

EVA GÜNTHER

Wisdom as a Model for Jesus' Ministry

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Wisdom as a Model for Jesus' Ministry

A Study on the "Lament over Jerusalem"
in Matt 23:37–39 Par. Luke 13:34–35

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

This study is a slightly modified version of my PhD thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham in May 2017. It traces the influence of the Jewish wisdom tradition on the shaping of the earliest christology. It is a well known concept, which invests Jesus with Wisdom's function of a *Schöpfungsmittler*, that appears already in the earliest Christian sources (1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3; John 1:1-3), and early patristic writers characterised the relationship between the heavenly Christ and God the Father by identifying Jesus with the pre-existent personified Wisdom of Prov 8. The present study explores a parallel development, which took place during the formation of the gospel traditions. Particularly the "Lament over Jerusalem" in Matt 23:37-39 // Luke 13:34-35 summarises Jesus' mission in terms reminiscent of Wisdom. As it can be shown that Wisdom had come to be seen as an agent in history in some prominent Second Temple texts, her role in Israel's history can be related to the ministry of the earthly Jesus.

However, rather than being presented as an incarnation of pre-existent Wisdom, Jesus is portrayed in the logion as a representation of God *like* the divine Wisdom, who in turn had taken on features of the Angel of the Lord, famously encountered as the pillar of cloud and fire on Israel's wilderness wanderings, where he acted as a manifestation and servant of God at the same time. Wisdom is related explicitly to Angel of the Lord as she is associated or identified with the pillar of cloud in Sir 24:4, 10 and Wis 10:17. Thus, just as the role of the previously known mediator, the Angel of the Lord, had been transferred to the divine Wisdom in the Early Jewish texts portraying Wisdom as a new appearance of this "older" divine representative, the logion in Matt 23:37-39 // Luke 13:34-35 continues the tradition of actualising the image of the divine mediator by presenting Jesus in an analogous way as the contemporary representative of God in the world like Wisdom or the Angel of the Lord.

I owe thanks to many people whose support contributed to the development of my thesis, beginning with a range of academic teachers at the University of Tübingen where I completed my first theological degree, for convincing me that historical investigation could establish rather than discredit the truth about God's real engagement with humanity. I have to thank especially Prof. Peter Stuhlmacher, who first introduced me to the role of the Jewish Wisdom in shaping a high Christology.

The next person I am indebted to is Prof. Roland Deines, who accepted me as a PhD student after I had taken a long break from theology to look after my children. From the beginning, I benefitted immensely from many conversations dedicated to accuracy in historical research combined with respect for the theological truth conveyed by the ancient texts. In particular, my original intention to explore in what way Jesus was understood as a representation of the divine Wisdom by the early Christians was given a wholly new orientation, when Prof. Deines suggested to reverse the perspective by asking whether it was possible that Wisdom was, and had always been, a representation of the Son rather than the other way around. This task seemed quite impossible at the time, but it was truly helpful to look at the evidence from a different angle. Thanks are also due to my external and internal examiners, Dr. Jessie Rogers and Prof. Richard Bell, whose suggestions helped improve my argument. Finally, I want to express my gratitude to Prof. Jörg Frey (Zurich) for accepting this study for publication in the *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*.

I would also like to thank Dr. David Armitage, Terry Roots, Tim Murray, Lucy Parks, Dr. Ruth Whittle and Dr. Rachel Luckman for reading parts of the manuscript and giving their much valued feedback. Lastly, I want to thank my family. This thesis could not have been written without the support of my husband, Prof. Ulrich Günther, who allowed me time to pursue my research while he was earning a living, and without the patience of our children Leonhard and Sarah. It has been much supported by the encouragement of friends and family, who took an interest in my progress and results, most of all my father, Prof. Bernhard Fischer, who is at home in a very different subject, mathematics, but made his way through long chapters of complicated theological concepts.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations generally follow the SBL format; additional abbreviations are listed below. For Sapientia Salomonis (Wisdom of Solomon) I use the abbreviation Sap, and for the Jerusalem Word (Matt 23:37–39 // Luke 13:34–35) I use the abbreviation JW.

Translations are my own where I have not indicated otherwise.

AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
ATD Apokryphen	Das Alte Testament Deutsch Apokryphen
DCLY	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook
ECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
fzb	Forschungen zur Bibel
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
NCBCOT	New Collegeville Bible Commentary: Old Testament
SAPERE	Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam RELigionemque pertinentia

Chapter 1

Introduction: Wisdom Christology in the Jerusalem Word?

1.1 The Impact of the Jewish Wisdom on Christology

The aim of this study is to trace the influence of the Jewish Wisdom tradition on the shaping of Jesus' messianic role. The personified Wisdom of Prov 8:22ff. is clearly identified as a model for early Christology by patristic writers such as Justin Martyr and Origen. In fact, Wisdom can be ontologically identified with Jesus in statements such as these:

God has begotten himself a certain rational Power as a Beginning before all other creatures. The Holy Spirit indicates this Power by various titles, sometimes the Glory of the Lord, at other times Son, or Wisdom, or Angel, or God, or Lord or Word.¹

or

[...] the only-begotten Son of God is, seeing he is called by many different names, [...] termed Wisdom, [...]. The first-born, however, is not by nature a different person than the Wisdom, but one and the same. [...] the only-begotten Son of God is Wisdom, hypostatically ('*substantialiter*') existing [...]²

This study explores the origin of that claim. Jesus is not explicitly identified with Divine Wisdom in the NT,³ but the two are set in a close relationship, as

¹ JUSTIN, *Dialogue with Trypho* 61 (FC 6: 244 [Falls]).

² ORIGEN, *De principiis*, 1:2 (ANF 10:18). For further references to Christ's pre-existence being based on Prov 8 see: CYPRIAN, *Ad Quirinium testimonia adversus Iudaeos*, 2.1 (CSEL 3.3: 62–64).

³ In 1 Cor 1:24 Paul says that "we preach [...] Christ the power of God and the Wisdom of God" and similarly in 1 Cor 1:30 that Jesus Christ "became Wisdom to us from God," which may be taken as indicating Christ's identification with Wisdom, as held e.g. by CHARLES KINGSLEY BARRETT, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC (London: Adam & Charles, 1968), 59–60; FREDERICK FYVIE BRUCE, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 35–36. But most exegetes are not convinced that Paul is speaking of hypostasised Wisdom in this place, see e.g. WOLFGANG SCHRAGE, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4 vols., EKKNT 7 (Zurich: Benziger Verlag/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1995), 1:188, 214; HANS CONZELMANN, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 48, 51 n.25; ANDREAS LINDEMANN, *Der erste Korintherbrief*,

various functions of personified Wisdom are ascribed to him, both in the gospel tradition and Paul's epistles.

In fact, Jesus had already been assigned the role of the heavenly Wisdom in one of the earliest written Christian sources, in an "ancient formula"⁴ quoted by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. In 1 Cor 8:6 he confesses that "But for us, there is one God the Father from whom everything [came], and we [are made] for him, and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom everything [is], and we [are] through him,"⁵ ascribing Wisdom's role of the *Schöpfungsmittler* (God's assistant with the creation of the world) to the exalted Christ.⁶ This concept must have been well established by the years 54–56 when Paul wrote his letter, as he neither introduces Christ's identification with the pre-existent Wisdom in 1 Cor 8:6 as a new concept, nor does he defend it.⁷ Paul does not claim it as his own insight, whereas he feels free to do so regarding other subjects. Astonishingly, there is no opposition here or in any other letter to this idea, which must have been a highly offensive attack on Jewish monotheism, in contrast to the conflicts which arose in the early church over other issues such as Paul's view of the law or of circumcision. Wide-ranging agreement with Jesus' identification with the pre-existent Wisdom, whichever way this might have been precisely understood by these early writers, is confirmed by similar parallels between the heavenly Christ and pre-existent Wisdom being drawn in Col 1:15–20, the prologue of John's gospel and Heb 1:1–3.⁸

Further functions of Wisdom are transferred to Jesus in the gospel tradition: in Luke 10:22 // Matt 11:27, the Son's intimate knowledge of the Father is reminiscent of Wisdom knowing and revealing God in Sap 9:9–10. In Matt

HNT 9,1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 47; DAVID E. GARLAND, *1 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003).

⁴ ALOYS GRILLMEIER, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, trans. John Bowden, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London & Oxford: Mowbrays, 1965), 15. See also WOLFGANG SCHRAGE, *Korinther*, 2:221.

⁵ Some examples of Wisdom's role as *Schöpfungsmittler*, whether as observer or as instrument of the creation, include Prov 8:30, Job 28:25–27, Ps 104:24, Sir 24:3, Wis 7:22; 9:1–2. See GRILLMEIER, *Christ*, 1:15, 28–29, 44 for the influence of the Jewish Wisdom on conceptions of Jesus' pre-existence. ANTHONY C. THISELTON, "Wisdom in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures: Wisdom in the New Testament," *Theology* 115 (2011), 260–268, here p. 266, speaks of "Christ represent[ing] the Wisdom of God in person."

⁶ See SCHRAGE, *Korinther*, 2:224; OTFRIED HOFIUS, "Christus als Schöpfungsmittler und Erlösungsmittler" in *Paulusstudien* II, WUNT 143 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 181–192, here pp. 191–192; HARTMUT GESE, "Die Weisheit, der Menschensohn und die Ursprünge der Christologie als konsequente Entfaltung der biblischen Theologie" in *Altestamentliche Studien* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 218–248, here p. 239.

⁷ See LARRY HURTADO, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2003), 125–126, for a presupposed notion of Christ's pre-existence, which is commonly based on an appropriation of Jewish wisdom tradition.

⁸ Especially the terms ἀπαύγασμα and εἰκόων in Heb 1:3 and Col 1:15 connect Jesus to Wisdom, who is described by the same terms in Wis 7:26. See GRILLMEIER, *Christ*, 29.

11:28–30, Jesus’ invitation to receive instruction mirrors a similar invitation issued by the sage in Sir 51:23–30, whose offer is in turn based on the invitation extended by the heavenly Wisdom herself in Sir 24:19–22.⁹ In Luke 13:34–35 // Matt 23:37–39, Jesus’ ministry is compared to various forms of Wisdom’s engagement in Israel’s history; the significance of this logion will be explored in detail in this study. The synoptic references differ from all the other instances where Wisdom’s functions are assigned to Jesus in that they concern Jesus’ earthly ministry rather than refer to his role in creation or his exalted status after the resurrection.

The seemingly unproblematic transfer of Wisdom’s role to Jesus by the early Christian authors creates the impression that they saw Jesus as somehow related to Wisdom, which has led to the conclusion that the historical Jesus had been understood as an earthly representation or even incarnation of Wisdom. In particular, the evangelist Matthew has been seen as a champion of this concept,¹⁰ because he twice substitutes Jesus as the subject of statements pertaining to Wisdom in Q (in Matt 11:19 it is Jesus who is justified by his works, whereas in the parallel Luke 7:35 it is Wisdom who is justified by her children; and in Matt 23:34 Jesus is the sender of prophets whereas in the Lukan version in Luke 11:49, Wisdom is the sender of prophets). Other authors detect a Wisdom-Christology as early as in the pre-synoptic sources.¹¹ However, this explanation is not entirely satisfactory, because this conclusion is not drawn explicitly by Matthew or any other author of the NT, and they seem not to emphasise the hypothesis of Wisdom’s incarnation in Jesus. Nevertheless, in particular Matthew and Paul clearly imply an identification of some sort, but the relationship they have in mind may be more subtle. The so-called “Jerusalem Word” (hereafter referred to as JW), or “Lament over Jerusalem” (Matt 23:37–39 par.) will be crucial to our attempt to describe this more subtle approach. This logion has played a central role in determining Jesus’ relationship to the divine Wisdom. It is preserved in nearly identical wording by Matthew and Luke:

⁹ See CELIA DEUTSCH, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke: Wisdom, Torah and Discipleship in Matthew 11.25–30*, JSNTSup 18 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 103–104, 114, 117, 137–138.

¹⁰ See especially M. JACK SUGGS, *Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew’s Gospel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 67; also MARTIN HENGEL, “Jesus as Messianic Teacher of Wisdom and the Beginnings of Christology” in *Studies in Early Christology* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 73–119, here p. 87: “Matthew [...] consistently identifi[es] the divine Wisdom with Jesus.”

¹¹ So DEUTSCH, *Hidden Wisdom*, 103–104, 138; FELIX CHRIST, *Jesus Sophia* (Zurich: H. Majer, 1970), 138, 145–148, 154. See also HUBERT FRANKEMÖLLE, *Frühjudentum und Urchristentum: Vorgeschichte – Verlauf – Auswirkungen (4. Jahrhundert v.Chr. bis 4. Jahrhundert n.Chr.)* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006), 172: He speaks of a “Weisheitschristologie in der Logienquelle,” referring to Luke 13:34–35 among others; more cautiously on pp. 184–185.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those sent to her, how many times I wanted to gather your children as a bird gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. See, your house is left to you [desolate]. And I tell you, you will not see me [from now on] until you say: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. (Matthew's additions in brackets)¹²

It can be understood as summarising Jesus' earthly mission in a way that relates his work to a trans-historical agent who had sent generations of prophets; this agent has been taken as the divine Wisdom by some exegetes.¹³ The saying is the focus of the present investigation, which explores how Jesus was set in relation to the divine Wisdom in the synoptic tradition, whether by identifying Jesus with Wisdom or by more subtly incorporating aspects of Wisdom in the concept of Jesus as God's Son.

If patristic theology had identified Jesus ontologically with the divine Wisdom, modern exegesis did not see itself in a position to verify this claim. Rudolf Bultmann saw the subject speaking in the JW as a "supra-historical entity," which he identified as the Jewish Wisdom, but, ruling out the possibility that Jesus may have suggested that he was more than a mere human being, he analysed the logion as a traditional Jewish prophecy, which Jesus had either quoted, or which was later ascribed to him by the post-resurrection church.¹⁴ Since Ernst Käsemann's article "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," Jesus has been widely seen as a teacher of wisdom,¹⁵ explaining the many sapiential themes in Jesus' ministry without identifying him outright with the divine Wisdom.

More recently, scholars have doubted for various reasons that the logion is a wisdom saying at all. In brief, there are three main challenges to reading the logion as a wisdom saying: (1) The logion can be read simply as a summary of Jesus' earthly ministry, requiring no additional layer of meaning,¹⁶ (2) The frequently claimed origin of the logion as part of a longer wisdom text, where the

¹² For a more detailed analysis of the two versions see below chapter 2.1.1.

¹³ So for example RUDOLF BULTMANN, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 114–115.

¹⁴ BULTMANN, *Synoptic Tradition*, 114–115. See also SUGGS, *Wisdom*, 66; DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS, "Jesu Weheruf über Jerusalem und die Sophia tou Theou" in *Zeitschrift für die wissenschaftliche Theologie* 6, 1863, 84–93, here pp. 87–88; GÉZA VERMÉS, *The Authentic Gospel of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 2004), 328.

¹⁵ ERNST KÄSEMANN, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus" in *Essays on the New Testament*, SBT 41 (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1964), 15–47, here pp. 40–41.

¹⁶ This view necessitates interpreting the "many times" Jesus had wanted to gather the children of Jerusalem either as repeated visits to the city, as understanding "Jerusalem" as *pars pro toto* for the entire Jewish people, or as Jesus merely *desiring* to gather the people. See DONALD A. HAGNER, *Matthew*, 2 vols., WBC 33 (Dallas, TX: Word Book, 1995), 2:680; RICHARD THOMAS FRANCE, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2007), 883; MAURICE CASEY, *Jesus of Nazareth* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 408; JOACHIM GNILKA, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, HThKNT 1, 2 vols. (Freiburg: Herder,

JW followed on to Q 11:49, is uncertain. Without such a literary connection to a wisdom saying, which actually names Wisdom (such as Luke 11:49), it is more difficult to see why the actions of the trans-historical agent should refer to Wisdom.¹⁷ (3) The implied supra-historical agent to whom Jesus is related could be God as well as Wisdom, because all of the divine actions are primarily themes related to God in the Scriptures;¹⁸ they were only secondarily appropriated by Wisdom.

1.2 Aim and Structure of the Study

My own hypothesis is that the relationship between Jesus and Wisdom is more complex than Jesus simply being an embodiment of Wisdom: the JW portrays Jesus as a representation of God *like* the divine Wisdom.

Chapter 2 examines the challenges for interpreting the JW as a wisdom saying, scrutinising the existent exegetical options. Chapter 3 gives a short survey of the themes that characterise Wisdom in the Jewish tradition with a special focus on the emergence of her role in the historical world, which helps to establish Wisdom as a possible candidate for the trans-historical agent who Jesus is related to in the JW. The personification of Wisdom in the sapiential texts poses a crucial problem because it impacts on how Jesus could be related to her. Some discussion of the possibility of conceptualising Wisdom as a hypothesis or as a divine being is therefore required, including a consideration of whether Wisdom could have a place in the heavenly court of the Hebrew Scriptures, before an analysis of specific Jewish traditions is undertaken. The main investigation in chapters 4 to 7 demonstrates that the four elements of the JW which relate to a supra-historical subject, namely sending the prophets, gathering the children of Israel under the wings of the mother bird, withdrawing the divine presence from the temple and returning as God's messianic agent, can be seen as references to functions of the divine Wisdom, as she is presented in sapiential texts from Proverbs through Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon to the Similitudes of 1 Enoch. If it can be shown that Wisdom was understood as an agent in history in Second Temple Judaism, then Wisdom could have served as a model for Jesus' earthly ministry in the gospels, just as the pre-

1986–88), 2:303; JOHN NOLLAND, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2005), 950; NICHOLAS T. WRIGHT, *Matthew for Everyone. Part 2* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 110.

¹⁷ See FRANCE, *Matthew*, 879–880, 883 n. 5; ULRICH LUZ, *Matthew 21–28: A Commentary*, trans. James E. Crouch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 153, 159–160; SIMON J. GATHERCOLE, *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 213.

¹⁸ LUZ, *Matthew 21–28*, 159–160; GATHERCOLE, *Preexistent Son*, 213.

existent Wisdom served as a model for the heavenly Christ in 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15–17; Heb 1:3 and John 1:1–3.

If Wisdom's role as agent in history was indeed transferred to Jesus, there are, however, *two* crucial aspects which contribute to shaping Jesus' messianic role: not only Wisdom's functions may have helped define Jesus' mission, but also her nature. In a second line of argument, I will contend that Wisdom was conceptualised as a representative of God in the Jewish tradition. In order to determine the nature of that representation, I will consider whether personified Wisdom can be understood as an independently acting heavenly being or hypostasis¹⁹ rather than as an attribute of God in each of the Jewish texts. My thesis is that Wisdom is perceived as a tangible manifestation of God in the immanent world, acting as an independent agent to a certain degree, like the Angel of the Lord in older biblical tradition. I will show that Wisdom is merged at least functionally with the Angel of the Lord in the sapiential texts, and I will conclude in the final chapter that this creates the idea of a divine mediator, who represented God in the immanent world in different shapes throughout the ages, sometimes visible and more concrete, sometimes invisible and more abstract. As a result, I postulate that Jesus is to be understood as a new manifestation of this divine agent in the "Lament over Jerusalem".

¹⁹ See below chapter 3.5.1 for an explanation of the term "hypostasis."

Chapter 2

The “Lament over Jerusalem”

2.1 Introduction of the Jerusalem Word

2.1.1 The Text of the Jerusalem Word in Q and Its Context in the Gospels

Following largely the *Critical Edition of Q*,²⁰ the original version of the saying can be reconstructed as:

Ἰερουσαλήμ Ἰερουσαλήμ, ἡ ἀποκτείνουσα τοὺς προφῆτας καὶ λιθοβολοῦσα τοὺς ἀπεσταλμένους πρὸς αὐτήν, ποσάκις ἠθέλησα ἐπισυναγαγεῖν¹ τὰ τέκνα σου ὄν τρόπον ὄρνις ἐπισυνάγει¹ τὰ νοσσία² αὐτῆς ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας, καὶ οὐκ ἠθελήσατε. Ἴδοὺ ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν³. Λέγω δὲ⁴ ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ ἴδετέ με⁵ ἕως ἂν⁶ εἴπητε· Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου.

In cases of doubt, where Luke’s version had traditionally been judged as more likely to be the original,²¹ the *Critical Edition of Q* now often prefers Matthew’s reading regarding some minor details. Only in the two cases where Matthew’s additional phrases apparently serve to clarify the meaning these are omitted in the reconstruction of Q. Thus,

1) Matthew’s form of the inf. aor. of ἐπισυνάγειν is used, and his repetition of the verb is retained.²²

2) It is uncertain whether Luke’s τὴν ἑαυτῆς νοσσία (her brood) or Matthew’s τὰ νοσσία αὐτῆς (her chicks) was the original phrase.²³

²⁰ JAMES M. ROBINSON, PAUL HOFFMANN, JOHN S. KLOPPENBURG (eds.), *The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German and French Translations of Q and Thomas*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 420–423.

²¹ See CHRIST, *Jesus Sophia*, 137; ODIL HANNES STECK, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum*, WMANT 23 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967), 49–50; SUGGS *Wisdom*, 63; HENGEL, “Beginnings,” 84; and FRANÇOIS BOVON, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 322.

²² In contrast, BOVON, *Luke*, 322, holds that Luke’s ἐπισυνάξει is popular Greek and therefore more original than the Attic form used by Matthew.

²³ STECK, *Israel*, 234, 293, argues that Luke’s image must be older, because it refers to Wisdom as the original subject of the saying whereas Matthew’s version is more suited to describe Jesus as acting subject. Contrary to KIM HUAT TAN, *The Zion Traditions and the*

3) Matthew elaborates by adding ἔρημος (desolate), possibly to suggest a reference to Jer 22:5. The word is omitted in Matthew’s text according to codex B, but significantly attested in Papyrus⁷⁷ vid, κ, C and D etc.

4) Matthew possibly strengthens the causal relationship by replacing δὲ with γάρ.

5) Matthew adds ἀπ’ ἄρτι, emphasising the temporal distance between Jesus’ disappearance and the arrival of the “Coming One.”²⁴

6) The ἦξει ὅτε present in some manuscripts in the Lukan version is dubious, as it reads ἄν even in Luke in papyrus⁴⁵ and codex κ etc.²⁵

The context of the logion in Q is not preserved, as Matthew and Luke place it in different contexts. In Luke’s gospel, the section which includes the JW is Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. This part of the gospel incorporates relatively unconnected sayings,²⁶ but Luke aims particularly to emphasize Jesus “setting his face” towards Jerusalem, where he knows that death awaits him.²⁷ Luke’s context is now widely regarded as editorial.²⁸ The Q logion was relocated by Luke who placed it after a passage that is unique to Luke’s gospel,²⁹ giving Jesus’ reply to the well-meaning Pharisees that he must continue on his way to Jerusalem, as it would not be right for a prophet to perish outside the city. Thus, Jesus appears as a prophet in the line of those who have been killed in Jerusalem. François Bovon’s exegesis reveals that the pericope that precedes the JW in Luke 13:31–33 already introduces the theme of the JW as it interprets Jesus’ destiny in terms of salvation history by joining a biographical note with soteriological meaning.³⁰ But this context is hardly original, because Jesus is not

Aims of Jesus, SMTSNS 91 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 103, who argues that Matthew’s text is original, because Luke has a propensity for using ἐαυτός with a noun. BOVON *Luke*, 322, thinks that the Lukan τὴν νοσσίαν is original while ἐαυτῆς is a grammatical improvement on the Q text, which was made by Luke.

²⁴ Also SUGGS, *Wisdom*, 70 n.22, notices that ἀπ’ ἄρτι is characteristic of Matthew.

²⁵ Contrary to SUGGS, *Wisdom*, 70 n.22, who thinks that the Lukan version is original. Also LUZ, *Matthew 21–28*, 158 n.4. BOVON, *Luke*, 322, thinks the phrase ἕως ἦξει ὅτε goes back to Q. TAN, *Zion Traditions*, 103, thinks that ἦξει ὅτε followed by subjunctive creates such an unusual syntax that it is unlikely that Luke added it. ROBINSON, *Q*, 422, includes ἦξει ὅτε as probable but uncertain.

²⁶ See DELBERT BURKETT, *An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 209; I. HOWARD MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster Press/Eerdmans, 1978), 562; BOVON, *Luke*, 321, 333.

²⁷ BURKETT, *Introduction*, 209.

²⁸ *Ibid.*; JOHN NOLLAND, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, WBC 35B (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993), 739.

²⁹ DARRELL L. BOCK, *Luke: Volume 2: 9:51–24:53*, ECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 1243.

³⁰ BOVON, *Luke*, 321.

speaking in Jerusalem when he addresses the city, and it seems to have been chosen by the association with the word “Jerusalem.”³¹

The journey to Jerusalem brings an important theme into focus, as the holy city is the destination of Jesus’ ministry. Even the simple fact that Luke uses the Hebrew name of the holy city 26 times whereas it occurs only one time in Matthew’s gospel, in the JW, indicates that the city has a theological significance for Luke, and he would likely interpret the JW in a way that supports the role that Jerusalem plays in his gospel. Jerusalem is the “centre of the Jewish world,” which has the lead role in determining their relationship to God. This is where the final decision regarding Jesus’ ministry must be made.³² Thus, Luke presents Jesus as a prophet who warns Israel of rejecting God’s envoy, and being placed before the entry into Jerusalem, the JW may leave the decision open as to whether the people of Jerusalem will welcome him as the “One coming in the name of the Lord” or not.³³ Luke confirms Jesus’ identity as a prophet by his editorial decision to link the JW with the saying about the necessity of prophets being killed in the city. By focussing on the city’s reaction, Luke gives a reason for the eventual destruction and the spiritual insignificance of Jerusalem as Jewish centre.³⁴ Thus, the JW is put in a context that suits Luke as he both links it to Jesus’ answer to the Pharisees’ warning that a prophet must die in Jerusalem (Luke 13:31–33) and emphasises the direction of Jesus’ travel towards Jerusalem and his death. The context of Luke’s gospel elucidates Luke’s interpretation of the JW and was not original to Q.

In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus appears as Wisdom Incarnate³⁵ for two reasons: (1) Matthew combines the “Lament” with the previous logion about sending prophets and envoys (Matt 23:34–36), which he had transformed from a word spoken by the divine Wisdom in Luke 11:49, into a word spoken by Jesus. The “Lament” follows this saying, implying that Jesus continues to speak as Wisdom.³⁶ (2) The point in the plot where Matthew placed the logion, namely Jesus

³¹ STRAUSS, “Weheruf,” 89; BULTMANN *Synoptic Tradition*, 115; CHRIST, *Jesus Sophia*, 136; SUGGS, *Wisdom*, 64: he thinks the Lukan context is hardly original as it conveniently positions the logion before the triumphal entry into Jerusalem; WILLIAM D. DAVIES and DALE C. ALLISON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–1997), 3:312; BOVON, *Luke*, 321. Contrary to LUZ, *Matthew 21–28*, 158–159, who thinks that the saying is placed too awkwardly in Luke’s context to believe that Luke had created that difficulty for himself.

³² JOEL B. GREEN, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1997), 534, 537, 538.

³³ EDUARD SCHWEIZER, *The Good News According to Luke*, trans. David E. Green (London: SPCK, 1984), 230.

³⁴ HANS CONZELMANN, *The Theology of St Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), 133–134.

³⁵ Thus SUGGS, *Wisdom*, 71; CHRIST, *Jesus Sophia*, 152 “Jesus erscheint [...] als die Weisheit selbst”; less sure p.150.

³⁶ See SUGGS, *Wisdom*, 70.

leaving the temple for the last time, is ideally suited to insinuating that the presence of God departs from the temple as Jesus leaves, perhaps suiting Matthew’s theology too well to be credible.

Since the original context is uncertain,³⁷ the pre-synoptic logion, whether it first appeared in Q or goes back to a dominical saying,³⁸ must be interpreted without reference to a context.

2.1.2 Contents

The “Lament” appears primarily as a prophetic threat of imminent judgement, paired with the prospect of future hope. Particularly in Luke’s presentation of the logion, Jesus appears as a prophet.³⁹ As a reference to Wisdom is much more unlikely in Luke’s gospel, which distinguishes sharply between pre-existent Wisdom and Jesus who does not assume her role e.g. in Luke 11:49,⁴⁰ Jesus’ mission is usually interpreted as that of a prophet, who speaks and acts in God’s stead.⁴¹ Consequently, Jesus’ “I” represents God’s desire to gather the children of Israel when he says “I wanted to gather your children.”⁴² Thus, he is seen as speaking and acting in God’s place.⁴³ This avoids the difficulty of explaining how he could have called Jerusalem several times, in addition to extending the scope of his ministry to the wider Jewish community.⁴⁴ Accordingly, a favourite term of Luke’s in 13:32, “δεῖ,” indicates that Jesus obediently acts according to the divine imperative.⁴⁵ Equally, “your house is left to you” is usually not interpreted as referring to the divine presence in the temple. Rather, the “house” is understood as the city of Jerusalem and its people, which are left defenceless when God abandons the city.⁴⁶ However, interpreting the JW as a prophetic warning to Israel, which foretells the destruction of Jerusalem does not link the removal of God’s presence very well with Jesus being

³⁷ CHRIST, *Jesus Sophia*, 136, doubts both Luke’s and Matthew’s context. So also STECK, *Israel*, 47–48 and NOLLAND, *Luke*, 739.

³⁸ CHRIST, *Jesus Sophia*, 148, and HENGEL, “Beginnings,” 76, 86, think it is possible that the logion goes back to Jesus himself. See also TAN, *Zion Traditions*, 107–109.

³⁹ CONZELMANN, *Theology*, 139; BOCK, *Luke*, 1243, 1245, 1249.

⁴⁰ See CONZELMANN, *Theology*, 110 n.1. BOCK, *Luke*, 1249. Contrarily, MARSHALL, *Luke*, 574, accepts that Jesus is using wisdom terminology and thus appears as a messenger of Wisdom; BOVON, *Luke*, 323, 328, accepts a wisdom background and accepts that personified Wisdom is the speaker of Luke 13:34–35a.

⁴¹ BOCK, *Luke*, 1249; NOLLAND, *Luke*, 742.

⁴² BOCK, *Luke*, 1249.

⁴³ NOLLAND, *Luke*, 742–743.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 742. Alternatively, he explains the address to an absent Jerusalem as a “soliloquy” on p. 743. In contrast CONZELMANN, *Theology*, 110, maintains that the context is difficult to explain because the logion must be spoken after Jesus had ministered to Jerusalem.

⁴⁵ BOCK, *Luke*, 1248; also GREEN, *Luke*, 534–535; SCHWEIZER, *Luke*, 230.

⁴⁶ BOCK, *Luke*, 1250; GREEN, *Luke*, 539; MARSHALL, *Luke*, 576, SCHWEIZER, *Luke*, 231, NOLLAND, *Luke*, 742–743.

removed from sight by his death when he continues “and I tell you, you will not see me until [...]”⁴⁷

Matthew’s interpretation on the other hand demonstrates that the JW can hint at a much deeper level of meaning: in outlining the events of Jesus’ proclamation, rejection and death, it formulates his mission, which appears as part of, and indeed as the summarising culmination of, God’s history with Israel. But Jesus’ role in this history and his relationship to God are difficult to discern precisely. Apart from the obvious references to Jesus’ historical ministry, where he speaks in the first person, indicating his many rejected attempts to win over the Israelites and predicting that he will soon be withdrawn from the company of his disciples, the logion alludes to a range of biblical themes which interpret Jesus’ ministry as participating in God’s dealings with his people. However, all of these themes are equally known in his Jewish environment as functions of the divine Wisdom.

The *crux interpretum* is the word ποσάκις (“how often did I want to gather your children”). The frequency of Jesus’ attempts to gather the people of Jerusalem in a gospel that has not recorded any significant previous visits to Jerusalem has led exegetes to understand that Jesus’ ministry extended to the previous generations addressed by the prophets,⁴⁸ particularly in its position in Matthew’s gospel, which had just established Jesus as a sender of prophets in continuation of the Old Testament tradition in 23:34.⁴⁹ Thus, he assumes either the role of God, who is the sender of prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures, or the role of Wisdom, who is also related to the sending of prophets in Prov 1:20–33, Sap 7:27 and Luke 11:49.

The perception that Jesus participates in God’s role as he engages in Israel’s salvation history is supported by further associations with divine functions: “Your house is left to you empty. I tell you, you will not see me [...]” suggests that the divine presence will leave the temple not only as a consequence of Jesus’ rejection, but also in temporal agreement with Jesus being withdrawn from view by his death, implying that Jesus is the *Shekinah*, God’s presence in the temple. Wisdom, however, is also known as the divine presence resident in the temple according to Sir 24:1–17.

⁴⁷ GREEN, *Luke*, 538, suggests a connection with Simeon’s waiting to see the Messiah in Luke 2:29–32, and NOLLAND, *Luke*, 742, suggests that Jesus is snatched away until the eschaton like certain figures in Jewish tradition. The problem with both explanations is that neither the text of the JW nor Luke’s context give prompts to justify such a farfetched interpretation.

⁴⁸ See BULTMANN, *Synoptic Tradition*, 113–114.

⁴⁹ See STRAUSS, “Weheruf,” 87, 90; STECK, *Israel*, 54; CHRIST, *Jesus Sophia*, 142, 146, NOLLAND, *Matthew*, 950; GATHERCOLE, *Preexistent Son*, 216–218. Against LUZ, *Matthew* 21–28, 161. Contrary to NOLLAND, *Luke*, 739, where he says that the tenses of the Greek verbs prohibit Jesus’ “gathering” referring back to the previous sending of prophets.

Jesus’ ministry is most directly portrayed as divine action by the metaphor of the wings of the mother bird offering protection and guidance to her young, which alludes to God carrying Israel like an eagle in Deut 32:11 and Exod 19:4. The image had been developed in the Jewish tradition, and the concept of seeking shelter under the divine wings also occurs in the psalms. Especially noteworthy is Ps 61:4, where the wings are associated with the temple. In this vein, the wings of the hen bring to mind the winged cherubim in the temple, indicating that the Israelites are invited to seek shelter with the Wisdom-*Shekinah*.⁵⁰

The pivotal verb ἐπισυνάγειν (to gather), denoting Jesus’ mission, deserves special attention. It may indicate ways of supporting the Israelites throughout their history other than calling them through the prophets. Origen suggested that it refers to Israel being brought back from captivity,⁵¹ a meaning which is supported by the use of the verb in Ps LXX 105:46–47 (“gather us from the nations”) and Isa 52:12. 1 Esd 8:69; 8:88; 9:18; 9:55 use the verb for people gathering around Ezra to implement parts of the law; it could therefore refer to ending an ongoing spiritual exile as well as the historical exile in Babylon. Sapientia Salomonis 10 offers a tradition where Wisdom is the agent who saves and guides Israel throughout its history, which could include a role in bringing them out of captivity.

The final phrase “You will not see me until you say ‘blessed is the One coming in the name of the Lord’” is the most difficult one to trace back to a wisdom tradition. However, in the Similitudes of 1 Enoch (1 En. 48:2–7; 49:1–3), Wisdom is united with the “Elect One,” the Son of Man, who is expected to be the eschatological ruler. Unlike the divine functions that are assigned to Jesus above, the “One coming” can only be understood as a representative or envoy of God.

The crucial problem to interpreting the logion is in demonstrating which divine agent Jesus is being related to here. It is possible to relate him to both, God and his Wisdom.

2.1.3 Date and Author

The Jerusalem Word can be understood as a word of Jesus, when it is read within the framework of Jesus’ earthly ministry: participating in God’s call to Israel through the prophets, Jesus can be seen as one in the line of prophets, indeed the last envoy, or eschatological representative. The image of the protective mother bird links well with his mission to seek and save the lost. Many attempts to gather the children may either be explained as multiple journeys to Jerusalem not recorded by the synoptic gospels or they may indicate that Jesus

⁵⁰ See GESE, “Weisheit,” 237.

⁵¹ ORIGEN, *Fragmenta ex comentariis in evangelium Matthaei* 461 (GCS 41:191).

included the wider community of Israel in his address to the capital.⁵² Judgement on Israel is announced when God's efforts to move the people to repentance have come to an end with the rejection of his last envoy: the divine presence will leave the temple. Jesus' simultaneous departure implies that Jesus is actually the *Shekinah*, God's presence, which will be lost at his imminent death. The prophecy ends with a glimmer of hope: Jesus will be vindicated and reunited with his disciples at the eschatological arrival of the Son of Man.

Notably, the appellation "Coming One" in Matt 23:39 par., quoting Ps 118:26, does not claim a messianic title for Jesus. But the "Coming One" *can* refer to the expected Messiah; at least it does so when the crowds welcome Jesus to Jerusalem in Mark 11:9 par. and in the Baptist's enquiry in Matt 11:3 par. But while Jesus' followers had acclaimed him as the coming king on his entry into Jerusalem, Matt 23:39 par. is not committed to the same claim: if this logion belongs in the time of Jesus' earthly ministry,⁵³ he can be understood to be expecting his own vindication at the arrival of the eschatological kingdom, even if the agent of God was another than himself.

The judgement that the people are threatened with has often been interpreted as a reference to the destruction of the temple in AD 70, and dated close to that event,⁵⁴ but this interpretation is uncertain. In particular, exegeses of Luke's version interpret the "house" not specifically as the temple but as the city and its people who remain unprotected and face the conquest and destruction by the Romans.⁵⁵ This lies in the trajectory of Luke concentrating on the role of the holy city as Jesus' destination and the central place which moulds Jewish religious identity; therefore, their rejecting Jesus furnishes the reason for Jerusalem's demise according to Luke.⁵⁶ However, Matthew, like Q, may well simply connect Jesus' death to the abandonment of the temple, corresponding to a similar correlation between Jesus and the temple, which he threatened to destroy and rebuild in three days according to Mark 14:58, and which goes back to the accusations made at Jesus' trial.⁵⁷

Thus, all parts of the logion can be understood from a pre-resurrection Jewish perspective as a sapiential-prophetic saying thematising the significance of

⁵² See above, note 16.

⁵³ Especially in Luke's version of the JW, which understands Jesus as a prophet, the logion is often seen an authentic Jesus word. See BOCK, *Luke*, 1245; NOLLAND, *Luke*, 739; BOVON, *Luke*, 323, 328.

⁵⁴ STRAUSS, "Weheruf," 90. STECK, *Israel*, 237–238, and LUZ, *Matthew 21–28*, 160–161, speak of an immediate anticipation of the destruction.

⁵⁵ BOCK, *Luke*, 1250; GREEN, *Luke*, 539; MARSHALL, *Luke*, 576; SCHWEIZER, *Luke*, 231.

⁵⁶ CONZELMANN, *Theology*, 139; see also BOVON, *Luke*, 330.

⁵⁷ See e.g. GESE, "Weisheit," 237–238. MARSHALL, *Luke*, 576, also allows for a reference to Jesus' word about the destruction of the temple. See also BEN WITHERINGTON, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1994), 366, for another parallel: Matt 12:6 claims that something greater than the temple was on the scene with Jesus.