

Section One.

Explorations of Heritage

Chapter one. **Paul, Jesus and the Old Testament promises.**

Paul and his place in the NT.

For generations scholars have claimed that Paul was the creator of Christianity. They have claimed that Paul changed the original message of Jesus and what emerged, it is argued, was something that Jesus himself would never have recognised as what he had taught. Such a claim is a massive blow to the authority of the Christian gospel. If the greatest teacher of the early church left his master's teaching, then there is a question that must be asked. Do Christians follow Jesus, or do they follow Paul? The claim of this book is that Paul never left the religion of the OT. In fact, it will be argued that he never departed from the teaching of Jesus.

This is a very different position from most NT scholars in the past 100 years who have not only claimed that Paul Hellenised the Jewish message, but have also argued that the gospels were written by Christian communities who invented stories and sayings about Jesus to teach the gentile believers what Jesus would have taught concerning various issues if he had lived among them. The gentiles faced issues that the Palestinian Jews would have known nothing about. The church gave its approval, it is claimed, to the composition of stories, attributed to Jesus, that would be the vehicle of instruction for the new believers. These stories, it is argued, became part of the source out of which the four evangelists composed their gospels.

Limits of knowledge.

But if these records do not accurately record Jesus teaching then we cannot possibly ask if Paul is teaching the same thing as Jesus. If they are not reliable records, then we can only guess at what Jesus had actually taught. It would therefore be foolish to say that Paul did not follow Jesus' teaching if we have no reliable record of it. This illustrates the folly of much NT research. To argue that we don't have the original teaching of Jesus and then to say Paul rejected it is blind prejudice. Of course the answer from some will be that we know Jesus taught as a Jew and Paul taught as a Greek, and this justifies the assertion that Paul left the teaching of Jesus, but this claim concerning Paul being Hellenistic, as we shall soon see, can no longer be sustained. If however we can demonstrate that the gospels are a faithful record of Jesus' teaching, then we can compare Paul's teaching with that of his master. Once we have considered Paul's commitment to the teaching of Jesus, we can go on to examine: *The Contours of Pauline Theology*.

The structure of the book

To help the reader navigate this book we will briefly examine its structure. First, in chapter 1, we will consider whether the OT Scriptures were significant for Jesus and Paul. We will also examine the claim that the gospels are not a reliable record of the teaching of Jesus. Then in chapter 2 we will examine the sources that Paul based his teaching on. Did he really depart from Jesus, was he really a Hellenist teacher, or has he been misunderstood? In chapter 3 we will pause to consider the way scholars are using ancient Jewish literature known as the Pseudepigrapha. These are considered important documents for understanding both the Gospels and

Paul. We need to ask if this material is relevant to the study of the NT. In chapter 4 we consider Paul's thinking when he speaks about believers being slaves. By studying this particular example it will help us to decide if Paul stayed within his preconversion Jewish theological framework, the setting that most scholars see as Jesus natural conceptual home. If we conclude that he did, then it will give grounds for seeking to interpret him from within this spiritual and intellectual framework. Having done this necessary ground work we will explore particular subjects that are key themes in the theology of Paul in chapters 5-12. These studies will seek to focus on an OT framework for understanding the mindset of Paul. The themes chosen center on the way God saves a people through the death of Jesus. Finally, in section four there are two appendixes provided to help the reader understand the extent of previous studies in this field and also to show how the early church fathers were slowly but surely influenced by the Hellenistic philosophical mindset rather than staying within the context of Biblical Salvation history.

It will become clear that the evidence powerfully suggests that the teaching of both Jesus and Paul have clear links with the OT. Only by appreciating the nature of these links can we really discover the nature of Paul's theology. We will discover that Paul's theology has its roots in the model of the Passover and Exodus which he sees to have been a type of the work of Jesus. This we will discover was the very model used by Jesus himself. The conclusion reached is that Paul departed neither from the OT Scriptures nor the teaching of Jesus.

Difficulties to understanding.

The NT presents its own set of difficulties for the reader who wants to understand its message. It was written almost two thousand years ago. We know that the meaning of words and the ideas they contain can change in a matter of years. We use the term 'generation gap' to speak of the cultural gap between older and younger generations living at the same time. The older generation struggles with the new ideas and values of the younger generation. Old words are given new meanings and new words are coined, both of which confuse the older generation. The cultural/generation gap between modern society and the NT world is immense and is an obstacle to a clear understanding of the NT.

It is hard enough to understand properly an earlier generation of our own nationality. The meaning of words has changed, the significance of customs has altered and the passage of time has rejected earlier beliefs so that they are no longer held or even understood. How much more difficult it is to understand the NT! Not only is there the massive cultural gap that makes study of the NT difficult, there is also the complication of mixed alien cultures. The NT is dealing with more than one people group. It is interacting with the culture of a range of peoples and assumes that the reader is aware of their significance for particular statements. While all but one of the NT writers were Jews,¹ most of the NT writers wrote for both Jews and Gentiles. So what culture did they set their writings in? Was it Jewish, Greek, or was it some lost variant? Perhaps culture didn't really matter. Many modern cultures switch without thought between their own and American culture. Were the

¹ Luke was the exception but it is generally accepted that he had learned the Jewish mindset and wrote from that perspective, See Strauss, *Davidic passim*..

NT writers doing the same? How do we decide on the imagery used by the NT writers and from what culture it was from?

NT Scholars have struggled with these obstacles for years. Most modern scholars think that the early church sacrificed its Jewish inheritance. This they argue was inevitable, so that its missionaries could effectively communicate its message to the Gentile world. This has led the majority of scholars to assume that the NT is made up of layers of traditions that reflect these early stages of change.

NT origins.

For most NT scholars there are three layers of tradition that make up the NT documents. The first is Jewish material that comes from the life and teaching of Jesus in Palestine. After Pentecost the church took its message concerning Jesus to the Jews of the Diaspora. These Jews lacked much of the social background of the Palestinian Jews. To communicate with them the message was simplified. Imagery that would have been easily understood in Palestine, but meaningless in other parts of the world, was dropped. In its place was put imagery that the Diaspora Jews would have been familiar with. Local Palestinian customs were explained, Jesus was portrayed as a universally significant figure and demands that could only be met in Palestine were dropped. Thus a second layer of tradition emerged.

The third layer of tradition came when the church began to proclaim its message to the Gentiles. These knew even less of the Palestinian background of Jesus' life and teaching than did the Diaspora Jews. Furthermore, the Gentiles lacked the knowledge of the Old Testament that the Diaspora Jews shared with the Palestinian Jews. At this point, most scholars believe, the original Jewish message was all but abandoned as the Christian community tried to win the Gentile world. Teaching that was essential to the Jewish understanding, but that was offensive to Gentiles, was dropped. New imagery to explain the church's teaching was developed. So, for example, redemption was described as being purchased as a slave in the market, and Jesus was deified.²

These three stages of evolution, from a Jewish message to a fully Gentile (Hellenistic) religion with Jewish origins, are assumed to be part of the historical development of the NT writings.³ Much NT scholarship is an attempt to identify these layers in the NT documents. Scholars spend much of their professional lives trying to identify the stage in this development that a particular text has come from.⁴

But this practice raises a very important question. How do we know the meaning of the NT documents? If they are the response to changing cultures, then which culture(s) are we expected to read them against? The impossibility of answering this question means the collapse of objective biblical truth. This is at the core of most modern thinking which has led many to abandon all hope of discovering such a thing as the authorities Biblical message.

² Beers, "Real", *passim*.

³ Erickson, "Christology", 258-9.

⁴ See Boring, *Hellenistic, passim* for an extreme example of the use of Hellenistic sources to interpret the NT. The table of contents of almost any Christological study shows how this method dominates Christological studies: see, for example the table of contents of Fuller, *Foundations* and Cullmann, *Christology*.

Doctrinal implications.

The process described above assumes that the beliefs of the early church evolved. Jesus 'became' the eternal Son of God as a result of the church's missionary work. It was essential that Jesus was shown to be superior to the pagan gods, so he was given the status of divinity. This inevitably implies that Jesus never thought of himself as being God. The belief that Jesus is the eternal Son of God, it is argued, was the product of the early church developing its missionary message. In fact, it was the product of their interaction with Greek philosophy and religion. Jesus was not the source of the church's distinctive teaching, Hellenism was! Such claims cannot but shake the foundations of traditional understanding and leave us with the question, 'Do we have the right Jesus?'

We have got into this crisis of belief because we have accepted the argument that the Christian message changed from one level of understanding to another. Each level or layer, while supposedly making it easier for the newly evangelised group to accept the gospel, actually made Jesus progressively into something he was not. All this rests on the belief that the NT is largely the product of the Gentile church.

Missionary implications.

Now if this is a true account of how the NT writings developed, then it ought to be obvious that the apostles have left an example for all future generations of Christians. Whenever the gospel is taken into a new culture, whatever is offensive or unclear to the people being evangelised should be abandoned.⁵ Missionaries, to be biblical, must rewrite the gospel using culturally acceptable symbols that help the people they seek to evangelise. The legitimacy of this contextualising process is so widely accepted that it is hardly ever commented on.

Changing attitudes.

Despite the widespread acceptance of the explanation outlined above, the assumption that the Christian message changed from a Jewish to a Gentile message is now being seriously challenged. For example, the NT scholar Mark Nanos has recently asserted: "Where NT scholarship is concerned, the

⁵ So for example, Chadwick, "All Things", 273 says: "The eschatological and apocalyptic character of the primitive Palestinian Gospel was a grave liability in preaching the Gospel of Christ to an audience of Hellenistic intellectuals, he boldly reinterpreted the Gospel so as to put into the background the concept of the end of the world, and interpreted the supremacy of Jesus Christ in terms of Cosmic Wisdom, the agent of God in creation." Cf Klijn, "Study", 431. Boers, "Jesus", 435 says: "Hellenistic Jewish Christianity may ease the transition from Palestinian Jewish to Hellenistic Christianity, but this does not alter the fact that it was a transition into something new." Kee, "Christology", 232 says: "From Jew to Gentile, from Palestine to the Diaspora, from an apocalyptic to a Gnostic environment, from the social and political role of a Jewish sect to that of a world religion - all these contextual alterations necessitated a rapid series of translations of the kerygma". Kummel, *Theology*, 105f and 118f says that it is impossible to distinguish between the thought of the earliest church and that of the Hellenists, and Marshall, "Palestinian", 283 says: "for almost every document it is possible to demonstrate its mixed Jewish and Gentile character." Davies, *Rabbinical*, 105 says: "All that we can safely assume as to the impact of the mysteries on Judaism and on Paul is that the mysteries quite definitely formed part of the milieu into which Paul brought his gospel; that Paul undoubtedly would therefore be open to their influences, and that many of the terms he used would have an undertone of meaning which would strengthen the appeal of the gospel to the Hellenistic world. Further than this however we cannot go". Stanton, *Jesus* 220: "Only with careful use of rigorous methods is it possible to isolate the earliest form of the traditions and so uncover Jesus' own self understanding." Sanders, *Paul*, 555 says, "Paul does not have simply a 'Jewish' or a 'Hellenistic' or a Hellenistic Jewish conception of man's plight. It appears that Paul's thought was not simply taken over from any one scheme pre-existing in the ancient world." Contra Munck, "Post-Apostolic", 109; Dunn "Identity" 175 and Nanos, *Mystery*, 4. The confusion between these two world views can easily be appreciated through Wright's "Faith" 77 observation "'Athens' and 'Jerusalem' often spoke about God and his relation to the cosmos in similar terms, which at best concealed the gulf that yawned between the two cities, or at worst fostered extravagant notions of agreement between the two."

literature can now be read as Jewish correspondence, written by and for Jews and gentiles concerned with the Jewish context of their faith in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah- Simply put, we can now read the NT as a Jewish book.”⁶ Scholars are recognising that the NT documents do not reflect the transition described above which has been at the heart of liberal theology. The evidence suggests that this process never took place when the NT was being written. They are Jewish documents that must be read in the cultural and religious context of pre AD 70 Judaism. It is increasingly being recognised that during the writing of the NT the church remained faithful to its Jewish heritage. It was in the second century AD that this Greek influence began to pervade the thinking of the church, after the NT documents had been written.

A generation too early.

Thus, the evolutionary model certainly applies to the teaching of the church in the second century and beyond, but not to the early community.⁷ In other words, the transition to a Hellenistic church was much later than had been assumed. It happened after the completion of the NT documents and did not effect their content. This second century process of Hellenisation was the result of two momentous events. The first was the division that took place between the church and Judaism. This separation happened in the latter part of the first century.⁸ The second was the emergence in the second century of Gentile leaders within the church. These men brought their Hellenistic intellectual training with them and they unwittingly read it into the Christian Scriptures. They used the Greek text of the OT along with the emerging NT canon that was also written in Greek. Rather than appreciating the Hebraic mindset that lay behind these writings,⁹ they treated them as ‘authentic’ Greek literature, the same as the Greek texts that they had been educate on. They soon began to lose sight of the OT background to the NT writings and in its place inserted a Hellenistic scheme of thought.¹⁰ It thus follows that the Hellenisation of the Christian Gospel was in the second century, much latter than NT scholars had assumed.¹¹

The setting of the NT.

With the realisation that the early church never abandoned its Jewish message, there emerges a much better way of explaining how the apostles communicated the gospel of Jesus. Instead of adapting the message of Jesus to the ideas of the people it was being taken to, these people were taught the Jewish Scriptures.¹² This gave them the key to understand Jesus’ message and

⁶ Nanos, *Mystery*, 7. See also Wright, *Jesus*; Hays, *Echoes*; Vermes, *Jesus*.

⁷ This is a similar mistake to that made by Bultmann and his followers who assumed that the Gnostic texts were first century writings and used them as the key for interpreting the NT texts.

⁸ Contra Dunn, *Parting*.

⁹ For examples of this see chapters 4, 5, 6 and 11.

¹⁰ The LXX was heavily influenced by the Hebrew concepts which it more often than not preserved, despite being a Greek translation. The early church, being a Jewish church, stayed in touch with this heritage even though few actually spoke Hebrew. This OT background was often lost as the emerging Gentile leaders brought heir Hellenistic mindset and its commonly accepted meanings for the words used in the NT. See Hill, *Meaning*; Ziesler, *Righteousness*; Wright, *People*; Hays, *Echoes* and Beal “Wrong Text”.

¹¹ Wright, “Faith”, 27; Dennison, “Athens”, 145ff; Riegel, “Jewish”, passim; Filson, “Crucial”, 1ff. Stegner, “Jewish”, 249 says that: “early Jewish Christians expressed their new faith in Jesus in a way that grew out of their Jewish background.”

¹² The solution is so obvious that it is embarrassing to state. We see evidence of the effectiveness of this method of communication in the examples of many groupings. Jehovah’s Witnesses teach their converts their way of reading the scriptures. Muslim evangelists teach Westerners who have no knowledge of Middle Eastern culture and history their background and slowly the convert is brought to think as the faith community rather than the faith of the

work. By understanding this OT background, the converts were helped to appreciate the life and teaching of Jesus in all of its Jewish significance. The responsibility of the church's teachers was to apply the principles of the OT, as interpreted by Jesus, to the life of the churches that were made up of both Jews and Gentiles. That this did happen is clear. The first missionaries were Jews. They first went with their message to the synagogue.¹³ In the synagogues were not only Jews who shared their acceptance of the OT Scriptures but also people known as 'God fearers'. These were Gentiles who were offended by the corruption and teaching of the Gentile religions. These God-fearers sought the God of the Jews because they respected the high moral standards of Judaism. They attended the synagogue services, but few converted to Judaism. Most God fearers found the initiation ceremony of circumcision a major obstacle to conversion.

It was to these Jews and Gentiles in the synagogue that the good news about Jesus was first taken. They had the Old Testament background. They didn't need to be taught Israel's history and Scriptures, they already shared in them. After only a short time of instruction they were able to understand the message of Jesus in almost its entirety. The God fearers enthusiastically welcomed the apostles' message that God accepted them without circumcision. They were told that God's concern was their hearts, not their flesh. Physical circumcision did not matter, it was the change of heart that really counted, this is what circumcision was intended to symbolise.¹⁴

Survival and expansion.

This explains how the early church not only survived, but how it grew. Often the apostles were driven out of the communities they had preached to, leaving behind a handful of believers. Sometimes these believers had been converted for only a matter of days.¹⁵ How could they survive without the help of the apostles? They were able to grow in their faith because they had the Old Testament. It was these Scriptures that taught them all that God was going to do. They gave them a framework to understand their past and hope to face the future.

But how did the Jews understand these Scriptures in the first century? Were the apostles imposing some new meaning on these sacred writings or was their message plainly supported by these texts? To understand why it was so natural for Jews and God fearers to accept the teaching of the apostles we need to understand what the Jews had been waiting for. This expectation was the result of their history, the experiences that made them who they were. Within Judaism were many groupings and they certainly differed from each other in understanding. Their own particular history determined how they interpreted detail. Nevertheless, all of these groups shared the common history of Israel and this common history gave them a large measure of agreement over the big picture that the OT gave. Most, like the community at

community is surrendered for the sake of evangelising the unbeliever. The tragedy and weakness of the church has been that it has sold its birthright for a morsel of pottage.

¹³ Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:2, 10, 17; 18:4; 19:8. Note Longenecker's view ("Prolegomena", 151) when he writes: "we could probably highlight as being of major importance the axis that ran from Roman Christianity back to the Jerusalem church in Judea. And if that be true, then we should understand Paul's Roman addressees - even though dominantly Gentile believers, and so within the orbit of his Gentile ministry - to be principally influenced in their thought, traditions and religious practices by Jewish Christianity as centered in Jerusalem.

¹⁴ Rom. 2:28-29; Eph. 2:11-18; Phil. 2:2-3.

¹⁵ Acts 13:40-14:7

Qumran, thought that other groups were excluded from the events that were foretold. To understand how the Jews interpreted their Scriptures, and to understand the big picture that united them, we need to review briefly their history.

Redemptive history-a brief sketch of key events.

The following outline is basic but necessary for a proper understanding of Jewish identity. Most readers will be familiar with it and may want to proceed to the section, 'The promise of restoration'.

The Jews boast that they have a unique history. Their claim is that the only true and living God, the creator of all things, chose Abraham and promised him the land of Canaan as his inheritance. A promise was given to Abraham regarding his descendants. This promise was formalised by a covenant¹⁶ or agreement between God and Abraham that was to be the basis of all that happened to Abraham's offspring.

After many trials and set backs, Abraham and his family eventually settled in the land of Canaan and prospered. But as with all families there were difficult times. A major set back came some hundreds of years later when the family, now very large, had to migrate to Egypt to survive a famine that was ravaging Canaan. Here they had plenty of food. However, as time went by, the government of the land changed and took a hard line against immigrants. The Jews became the object of ferocious persecution and they were forced to work as slaves. For a period their male babies were put to death at birth.¹⁷

The birth of a redeemer.

It was at this point that another great Jewish figure came onto the scene of history, Moses. As a baby his life was spared when an Egyptian princess found him. She adopted him as her son and so he entered into the royal family.¹⁸ Eventually, as an adult, he transferred his allegiance to his own people. After 40 years in exile he returned to lead his people to freedom. Pharaoh did everything possible to stop them leaving.¹⁹ Moses warned him that if he did not let the people go, then his firstborn son, and those of all the other Egyptian families, would be struck dead. The warning was ignored. However, the Jews obeyed what they were told to do. Taking the blood of a slain lamb, they smeared it on the doorposts of their homes and stayed indoors.²⁰ That night the angel of death came through the land of Egypt. Where he saw the blood, he passed over the home. Where the angel found no blood, he killed the firstborn male child. This was the night of the Passover that Jews celebrate to this very day. It is still the greatest event in Jewish history.

The story of the Exodus is well known. Moses led the Jews out of Egypt. However, instead of immediately possessing the land their ancestors had left, because of disobedience, they journeyed in the wilderness for 40 years. Eventually, the Jews once again settled back in the Promised Land. Their history continued to have its highs and lows.

¹⁶ Gn. 15:1-21; 17:1-27.

¹⁷ Ex. 11:8-22

¹⁸ Ex. 2:1-10

¹⁹ Ex. 5:1-11:10

²⁰ Ex. 12:21-18

From theocracy to monarchy.

Thinking that the success of the surrounding nations was because they had kings, they became a monarchy. Their first king was Saul.²¹ He was succeeded by another important figure in Jewish history, king David. The Bible presents David as a man of great integrity who strove to do what he knew God wanted of him. Under his leadership the nation was made secure and prosperous. Despite this he was denied the one thing that he wanted to do. He longed to build a temple for God to dwell in. God would not allow this because David as a military commander had shed much blood. However, God was pleased with David's desire and promised that rather than David building a house for God, God would build a house for him. The family of David would become the Jewish royal dynasty. David was promised that one of his descendants would always rule over the chosen people.²²

The failure of hope.

Tragically David's son, Solomon, was not the king that the nation needed. Although he was known for his wisdom in dealing with the nation's problems, he couldn't apply his wisdom to his own life. He demanded far too much tax from the people to achieve fabulous building programmes. But worse still, he abandoned the clear instruction of Israel's God that forbade marrying foreign wives. This was commanded because of the fear that the gods of the other nations would gain a foothold in the nation. This is exactly what happened. Solomon's foreign wives brought their entourages with them. Soon there were thousands of foreigners living in Jerusalem as part of the extended royal family, and their gods were being worshipped. Monotheism was abandoned and paganism, which they had suffered so much to overcome, was now being practiced. All this took place in the very temple of Israel's God.

With the worship of these foreign gods came the life styles of the surrounding nations. The Jewish people imitated them and in doing so broke the moral commands that God had given them. This act of flirting with the gods of the surrounding nations was described as adultery.²³ Israel's God was described as a husband and Israel was depicted as his bride. When they had left Egypt under Moses' leadership they had entered into a solemn agreement, a covenant.²⁴ They had promised to be faithful to their God and He in return promised that He would be faithful to them as a nation. In that covenant agreement was the warning that God would not accept other gods sharing Israel's life. If they did, God would put her away.²⁵

As Israel's national life declined, God sent prophets to warn her of the consequences of turning away from Him. The nation had divided under two kings.²⁶ The kings rejected the prophets' message and the divided nation declined further into moral chaos. Eventually God acted against his people. First the Assyrians invaded the breakaway northern kingdom. Its cities were destroyed and the people were taken into exile.²⁷ Latter, the Babylonians came against Judah, the part of the original twelve tribes that had stayed

²¹ 1 Sam. 10-31
²² 2 Sam. 7:1-17.
²³ Ezek. 16:15ff; Hos 3:1.
²⁴ Ex. 24:8.
²⁵ Ex. 23:32-33.
²⁶ 1 Kings 1 2:1ff.
²⁷ 2 Kings 17:1ff.

faithful to the house of David. They destroyed its towns and villages. They then lay siege to the capital Jerusalem and eventually overthrew it.²⁸ They destroyed the entire city including the sacred temple. The royal family were either put to death or taken into captivity along with almost the entire population.²⁹ It was the beginning of one of the darkest periods of ancient Israel's history.

The promises of restoration.

Understandably the morale of the nation collapsed. They never thought God would allow this to happen to them. They saw the exile as God's punishment for their sins and found great difficulty in thinking that there could be a new start. But this is the very thing that the prophets had promised. In spite of the collapse of the royal family, they predicted that a descendant of David would be raised up.³⁰ He would lead the people from their captivity back to the Promised Land.³¹ He would be anointed with the Spirit of the Lord for this task.³² He would lead the people through the wilderness,³³ it would be just like when the Jews left Egypt, for it would be a Second Exodus. The pilgrimage through the desert would be under the protection of the Holy Spirit,³⁴ just as the pilgrimage from Egypt had been. There would be miracles³⁵ like when they came out of Egypt, and the desert would be transformed as nature shared in the recreation of the nation.³⁶ The returning exiles would return telling of the salvation of God.³⁷ There would be a new covenant established which would be centered on the Davidic prince³⁸ and, unlike when the people came out of Egypt when their flesh was circumcised, this time the hearts of the people would be circumcised.³⁹ This return from exile would be their return to Eden.⁴⁰ Once the people arrived back at Jerusalem they would build a magnificent temple that the descendant of David would dedicate.⁴¹ Into this temple all the nations would come to worship Israel's God.⁴² The Lord would come into his temple⁴³ and finally, the wedding between God and his people would be celebrated with a great cosmic banquet.⁴⁴

We find the history of the return of the Jews from exile in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and the minor prophets such as Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. What these books show is that while the people attempted to build a temple,⁴⁵ it was a poor pathetic attempt compared with that which had been destroyed by the Babylonians.⁴⁶ They constantly looked for the coming of the

²⁸ Jer. 39; 2 Kings 25ff.

²⁹ 2 Kings 25:1ff.

³⁰ Isa. 11:1; 55:3-4; Jer. 23:1-8; 33:4-17.

³¹ Isa. 11:11; 48:20-21; 52:1-12; Ezek 36:24.

³² Isa. 61:1-2.

³³ Hos. 2:14, 12:9.

³⁴ Isa. 44:3; 59:21; 61:1-3; Ezek 36:24-28; 37:1-4.

³⁵ Mic. 7:15.

³⁶ Isa. 55:13.

³⁷ Isa. 52:7-10.

³⁸ Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1; 55:3-4; Jer 33:14-17.

³⁹ Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek 36:26-27.

⁴⁰ Isa. 51:3.

⁴¹ Ezek. 44-45.

⁴² Isa. 2:1-5; 9:1-5; 19:23-25; 49:6-7, 22-23; 56:3; 60:3, 10; 65:17.

⁴³ Isa. 4:2-6; 25:9-10; 35:3-6; 40:3-5,9,11; 59:15-17,19-21; 60:1-3; 62:10-11; 63:1,3,5,9; 64:1; 66:12,14-16,18-19; Exek. 43:1-7; Hag. 2: 7, 9; Zech. 2:4-5, 10-12; 8:2-3; 14:1-5, 9, 16; Mal. 3:1.

⁴⁴ Isa. 54:1-8; 61:10; 62:4-5; Hos. 2:16,19.

⁴⁵ Ezra. 3:7ff; Neh. 4:1ff.

⁴⁶ Hag. 2:3-9.

descendant of king David,⁴⁷ but he did not come, and for four hundred years they groaned in their sense of failure, guilt and disappointment.

This period of 400 years saw no significant change for the Jews. They were always effectively under the control of another nation. They longed for their exile to end. They had returned to their own land but they were as far from God as they had ever been, for He had not fulfilled His promises. Not until they had complete freedom could they accept that their punishment was over. The literature of the Jews during this period, known as the intertestamental period or the second temple period, clearly shows the faith that they had. They clung to the hope that God would yet fulfil the promises He had made to them through the prophets. These Scriptures, which we have surveyed above, became their light throughout the long dark years of shame under the domination of the Greeks and then the Romans. The following examples illustrate this hope.

The Dead Sea Scrolls.

The *Damascus Document* provides clear evidence of the expectation of a coming Davidic messiah who would fulfil the Isaianic prophecies. He was called both the Root and the Branch, titles familiar in NT Christology as well as in the prophetic expectations of the 7th and 8th centuries BC:

A ruler shall [no]t depart from the tribe of Judah when Israel has dominion. [And] the one who sits on the throne of David [shall never] be cut off, because the "rulers staff" is the covenant of the kingdom, [and the thous]ands of Israel are "the feet," until the Righteous Messiah, the Branch of David, has come. For to him and to his seed the covenant of the kingdom of His people has been given for the eternal generations, because he has kept [...] the Law with the men of Yahad. For[...the "obedience of the people]s" is the assembly of the men of [...] he gave⁴⁸

Another document from Qumran known as *Joshua Apocryphon* gives further information about the community's expectation as to what the descendant of David would achieve:

He will not [abandon Zion], to make His name dwell there, the Tent of Meeting....[to the end] of time, for, look, as a son is born to Jesse son of Peretz son of Ju[dah...he will choose] the rock of Zion and drive out from there all the Amorites from Jeru[salem...] to build the temple for the Lord, God of Israel, gold and silver [...] cedar and pine shall he bring from Lebanon to build it; and his younger son[shall build the temple...and Zadok] shall serve as priest there first[...] [...]from heaven [...] the Lord's beloved will dwell there securely [...]for a long] time and his people will dwell for ever. But now, the Amorite is there, and the Canaanite [and the Jebusite and all the] inhabitants who have committed sin, whom I have not sought [...] from you. As for the Shilonites, I have made them servants [...]⁴⁹

Other texts from the scrolls tell of how the Davidic messiah would complete

⁴⁷ Hag. 1:13-14; Zech. 3:8-9.

⁴⁸ *A Genesis Florilegium* (4Q252) Fragment 1 Column 5, translated by Wise, Abegg and Cook *Scrolls* 277.

⁴⁹ *Joshua Apocryphon* (4Q522) Fragment 1 Column 2, translated by Wise, Abegg and Cook *Scrolls* 422-3.

his work by establishing a spiritual temple (a building of holiness). It was not a physical building that he was going to construct, it was a spiritual one. It would be made up of the Community Council in conjunction with the 'sons of Heaven'.

...He gave you authority, O ye (4) this was how He glorified it when you sanctified yourself to Him, when He made you a Holy of Holies...for all.⁵⁰

In the book of Ezekiel there was the expectation of an eschatological temple, so in Qumran. This expectation was in fact based on Ezekiel's vision in chapters 40-48.⁵¹ The Qumran community used the imagery of the OT to describe their relationship with Yahweh. As the Jews saw themselves to have become the bride of Yahweh in the wilderness, so they believed they had been called into the wilderness for this unique relationship. It would be at this time, when Yahweh took her as His bride, that the Gentiles would enter the blessings of the covenant community:

Like one whose mother comforts him, so He will comfort them in Jerusalem (Isa 66:13) [and He will rejoice as a bridegroom] over his bride. His [presence] will rest upon it for ever, for His throne will last forever and ever, and His glory [...] and all Gentiles [...] for beauty [...] I will bless the [Lord...] Blessed is the name of the Most High [...] [...] Bless, [O my soul....You have placed] Your mercies upon me [...]You have established it on the Law [...] the book of Your statutes [...]⁵²

The Exodus certainly formed the pattern of expectation for the Qumran community. In the War Scroll document it sees God to be involved in history in the same way that Isaiah had spoken of. The Messiah's eschatological victory over Belial and his forces would be a repetition of God's triumph over the armies of Pharaoh.

By the hand of Thine anointed, who discerned Thy testimonies. Though hast revealed to us the [times] of the battles of Thy hands that Thou mayest glorify Thyself in our enemies by levelling the hordes of Satan, the seven nations of vanity, by the hand of Thy poor whom Thou hast redeemed [by Thy might] and by fullness of thy marvellous power. (Thou hast opened) the door of hope to the melting heart: Thou wilt do to them as Thou didst to Pharaoh, and to the captains of his chariots in the Red Sea.⁵³

A major difference between the understanding of Qumran and the NT is that the former looked for two Messiahs. One was to be a king from the tribe of Judah and the other a priest from the tribe of Levi. For the Christian community there was only one Messiah. He comes from the tribe of Judah and is the son of David. He fulfils both offices of king and priest in his own

⁵⁰ *The Children of Salvation* (Yesha') and the *Mystery of Existence* (4Q416,418). Fragment 1.

⁵¹ cf *The Words of Michael*(4Q529) and *The New Jerusalem* (4Q554).

⁵² *Hymns of the Poor* (4Q434, 436) Fragment 1 column 1, translated by Wise, Abegg and Cook, *Scrolls* 394-5.

⁵³ 1QM 11:7c-10a, translated by Vermes *Scrolls* 116.

person.⁵⁴

Thus, in the expectations of Qumran, there was the ongoing hope that the prophecies of the exilic period would yet be fulfilled. They looked for two messiahs who would fulfil all that the prophets had predicted.⁵⁵

Josephus.

Josephus tells us how Theudas promised that the Jordan would divide once again and how another prophet predicted the repetition of the miracle of Jericho on the walls of Jerusalem. Josephus also tells how the weaver Jonathan foretold of miracles in the wilderness.⁵⁶ He repeatedly tells how the messianic pretenders called their followers to the desert,⁵⁷ the location that popular opinion associated with the coming of eschatological salvation. This practice was founded on the historical fact that the Jews came from the wilderness following their Exodus, to claim their inheritance.

Psalms of Solomon.

The Psalms of Solomon, of Pharisaic composition, show how the prophetic expectation of the New Exodus was flourishing in the first century BC. Psalm 17 gathers all the main threads of the prophetic predictions together and cultivates an expectation of a coming Davidic Messiah. The Psalm speaks of God's promise that David's kingdom will never end (v4) and then appeals to God to fulfil His promises and give Israel her king. Lohse summarises the Psalmist's expectations thus:

*This king will throw off alien dominion, seize the holy city from the foe, purge it of the heathen, subdue the peoples, judge the tribes of Israel, and rule the land in purity and righteousness, so that nations will come from the ends of the earth to see his glory and look on the glory of the Lord vv21-46. He will rule as a righteous king who is taught by God Himself. In his days no wrong will be done, for all are holy and their king is the servant, the Lord's anointed v32.*⁵⁸

The Book of Tobit.

The involvement of the Gentiles in the eschatological salvation is discussed in the book of Tobit. The author says:

After this they will return from the places of their captivity, and will rebuild Jerusalem in splendour. And the house of God will be rebuilt there with a glorious building for all generations for ever, just as the prophets said of it. Then all the Gentiles will turn to fear the Lord God in truth, and they will bury their idols. All the Gentiles will praise the Lord, and his people will give thanks to God, and the Lord will exalt his people. And all who love the Lord

⁵⁴ Eisenmann, *Uncovered*, 225, against the common consensus, claims that the recently published texts show that the Qumran community's expectation of one Messiah, who was a king and a priest, was the origin of the NT doctrine. The NT writers are more likely to have got their model from Zech. 6:13.

⁵⁵ See Fitzmyer, "Use" 324.

⁵⁶ Josephus, *Ant.* 20.5.1; 20.8.6 and *B.J.* 7.9.1; *Ant.* 20.8.6 respectively.

⁵⁷ *Ant.* 20.97-99, 167f, 188.

⁵⁸ Lohse, *TDNT* 8:480.

*God in truth and righteousness will rejoice, showing mercy to our brethren.*⁵⁹

The Book of Baruch.

Baruch also refers to the Exodus when it says:

*Arise; Jerusalem, stand on the heights and turn your eyes to the east;
see your sons reassembled from the west and the east at the command of the
Holy One,
jubilant that God has remembered them.
Though they left you on foot,
with enemies as an escort,
now God brings them back to you like royal princes carried back in glory.
For God has decreed the flattening of each high mountain,
of the everlasting hills the filing of the valleys to make the ground level,
so that Israel can walk in safety under the glory of God.
And the forests and every fragrant tree will provide shade for Israel at the
command of God;
for God will guide Israel in joy by the light of his glory with his mercy and
integrity for escort.*⁶⁰

The Rabbinic Writings.

We find in the Rabbinic literature⁶¹ repeated references to the Exodus as a model of final redemption.⁶² There was widespread expectation of a repetition of the signs of the Exodus⁶³ and the expectation of once again being taken into the wilderness to meet with God.⁶⁴ This would happen on the night of the Passover.⁶⁵ It was believed that a new Moses would lead the people, a new Moses who was identified with the promised descendent of David.⁶⁶ It was expected that once again the people would be fed miraculously with manna. Ben-Sira, in his extended prayer for deliverance, prays for a repetition of ‘signs and wonders’ in a final redemption constructed on Exodus categories.⁶⁷ On the analogy of the Exodus, the end time glory would be revealed on the 14th of Nisan.⁶⁸

Another strand of the Rabbinic material relates to the offering of Isaac by Abraham (the *Aqedah*).⁶⁹ In this material, the Passover, the 14th of Nisan,

⁵⁹ Tobit 14:4-7.

⁶⁰ Bar 5:5-9.

⁶¹ For a discussion on the dating of the Rabbinical literature see chapter 10.

⁶² Str.-B, 1:68ff, 85ff; 2: 284f, 293; 4: 55f.

⁶³ Str.-B, 1:85, 4: 954.

⁶⁴ Str.-B, 4: 939f.

⁶⁵ Jeremias, *TWNT* 4: 857 note 111.

⁶⁶ *Mekilta* on Ex.12:42, *R.Johhua b.Hananiah*, c 90; cf. *Tg. Yerus* 1 Ex 21:42; *Tg. Yerus* 11 Ex 15:18 cf. 12:42), and later, Ex R.18.12 on 12:24; “Let this sign be in our hands on the day when I wrought salvation for you, on that very night know that I will redeem you.” cf. Ex R.51:1 on Ex 12:2; Jeremias, *Eucharistic*, 207.

⁶⁷ *The Book of Wisdom* is an Alexandrian Passover Haggadah, so Buckley, *Phrase*, 53.

⁶⁸ Passover was the occasion of creation and will be the night of the coming of the Messiah.

⁶⁹ c.f. Chilton, “Isaac”, 78ff who rejects the Rabbinic material as admissible evidence for interpreting the NT on the grounds that the date of the material cannot be proved to be pre-apostolic. However, Hengel, *Atonement*, 63; Miller, “Targum”, 29ff and York, “Dating”, 49-62 regard the Palestinian Targums earlier than the first century. McNamara, “Review”, 67ff claims that the Targums represent substantially the liturgical paraphrase of the NT period and that all who attended the synagogue would recognise the language. Carey, “Lamb”, 97ff does not doubt the antiquity of the material but says that it was not used by the NT writers because it had so many complicated Rabbinical interpretations that the differences between the death of Christ and the *Aqedah* were more than the similarities and therefore would confuse the message they were seeking to give concerning the meaning of the cross.

becomes the crucial date that marks the anniversary of all other major historical events. It celebrates the creation of the world, the offering of Isaac, the fall of Jericho and the coming of the Messiah who will appear in Jerusalem on the last Passover. Some strongly contest the date of this material. However, the objections can be shown to be misdirected.⁷⁰ If the earlier dating is accepted then there is certainly significant evidence that Judaism in the NT period linked the final redemption with the Passover. This final celebration in the presence of the Messiah is inevitably seen to fulfil the New Exodus expectations.

The NT.

We have seen a strong expectation of a New Exodus within the OT and throughout the intertestamental literature. Clearly this hope was powerful and sustained Israel throughout her suffering. What we need to establish is whether this hope of a New Exodus had any significant influence on the writers of the NT.

Scholarly recognition.

There are a number of scholars who are strongly supportive of there being a “New Exodus” pattern in the Gospels of Mark and Luke.⁷¹ They claim to have identified the presence of highly developed theological insights which could be triggered off by OT texts.⁷² The mere quotation of a short text had the effect of alerting the reader to the OT passage that it had been taken from. In this way these texts had a far greater significance for the first readers of the NT than is normal today. Their knowledge of these passages meant that they automatically understood the passage of the NT that they were reading in the light of the OT passage out of which the quotation had been drawn.

The generally recognised New Exodus material in the NT is in Acts 26:17-18; Gal 1:3; Col 1.12-14 and Rev 1:5-6.⁷³ Luke 1-2 reflects the expectations of a group of devout Jews at the time of the birth of Jesus. These were clearly in touch with the same traditions that are reflected in the Damascus Document found at Qumran.⁷⁴

The testimony of Jesus and of John.

It is the longing for the fulfilment of these New Exodus promises that are the background to the NT. All four Gospels open with John the Baptist saying that he is ‘the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord’.⁷⁵ The importance of this text is clear in that it is one of the few passages that all four gospels preserve. John took the words from the prophecy of Isaiah which announced the coming of the descendant of David to fulfil God's promises. When Jesus stood up in the synagogue, he said that

Hanson, *Technique*. 82f says that if there is a type of Christ to be found in the *Aqedah*, then it is to be found in the ram, for it was that which actually died.

⁷⁰ See chapter 10.

⁷¹ Mánek, “Luke”, 8-23; Bowman, *Mark, passim*; Watts, *Isaiah, passim*; Klijn, “Origins”, 7; Daube, “Structures”, 174-87; Piper, “Unchanging”, 16; Wright, *Jesus, passim* and Stahlin, “Exodus”, 82.

⁷² See Dodd, *According, passim*; Hays, *Echoes, passim*.

⁷³ These will be discussed later.

⁷⁴ See Strauss, *Davidic*, 43-4.

⁷⁵ Matt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 3:4; Jn. 1:23.

the Spirit of the Lord was upon him to preach the good news to the poor.⁷⁶ He was claiming to be the one who had come to bring freedom from captivity. He was claiming to be the son of David, the promised king.

The fact that both the Baptist and Jesus⁷⁷ began their ministries by quoting Isaiah is very significant, the former Isaiah 40:3-5 (Lk 3:4-6) and the latter Isaiah 61:1-2 (Lk 4:18-19),⁷⁸ both passages being New Exodus based. By using these texts they were declaring that the eschatological salvation that Isaiah had predicted was at long last breaking into human history. This understanding is confirmed by the question John asked when he sent messengers to Jesus to ask if he was the Christ. Jesus replied by pointing to the signs of Isaiah.⁷⁹ These were the very signs that Isaiah wrote of that would accompany the New Exodus when it finally happened. Jesus also commended John saying that he fulfilled the prophecy of the one sent before the Lord to prepare His way.⁸⁰ Clearly both the Baptist and Jesus set their ministries in the context of the Isaianic predictions of the New Exodus.

The testimony of the Father.

At Jesus' baptism, the voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased'. This is widely recognised to be based on Isa 42:1ff.⁸¹ In other words, God was identifying Jesus as the Servant who would bring about the New Exodus. Indeed, on the mount of Transfiguration, a key incident in the Gospel, Jesus talked with Moses and Elijah about 'his coming *Exodus*', not the much weaker 'departure' as NIV.⁸² This Exodus theme is stressed even more by the way Jesus took his disciples to the upper room to celebrate the Passover. There can be no doubt that He wanted his death to be understood as a Paschal offering. His death was for his disciples and was the means of their redemption. Without it there could be no Exodus for them.

David replaces Moses.

Among the expectations that were commonly shared relating to the New Exodus was a belief in the identity of the new Moses. He was not to be of the tribe of Levi, like Moses, but of the tribe of Judah. He was to be none other than the promised descendant of David whom Yahweh had declared would have an everlasting throne.⁸³ Jesus' fulfilment of the promises⁸⁴ relating to the predicted Davidic deliverer are crucial for appreciating the early church's understanding of the person and work of its saviour.⁸⁵ It is no coincidence

⁷⁶ Lk. 4:18-19.

⁷⁷ "Jesus presented his ministry as the fulfilment of the whole future hope of the Old Testament, the day of the Lord and the coming Messiah." France "Prophecy", 58.

⁷⁸ Hooker, "Beginning", 222 points out that Jesus follows the LXX but omits the phrase 'to heal the broken hearted' and includes another, namely, 'to set at liberty those who are oppressed' which is taken from Isa 58.6. Hooker thinks that the variation is not of any importance. But what this does show is that Jesus has deliberately underlined the liberation, i.e. New Exodus significance of the miracles he is performing.

⁷⁹ Lk. 7:21-22.

⁸⁰ Lk. 7:27.

⁸¹ Stanton, *Jesus*, 225.

⁸² οἱ] οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐν δοξολογίᾳ αὐτοῦ/(ἡ] ἡ; μὲν πληροῦς ἐν
Ἱερουσαλὴμ, ἢ ἄλλοι Lk. 9:31.

⁸³ See 2 Sam 7:16. Ellis, *Prophecy*, 195 says that 2 Sam 7 is used in Acts 13:6-14 in a midrashic manner. He also points out that 2 Cor. 6:7 and Heb. 1:5 show that a Christian reference to the text is assumed.

⁸⁴ Kaiser, "Promise", 13, says that the NT has more than forty references to the promise and uses the technical term *epaggelia* and its cognates *epangelma* and *epaggelomai*.

⁸⁵ Some see the title 'Son of David' to reflect the primitive Christology of Acts, so Black, "Romans" in

that the evidence brought against Jesus, evidence that secured his crucifixion, related to his claims to kingship.⁸⁶ Nor is it less of a coincidence that Jesus denied claims to an earthly kingdom, while asserting his claim to a spiritual one.⁸⁷

The NT writers did not need to keep using the term ‘son of David’. They could choose from a range of related titles that to the first century believer meant exactly the same thing.⁸⁸ Many scholars say that Matthew’s gospel shows Jesus is the second Moses.⁸⁹ This misses the fact that Moses is rarely mentioned in direct contrast to Jesus, whereas David is repeatedly recalled. Matthew clearly has an exodus structure, but it is not Moses who brings this deliverance about, it is the son of David. This is what the prophets had foretold. The significance of Jesus being the son of David would be clear to any Jewish believer. The fact that Jesus had died with the inscription “the King of the Jews” above his head⁹⁰ at Passover spoke of the Davidic prince offering Paschal sacrifices.⁹¹ This was something that Ezekiel had predicted and is a theme that we will investigate more fully later in our study.⁹² The king was establishing the kingdom into which his subjects were to be incorporated.⁹³

The importance of the prophets.

If we bypass the eighth century prophets and merely link the significance of Jesus’ Davidic descent with the promise to David of an eternal throne, then we miss the New Exodus motif that is lurking beneath the surface of the title.⁹⁴ This motif is not only in the Gospel narratives where Jesus is continually honoured as the long-awaited descendant of David. It is also in the preaching of the early church, as recorded in Acts. The reference to the

NBC, 37; Krammer, *Christ*, 241; Gibbs, “Purpose”, 464 and Hahn, *Titles*, 60. Its OT basis is in such passages as 2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:3f,19f; Isa. 11:1,10; Jer. 23:5f, 30:9ff; Ezek. 34:23f, 37:24f. The expectation was clearly continued in the intertestamental period Ps Sol. 17:23(21); 4Qp Isaa; 4QPB1; Damascus Rule (vii). Johnson, “Motif”, 146, cites 4QBt 3 which he believes to be possibly as old as 150 BC to support the expectation of a Davidic Messiah amongst the Essenes. The passage says that God has chosen the tribe of Judah and made a covenant with David who was to be shepherd and prince of the people. See Vermes, *Scrolls* 224 for other examples. Aune, “A Note”, 165, says that the significance of 11 Q Melchizedek is that it provides the first piece of conclusive evidence before AD 70 that the proclamation of glad tidings could be considered a significant aspect of the Messianic task. The importance of the house of David for the NT church can be seen in that the grandsons of Jude, the brother of Jesus, were brought before Domitian (AD 81-96). Although they acknowledged their Davidic descent, Domitian was convinced that the kingdom they sought was not an earthly kingdom and restored their freedom, see Johnson, “Motif”, 150 and Kingsbury, “Title”, 591ff. Teeple, “Origin” 237 says that the Son of David Christology represents the earliest Christology which eventually developed into the Son of Man description. This pre-occupation with David explains why the Psalms should be seen as an important source of OT quotation in the NT contra Zeitlin, “Essence”, 507 who says that Messianic expectation came only after the destruction of the temple in AD 70.

⁸⁶ Jn.18:33-39.

⁸⁷ Jn. 18:36.

⁸⁸ So Root of David, Christ, the Branch etc.

⁸⁹ See Robinson, “ Primitive”, p187 foot note 7 who demonstrates the assumption many scholars make of a Moses typology governing the NT.

⁹⁰ Jn.19:19. The title’s Paschal significance is seen only when it is remembered that the “king was the Son of God”, so Goppelt, *Theology*, 167f. The King was the federal head of his people and they were bound in covenant to him. Similarly Wright, *Messiah*, 12-13. The evangelists stress the timing of Jesus’ death to be the Passover, Lk. 22:7-8; Jn. 18:39,19:36., and that the victim is none other than the only begotten, Messianic (firstborn Psalm 89:27), Son of God. See chapter 10.

⁹¹ C.f. Ezek. 45:25.

⁹² See chapters 8 and 10.

⁹³ See chapter 7.

⁹⁴ For David’s part in the New Exodus see foot notes 21-32. Carroll, “Failure”, 119ff says that Isaiah was a failure as a prophet because he gave prophetic encouragement which failed to materialise. For David in Qumran see Brownlees, “Motifs”, 23-24.

raising again of the tent of David⁹⁵ is particularly significant. It demonstrates that it was not merely the role of the Davidic descendant that Jesus fulfilled, but that the early church clearly saw that all aspects of the Davidic covenant were being fulfilled in him. Because he had come, the Gentiles could now be welcomed into the covenant community. Coupled with the title son of David is the title “the Christ”, which is used regularly throughout the epistles. This title carried with it all the messianic associations of the son of David.⁹⁶

New Exodus themes.

Other New Exodus themes are widely dispersed throughout the NT. The New Covenant,⁹⁷ circumcision of the heart,⁹⁸ gift of the Spirit,⁹⁹ pilgrimage,¹⁰⁰ the return to Eden,¹⁰¹ the eschatological temple¹⁰² the conversion of the nations,¹⁰³ and their inclusion in the covenant community¹⁰⁴ and the eschatological marriage,¹⁰⁵ are further examples of OT expectations that overflow into the aspirations and understanding of the early church. They saw that it was Jesus who had brought these promises to fulfilment. It was Jesus who had brought about the New Exodus and with it its resultant blessings. Behind these widely recognised themes there is a whole substructure of allusions. Once the paradigm has been identified, this substructure lights up with a clarity that is compelling.¹⁰⁶ Much of this material requires detailed exegesis. Wright gives examples of this, but in my opinion he loses the focus of the OT paradigm in some important areas and the result is sometimes a less than convincing argument.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁵ Acts 15:15-17. The *hesed* of the Psalms is to be identified with the sure mercies of David in the prophetic literature, so Kaiser, “Promise”, 21. This has the effect of drawing much of the theology of the Psalms into the expectations of the New Exodus. Thus the righteous sufferer becomes the representative of the Jewish people waiting for their vindication by Yahweh by his saving act. Indeed, some of the Psalms deal with the actual Exodus itself. Nixon, *Exodus*, 19 lists the following Psalms as recounting the Exodus, Ps. 66, 77, 80, 81, 105, 106, 114, 135, 136.

⁹⁶ Wright, *Messiah*, 11.

⁹⁷ 2 Cor. 3:6, 5:17, 6:16-18; Heb. 8:8-13.

⁹⁸ Rom. 2:28-29; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11.

⁹⁹ Rom. 8:9-27; Gal. 4:6-7; 2 Cor. 3:16-17; 4:6-7; Eph. 1:13-14, see Turner, *Power*, ch 6.

¹⁰⁰ Gal. 5:18, 25; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; Eph. 6:13-17; Phil. 3:12-14; Heb. 3:7-4 & 11; 12:1-3 & 18-28. The NIV confuses the identification of this motif by translating walk (*peripateite*) by ‘lives’.

¹⁰¹ 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 22:1-18.

¹⁰² 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22; Rev. 21:1-4.

¹⁰³ Rom. 10:12, 15:14-15; Acts 9:15, 15:13-18; Eph. 2:11-21.

¹⁰⁴ Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 3:6.

¹⁰⁵ Mtt. 22:1-14; Jn. 3:29-30; Rom. 7:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25ff; Rev. 19:6-8.

¹⁰⁶ Klijn, “Origins” 7, Daube, “Structures” 174-87, Piper “Unchanging” 16; Stahlin, “Exodus” 82; Watts, *Isaiah passim*.

¹⁰⁷ Wright seeks to consider Jesus as a prophetic figure who speaks as a man of his age. He attempts to interpret the words of Jesus in their historical context. He allows Jesus no more special knowledge than would be expected of a religiously focused Jew who considered himself to be called of God to be a prophet. Wright sees the New Exodus paradigm as the key to Jesus’ teaching and seeks to interpret the words and action of Jesus in the light of it. This I agree with, but I disagree with his understanding that Jesus spoke only about his relationship to Israel and her redemption. It is this that causes Wright to interpret the parable of the prodigal son as the story of Israel’s return from the Babylonian exile. The elder brother, according to Wright, represents the inhabitants of the land who do not want chastened Israel back (*Jesus*, 126). It is very difficult to see that the people of the land could be seen as self righteous, for they were anything but faithful to Yahweh. It is much better to see that Jesus wasn’t restricted to a nationalistic interpretation of the return from exile but that he saw this included the Gentiles as well. Indeed, Wright’s own premise that nothing more is to be attributed to the knowledge of Jesus than a correct reading of the OT would give allows for a universal perspective. As we have seen, the prophets had made it clear that the Gentiles were to share in Israel’s return from exile, their exile having been much longer than Israel’s. In other words, the Pharisees condemning Jesus for welcoming sinners, who as far as the Pharisees were concerned were no better than the Gentiles, were actually condemning the very God who was about to welcome Gentiles into the covenant and the family of God. The elder son in the parable is self-righteous Israel offended that the Gentile sinners, typified by the tax collectors, were being received into the covenant. Because Wright fails to see the universal focus of the New

Conclusion.

This survey demonstrates the level of saturation that the expectation of a New Exodus had reached at the time of Jesus ministry. What is abundantly clear is that the hope of these promises one day being fulfilled did not die. In all of the Jewish literature that we have of the period there is clear evidence that the hope of the New Exodus sustained the nation as a whole. They waited for the day when these promises would finally be fulfilled. To ignore this expectation in any attempt to understand the NT message would be folly.

Returning to the question that was asked at the beginning of this chapter. Are the Gospels reliable records of the teaching of Jesus? The answer must be that there is no reason to reject them as being so. Scholarship has failed until recently to appreciate the essential Jewishness of these writings and has read them through a lens that has seriously distorted their message. Given the correct lens, that of the fulfilment of the prophet's promises of a New Exodus, the gospels are saying nothing that requires a later date or a different religious background from first century Judaism to make sense. In the next chapter we will examine if Paul shared this same expectation.

Exodus in the teaching of Jesus he tends sometimes to give an artificial and unconvincing interpretation in some of his exegesis. It was in fact the insistence of Jesus that Gentiles would be preferred before Jews (Mtt. 8:1-13; 20: 1-16; 21: 33-45; 22: 1-14; Lk. 14: 15-23) that caused such deep offence. There are other areas where I dispute the details of Wright's interpretation and these I will deal with as the study progresses. This lack of focus is important because Wright says that he gives the interpretation of this parable as as: "a case study to wet the appetite, to point forward to some of the main themes that will develop, and to underscore the points of the method." (*Jesus*, 126). Despite this disagreement, I would affirm that Wright has brought to wider attention what other scholars had been concluding for individual NT books (so Klijn, "Origins", 7; Daube, "Structures", 174-87; Piper, "Unchanging", 16; Stahlin, "Exodus", 82 and Watts, *Exodus, passim*), i.e. the fundamental importance of the New Exodus motif for understanding the NT. In my judgment he is correct to say: "it is hard to overestimate the importance of the exodus story within the historical, political and theological world view of second Temple Judaism." And again: "that story resonated in a world view which most Jews were looking and praying that would come true once more, this time for good." (*Jesus*, 577). Contra Sanders, *Palestinian*, 512-3 and Johnson, "Histogramical", 224.