

ECKHARD J. SCHNABEL

Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament*

406

Mohr Siebeck

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406



Eckhard J. Schnabel

Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church

Missionary Realities in Historical Contexts

Collected Essays

Mohr Siebeck

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To

Bob Yarbrough, Hans Bayer, Craig Blomberg

friends in Aberdeen thirty-five years ago,

friends and colleagues still, in Deerfield, St. Louis, and Denver

Preface

The essays collected in this volume have been written over the past 25 years, the 1992 essay shortly after my return from Manila, Philippines, where I had been teaching at the Asia Theological Seminary. It continues to be the norm, or at least the aspiration, of most European New Testament scholars to engage in research and writing across all the major areas of New Testament research, from Jesus to Paul and to the early church, utilizing philological and historical methods and newer approaches to literary texts to elucidate the world of the earliest Christians and the meaning of their texts in context, while also focusing their questions and the synthesis of the results of their research on the theological concerns and implications of the life and teaching of Jesus, Paul, and the early church. This variegated interest has informed my research, teaching, and writing since my doctoral studies at the University of Aberdeen and as I have taught in Manila, Wiedenest, Gießen, Deerfield/Chicago, and Hamilton/Boston. Twenty-five years ago, there were not many New Testament scholars who wrote on the missionary work of the early church, nor even on the missionary work of Paul. This has changed considerably. My own research interests have turned again and again to the realities of the work of Jesus, Paul, John, and the early church, as the following essays indicate.

Most of the essays published in this volume were written as a response to invitations to contribute to *Festschriften* and other essay volumes, or as presentations at conferences. The essays have been harmonized as far as format is concerned, and infelicities have been eliminated; they have not been updated in the light of more recent research. The bibliographies at the end of each essay list the primary sources and the secondary literature referred to in the essay.

I am most grateful to Professor Jörg Frey for accepting the volume for the WUNT series, to Dr. Henning Ziebrizki and Katharina Gutekunst from Mohr Siebeck for facilitating the publication with the cheerfulness and competence that continue to be the trademark of Mohr Siebeck, and to Bettina Gade and Elena Müller for their editorial work on the manuscript. I am again grateful to Steve Siebert of Nota Bene for a wonderful word-processing software that allows the production of camera-ready manuscripts. I thank my assistant Kelly

R. Bailey for help with the manuscript, especially with the indexes. Above all, I thank my wife Barbara for her cheerful and unstinting support during all these years living and working in Asia, Europe, and North America.

This volume is dedicated to Bob Yarbrough, who initiated my move to the North America and was a colleague at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield/Chicago, and to Hans Bayer and Craig Blomberg – all fellow doctoral students at the University of Aberdeen when I. H. Marshall modeled New Testament scholarship at its highest levels while contributing to the life and mission of the church, who now teach at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis and in Denver Seminary, respectively, and who continue to be friends, always ready with a word of encouragement.

Hamilton, Mass., Mai 2018

Eckhard J. Schnabel

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary. Edited by D. N. Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1972
ABR	Australian Biblical Review
AE	Année épigraphique
AGAJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Edited by W. Haase, and H. Temporini. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1972–
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
AV	Authorized Version
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BAGD	Bauer, W., W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. Second Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BBR	Bulletin for Biblical Research
BCH	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. Third Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000
BDF	Blass, F., A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk. A Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961, Reprint 1982.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BEvTh	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BHTh	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	Biblica
BNP	Brill's New Pauly. Edited by H. Cancik, and H. Schneider. Leiden: Brill, 2002–2012
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BT	Bible Translator
BTB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology

CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CIIP	Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palestinae. Edited by H. M. Cotton, L. Di Segni, W. Eck, B. Isaac, A. Kushnir-Stein, H. Misgav, J. Price, I. Roll, A. Yardeni, and W. Ameling. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010–2014
CIJ	Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum. Edited by J. B. Frey. New York: Ktav, 1975
CIQ	Classical Quarterly
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
CPJ	Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum. Edited by V. Tcherikover, and A. Fuks. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957–1964
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DDD	Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible. Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Brill: Leiden, 1995
DGE	Diccionario Griego-Español
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert [of Jordan]. Oxford: Clarendon, 1955–2002
DJG	Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels. Edited by J. B. Green, S. McKnight, I. H. Marshall. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992
DLNTD	Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments. Edited by P. H. Davids, R. P. Martin. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997
DNTB	Dictionary of New Testament Background. Edited by C. A. Evans, S. E. Porter. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000
DPL	Dictionary of Paul and his Letters. Edited by G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, and D. G. Reid. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993
DSSSE	The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition. Edited by F. García Martínez, and J. C. E. Tigchelaar. Leiden: Brill, 1997–1998
EA	Epigraphica Anatolica
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary
EDNT	Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by H. Balz, and G. Schneider. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–1993
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar
EBib	Études Bibliques
EHS	Europäische Hochschulschriften
EPRO	Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
ET	English Translation
ETAM	Ergänzungsbände zu den Tituli Asiae Minoris
ETL	Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses
EÜ	Einheits-Übersetzung
EUS	European University Studies
EWNT	Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament. Edited by H. Balz and G. Schneider. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1980–83
ExpTim	Expository Times
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FilNT	Filologia Neotestamentaria
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FS	Festschrift
fzb	Forschungen zur Bibel
GNB	Gute Nachricht Bibel
GThA	Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten

HAL	Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament. Edited by L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Third Edition. Leiden: Brill, 2004 [1995]
HALOT	The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament in English. Edited by L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm. Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000
HdA	Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft. Begründet von Iwan von Müller
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HFA	Hoffnung für Alle
HNT	Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
HThK	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUTH	Historische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
HWR	Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by G. A. Buttrick. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
IG	Inscriptiones Graecae
IGLS	Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie. Edited by L. Jalabert, R. Mouterde, J.-P. Rey-Coquais, M. Sartre, and P.-L. Gatier. 21 vols. Paris: Institut français du Proche-Orient, 1911–1993
IGR	Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes. Edited by E. Leroux. Paris: Leroux, 1906–1927; reprint Chicago: Ares, 1975
IJudO	Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis. Edited by D. Noy, A. Panayotov, H. Bloedhorn, and W. Ameling. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004
IK	Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien
ILS	Inscriptiones latinae selectae. Edited by H. Dessau, Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1916 [1954–1962]
Int	Interpretation
IVPNTC	IVP New Testament Commentary
JAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JGRChJ	Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JRA	Journal of Roman Archaeology
JRASup	Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
JSHJ	Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus
JSJ	Journal the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods
JSJSup	Journal the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSP	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
KJV	King James Version

KNT	Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
KP	Ziegler, K., W. Sontheimer, and H. Gärtner, eds., <i>Der Kleine Pauly. Lexikon der Antike. Auf der Grundlage von Pauly's Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . 5 vols. Stuttgart: Druckenmüller, 1964–75
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio Divina
LEH	Lust, J. E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint</i> . Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1992–1996
LN	Louw, J. P., E. A. Nida. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains</i> . New York: United Bible Society, 1988
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, and H. S. Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . Ninth Edition, with revised supplement edited by Peter G. W. Glare. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
LÜ	Luther-Bibel (1984)
LXX	Septuagint. LXX texts are taken from the Göttingen Septuaginta
Maj	Majority Text
MAMA	Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua
MM	J. H. Moulton, G. Milligan. <i>The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources</i> . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982 [1930]
MT	Masoretic Text
NA ²⁸	Nestle-Aland. <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> . 28th Revised Edition. Edited by B. Aland, K. Aland, J. Karavidopoulos, C. M. Martini, B. M. Metzger, and H. Strutwolf. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEAEHL	New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land. Edited by E. Stern. Jerusalem/New York: Israel Exploration Society/Carta, 1993
Neot	Neotestamentica
NET	New English Translation
NewDocs	New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity. Edited by G. H. R. Horsley and Stephen R. Llewelyn. North Ryde, New South Wales: Macquarie University, 1981–2012
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIDB	New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Edited by K. D. Sakenfeld. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–2009
NIDNTT	The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. Edited by C. Brown. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975–1978
NIDOTTE	New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis. Edited by W. A. VanGemeren. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NovT	Novum Testamentum
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements series
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers

NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTA	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTD	Neues Testament Deutsch
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	New Testament Studies
NTTS	New Testament Texts and Studies
OCD	Oxford Classical Dictionary. Edited by S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth. Fourth Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
OGIS	Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae. Edited by W. Dittenberger. 2 vols. Leipzig: Hirzel 1903–1905
ÖTK	Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar
OTP	Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Edited by J. H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. Garden City: Doubleday, 1983–1985
P. Coll. Youtie	Collectanea Papyrologica: Texts published in Honor of H. C. Youtie. Edited by A. E. Hanson, et al. Bonn: Habelt, 1976
P. Oxy.	Oxyrhynchus Papyri. Edited by B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt, et al. London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1915–
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
Petzl	Petzl, G. Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens. EA 22. Bonn: Habelt, 1994.
PKNT	Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
PSI	Papiri greci e latini. Edited by G. Vitelli, M. Norsa, V. Bartoletti, et al. Florence: Ariani, 1912–2008
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
PW	Pauly, A. F. von, and G. Wissowa, W. Kroll, K. Mittelhaus, K. Ziegler, and H. Gärtner, eds. Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. 84 vols. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1894–1980
QD	Questiones disputatae
QR	Quarterly Review
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum. Edited by T. Klauser et al. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950–
RB	Revue Biblique
RdQ	Revue de Qumran
RE	Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Edited by A. F. Pauly, G. Wissowa, W. Kroll, K. Mittelhaus, K. Ziegler, H. Gärtner. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1894–1980
REB	Revised English Bible
ResQ	Restoration Quarterly
REÜ	Revidierte Elberfelder Übersetzung
RHDFE	Revue historique de droit français et étranger
RHPR	Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RRJ	Review of Rabbinic Judaism
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RV	Revised Version
SB	Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten. Edited by F. Preisigke, et al. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1974 (1913–14)
SBAB	Stuttgart Biblische Aufsatzbände
SBB	Stuttgart Biblische Beiträge

SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBM	Stuttgarter Biblische Monographien
SEG	Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum. 55 vols. Edited by J. J. E. Hondius, H. W. Pleket, R. S. Stroud, and J. H. M. Strubbe. Leiden: Brill, 1923–2010
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SNTSMS	Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
StANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
StNT	Studien zum Neuen Testament
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
TAM	Tituli Asiae Minoris
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Edited by G. J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, and H.-J. Fabry. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
ThHKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TRu	Theologische Rundschau
ThWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933–1979
TLNT	Theological Lexicon of the New Testament. Edited by C. Spicq. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995
TLOT	Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament. Edited by E. Jenni and C. Westermann. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997
TNIV	Today's New International Version
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
TRE	Theologische Realenzyklopädie. Edited by G. Krause, and G. Müller. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977–2007
TynBul	Tyndale Bulletin
USQR	Union Seminary Quarterly Review
VoxEv	Vox Evangelica
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZEE	Zeitschrift für evangelische Ethik
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
ZRGG	Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

The abbreviations of ancient sources follow Patrick H. Alexander et al. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Second Edition. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2014; Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider, Manfred Landfester, eds. *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopedia of the Ancient World*. Leiden: Brill, 2002–2010.

Jesus – Messianic Teacher

1. Jesus and the Beginnings of the Mission to the Gentiles

In his Inaugural lecture, I. H. Marshall asserted that “Jesus saw his task as the renewal of the people of Israel who had fallen away from the true relationship to God. Although he restricted his activity almost exclusively to the Jews, he showed a particular concern for the poor and the outcasts of society, which suggests that in principle he was open to the inclusion of Samaritans and Gentiles under God’s Kingdom”.¹ Among the implications regarding the common basis in the teaching of Jesus, Paul and John, he pointed out that “for all the three teachers the salvation events are regarded as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy and that the area of fulfilment is the people of Israel now open in its membership, at least in principle, to all who accept Jesus as Lord”.²

Indeed, Jesus has been called “the primal missionary”: his conduct was the starting point of the early Christian mission.³ Since the early Christian movement saw the mission to the Gentiles as a logical feature of its mission,⁴ the issue of Jesus’ position regarding the Gentiles is of fundamental importance.⁵ This question has been answered in basically two ways.⁶ First, Jesus did not

¹ I. Howard Marshall, “Jesus, Paul and John”, *Aberdeen University Review* 51 (1985): 18–36 (= I. Howard Marshall, “Jesus, Paul and John”, in *Jesus the Saviour: Studies in New Testament Theology* [London/Downers Grove: SPCK/InterVarsity Press, 1990], 35–56, esp. 42). The Inaugural lecture to the Chair of New Testament Exegesis in the University of Aberdeen was delivered on 9 November 1983.

² Marshall, “Jesus, Paul and John”, 52–53.

³ Martin Hengel, “The Origins of the Christian Mission [1971]”, in *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1983), 48–64, 166–79, esp. 62, referring to Erich Gräßer, “Jesus in Nazareth”, *NTS* 65 (1969–70): 1–23, here 22.

⁴ Cf. E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 220.

⁵ Pace Hengel, “Origins”, 62, who claims that this question is “a secondary problem”.

⁶ For reviews of the history of research see particularly Ferdinand Hahn, *Das Verständnis der Mission im Neuen Testament*, WMANT 13 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1963), 19–22; David J. Bosch, “‘Jesus and the Gentiles’ – a Review after Thirty Years”, in *The Church Crossing Frontiers: Essays on the Nature of Mission*, FS Bengt Sundkler, ed. P. Beyerhaus and C. F. Hallencreuz (Uppsala: Gleerup, 1969), 3–19; Hubert Frankemölle, “Zur Theologie der Mission im Matthäusevangelium”, in *Mission im Neuen Testament*, ed. K. Kertelge, QD 93 (Freiburg: Herder, 1982), 93–129, esp. 100–2; Werner G. Kümmel, “Das Urchristentum. II. Arbeiten zu Spezialproblemen”, *TRu* 52 (1987): 268–85, esp. 268–78.

sanction a mission to the Gentiles. There are at least three versions of this position: (1) Jesus forbade his disciples on principle to engage in a mission among Gentiles; the Gentiles are thought to be brought into the kingdom of God by God's own action in the last days as fulfilment of the prophetic vision of the nations' pilgrimage to Zion.⁷ (2) Jesus deliberately limited his ministry to Israel, not wanting his disciples to witness to non-Jews; the conception of an active Gentile mission derives from the Hellenistic Jewish Christians in Jerusalem or from Paul.⁸ (3) A more cautious version of this view suggests that Jesus did not express any conviction about the Gentiles and the kingdom of God since his vision concentrated on the restoration of Israel.⁹

Second, the Gentile mission originated with Jesus in some way: (1) Jesus limited his ministry to Israel while envisaging a future inclusion of the Gentiles in the kingdom of God, with the resurrection and the Great Commission being the starting point of the universal mission of the disciples.¹⁰ (2) Jesus' vision was concentrated on Israel, the positive encounters with Gentiles were unplanned exceptions, there is no clear evidence for the assumption that he advocated a future inclusion of the Gentiles, but Jesus' ministry and some of his sayings opened up perspectives which logically led to the early Christian Gentile mission.¹¹ (3) Jesus himself was consciously involved in outreach to Gentiles and may be regarded as the first missionary to the Gentiles.¹²

⁷ Cf. Joachim Jeremias, *Jesu Verheißung für die Völker*, Franz Delitzsch-Vorlesungen 1953 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1959 [1956]), 32–33, 47ff, 60ff; also Bengt Sundkler, "Jésus et les païens", *RHPR* 16 (1936): 462–99 (= Bengt Sundkler, "Jésus et les païens [1936]", in *Contributions à l'étude de la pensée missionnaire dans le Nouveau Testament*, Arbeiten und Mitteilungen aus dem neutestamentlichen Seminar zu Uppsala, ed. B. Sundkler and A. Fridrichsen [Uppsala: Das Neutestamentliche Seminar zu Uppsala, 1937], 1–38); Helene Stoevesandt, *Jesus und die Heidenmission*, Diss. theol, Göttingen, 1943), 141ff.

⁸ Cf. Heinrich Kasting, *Die Anfänge der urchristlichen Mission*, BEvTh 55 (München: Kaiser, 1969); Frankemölle, "Theologie der Mission", 117–18.

⁹ This view is held, with variations, by Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Fourth Revised Edition (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1924 [1902]), I, 39ff; Hengel, "Origins", 54ff, 62; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 221.

¹⁰ Cf. Max Meinertz, *Jesus und die Heidenmission*, NTA 1/1–2 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1925 [1908]), 84ff and passim; similarly David Bosch, *Die Heidenmission in der Zukunftsschau Jesu. Eine Untersuchung zur Eschatologie der synoptischen Evangelien*, AthANT 36 (Zürich: Zwingli, 1959), 76ff, 193ff, and passim; more recently David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology 16 (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1999 [1991]), 29–31, 39ff, 64–65.

¹¹ Cf. Hahn, *Mission*, 19–32; David J. Bosch, "'Jesus and the Gentiles' – a Review after Thirty Years", 16–17; Rudolf Pesch, "Voraussetzungen und Anfänge der urchristlichen Mission", in *Mission im Neuen Testament*, ed. K. Kertelge, QD 93 (Freiburg: Herder, 1982), 11–70, esp. 36–38, 54ff; cf. Hengel, "Origins", 63.

¹² Cf. Friedrich Spitta, *Jesus und die Heidenmission* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1909), 72ff, 109ff; Adolf Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus. Seine Sprache, sein Ziel, seine Selbständigkeit. Ein Kommentar zum ersten Evangelium* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1963 [1948]), 277–73, 339, 701–2; similarly Don A. Carson, *Matthew*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary with

We will first review three basic facts which are most relevant for our discussion: the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, the vigor of the early Christian mission to the Gentiles, and the evidence in the Gospels for a link between Jesus and the concern for Gentile mission. Secondly we will investigate Jesus' encounters with Gentiles and relevant statements about Gentiles in order to determine whether the Gospel narratives give a reliable portrait of the missionary concerns of Jesus.

1. Basic Facts

1.1 Jews and Gentiles

The attitude of the pagan world towards the Jews was mixed. There were on the one hand those who were impressed with the integrative potential of Israel's monotheistic faith and with the ethical rigor of the corresponding praxis.¹³ As a result there were Gentiles who decided to become Jews, despite the social alienation from their old context demanded by the Jewish cultic regulations. Besides these "proselytes" there were "God fearers", people who remained sympathizers and who took over several of the (less strict) Jewish laws. On a more official level, in the Diaspora Jews were generally appreciated as loyal citizens. Many Hellenistic cities welcomed them as traders. Around 200 BC Antiochus III Megas settled 2,000 Jewish families from Mesopotamia in Lydia and Phrygia to consolidate his strategic interests in these regions (Josephus, *A.J.* 12.148–153). Around 139 BC further Jews migrated to Asia Minor (cf. 1 Macc 15:16–23).¹⁴

the New International Version. 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995 [1984]), 202, 248, 596–97; evidently also I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, Second Edition (Exeter: Paternoster, 1989), 140–41, and I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 768, 903–04; R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1989), 232–35.

¹³ Fergus Millar wrote recently that "no full and satisfactory study of proselytism in the Graeco-Roman period has yet been written"; in Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)*, revised by G. Vermes, et al. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–87), III.1, 150.

¹⁴ Cf. Getzel M. Cohen, *The Seleucid Colonies: Studies in Founding, Administration and Organization*, Historia. Einzelschriften Heft 30 (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1978), 4ff, 87ff; Paul R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, SNTSMS 69 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 5ff.

On the other hand, there was a hostile attitude vis-à-vis the Jews which should not be underestimated.¹⁵ This attitude was the effect of official manipulations of public sentiments in times of crises, or the result of the provocation which the non-conformistic and yet attractive Jewish religion constituted for non-Jews, particularly the refusal to intermarry and the impossibility of cult- and table fellowship. There was an anti-Jewish propaganda which sometimes resulted in outright persecution. Polemical and mocking remarks about Jews are found in the writings of Cicero, Seneca, Quintilian, Juvenal, and Tacitus.¹⁶

It is disputed whether there was an active Jewish missionary effort among Gentiles. Some scholars interpret the available literary and archaeological evidence as indicating that there must have been an “advertising” activity by Jews among Gentiles.¹⁷ Others deny that there was an active Jewish mission to Gentiles.¹⁸ It seems to be true, at any rate, that in most cases the impetus for conversion had to come from the Gentile: “It was extremely unusual for any Jew in the first century AD to view the encouragement of gentiles to convert to Judaism as a praiseworthy act”.¹⁹ The number of proselytes was probably not very high.²⁰ The barriers for Gentiles wanting to become Jews were considerable. The main hindrances were the requirement of separation (corresponding

¹⁵ See generally J. N. Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism in the Ancient World*, Numen Sup 41 (Leiden: Brill, 1975); Menachem Stern, “The Jews in Greek and Latin Literature”, in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern, CRINT I.2 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), 1101–59; Schürer, *History*, III.1, 150–58; Nicholas R. M. de Lange and Clemens Thoma, “Antisemitismus I. Begriff/Vorchristlicher Antisemitismus”, *TRE* III (1978): 113–19; John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

¹⁶ Cicero, *pro Flacco* 28.67; Juvenal, *Sat* 6.160; 14.96–106; Tacitus *Hist.* 5.8; Menachem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Science and Humanities, 1974–84), I, nos. 68, 298, 301; II, no. 506. The Alexandrian anti-Jewish polemic can be seen in Josephus’ apologetic text *Contra Apionem*.

¹⁷ Cf. Heikki Solin, “Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt. Eine ethnisch-demographische Studie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der sprachlichen Zustände”, *ANRW* II.29.2 (1983): 587–798 (Index 1222–49), esp. 616 n.45; also Schürer, *History*, III, 153–59.

¹⁸ Cf. Martin Goodman, “Proselytising in Rabbinic Judaism”, *JJS* 40 (1989): 175–85; Scot McKnight, *A Light Among the Gentiles. Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

¹⁹ Goodman, “Proselytising”, 175, concludes from the (scarce) evidence in the Talmud that no Amoraic text reports a tanna of the second century AD making a positive statement on proselytizing; the first such positive statements come from the third and the early fourth century. Goodman advances the hypothesis that Jewish interest in a “mission to convert”, based on a conviction that this was a natural corollary of religious belief, increased during the third century AD as a result of the effectiveness of the energetic Christian mission (184–85).

²⁰ Cf. Solin, “Juden”, 610ff, who states that among the inscriptions from Rome only six refer definitely to proselytes (623 n.55). Differently Schürer, *History*, III, 160–61, who regards the success of the assumed Jewish mission as “considerable”.

to the prevention of assimilation for the Jews) and the close relation between nation and religion.²¹

When the Jews read the Scriptures with a view to establishing the attitude towards the Gentiles in their own time and in the future of the promised Messiah, they read of a pilgrimage of the nations to Zion (Isa 2:2–3; 60:3–4; Zech 8:20–23; Mic 4:1–2) and of Gentiles worshipping God in all parts of the earth (Isa 45:6; 59:19; Mal 1:11; cf. Isa 45:22; 49:6,23; 56:6–8; Zech 2:11; Micah 7:17), but they would also read of a future destruction of the Gentiles (Isa 54:3; Mic 5:10–15; Zeph 2:10–11).²² Early Jewish literature reflects this ambiguity: hope is expressed that many Gentiles will share Israel's salvation (Tob 14:6–7; *1 Enoch* 90:30–33; *Sib. Or.* 3:616, 716–718, 752–753) and there are predictions of their destruction on account of their idolatry and sexual immorality (Sir 36:7–9; *1 Enoch* 91:9; Bar 4:25,31–32,35; 1QM XII, 10; *T. Mos.* 10:7; *Jub.* 23:30; *Pss. Sol.* 17:25–27; *Sib* 3:517–518, 669–672, 761). The conclusion of Sanders seems to be correct when he states that “the evidence does not permit a precise account of the views of Jesus’ contemporaries about Gentile conversion at the end-time ... most Jews who thought about the matter one way or the other would have expected many Gentiles to turn to the Lord when his glory was revealed”.²³

1.2 The Early Christian Gentile Mission

When we turn to the evidence for the early Christian Gentile mission in the letters of Paul and the book of Acts, it appears that no Jewish Christian group disapproved of a mission to the Gentiles as such.²⁴ The disagreements which underlie the discussion of Paul in his letter to the Galatians and to the Romans concerned only the terms and conditions of the Gentile mission. The movement started by Jesus saw the Gentile mission as an entirely natural venture.

When the Christians of the Jerusalem church were forced to flee to other regions they seem to have regarded it as the natural thing to spread the gospel

²¹ Cf. Martin Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2. Jhr. v.Chr.*, 3. Aufl., WUNT 10 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1988), 560ff; Solin, “Juden”, 616. Cf. Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5.2: “Those who cross over into their manner of life adopt the same practice, and, before anything else, are instructed to despise the gods, disown their native land, and regard their parents, children, and brothers as of little account”.

²² The latter point is emphasized by Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 213ff, who argues against Jeremias, *Jesu Verheißung für die Völker*, passim (= Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* [London: SCM, 1958]), and John Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980).

²³ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 218.

²⁴ Cf. Kasting, *Anfänge*, 110–14.

beyond the confines of Judaea, not needing specific guidance from the Spirit.²⁵ This matter-of-factness included going to Samaria and preaching about the Messiah (Acts 8:4–5). The boundary between Jews and Samaritans was crossed by Philip and then by Peter and John with apparently no compunction about the legitimacy of such a move (8:5–25). When Philip’s preaching met with dramatic success, the Jerusalem apostles evidently wanted to examine this new advance with care, but the report of the visit of Peter and John (8:14ff) does not hint at any reticence regarding the possibility of faith of Samaritans. On the contrary, the apostles are described as “preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans” (8:25).

The conversion of the Ethiopian court official (8:26–39) does not pose any problems for Philip who had the confidence of the Jerusalem leaders (cf. 6:5). We do not know whether the Ethiopian was a Gentile God-fearer or, as a proselyte, “a Jew of a peculiar sort” whose status in the Jewish community was evidently ambiguous.²⁶ That Luke reports no problems regarding the conversion of the Ethiopian may be due to the fact that he returned immediately to his own, distant country without having contact with the Palestinian church.²⁷ We should notice that Luke ends the story with a note of joy (8:39).

The longest single story in the Book of Acts (10:1–11:18) recounts the conversion of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, and his family. The fundamental problem which is overcome by God giving supernatural guidance to Peter is not the Gentile mission *per se*, i.e. not the recognition that the gospel is for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews,²⁸ but the apartheid of Jewish Christians and believers among the Gentiles, particularly in the area of forthright fellowship at the table and communal living.²⁹

When Luke points out that the Christian refugees from Jerusalem who reached Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch “spoke the word to none except Jews” (11:19), he may emphasize the fact that evangelizing the Gentiles had already been initiated by Peter and approved by the Jerusalem apostles.³⁰ When some of them started to preach Jesus Christ as Lord before a Gentile

²⁵ I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles. An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 156.

²⁶ For the status of the proselyte in Judaism cf. Shaye J. D. Cohen, “Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew”, *HTR* 82 (1989): 13–33, esp. 28–30.

²⁷ Marshall, *Acts*, 160.

²⁸ Pace Marshall, *Acts*, 181; Rudolf Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, EKK 5 (Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), I, 330: “Der Judenmissionar Petrus ... wird gegen seinen Widerstand zum Heidenmissionar”.

²⁹ Note the repeated reference to eating/food (γέδομαι, 10:10; φαγεῖν, 10:13, 14; 11:7; συνεσθίω, 11:3; also 11:8) as well as to the house of Cornelius (οἶκος, 10:2, 22, 30; 11:12, 13, 14) and the house of Simon in which Peter stayed (οἰκία, 10:6, 17, 32; 11:11). The emphasis on the house of Cornelius is further seen in the verbs εἰσερχομαι (10:27, 28; 11:3) and ἐπιμένω (10:48) used in the same context.

³⁰ Cf. Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, I, 351.

audience, many believed. Howard Marshall observes that whereas it had taken divine intervention to persuade Peter to take the step to preaching to the Gentiles, “here it seems to have happened almost casually without any issues of principle arising at the outset or later”.³¹

Finally, when the church was prompted by God’s Spirit to release Barnabas and Paul for the mission to the Gentiles (13:2), the possibility of such a mission seems to have posed no problem. The fasting and praying (13:3) no doubt took place as spiritual support for their future work,³² rather than being a time of “distinguishing between spirits” (cf. 1 Cor 12:10), assessing whether a mission to the Gentiles was a viable option.

There was a group in the Jerusalem church who opposed admitting Gentile converts into the community of believers without circumcision (and possibly also adherence to food laws and) being demanded of them (Gal 2:12; Acts 15:1). We have no idea, however, how large and how influential this group of “right wing Jewish Christians in Jerusalem” were, but nothing suggests that they were dominant in the church.³³

1.3 The Gospels and the Mission to the Gentiles

It is a fair assumption that the early Christians had developed a theology of missions which included the mission to the Gentiles. The theology and the praxis of the apostle Paul, whose missionary ministry began just three or four years after the death and the resurrection of Jesus,³⁴ is the most obvious case in point. Without doubt such a theology of mission would not have been uniform, as the dispute between Paul and “those of the circumcision” shows.

Less conspicuous is the fact that all four Gospels show a discernible interest in missionary outreach to the Gentiles, although the degree to which this interest is a central or a more peripheral motif varies. I will not attempt to present the full evidence at this point. A rather sketchy review of Matthew’s Gospel and a some hints regarding the Gospel of Luke must suffice.

³¹ Marshall, *Acts*, 201.

³² Cf. Marshall, *Acts*, 216; cf. Ernst Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 7th Edition, KEK 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 380.

³³ Marshall, *Acts*, 202.

³⁴ Assuming that his sojourn in Arabia (Gal 1:17) was not a spiritual retreat for purposes of mediation and that the time in Syria-Cilicia (Gal 1:21) was not devoted to the pursuit of personal interests but missionary outreach (cf. Gal 1:23 and the probable background of 2 Cor 11:32–33 and Acts 9:24–25); cf. Marshall, *Acts*, 174; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians. A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 96, 104–5; recently Martin Hengel, “Der vorchristliche Paulus [1990]”, in *Paulus und das antike Judentum*, ed. M. Hengel and U. Heckel, WUNT 58 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 177–293, esp. 220.

In his opening sentence Matthew links Jesus with David and Abraham (Matt 1:1). This can be interpreted in terms of the conviction that the hope of a “new creation” is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who is the messianic king of Israel and heir to the Davidic promises and who is the one through whose ministry God’s promise to the patriarchs that all the nations of the earth will be blessed is being realized.³⁵ That Jesus’ designation as “son of Abraham” marks him not only as a true Jew but as the instrument of divine blessing for the nations (taking up Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18) is indicated (1) by the fact that Abraham is regularly seen in critical distance to Israel (Matt 3:9; 8:11; 22:32) and (2) by the end of the Gospel 28:19–20 where the commission to evangelize the nations clearly implies the universality of the salvation taught and brought by Jesus.³⁶

The first reported speech by human beings is the inquiry of Gentile magi who have come from the East to worship the King of the Jews (2:2) – before Jesus’ task to Israel has even begun and in tragic contradistinction to the leaders in Jerusalem. “Thus the commission to be the Son of Abraham (1:1) is here already going into effect”.³⁷ And the first “action” of Jesus, the infant Messiah, takes him to Egypt (2:13–15), another element in the introduction which points outside Israel.³⁸ The first episode of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee and his first reported words in the main body of the narrative (4:18–22) are his commissioning of Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John to follow him and to become “fishers of people” (4:19). Since the last reported words of Jesus which conclude the entire narrative (28:18–20) contain the commission to make disciples of all nations, the ἄνθρωποι in 4:19 may well imply a universal dimension.³⁹

³⁵ Cf. William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–97), I, 159–60, who interpret βίβλος γενέσεως in terms of “book of origin”. Carson, *Matthew*, 61, disagrees with the “increasingly popular view”, advocated by Zahn, Davies, Hill, Maier and others who see the phrase as a heading for the entire gospel. Even though it is true that no occurrence of the expression βίβλος γενέσεως for a book-length document has been discovered, and that it should therefore be taken as a heading to 1:2–17 or to 1:2–25, it is not impossible to assume, on the basis of Matthew’s use of γένεσις, that the evangelist wants Jesus Christ understood as a new beginning in the sense of a new creation (cf. R. T. France, *Matthew*, TNTC [Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1985], 73).

³⁶ Joachim Gnllka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, HThK I (Freiburg: Herder, 1986–88), I, 7.

³⁷ Cf. H. J. Bernard Combrink, “The Structure of the Gospel of Matthew as Narrative”, *TynBul* 34 (1983): 61–90, esp. 77; also Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I, 253.

³⁸ Cf. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*, 233. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I, 281 n.53, find it questionable that the references to Egypt further the Gentile theme, referring to Ulrich Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, EKK I (Zürich/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1985–2001), I, 129 who allows, however, that such a hint is “durchaus möglich”.

³⁹ Similarly Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I, 398: “Perhaps Matthew thought of the Gentiles as included in the *anthropon*”.

When Matthew outlines “the programme of Jesus’ active ministry” in 4:23–25,⁴⁰ he implies that the Galilean ministry (v.23) had an impact on non-Jews as well: the news of Jesus reaches Syria and the Decapolis. Coming after a reference to “all Galilee” and determined by ὅλη, Syria is most likely not a reference to the Roman province nor to the Jewish population living in *Palästina* but to the territory extending from Damascus to Antioch and eastwards and implies non-Jews hearing from Jesus.⁴¹ Whether the reference to the Decapolis (v.25), is intended to imply Gentiles among the “great crowds” who followed Jesus is unclear: it may refer, together with the other regions listed in v.25 (Galilee, Jerusalem, Judea, Perea [“from beyond the Jordan”]) and with the exception of Samaria which is not mentioned, with salvation-historical import to the ancient “holy land”;⁴² if the reference is determined by the contemporary historical situation, the Gentile majority of the Decapolis cannot *a priori* be excluded.

In the Sermon, followers of Jesus are described as “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (5:13, 14). Both γῆ and κόσμος cannot be made to refer to the land of Israel⁴³ but have a universal reference. These verses imply therefore a universal mission of the disciples,⁴⁴ at least for the evangelist. The significance of this universal dimension is highlighted by the fact that 5:13–16 may be regarded as a “summary statement of the task of the people of God in the world”.⁴⁵ The narrative section 8:1–9:34 which reports on Jesus’ healing ministry recounts in central position encounters of Jesus with Gentiles: the healing of the centurion’s servant (8:5–13) and the healing of the Gerasene demoniacs (8:28–34).

⁴⁰ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I, 412, quoting Birger Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts of Jesus according to Matthew* (Lund: Gleerup, 1979), 23.

⁴¹ Thus recently Gnlika, *Matthäusevangelium*, I, 108; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I, 417. Luz, *Matthäus*, I, 181 with n. 16, sees a reference to the entire Roman province but interprets in terms of Gentile recipients of the news of Jesus’ ministry as well. Syria is *hapax legomenon* in Matthew.

⁴² Cf. Gerhard Lohfink, “Wem gilt die Bergpredigt? Eine redaktionskritische Untersuchung von Mt 4.23–5.2 und 7.28f”, *ThQ* 163 (1983): 264–84, esp. 275–76; France, *Matthew*, 105, Gnlika, *Matthäusevangelium*, I, 108–9, with caution Luz, *Matthäus*, I, 180–81.

⁴³ Pace William J. Dumbrell, “The Logic of the Role of the Law in Matthew 5.1–20”, *NovT* 23 (1981): 1–21.

⁴⁴ Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I, 472, 479; Gnlika, *Matthäusevangelium*, I, 135–36, who regard, however, the statements as redactional, “presupposing” the Gentile mission. Schlatter, *Matthäus*, 146, states: “Der Beruf der Jünger hat keine Grenzen; sie sind zur Menschheit gesandt. Das letzte Wort des Evangeliums: *eis panta ta ethne* 28,19 ist auch das erste, das den Jüngern ihren Beruf zeigt”. Cf. Georg Strecker, *Die Bergpredigt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 52: “An der Durchführung des Missionsauftrages entscheidet sich das Jüngersein”.

⁴⁵ Thus the heading for this pericope in Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I, 470. Gnlika, *Matthäusevangelium*, I, 133 categorizes the statements as “Definitionssätze”.

Moving to the later sections of the Gospel, we notice that the last element of Matthew's general description of the "signs" indicating that Jesus is coming back (24:4–14) is the feature that "this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations" (24:14). The end of the world cannot come until the gospel has penetrated ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ and has reached outside the Jewish world to πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.⁴⁶ The first section of the passion narrative (26:6–27:66), Jesus' anointing at Bethany (26:6–13), ends with the pronouncement that "this gospel will be preached in the whole world" (26:13). The phrase ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ is even more all-inclusive than the corresponding phrase in 24:14.⁴⁷ The resurrection narrative (28:1–20) ends with Jesus declaring his universal authority and giving the disciples the commission to "make disciples of all nations". The great commission is the last, and therefore perhaps the most relevant definition of the λαός whom Jesus will save according to the announcement of the angel (1:21) – the identification of "his people" as people of all nations is the resolution of a theme that has been implied (2:1–12), predicted (8:11–12) and clarified (15:21–28) earlier in the Gospel.⁴⁸

One can make a similar case for the other Gospels. All four Gospels express a discernible interest in mission to the Gentiles.⁴⁹ Now it is a fair assumption that in their selection of the available teaching of Jesus the evangelists wanted to be relevant to the needs of his church. It is spurious, however, to argue that since they were interested in the relevance of the teaching of Jesus rather than in its origin they felt free to create sayings or settings which suited their purposes. As regards this question of authenticity, the case of Luke's Gospel seems to be particularly relevant. Luke is the only evangelist who wrote a sequel to his portrait of Jesus, narrating the mission of the early Christians after the ascension and the giving of the Spirit. A key point of this second volume is the desire to show how the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ was

⁴⁶ Cf. James W. Thompson, "The Gentile Mission as an Eschatological Necessity", *ResQ* 14 (1971): 18–27.

⁴⁷ Thus France, *Matthew*, 363.

⁴⁸ Cf. Mark A. Powell, "The Plot and Subplots of Matthew's Gospel", *NTS* 38 (1992): 187–204, esp. 196 n. 27.

⁴⁹ See generally the sketch of Hahn, *Mission*, 95–115. For Mark see Zenji Kato, *Die Völkermission im Markusevangelium: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, EHS.T 252 (Frankfurt: Lang, 1986); Klemens Stock, "Theologie der Mission bei Markus", in *Mission im Neuen Testament*, QD 93, ed. K. Kertelge (Freiburg: Herder, 1982), 130–44; for Luke see Stephen G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts*, SNTSMS 23 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 29–58; for John see Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 4 vols., HThK IV (Freiburg: Herder, 1965–75), IV, 58–72; Miguel Rodriguez Ruiz, *Der Missionsgedanke des Johannesevangeliums. Ein Beitrag zur johanneischen Soteriologie und Ekklesiologie*, fzb 55 (Würzburg: Echter, 1987); Teresa Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4:1–42*, WUNT 2.31 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988).

meant for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews⁵⁰ and how the problem of continuity between the message of “the things that have been fulfilled among us” (Luke 1:1, NIV) which retain their moorings in OT prophecy and the fact of the early Christians’ turn to the Gentiles can be explained.⁵¹ If Luke had these concerns, and if he designed a two volume project right from the start,⁵² the manner in which Luke refers to Gentiles warrants the conclusion that his references to Jesus’ encounters with and sayings about Gentiles are not apologetically motivated redactional clarifications and justifications. Luke’s “special material” on Gentiles either consists of OT quotations or remains implicit. Note (1) how the references to Gentiles in 2:32 and 3:4–6 are allusions to OT prophecy which are not developed in the respective contexts; (2) how the allusion to the Gentile mission in the commissioning of the Seventy-Two remains implicit; (3) how the saying about the men from all four corners of the earth (paralleled in Matt 8:11) is not developed either; and (4) how the command to evangelize in 24:47 (roughly paralleled in Matt 28:19) refers to “all nations” as the target group and the starting-point (Jerusalem) of the mission without being expanded along the lines of Acts 1:8.

It is further evident that the references to Gentiles are on a more modest scale than those in Matthew and in Mark. (1) Note how Luke omits Mark’s reference to Jesus’ foretelling the preaching to the Gentiles (Mark 13:10) as well as the healing of the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24–30) together with the preceding section on ritual purity (Mark 7:1–23), a sequence of pericopes which in Mark and Matt imply – in hindsight quite powerfully – a christological justification of the mission to the Gentiles. (2) Luke omits the geographical reference to Caesarea Philippi as locale where Peter confesses Jesus as the Messiah and where a new people of God is established (Luke 9:18). (3) Luke omits the phrase “for all the nations” from the quotation Isa 56:7 used by Jesus to explain his demonstration in the Temple (Luke 19:46).

Thus we see a very strong link between Jesus and a concern for mission among Gentiles in the Gospels. Although the evangelists, particularly Matthew, portray Jesus as limiting his ministry to Israel, they all point out that the vision of Jesus was larger – and not only his vision for the future, but the reality of his ministry as well. And this nexus between Jesus and mission among Gentiles cannot simply be ascribed to the aetiological interests of the Gospel writers.

⁵⁰ I. H. Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 20.

⁵¹ Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, I, 33–34, pointing out that Luke sees the solution of this problem of continuity in the soteriological will of God, which is universal and which can be traced in history as well as in the hardening and impenitence of part of Israel.

⁵² Cf. Martin Hengel, *Zur urchristlichen Geschichtsschreibung* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1979), 38, who speaks of the “historical and theological unity” of Luke-Acts; cf. Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, I, 29.