. In Paul's view then, the temple remained a legitimate structure until the end of the world. It would be impossible for the antichrist to desecrate something that has already

[66] Marvin R. Wilson. *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 22. Wilson does argue (p. 27) that gentiles and Jews alike are no longer bound by ceremonially matters in the Law but can still find it meaningful.

[67] John T. Townsend. *The Jerusalem Temple in New Testament Thought.* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1958.) 3.

been rejected by God. So in Paul's understanding, God viewed his temple as holy even at the end of the age, and therefore, it would have also been holy in the mind of Paul in the first century. This is clear evidence that the first century view of the temple was one of veneration among the disciples of Yeshua.

Epistle to the Hebrews

The epistle to the Hebrews is arguably the most direct concerning Christian thought towards the temple as it is regarding the Jewish people and interprets many things of the Hebrew Scriptures in light of the messiah. As the title of the epistle informs us, the letter is to Jews concerning the validity of Yeshua as messiah. Hebrews calls Yeshua a high priest, yet it explains that he is not a priest on earth. He is not an earthly priest because he is from the tribe of Judah and not Levi. Therefore, his order is of heaven and he is a priest in heaven and Yeshua is performing the Divine Liturgy in the heavenly temple on our behalf.[68] Hebrews 8:2 states that he serves in the heavenly tabernacle, not the earthly and that he would not be a priest on earth because there are already priests on earth. What Hebrews is arguing is that the earthly temple is a symbol of the heavenly and the perfect is above while we have a shadow of it on earth. In no way is the author arguing that the earthly system is abolished. The author never directly criticizes the temple as something derelict, only that the perfect is still future. In the meantime, the temple we have is still a part of the faith. The author does state that the sacrifices being offered can never take away sin completely[69], and by this statement many have argued that the sacrificial

[68] John T. Townsend. *The Jerusalem Temple in New Testament Thought.* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1958.) 251.

[69] The sacrificial system was efficacious in some respects. Sacrifices were for maintaining a right relationship with God in a fallen world. There are many places in Scripture that speak of the sacrifices as making restitution, and in that way they are effective. However, the sacrificial system was not a works based salvation and was never characterized as such. The only sacrifices addressing sin were for unintentional sins. There was no sacrifice for willful rebellion. Cf. Lev. 4-5, Psalm 51.

system was therefore abolished because of Yeshua's sacrifice on the cross which can take away sin. However, the author is expecting a clear understanding of the Torah which never states that one is saved by the sacrificial offerings. Instead, the author is arguing that Yeshua's sacrifice should have been expected because of the limits of the Torah. The view of the author of Hebrews is then in keeping with the actions and writings found in the other New Testament books. An assumption that the temple still served a purpose was understood by the author and he attempted to communicate the Messiah's legitimacy through reference to it.

Hebrews specifically uses Jeremiah concerning the New Covenant. The author quotes 31:31-34:

> The time is coming declares the LORD when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, declares the LORD. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time declares the LORD. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, saying, know the LORD, because all will know me from the least to the greatest, declares the LORD.

Jeremiah states that Yahweh will write the law on the peoples' hearts. The word law is the Hebrew word *torah,* which is used to refer to the laws of Moses or the Pentateuch as a whole. The laws contained in the books of Moses regulate the temple and its services. Therefore, it is likely that Jeremiah understood this to mean the biblical faith. Jeremiah spent much of his time at the temple and would likely have known the writings of previous prophets like Isaiah that speak of a temple in the world to come (Jer. 50:28, 51:11, Isa. 2:2-3). Also, the writer of Hebrews adds after quoting Jeremiah that the first covenant will "soon disappear" not that it has disappeared. This is in keeping with Yeshua's statement in Matthew 5:18 that heaven and earth will pass before the law passes. The writer of Hebrews is not arguing against the temple as being defunct,

but that it is a shadow to point us towards messiah and the heavenly things (Hebrews 10:1 cf. Col. 2:17).

CHAPTER III
OTHER FIRST CENTURY WITNESSES

The veneration of the temple found in Hebrews and other places is seen in the Christian community throughout the first century and even later, as in many splinter groups such as the Ebionites.[70] After the first century there were still many Christians who sought to keep the Old Testament Laws. John Chrysostom in the sixth century penned several sermons decrying Christians that kept Passover.[71] It is significant that the so called Mouth of Orthodoxy would address such an issue if there were not Christians that still clung to the Hebrew roots of the faith. But even before this there is evidence that Christianity still considered itself a Jewish religion and did not see itself divorced from Israel. The traditional view that confirmed the temple and the Old Testament were integral parts of the faith practiced by the early church lingered much longer than the destruction of the temple in AD 70. A different view among Christians is difficult to prove before the second Jewish war in 135 AD.[72] Also, Polycarp, the disciple of John, as attested by Eusebius[73] went to Rome to discuss the date of Passover, a temple feast, in the early second century. There is evidence of many Christians keeping the feasts according to the calendar found in Scripture. This group was labeled Quartodecimanism that is celebrating according to the fourteenth of the month Aviv. So there is evidence that Christians kept the feast

[7070] Sanders, 163.

[71] Oskar Skarsaune. *In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish influences on early Christianity.* Downers Grove IL: Intervarsity, 2002. 436.

[72] Philip S. Alexander. Dunn, James D. G. (ed.) *Jews and Christians: the parting of the ways AD 70-135.* Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999. 20.

[73] Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History.* Translated by C.F. Cruse. Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1998. 181. (book 5 chap. 23).

according to the calendar found in Scripture, the same as the temple, even into the second century. It was a later development that celebration of the resurrection was kept according to the Roman calendar apart from Passover. The distinctions of early Christianity lasted in some small respects in various groups before Nicene Christianity. Therefore we can see that the first Christians, especially the apostles, saw the temple as the house of the God of Israel and that this view lingered into the second century only to be replaced at a later date making orthodoxy something alien to what is attested in Scripture.

It has been demonstrated that throughout the New Testament there is a high view of the temple. The New Testament which is considered by many to be the orthodox view of how the faith should be lived is not alone in its view of the temple. Many other first century Christian writings have survived that also consider the temple in Jerusalem to be a major part of the faith. These writings give us a glimpse into the wider history of Christianity in the first century and the beliefs that were held by these ancient Christians.

Josephus

Although not considered a Christian, Josephus is a very important figure for Christianity. He is the author of several works chronicling the history of the Jews and of the great revolt in which the temple was destroyed. Josephus mentions the messiah and it would seem identifies him as Yeshua. This is the famous passage of the confession of Christ.[74] That Yeshua is called Christ and that the Christians still survive. What is very interesting here about Josephus's report concerning Yeshua, is that he says nothing negative, but in fact praises him as a teacher of truth.

[74] The testamonium was not widely quoted in the second century and Josephus was not popular among Jews so Christians would not have put the testamonium in the work to try to persuade Jews. Later protestant views thought of the work as Catholic so they were against it in principle, not through careful scholarship. Also, Josephus was Jewish, and per the anti-Semitism of the middle ages, it was thought that a reprobate Jew could not have said such a thing. Therefore, it is likely that the testamonium is authentic and not a later Christian interpolation.

Josephus, an observant Jew and priest, would have repudiated Yeshua as a false prophet if Yeshua had taught against Torah. Josephus would have been quick to point out that Yeshua was a pretender and not the real messiah, but he does no such thing. The Gospels assert that false witnesses were brought against Yeshua at his trial claiming he spoke against the law. However, if Josephus had believed the report given in later rabbinic literature, he would have most certainly mentioned this. However, Josephus claims that Yeshua was a teacher of truth.[75] Furthermore, Josephus was writing for a Roman audience and spent much of his time describing the temple and the tragedy of its loss.[76] If Josephus had believed that Yeshua had spoken against the temple and condoned its destruction, he would not have mentioned Yeshua, who was also killed by the Romans as king of the Jews.

Josephus reports the stoning (or attempted stoning) of James, the brother of Yeshua. The new high priest, who was a corrupt and intemperate man, took an opportunity when the procurator was on his way to Egypt to seize James and bring false accusations against him. Just as we see in the book of Acts, the false claims were that the disciples were speaking against the Torah. For these accusations to be false, James would have to truly be keeping and affirming the Torah. If not, then the reports of Josephus and the New Testament would be much different. The Sanhedrin would not have needed to bring false accusations because the disciples would have blatantly told them the Torah was abolished. However, this is obviously not the case and so our conclusion must be that the disciples kept and affirmed the validity of the Torah and therefore temple worship.[77] So we see that Josephus, a late first century witness to these events affirms that

[75] Josephus. *Antiquities of the Jews.* Translated by William Whiston. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998. 18.3.3.

[76] Josephus was a priest and held the temple in very high regard, spending much of his time writing about it. He describes it in similar ways to Philo of Alexandria as a microcosm of the universe. Josephus also describes it as being below the heavenly temple.

[77] Josephus, *Antiquities,* 20.9.1.

the first Christians were still a part of the religion of Israel and saw themselves in this way. Josephus does not allude to Christians rejecting that institution in any of his writings. Therefore, this second witness bolsters the accounts found in the New Testament concerning the attitude towards the temple.

The Didache

The *Didache* is another text that the early Christians had written and were familiar with. One of its themes is proper worship for believers. The *Didache* is an early Christian document that relates a very basic teaching for believers. Although many date the *Didache* to the second century, Jonathan Draper believes that it was first composed in the first century around 50-70, and no later than 100, perhaps before the book of Matthew, with which it shares many similarities.[78] The *Didache* is similar to the book of Matthew and the faith that is expressed therein and so it is thought to have more Hebraic overtones although it is also argued that it was written to instruct gentile believers. The concept of sacrifice as worship is addressed in the *Didache*. However, it does not specifically mention the temple but speaks of offering sacrifices "in every place and every time" (14:4). The *Didache* thought to be addressed to Gentile believers is reminiscent of what Paul tells the Romans, where he encourages them to offer spiritual sacrifices (Romans 12:1). Since Gentiles were not permitted in the temple by the Jewish authorities and since Christians were not required to convert to the standards of the temple authorities, other means of sacrifice, like the above were incorporated. This concept of spiritual sacrifices was not a rejection of the temple and its system but was born out of necessity since Gentile converts to Christianity would not have been permitted to enter the temple. Furthermore,

[78] Jonathan A. Draper. *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered: The Holy Vine of David Made Known to the Gentiles Through God's Servant Jesus: "Christian Judaism" in the Didache.* 260.

Christians living in the Diaspora, like the Romans Paul addressed, would hardly have been able to go to the temple on pilgrimage so spiritual sacrifices are a logical extension of a faith lived away from its origination point. Also, the messiah had prophesied that the temple would be destroyed, so the only type of sacrifice available would have been spiritual within a few decades of the ascension. The concept of spiritual sacrifice and devotion to the temple calendar services is not unique to the New Testament and Christian writings. Daniel, who was exiled in Babylon also prayed toward the temple and at the times of sacrifice.[79] Daniel was a very popular book amongst the first Christians judging by the frequency its concepts occur in the New Testament and it is possible that the apostles' writings were instructions on how to live out the faith in exile since the majority of believers lived outside of the land.

Jonathan Draper comes to a different conclusion concerning the *Didache.* He argues that Paul's teachings are opposed to the Old Testament and that Yeshua's teachings have surpassed and replaced them. Since the *Didache* draws heavily on the Old Testament it is a non-orthodox document, or at least aberrant to the beliefs of the author of most of the New Testament. Draper sees a conflict between Pauline Christian communities and those who read the *Didache.* [80] He argues that the Jewish believers were holding onto tradition that would eventually be replaced by what Draper believes is the proper Pauline understanding of the faith.

However, there does not seem to be such a distinction between Paul and the *Didache*. Both used temple imagery to bolster belief and regulate worship. In fact, these similarities match with the teachings of the Gospels and Revelation, manifesting continuity in view of the temple.

[79] Daniel 9:21 cf. Acts 3:1. After the temple was destroyed in AD 70 both Jews and Christians had to find a substitute for temple worship. It appears that both groups used *mitzvot,* characterized as spiritual sacrifices in the New Testament as a substitute. . James H Charlesworth. "The Temple and Jesus' Followers." *Jesus and Temple: Textual and Archaeological Explorations.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. 182-212. 187.

[80] Draper, 263.

An early date for composition of the *Didache* would mean that the temple was still standing, but Gentile Christians were no longer allowed there. If in fact it was written towards the end of the first century then it is a witness of temple themes surviving in Christian worship even after the destruction of the temple. Whether or not the *Didache* is authoritative in its teaching, it was a widely read book and it gives a glimpse of what the early Christians thought of the temple. The message it seems to give is that there was room for the temple and the concept of sacrifice in the Christian faith.

Epistle of Barnabas

The *Epistle of Barnabas* is thought to have been written in the last decade of the first century by an Alexandrian Christian that was influenced by Hellenistic thought, perhaps Philo.[81] The views portrayed in the document are quite distinct from the New Testament, although there are hints that the author knew of Paul's writings. It has also been included in some canons as it was included in the New Testament of the Codex Sinaiticus. *Barnabas* draws heavily on the Old Testament but in a way quite different from the New Testament and other Christian writings like the *Didache*. The Egyptians believers who were this letter's main audience held the paschal feast on Sunday, so it is on the other side of the quartodeciman debate.[82] Indeed the Alexandrian flavor of Judaism and then Christianity seems to be more at one end of the spectrum that what we see in the New Testament and even in later centuries (They were the first to celebrate Christmas along with Rome which was not something done in the other churches). So it is no

[81] James Paget. "The Epistle of Barnabas." *The Expository Times.* Vol. 117, no 11, 2006. 441-446. P. 441. There is debate on the dating of the work, cf. Geza Vermes "From Jewish to Gentile: How the Jesus Movement became Christianity." BAR Vol. 38 No. 6 November/December 2012. Vermes claims the book to have been written in the 120s.

[82] LW Barnard "Epistle of Barnabas—A Paschal Homily?" Vigiliae christianae 15 no 1 Mr 1961, p 8-22. March 1, 1961. 14-15.

surprise that *Barnabas* has a different view of the temple than other early Christian works as it seems to be more of a Hellenistic composition. All laws from the Old Testament are interpreted to be spiritual and the literal view of them is seemingly negative. In fact, one scholar goes as far to say, "The *Epistle of Barnabas* is one of the earliest expressions of gentile Christianity, filled with anti-Jewish strictures."[83] *Barnabas* speaks of the temple and many other Old Testament themes in an interesting way that has been the source of much controversy, but all do agree that the main thrust of *Barnabas* is biblical interpretation. The writer is thought to be a converted Jew but he also seems to be hostile to Judaism and therefore writes of the Old Testament stories as allegory. The writer also thinks the Israelites lost the covenant because of the golden calf and that it was given to Christians. This is the first instances that we see of replacement theology.[84]

Chapter fifteen of Barnabas seems to indicate that mankind is unable to keep the Sabbath and the Sabbath is pointing towards the end or the millennial reign. The mention of an eighth day "in which Jesus rose from the dead" is kept for rejoicing. But this is in distinction from the commands reproduced from the Torah in the beginning of the chapter. James Paget takes it to mean that the Torah is not to be interpreted literally.[85] Thus the book departs from the New Testament but is still insightful as to attitudes towards the temple and the Old Testament in some early Christian communities even though it seems to disagree with the Old and New Testaments in many places. As one author put it,

> It is a hybrid work, in which moral instructions (Barnabas 18–21) based on a Jewish tractate on the way of light and the way of darkness, attested to also in the Didache 1–5, and ultimately in the first-century B.C.E. Community Rule among the Dead Sea Scrolls, is preceded by a lengthy anti-Jewish diatribe (Barnabas 1–17). The author depicts two quarreling parties designated simply as "we" and "they," the first representing the Christians and the second the

[83] Geza Vermes "From Jewish to Gentile: How the Jesus Movement became Christianity." BAR Vol. 38 No. 6 November/December 2012.

[84] LW Barnard "Epistle of Barnabas—A Paschal Homily?" Vigiliae christianae 15 no 1 Mr 1961, p 8-22. March 1, 1961. 15.

[85] Paget "The Epistle of Barnabas." 442.

Jews, and the dispute is founded on the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint), which both factions consider their own property.[86]

Chapter two of Barnabas seems to confirm this outlook. The second chapter concerns sacrifices. The author argues that God did not want sacrifices and uses the prophets as proof. What the prophets say concerning spiritual sacrifices is very similar to the New Testament. Barnabas seems to have a more negative view of the actual sacrificial system than the New Testament or the prophets do. Barnabas claims that the law is annulled so the new law of Christ can make offerings without hands. But in other places Barnabas speaks about the lawless age he is living in and that the faithful should flee from lawlessness and seek and rejoice in the ordinances of the Lord. He also states that we should strive to be a temple for the Lord, which is reminiscent of Paul. It seems there is tension in the interpretations by *Barnabas. Barnabas* does claim that the covenant was lost to the Israelites at Mount Sinai because of the golden calf incident. So the author of *Barnabas* may have a higher view of the Old Testament law than is argued by some. Indeed it would be strange that the author would argue for the legitimacy of some parts of a book but not others, in which he quotes the Torah as authoritative, but then seemingly discourages his readers to heed the books commands. It seems that *Barnabas* is drawing on the Old Testament heavily but uses Paul's words to interpret it in different ways. The book has the concept of spiritual sacrifice and a temple but not in the literal fashion. It also must be remembered that the book was written after the destruction of the temple which is mentioned in chapter sixteen. So it could be argued that Barnabas was interpreting the Torah in light of the destruction of the temple and the new reality that brought.

Chapter nine also mentions that circumcision is abolished showing that there were differing opinions in the first Christian communities. The epistle was thought to have been

[86] Geza Vermes "From Jewish to Gentile: How the Jesus Movement became Christianity." BAR Vol. 38 No. 6 November/December 2012.

written in Egypt and the true author is unknown. But even with its unorthodox views on the law it still shows that the law still had enormous influence on the thought of Christians and how they perceived their faith. James Paget in his article states that *Barnabas* encourages his listeners to keep the law but that following the commands literally is discouraged. So, in a way, the law was not abolished in the view of *Barnabas*, but every command in it was to be kept in a spiritual manner.[87] Paget notes that the author strays from the teaching of the New Testament considerably in some places,

> Radically, and in contrast to Paul and other New Testament and early Christian writers, Barnabas asserts that this non-literal interpretation, which he appears quite consciously to contrast with Jewish interpretation, although neither the term Jew nor Jewish ever appear in the epistle, comports with the original meaning of the scriptural text. Such a view might be said to reach its most extraordinary expression in the assertion that the commandment literally to circumcise oneself was given by an evil angel (9.4).[88]

So it seems that Barnabas might have been responding to Jewish arguments and could be considered the first *adversus Judaeos.*[89] What is obvious is that the book departs considerably from the New Testament interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures but still manages to keep many of the themes contained therein. It seems that the epistle shows the parting of the ways between the Christianity of the New Testament that is often called "Jewish" and what would become Gentile Christianity as practiced in Barnabas and Presumably in Alexandria.[90]

Chapter sixteen is of special concern for the temple. The author of the document is quick to use the concept of the temple as the format for the faith, but at the same time speaks of those who worshiped at the temple as being led astray by putting their hope in a building and not God. So the author of the document, who is almost certainly not the Barnabas of the New Testament,

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[87] James Paget. "The Epistle of Barnabas." *The Expository Times.* Vol. 117, no 11, 2006. 441-446. P. 443.
[88] Paget, 444.
[89] Paget, 441.
[90] Geza Vermes "From Jewish to Gentile: How the Jesus Movement became Christianity." BAR Vol. 38 No. 6 November/December 2012.

uses the theme of temple worship in a spiritual manner. Spiritual worship and spiritual sacrifices are mentioned in Paul's letters and alluded to in the book of Daniel, but a close reading of the New Testament and *Barnabas* show that there is a very different interpretation on what this means in practice. The New Testament, like the Old, still has a place for the actual physical temple in Jerusalem while *Barnabas* only allows for its spiritual nature. This document might be a polemic against Jews that wanted to rebuild the temple, or a Christian reaction to its destruction and a groping for an explanation of it. James Paget puts forth the argument that the author of *Barnabas* is interpreting Paul as anti-Jewish and that the law has been abolished. *Barnabas* mentions the annulment of the Law in many places, but favors spiritual interpretations of those same commandments. However, it seems that this might be exactly what Peter warns against in 2 Peter 3:16 concerning misunderstanding Paul, since as we have seen from numerous examples in the New Testament that Paul favored the temple.[91] It must also be noted that Paul was misinterpreted by heretics such as Marcion to be in favor of abolishing all Old Testament practices. It is evident from what records we have from the first century that there were several interpretations of what Christianity teaches. There is the New Testament, but there are also the Judaizers and on the opposite end of the spectrum the writer and readers of the *Epistle of Barnabas*. Although the work does not show the high view of the temple found in the New Testament, it still draws heavily on its themes and speaks of the body of believers as a temple. And without the physical temple to use as juxtaposition, this view would have been impossible. So the author still owed an enormous debt to the temple, even if he did not accept the orthodox position on it.

[91] James Carleton Paget. "Paul and the Epistle of Barnabas" *Novum Testamentum* , Vol. 38, Fasc. 4 (Oct., 1996) , pp. 359-381, 370,71.

Clement of Rome

The *Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* is a lengthy letter dated to the late first century, perhaps 95 A.D. The book is thought to be the earliest Christian document extant that is not in the New Testament, although it was included in some canons.[92] The letter alludes to the deaths of Peter and Paul (1 Clement 5) and so is considered a part of the second generation of Christians. The work contains many references to the New Testament. Books such as Hebrews, the letters of Paul and James and Acts are alluded to[93] showing that the author was familiar with many of the New Testament writings and considered them Scripture. The author also shows a good understanding of the Old Testament as well. The beginning chapters are an exhortation to be patient and faithful and are reminiscent of the epistle to the Hebrews. The temple is only mentioned in one place in the work. The mention of the temple is in context of God's punishment and patience. Clement is warning his readers not to be complacent concerning God's judgment,

> Therefore let us not be double-minded, neither let our soul indulge in idle humors respecting His exceeding and glorious gifts. Let this scripture be far from us where He saith Wretched are the double-minded, which doubt in their soul and say, these things we did hear in the days of our fathers also, and behold we have grown old, and none of these things hath befallen us… Of a truth quickly and suddenly shall His will be accomplished, the scripture also bearing witness to it, saying He shall come quickly and shall not tarry; and the Lord shall come suddenly into His temple, even the Holy One, whom ye expect (1 Clement 23:5).

The author does not explain himself further concerning the temple and considers it sufficient only to say that the Scriptures bear witness to the fact. The passage referred to is Malachi 3:1. The book of the prophet Malachi is a message to the priests and people concerning the temple and their defilement of it by bringing unfit offerings. The context of the passage that Clement

[92] Clement is included in the New Testament of Codex Alexandrinus (5th century) and in Canon 85 of the Apostles. A digital copy of Codex Alexandrinus can be found at the British library http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_1_d_viii.

[93] Bruce M. Metzger, *Canon of the New Testament* (Oxford University Press) 1987. 42–43.

quotes states that the Lord they are seeking will appear at the temple suddenly and refine and judge them and afterwards they will "bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years" (Malachi 3:4). Clement was using this passage as future tense, as something yet to happen.[94] It is unclear from the letter what Clement's complete understanding of the temple is, but it would seem that quoting this passage would indicate that he understood there would be a future temple. This view would be in keeping with the rest of the Old and New Testaments concerning the temple and as was demonstrated above, was a part of the eschatological view of the apostles, specifically found in 2 Thessalonians and Revelation. Therefore, it would not be difficult to conceive of Clement having the same view, especially since it was written around the same time as Revelation.

What is interesting, is that the letter is dated to the last decade of the first century, at least twenty years after the destruction of the temple by the Romans. This short reference in Clement could be a demonstration of a temple theology that is still present in the Christian community. Also, the passage is not speaking of the temple in a negative light. If the context of the quote Clement is using is employed, then it may be alluding to the restoration of proper temple worship. Therefore, Clement, using this line of reasoning, could have possibly been referring to a future temple and ideal state at the second coming. The minimum that can be proved from this passage is that Clement believed that a future temple would exist in which the messiah would suddenly appear. The tone of the passage addressing the complacency of worshipers is in keeping with the book of Malachi that Clement quotes. Inferring from this information, we can see that there was a living tradition of temple theology in the Christian community that survived the destruction of the temple.

[94] See *The Apostolic Fathers*, third edition, Michael Holmes, Baker, 2007.

The Christian Flight to Pella and the Destruction of the Temple

At the beginning of the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66 A.D. the Christians are said to have left Jerusalem for the city of Pella. Pella is located on the eastern side of the Jordan and was not a participant in the revolt. The fourth century historian Eusebius records the flight to Pella and is the oldest known source for this tradition. Eusebius states that the Christians were warned by an oracle from God. [95] There have also been archaeological digs in Pella attempting to verify this account, but very little has physical material supporting the Christian flight to Pella has been forthcoming.[96] However, there is ancient tradition claiming a Christian presence,

> Finally, a few bits of evidence seem to imply an abiding early Christian presence at Pella. The Christian apologist Aristo (early to mid-second century A.D.) came from Pella, implying a significant Christian presence in the second century A.D., if not earlier. Later Christian historians like Eusebius make it clear that Pella was considered a wellspring of early Jewish-Christian Ebionite thought, which was later condemned as a heresy by Byzantine authorities. If the early Christians fled from Jerusalem to Pella, they may have been the beginning of a major Christian presence at the site.[97]

If there was a significant presence of Christians in the early second century then it is quite possible that there were Christians there in the first century and that at least some were escaping from the war with Rome. If the early believers did flee from Jerusalem, it is very possible that their flight was interpreted as abandoning their brothers, the Jews, in their time of need which could have provided the impetus for the widening gap between the two sects.

There are also theological considerations of the flight. The Jews believed that they were fighting righteously against the Romans while the Christians were warned by prophecy to flee Jerusalem. It could be argued that the prophecy that the Christians heeded was Luke 20:-22,

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[95] Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History.* Translated by C.F. Cruse Peabody MA: Hendrickson 2001. 70.

[96] See Stephen Bourke. "Flight to Pella: True or Tale?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* Vol. 39 NO. 3 May/June 2013.

[97] Stephen Bourke. "Flight to Pella: True or Tale?" (No page numbers available)

> "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written."

The Christians then were being faithful to their God by leaving Jerusalem. This is very similar to the writings of Jeremiah in which the prophet encouraged the inhabitants to cooperate with the Babylonians. However, the majority of people in Jeremiah's time refused to listen and the temple was destroyed for the first time (Jeremiah 38:18). This second destruction was upon Jerusalem and the Christians were the only ones being faithful to Yahweh. It is therefore likely that the Christians were not only being faithful to the messiah's prophecies, but also saw themselves as the inheritors of the prophetic tradition found in Jeremiah. Therefore, the Christian flight to Pella is not because of a rejection of the Hebrew heritage of the faith or a rejection of Jerusalem or the temple, but in obedience to Yahweh and follows in the prophetic tradition of the latter prophets who were always persecuted for their views and actions.

Summary and Conclusion

The view of the temple to the religion found in the Old Testament and much of the intertestamental literature is that of veneration. This high view of the temple and its services such as the liturgy and sacrificial system was shared by the writers of the New Testament and most of the other first century Christian writings. There is not a disparaging word against the temple to be found in the New Testament and its writers as well as the words of the messiah held the temple in high esteem, believing it to be a part of God's divine design. The earthly temple is a counterpart to the heavenly and this feature is stressed in Revelation. Therefore, we see that the temple is indeed not only a feature of the literature, but of creation and heaven itself. A popular modern Christian view of the temple is that it is something for the Old Testament believer and

does not concern believers in the messiah. However, in light of the evidence presented in this research, that the messiah, apostles and other first century Christians held the temple and its services in high esteem, then New Testament believers should reevaluate how we think of the temple. Indeed modern Christian theology should be scrutinized and brought into line with what the New Testament teaches concerning the temple and its place, not only in the lives of the Old Testament saints and first century Christians, but also to what it means for Christians today. The New Testament writers thought that the messiah will return one day and establish his kingdom on earth, the temple will be rebuilt and be a central feature of the kingdom. Furthermore, accurately portraying what the New Testament teaches is intrinsically enriching and rewarding, and will add depth to the ongoing task of understanding Christianity and its place in history.

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