

## TWO TESTAMENTS IN ONE BIBLE: HOW DO THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS INTERRELATE?<sup>1</sup>

Jostein Ådna  
(Professor emeritus of New Testament, VID Specialized University, Norway)

**Abstract:** The article presents and discusses its topic, “Two Testaments in One Bible”, in four parts.

*Part 1. The Jewish Bible.* The canonization of the Jewish Bible took place gradually in the post-exilic era, first the Law (Torah), second the Prophets (Nebi'im), and, finally, in the period between the first and second Jewish revolts (AD 66–135), the Writings (Ketubim). Applying the initial letters of the Hebrew designations of the three parts, the Hebrew Bible is called Tanakh. From the third century BC the biblical books were gradually translated into Greek. The Greek version, commonly called the Septuagint, contains more books than the Hebrew Bible. After the Septuagint had enjoyed recognition in the Greek speaking diaspora on the same level as the Hebrew Bible for a long period, it fell into disregard during the second century AD. Since then the Tanakh alone has been the authoritative biblical canon in Judaism.

*Part 2. The Christian Bible.* Jesus and the apostles read the Holy Scriptures in Hebrew, but because of their missionary outreach beyond Judea and Galilee, the early Christians predominantly used the pre-existing Greek translation of the Bible, the Septuagint, for preaching and teaching. Both due to its higher number of books (especially the wisdom books Sirach and Wisdom of Solomon) and thanks to its salvation-historical compositional outline, with the prophetic books at the end, the Septuagint corresponded well to the early Christians' understanding of the Christ event as the continuation and peak of revelation history. Gradually, the books that recount the story of Jesus Christ (the Gospels) and the books that communicate faith in Christ and elaborate what it means to live one's life as a follower of him (the Letters) were collected and given equal authority to as the Holy Scriptures shared with and inherited from the Jews. These two collections, called the Old Testament and the New Testament, were connected and united in the two-part Christian canon.

*Part 3. Tradition-historical developments as expressions of revelation history. The relationship between the testaments seen from the Old Testament as point of departure.* With regard to how different theological traditions developed, the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament does not frequently mark a unique, divisive point in the tradition-historical process. Within the long Old Testament period, for example at the transition from the pre-exilic to the exilic and post-exilic eras, corresponding major or minor transformations in the tradition-historical developments did occur. The article employs the Zion tradition as a paradigmatic example of a theological tradition that underwent a long, transformative development in many stages and through various currents from David's conquest of Jerusalem in the tenth century BC until its reception in Jesus' ministry and theological expositions in the New Testament.

*Part 4. The reception of the Old Testament in the New Testament. The relationship between the testaments seen from the New Testament.* All New Testament authors regard the Old Testament as Holy Scripture that they quote and allude to extensively. The New Testament shares a common language of faith with the Old Testament, applied in order to express the shared confession of the one true God, the Father of Jesus Christ. For a paradigmatic description of how the New Testament applies Old Testament traditions and texts for expressing and elaborating the Christ event, the article describes how the evangelists Mark and Matthew drew upon the Old Testament tradition of the righteous sufferer in Psalm 22 to describe the passion of Jesus, and how the Letter to the Hebrews drew upon the priesthood of Melchizedek and the promise of a new covenant for the exposition of Jesus' ministry.

*Conclusion.* The early Christians never regarded the Old Testament as obsolete. The New Testament understands itself as a continuation of the Old Testament, testifying to the culmination

---

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to John Goldie MA for helpful suggestions for linguistic corrections and improvements.

and fulfilment in the Christ event of the history of revelation. The Old Testament is the indispensable first part of the Christian Bible..

## INTRODUCTION

This article is a published version of three lectures that I held at Mekane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 8–10 November 2023, on the invitation of this institution’s Gudina Tumsa Research Center.<sup>2</sup> The issue of how the two parts of the Christian Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament, relate to each other, has accompanied and challenged theology ever since the Ancient Church. There are many historical, denominational and systematic aspects involved in the topic “Two Testaments in One Bible: How Do the Old and New Testaments Interrelate?”, and we can think of various ways in which to proceed in presenting and discussing them.<sup>3</sup> I have chosen a fourfold structure for my exposition:

Part 1. The Jewish Bible

Part 2. The Christian Bible<sup>4</sup>

Part 3. Tradition-historical developments as expressions of revelation history: The relationship between the testaments seen from the Old Testament as point of departure.

Part 4. The reception of the Old Testament in the New Testament: The relationship between the testaments seen from the New Testament.

## PART 1. THE JEWISH BIBLE

The collection of Holy Scriptures that Christians call the Old Testament are also sacred, canonical scriptures in Judaism. It is easy to understand why our Jewish friends do not apply the same designation as Christians do. The reason why we Christians label the first part of our Bibles as the Old Testament is that it is followed by a second part called the New Testament. The Greek word for ‘testament’ is *diathēkē*, which also has the meaning ‘covenant’. Thus, the designations Old and New Testaments are prompted by the distinctions in 2 Corinthians 3:1–18 and Hebrews 8:6–7 between old and new covenant, respectively, between first and second covenant.<sup>5</sup> In this presentation I will repeatedly emphasize that the designation “Old Testament” does not imply a negative verdict on these Scriptures for being outdated. Nevertheless, the name “Old Testament” might be perceived as a derogatory designation, and as Christians we must accept without reservation that Jews use other names. They recognize and respect this collection of writings as Holy Scripture, without viewing and accepting the New Testament as its organic successor

---

<sup>2</sup> I want to express my gratitude to Rev. Dr. Bruk Ayele Asale, President of Mekane Yesus Seminary, and Rev. Dr. Tibebu Teklu Senbetu, Director of Gudina Tumsa Research Center, for the invitation to give this lecture during a three-week stay at Mekane Yesus Seminary. From 1993 until my retirement in September 2022 I worked at the School of Mission and Theology, owned by the Norwegian Mission Society. (In 2016 this school merged with some other church-oriented institutions to become VID Specialized University.) The Norwegian Mission Society works closely with the Evangelical Ethiopian Church Mekane Yesus and the Mekane Yesus Seminary, and I visited the seminary in my capacity as a senior volunteer of the Norwegian Mission Society.

<sup>3</sup> My most important guide and reference source for the following presentation is Peter Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, translated and edited by Daniel P. Bailey with the collaboration of Jostein Ådna (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2018). Ever since I was Professor Stuhlmacher’s assistant (*wissenschaftlicher Assistent*) 1988–1993 at the University of Tübingen, Germany, when he published the first German edition of the first part of this book, I have cooperated closely with him in developing and expounding a biblical theology that spans and combines the Old Testament and the New Testament.

<sup>4</sup> Regarding Parts 1 and 2, The Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible, see esp. Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 5–10 (section of chapter 1, “The Task and Structure of a Biblical Theology of the New Testament”), 743–71 (= chapter 40, “The Formation of the Two-Part Christian Canon”).

<sup>5</sup> We encounter the term “the recognized scriptures of the Old Testament” in Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* 4.26. Eusebius coins this expression based on a treatise of the early bishop Melito of Sardis (ca. AD 100–180). Melito writes that he “learnt accurately the books of the Old Testament”. See Kirsopp Lake, *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History with an English Translation*. Two Volumes. LCL (London: William Heinemann / Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1926 and 1932), 1:393.

and fulfilment. When there is no follow-up in a New Testament, there is, of course, no need, no reason and no justification for speaking about an Old Testament.

## THE TANAKH

The most common designation of these Holy Scriptures among Jews is *Tanakh*. This name is a so-called acronym, i.e., a word formed from the initial letters of the three Hebrew words *Torah*, meaning the Law, *Nebi'im*, meaning the Prophets, and *Ketubim*, meaning the Writings. These three entities – the Law, the Prophets and the Writings – are the names of the three parts into which Jews divide the books of the Hebrew Bible. These group designations were already used at the time of the New Testament. Jesus and some of the New Testament authors repeatedly speak about “the Law and the Prophets” as a collective reference to the Holy Scriptures. I will mention two examples: The first is taken from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:12: “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”<sup>6</sup> I take the second example from the apostle Paul, Romans 3:21: “[...] the righteousness of God has been disclosed and is attested by the law and the prophets.”<sup>7</sup> In the New Testament we find only one example of a tripartite formula that corresponds to the Jewish designation *Tanakh*; however, the Psalms replace the *Ketubim* as the third element. The Psalms represent the largest and perhaps most prominent book among the Writings, the *Ketubim*. The tripartite formula is found at the end of the Gospel of Luke when the risen Christ encounters the disciples and speaks to them: “[...] These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44).

In modern biblical scholarship it has become common to speak about the *Tanakh* as the Hebrew Bible. This name reflects the fact that Hebrew is the language in which the included books were originally written. To be accurate we can specify that two of the books, Ezra and Daniel, are written partly in Hebrew and partly in the related Semitic language Aramaic (Ezra 4:8– 6:18; 7:12–26; Dan 2:4–7:28), and that there are a few Aramaic phrases also appearing in other books (Jer 10:11; Gen 31:47).

## THE DEVELOPMENT AND FORMATION OF THE JEWISH CANON

The sequence of the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible, the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, corresponds to the chronological order of their canonization. The words “canon” and “canonization” are derived from the Greek word *kanōn* which, at the outset, means a rod used by craftsmen to keep a thing straight or to measure it. Figuratively, *kanōn* means that which is measured in the sense of a rule or a standard, and the word is used with this meaning in Galatians 6:16. Applied to Holy Scriptures, canon is the designation of the books which are recognized by a religious community as genuine and normative in defining the religious truth, that is, as their rule. The related word “canonization” refers to the historical process through which specific texts acquire the position as canon.

The Law, encompassing the first five books in the Bible, referred to as the Pentateuch or the five books of Moses, was recognized as canon among the Jews in Judea in the post-exilic period, perhaps already in the fifth century BC.<sup>8</sup> This was followed by the canonization of the Prophets perhaps as early

<sup>6</sup> Biblical texts, including Old Testament Apocrypha, are generally quoted from *Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. Catholic Edition: Anglicized Text (London: SPCK, 2015), abbreviated NRSV.

<sup>7</sup> Further examples are Matt 5:17; Luke 16:16; John 1:45. See also the expression “Moses and the prophets” in Luke 16:29, 31.

<sup>8</sup> Neh 8:1–10:40 (ET 8:1–10:39) recounts how the priest and scribe Ezra publicly read “the book of the law of Moses” (8:1) in Jerusalem and it was recognized as authoritative by the people; they committed themselves “to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD [...] and his ordinances and his statutes” (10:30b [ET 10:29b]). This incident is often considered as the ‘canonization’ of the Law. Whether the date of Ezra’s arrival in Jerusalem in the seventh year of the reign of the Persian King Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:1–10) relates to Artaxerxes I Longimanus (465–424 BC) or to Artaxerxes II (405–358 BC) and, hence, is identified as 458 or as 398 BC, is an issue of debate among scholars.

as the third century BC or early in the second century BC (see Sir 44–49).<sup>9</sup> What might be surprising is the fact that the part of the Hebrew Bible called the Prophets comprises not only what Christians regard as prophetic books, that is, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve Minor prophets from Hosea to Malachi. In fact, the part *Nebi'im*, the Prophets, also includes the books Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings, books that we Christians normally consider to be simply historical books.

With canonical status established for the Law and the Prophets long before the birth of Christ and the transition from the era before Christ to after Christ, it is not surprising that the phrase “the Law and the Prophets” appears repeatedly in the New Testament as a collective reference to the recognized, normative Holy Scriptures. However, as already mentioned, there is only one example in the New Testament for a tripartite reference to the canon, and the third element in this one example, to be found in Luke 24:44, is not the broad term *Ketubim*, the Writings, but the Psalms. There is disagreement among scholars regarding when the third part of the Hebrew Bible reached canonical status as the Law and the Prophets had done at an earlier stage. Some claim that the *Ketubim* were also established as canonical in the pre-Christian era.<sup>10</sup> The *Ketubim* comprise the remaining books of the Hebrew Bible, beyond the five books of the Pentateuch and the 21 books of the Prophets. Hence, the *Ketubim* include the following books: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and 1–2 Chronicles. However, other scholars, with whom I agree, consider the fact that the complete tripartite reference *Tanakh* occurs neither in Jewish nor in early Christian sources in the first century AD<sup>11</sup> as an indication that the canonical process of the Hebrew Bible was ongoing, and had not yet come to an established end at the time of Jesus and the apostles. The exact extent of the content of the third part, the *Ketubim*, must have been fixed during the period between the first Jewish revolt against Rome in the years AD 66–70 (–74) and the second revolt in the years 132–135.

It is time for a first conclusion with some essential implications for the relationship between the Old and New Testaments: The final canonization of the Hebrew Bible occurred after most of the New Testament writings had been written. Hence, there is no time gap between the two testaments; on the contrary, their formations overlap. Although it is rather common among scholars to speak about an intertestamental period from about 200 BC to AD 100 and to call Jewish writings that originated during this period intertestamental writings, the implied idea in such talk is nevertheless misleading and erroneous.

## THE SEPTUAGINT

For a more complete comprehension of the relationship between the testaments we must now direct our attention to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, called the Septuagint.<sup>12</sup> After the military

<sup>9</sup> Sirach is an important wisdom book written around 180 BC. The way the prophets are referred to in the section called “Hymn in Honour of our ancestors” (chapters 44–49; cf. 48:22; 49:7, 8, 10) shows that the Prophets had gained canonical status by this time.

<sup>10</sup> For an argument in favour of the complete establishment of the Jewish *Tanakh* canon by the second century BC, see Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress, 1993), 55–60. See the criticism in Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 749.

<sup>11</sup> Like the New Testament (see Luke 24:44), the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran list only the Psalms (of David) explicitly in addition to the Law and the Prophets: “to you we have [written] that you must understand the book of Moses [and] the book[s] of the prophets and Davi[d ...]” (4Q397). The grandson of the author of Sirach translated the book from Hebrew to Greek around 132 BC. In the prologue he added to the Greek version the translator refers to “the Law and the Prophets” as established and well-defined entities, that are followed by other books, respectively “the other books of our fathers” or “the rest of the books”. Such a general, vague reference to a third group of books beyond the Law and the Prophets, that is not yet clearly fixed, also appears in the writings of the Jewish author Philo of Alexandria in the first century AD: Jews are occupied with studying “laws and oracles delivered through the mouth of prophets, and psalms and the other [books]” (*Contemplative Life* 25). For these source references see Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 744.

<sup>12</sup> Septuagint means “Seventy” (LXX) and has become the common designation for the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, based on the story that the translation was made by 70 or 72 Jewish scribes. This story occurs the first time in the so-called Letter of Aristeas, according to which the Law was translated during the reign of the Egyptian king Ptolemy II (285–247 BC). The

campaigns of Alexander the Great and the succeeding foundation of the Hellenistic kingdoms towards the end of the fourth century BC, Greek became *lingua franca*, that is, the common international language spoken and written throughout the entire Mediterranean world. During the Hellenistic period many Jewish diaspora communities were founded both along the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea in North Africa and in Southern Europe. These Jewish communities were predominantly Greek-speaking, and as a consequence there was a need for Greek translations of the Jewish Holy Scriptures. First, the Law (the five books of Moses, the Pentateuch) was translated from Hebrew into Greek in the third century BC. Next, the Prophets, Psalms and Daniel were translated in the second century BC. However, it was not until the beginning of the second century AD that all biblical books were translated.

Not only the books belonging to the Hebrew Bible *Tanakh*, but also some further Jewish writings from the period after Ezra and Nehemiah were included in the Septuagint. Some of these additional books, for example Sirach from approximately 180 BC and 1 Maccabees from around 100 BC, had first been written in Hebrew and were subsequently translated into Greek. Other additional books which were included in the Septuagint were composed in Greek and, hence, did not undergo a translation process before they were included in the Greek Bible. This applies to the book called Wisdom of Solomon and to 2 Maccabees.<sup>13</sup>

Jesus spoke and taught in Aramaic and Hebrew. However, as we learn from Acts 6, there were already many Greek-speaking believers in the mother church in Jerusalem, and, therefore, there was a need for the stories about Jesus and his teaching to be translated into Greek from the very beginning. Many of the apostles and other leading figures in the first generation of Christians were bilingual and used *both* the Semitic languages Hebrew and Aramaic *and* Greek in their proclamation. As soon as the early mission expanded beyond Judea and Galilee, Greek became the dominant or even the only operative language. On this background, it is no surprise that all of the New Testament books are written in Greek.

A further consequence of these circumstances is that the early Christian missionaries and teachers used the already existing Greek translation of the Old Testament when they read from the Holy Scriptures and referred to them. In the New Testament we observe that most quotations from the Old Testament are cited according to the Septuagint. There are also some deviations from the Septuagint which prove that the New Testament authors also related to the Hebrew version of the Bible and translated the text afresh into Greek or at least independently of the Septuagint. Nevertheless, in spite of such competence, the general tendency among the New Testament authors is to read and quote the Holy Scriptures according to the Septuagint.

#### THE FINAL FIXATION AND DELIMITATION OF THE JEWISH BIBLE

Let me summarize and conclude regarding the fixation and delimitation of the Jewish Bible. The final definition of the content of the *Tanakh* is the result of a long canonical process that ended some time between the two Jewish revolts against Rome in AD 66–70 and 132–135. There are different ways of counting the books in the Hebrew Bible depending on whether for example 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings and 1–2 Chronicles are counted as two books or only one. Towards the end of the first century AD the Jewish historian Josephus states that there are 22 canonical texts (*Against Apion* 1.39–41)<sup>14</sup> whereas the Jewish apocalyptic book 4 Ezra speaks of 24 books (14:18–47).

---

story about the 70 or 72 translators reappears with variations both in the Jewish authors Philo and Josephus and in many of the Christian church fathers.

<sup>13</sup> For more details about Sirach see notes 9 and 11 above. For an English translation of the Septuagint, see *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), abbreviation: NETS. There is an electronic edition of NETS available at <https://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/>. *The SBL Handbook of Style for Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, Second Edition (Atlanta, Georgia: SBL Press, 2014), 125, lists the following books in the entry “8.3.3 Deuterocanonical Works and Septuagint”: Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach/Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel (comprising Prayer of Azariah, Song of the Three Young Men, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon), 1–2 Maccabees, 1 Esdras, Prayer of Manasseh, Psalm 151, 3 Maccabees, 2 Esdras, 4 Maccabees.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 744.

4 Ezra 14:44–47:

(44) So during the forty days ninety-four books were written. (45) And when the forty days ended, the Most High spoke to me, saying: “Make public **the twenty-four** [omitted in some versions] books that you wrote first and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; (46) but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people. (47) For in them is the spring of understanding, fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge.” And I did so.<sup>15</sup>

The analysis of these numbers shows that they refer exactly to the books that are contained in modern editions of the Hebrew Bible, counted as 36 or 39 books, depending on whether the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles are counted as one or as two books. In most Christian Bibles Samuel, Kings and Chronicles are counted as two books each so that the total number of books in the Old Testament is 39. As we will see later in this article, there are differences among the denominations regarding whether they restrict their editions of the Old Testament to these 39 books only or whether they include more books. As for now, we will limit ourselves to the 39 books which are identical with the content of the Jewish Bible. Although there is an accurate correspondence regarding the inclusion of these books, their order within the canon differs. In the Hebrew Bible, the order is set corresponding to the three parts of the *Tanakh*, that is, first the books of the *Torah*, the Law; second the books of the *Nebi'im*, the Prophets; and third the books of the *Ketubim*, the Writings. If we take the division of 39 books as our basis, this means that the first part, the Law, contains five books, the second part, the Prophets, contains 21 books, and the third part, the Writings, contains 13 books.

#### THE BIBLE IN GREEK GRADUALLY SUPPLANTED BY THE *TANAKH* AS THE ONLY RECOGNIZED JEWISH BIBLE

During the period when the Holy Scriptures were gradually translated into Greek from the third century BC onwards, these new Greek versions of the Scriptures were met with enthusiasm and were highly regarded. Indeed, among the Greek-speaking diaspora Jews the Greek versions were recognized as inspired holy writ on the same level as the original Hebrew versions.<sup>16</sup> From the way New Testament authors interact with the Septuagint we can infer that the Jewish believers in Jesus Christ shared this full recognition of the Greek translation of the Holy Scriptures. However, by the second century AD the Septuagint was increasingly perceived to be the Bible of the Christians, to which they successfully appealed for scriptural proofs. As a consequence, scepticism towards the Septuagint increased among Jews, and during the second century AD new Greek translations, associated with the names Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus, were produced. These new Greek versions replaced the Septuagint in the Greek-speaking Jewish synagogues from the second century AD onwards. Although these efforts were undertaken in order to let Jews with insufficient knowledge of Hebrew still have access to the Holy Scriptures in Greek, gradually, as rabbinic Judaism developed, a more exclusive position emerged that recognized the Bible only in the original Hebrew as the sole authoritative version of the Holy Scriptures. Hence, with regard to both the language and the content of the Jewish Bible, the *Tanakh*, represented by the so-called Masoretic manuscript tradition, became the only and exclusive version. This outcome of the canonical process is upheld until the present. One remarkable consequence is that the Holy Scriptures are recited in Hebrew in synagogues all over the world irrespective of the level of knowledge of biblical Hebrew among people attending the synagogal services. In most cases the rabbis give their sermons and elaborate on and explain the biblical text in the local native language, but nevertheless, only the original

---

<sup>15</sup> Quoted from *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Volume 1: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1983), 555.

<sup>16</sup> This is a warranted inference from the way Philo (see *On the Life of Moses* 2.25–44) and Josephus (see *Jewish Antiquities* 12.11–118) describe the translation process and the inspired state of the Greek biblical text.

texts in Hebrew (and some passages in Aramaic) are recognized as canonical. The historical fact that, in the period after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the failing of the Jewish revolts, the leading centres of Jewish studies in Palestine and Babylon used Hebrew and Aramaic, as reflected in the collections of the Mishnah, the Tosefta and the Talmud, were decisive for this historical development.

#### THE ORIENTATION TOWARDS AND THE EMPHASIS ON THE LAW IN THE *TANAKH* CANON

The *Tanakh* canon of the Hebrew Bible is oriented towards the Law and the keeping of the Law as its central message. Because 1–2 Chronicles are placed as the last books in the third division, the Writings, 2 Chronicles 36 appears as the end of the Bible. This means that the final event recounted in the Bible is the declaration of the Persian king Cyrus that God has commissioned him to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem that the Babylonian king had destroyed some decades before. The very last verse, 2 Chron 36:23, says: "Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the Lord his God be with him! Let him go up." Any Jew who read this in the first and second centuries AD, would have known that the declared intention of King Cyrus materialized in the construction of the so-called Second Temple, raised from 520 to 515 BC. Hence, the *Tanakh* ends with a reference to the temple as the site where many of the commandments in the Law, in particular those about different sacrifices, were to be practised. After the destruction of the Second Temple in the year AD 70, the end of the *Tanakh* might have triggered hopes that once again a temple would be built in Jerusalem. Concentration on the Law and the recognition of observance of the Law as a valid replacement of the sacrifices in the temple were what became the lasting solution to the crisis that hit Judaism when the temple was destroyed and the temple cult came to an end. The long-established practice in Jewish diaspora communities, with the synagogue as the place to assemble for prayer and teaching, now became the regular religious practice among Jews. The Law was subjected to a detailed, meticulous study, as documented in the collections of the Mishnah and the Talmud. The emphasis on the study of the Law and on its observance is reflected in the *Tanakh* canon, where parts two and three, the Prophets and the Writings, are perceived to a high degree as comments and expositions of the first part, the Law.

#### RESPECT FOR THE HEBREW BIBLE

I think that we as Christians are obliged to show respect for the Hebrew Bible. This implies, first, that we treat all text passages in the biblical books with due humility and recognize that they reflect social, cultural and religious contexts prior to any Christian reception and interpretation. It is the task of the biblical scholar to analyse and interpret the Old Testament texts historically, to demonstrate their uniqueness and protect them from being anachronistically appropriated and exploited. However, it would be a misplaced respect if we limited ourselves only to historical-critical analyses and interpretations of individual text passages and biblical books. Our treatment of the biblical texts must also account for the tradition-historical processes that these texts were part of throughout the centuries and for their position and role within the Bible as a whole. This second point of due respect has to do with the *Tanakh* as canon. We must understand and recognize that the first part of our own Bible, which we share with our Jewish friends, is not only *our*, but also *their* treasured inheritance. As such the Hebrew Bible found a legitimate succession in the rabbinic tradition, reflected not only in the halakhic corpora of the Mishnah and the Talmud, but also in the Aramaic, interpretative translations called Targums and in the commentary literature, Midrash.

#### PART 2. THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE

I have already stated something about the Christian Bible, either indirectly or by implication. We have observed that Jesus and his disciples, who were all Jews, read and accepted the Law, the Prophets and the Writings as the inspired word of God. Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection did not change

anything in this respect; his followers who gathered as his church and as the church of God continued to read and teach the Scriptures, seeing Christ and his resurrection as the organic continuation and fulfilment of the testimony in the Holy Scriptures. Due to the historical circumstances Greek quickly became the dominant language used in the early church, and for this reason the Septuagint was the version of the Holy Scriptures predominantly read, proclaimed and taught in mission and teaching.

#### THE SALVATION-HISTORICAL STRUCTURE OF THE SEPTUAGINT

The Hebrew Bible and the Greek Septuagint differ from one another not only with regard to the language, but also with regard to the number of books included and the order of these books. The Septuagint is not divided into the three parts of the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. Instead, the compositional or editorial principle is a division into four groups of books: First, laws; second, histories or historical books; third, poetic books; and fourth, prophecies or prophetic books.<sup>17</sup> When it comes to the higher number of books, I have already listed them above (see n. 13). These additional books in the Septuagint are commonly called Apocrypha or deuterocanonical books. Depending on their content, they are distributed among the different groups, so that for example 1–2 Maccabees are placed in the second group of historical books and Sirach and Wisdom are placed among the poetic books.

Whereas the Hebrew *Tanakh* canon in its divisions is oriented towards the Law as its centre, the Septuagint order expresses a salvation-historical process instead. A consequence of placing the prophetic books at the end in the collection of Holy Scriptures is that they orientate the reader towards the future. Many of the prophets speak about how God will act in the future, both in judgment and for salvation. This structural composition of the Holy Scriptures clearly expresses an openness towards the future. They entail an implicit expectation that there will be something more to tell and that there will be a continuation of testifying to what the God of Israel is doing in the world and for his people.

#### THE JEWISH HOLY SCRIPTURES WERE CONSIDERED BY JESUS AND THE EARLY CHURCH TO BE A SOURCE OF TRUTH AND A RESOURCE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE PRESENT

Like all other contemporary Jews Jesus and the apostles read, studied and explained the Holy Scriptures. It was not a surprise that they turned to the Scriptures in order to learn truth and in order to interpret what was going on in the world, but, on the contrary, exactly what was expected and seen as a matter of course. The New Testament contains many examples of this practice, and I will mention two of them.

First, the Third Evangelist tells in Luke 4:16–30 that Jesus visits his home village of Nazareth and attends the service in the synagogue on the sabbath day. There he is invited to read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, and he reads the passage found in 61:1–2: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:18–19). After the reading, with the eyes of all in the synagogue fixed on him, Jesus began to speak: “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (v. 21). Later on, when Jesus was challenged by the disciples of John the Baptist to state clearly whether he was the Messiah or whether they should wait for someone else, Jesus again hinted at these verses and other verses in the book of Isaiah, and combined them with his own healing and preaching ministry: “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them” (Luke 7:22).<sup>18</sup>

Second, in his speech on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14–36), the apostle Peter quoted extensively from the Scriptures in order to explain what had already taken place seven weeks earlier in the resurrection of Jesus during Passover, and what was happening now during the Feast of Weeks. He

---

<sup>17</sup> For this compositional order see NETS and the most widely used critical text edition of the Greek Septuagint: *Septuaginta*, edited by Alfred Rahlfs and revised by Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> In addition to Isa 61:1 see Isa 26:19; 29:18; 35:5–6; 42:7, 18.



cited from the prophet Joel 3:1–5 (ET 2:28–32) in vv. 16–21, from Psalm 16:8–11 (quoted according to LXX Ps 15:8–11) in vv. 25–28, and he also made references to other Old Testament texts like Psalms 110 and 132 (see vv. 30, 34–35).

Altogether the New Testament contains about 80 quotations from the Law, about 80 quotations from the Prophets and about 55 quotations from the Psalms.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the way in which the early Christians interacted with the Holy Scriptures is clearly documented. For them as Jews in the first century AD it was neither coincidental nor accidental that they read and interpreted the Holy Scriptures; it was rather a matter of course.

#### THE FORMATION OF THE GOSPELS AND THE LETTERS

Jesus was recognized by his followers and disciples as their teacher. They listened carefully to his words, memorized them and treasured them. Soon after Jesus' death and resurrection, when the disciples began to proclaim him as the Messiah and the Lord, they related what Jesus had done, and they presented the message and teaching of Jesus to people. One example of how the life of Jesus was communicated to people in the early mission, is Peter's speech to the people assembled in the house of the God-fearing Roman officer Cornelius in Caesarea, recounted in Acts 10:34–43. This speech appears as a summary of the Gospel of Mark. In Mark as well as in the longer synoptic Gospels of Matthew and Luke and in the Gospel of John the treasured memories of Jesus' words and deeds, which at the beginning had been transmitted orally, are written down. Thanks to the Gospels, Jesus' ministry was communicated to people who had never encountered him face to face and, gradually, to subsequent generations born after his ministry.

Other written documents that communicate faith in Jesus and elaborate what it means to live one's life as a follower of Jesus are the letters authored by apostles and missionaries like Paul, Peter, John, James and Jude. We are particularly well informed about how Paul operated. In the Acts of the Apostles Luke reports extensively about Paul's three missionary journeys as well as his imprisonment in Jerusalem, Caesarea and Rome. Further, 13 of Paul's letters have been preserved, and some of them – for example his First Letter to the Thessalonians, his First Letter to the Corinthians and his Letter to the Romans – can be neatly plotted chronologically into the narrative of Paul's mission in Acts: 1 Thessalonians was written in the year 50 while Paul resided in Corinth during the second missionary journey; 1 Corinthians was written in the year 54 or 55 while Paul resided in Ephesus during the third missionary journey; Romans was written in the year 56 or 57 during Paul's new three-month visit to Corinth at the end of the third missionary journey, shortly before he travelled to Jerusalem, where he was imprisoned. As we can see from Colossians 4:16, Paul wanted his letters to be handed on to other Christian communities, as well: "[W]hen this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea." After Paul's death in the 60s all his letters, originally addressed to individual churches or persons, were brought together and united in a collection, commonly referred to as the *corpus Paulinum*, and 2 Peter 3:15–16 testifies to this phenomenon when it refers to the collection of Pauline letters: "So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures."

#### REFERENCES IN THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS TO THE GOSPELS AND THE LETTERS

Documentation of the memories of Jesus' words and deeds in the Gospels and the writing of letters by missionaries and apostles with information and instruction sent to churches in need of such

---

<sup>19</sup> For these numbers see Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 750. A book that analyses most of these quotations is *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, edited by G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic; Nottingham: Apollos, 2007).

communication constitute the first phase of the canonical process that finally led to the collection of writings called the New Testament. We are in the fortunate position that a number of early Christian texts from the first half of the second century AD have been preserved; these books are commonly referred to as the Apostolic Fathers. In this collection we find writings like *The Teaching of the Apostles*, in short called *Didache*; 1–2 Letters of Clement and altogether seven letters by Ignatius, bishop in Antioch, written around 110 during his travel to Rome where he expected to be martyred.<sup>20</sup> In the Apostolic Fathers we observe how Old Testament quotations and references to sayings of Jesus and to formulations in Paul’s Letters are juxtaposed, appearing side by side in the text as theologically normative statements. Hence, the Apostolic Fathers demonstrate how the New Testament canonical process is progressing; gradually, quotations and references from the Gospels and from the Apostolic Letters appear on a par with Old Testament quotations, as is plain from the following examples.

1 Clement 13.1–2:

(1) [...] Let us do that which is written, for the Holy Spirit says, “Let not the wise man boast himself in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, nor the rich man in his riches, but he that boasts let him boast in the Lord, to seek him out and to do judgment and righteousness”, especially remembering the words of the Lord Jesus which he spoke when he was teaching gentleness and longsuffering. (2) For he spoke thus: “Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy. Forgive, that you may be forgiven. As you do, so shall it be done unto you. As you give, so shall it be given unto you. As you judge, so shall you be judged. As you are kind, so shall kindness be shown you. With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you.”<sup>21</sup>

2 Clement 14.2:

Now I imagine that you are not ignorant that the living “Church is the body of Christ”. For the scripture says, “God made man male and female”; the male is Christ, the female is the Church. And moreover the books [i.e. the Old Testament books] and the Apostles declare that the Church belongs not to the present, but has existed from the beginning; for she was spiritual, as was also our Jesus, but he was made manifest in the last days that he might save us.<sup>22</sup>

1 Clement 49.5:

Love unites us to God. Love covers a multitude of sins. Love bears all things, is long-suffering in all things. There is nothing base, nothing haughty in love; love admits no schism, love makes no sedition, love does all things in concord.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> For an overview of this group of writings, see *SBL Handbook of Style*, 133–34, the entry “8.3.11 Apostolic Fathers”. In the series Loeb Classical Library, a Greek-English edition of the Apostolic Fathers is published in two volumes (LCL 24 and LCL 25). The most recent version, translated and edited by Bart D. Ehrman, appeared in 2003. I quote with some modifications from the earlier version, *The Apostolic Fathers*, with an English translation by Kirsopp Lake (London: William Heinemann / Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1912).

<sup>21</sup> The first quotation is taken from Jer 9:23–24. The quotation of the words of the Lord Jesus consists of a combination of sayings from the Sermon on the Plain, respectively, the Sermon on the Mount, see Luke 6:31, 36–38; Matt 5:7; 6:14–15; 7:1–2, 12. With the introductory formula “the holy word says”, the author quotes from Isa 66:2 in the following verses 3–4.

The first section in *Didache*, comprising 1.1–6.3 and describing the “two ways”, i.e. the way of life and the way of death, cites extensively from the Sermon on the Mount. Did 8.2 presents the Lord’s Prayer exactly the same as Matt 6:9–13.

<sup>22</sup> For the quoted references see Eph 1:22–23 and Gen 1:27. The statement about the manifestation of Jesus for our salvation in the last days alludes to 1 Pet 1:20.

<sup>23</sup> The statement that love covers a multitude of sins originates in Prov 10:12 and is also alluded to in Jas 5:20 and 1 Pet 4:8. The rest of the quoted text alludes to 1 Cor 13:4–7.

Other references to Pauline texts are found *inter alia* in 1 Clem 35.5–6; 37.5–6; 47.3; 49.5, and in 36.2–5 there are extensive references to Heb 1. More examples of quotations from and allusions to the Gospels and the Letters in the Apostolic Fathers are presented in Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 754.

## MARCION'S REJECTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND MOST OF THE APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

As the Gospels and the Letters gained a generally recognized position in all churches during the first half of the second century AD, the balance between the long-esteemed Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and these new documents testifying to the divine revelation in the person and life of Jesus and in the gospel message was suddenly challenged. Around AD 140 Marcion, son of a bishop and himself a rich shipowner, initiated a controversy in the church in Rome. He claimed that Jewish legalism was about to obscure the gospel. In his opinion, the church must reject the Jewish Bible, the Old Testament, because it represented this threatening Jewish legalism. According to Marcion such legalism had already influenced and infiltrated the texts about Jesus and the gospel. For this reason, it was necessary to scrutinize the Gospels and the Letters and wipe out the intruded legalistic elements. Marcion's crusade against the Old Testament and its alleged legalism was rejected in Rome, and he was expelled from the community. In AD 144 Marcion founded his own church with no Old Testament and only with a version of the Gospel of Luke revised by him in an anti-Jewish direction and ten similarly reworked letters of Paul as the new canon.

## THE FIXATION OF THE CHRISTIAN TWO-PART CANON OF THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENTS IN GREEK

Marcion's challenge prompted a more conscious and defined position in the church regarding its canon. In addition, the parallel development of Gnostic influences in some regions and the morally rigid Montanist movement intensified the need for such clarifications in the so-called catholic churches which were led by bishops loyal to their predecessors, who were originally ordained by the apostles.

The outcome of the disputes in the second century was, on the one hand, a firm confirmation of the Old Testament in the form of the Greek Septuagint as the word of God and, on the other hand, an increasingly clearly defined New Testament canon. The criteria for being accepted and recognized as authoritative were apostolicity, orthodoxy and consensus among the churches. Apostolicity means that the writings had to be written by apostles, like Paul, Peter, John and Matthew, but this principle also included authors who had been direct disciples or co-workers of some of the apostles, like Mark in his relation to Peter and Luke in his relation to Paul. By AD 200 the core of our New Testament was firmly established and recognized in all Christian churches. The core comprised the following: the four Gospels, 13 or 14 Pauline Letters – the variation in numbers depends on whether the Letter to the Hebrews was considered as written by Paul or not – further, Acts of the Apostles, Peter's First Letter and John's First Letter.

The extent of precisely those 27 books which our New Testament comprises, was confirmed in the fourth and at the very beginning of the fifth century AD. For the church in the East the Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter of Bishop Athanasius in Alexandria, written on the occasion of Easter AD 367, witnesses the recognition of the New Testament with 27 books. In the Western church the synod in Carthage 397 and the letter from the Roman bishop, Pope Innocent I, to the bishop in Toulouse in the year 405 confirm the establishment and recognition of all 27 books as New Testament canon.

## THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE IN OTHER LANGUAGES

As the Christian faith spread to more and more nations, the sacred texts were translated into new languages. As early as during the second century New Testament texts were translated into Latin, Syriac and Coptic. However, there was never any doubt that Greek was the original language of the New Testament and, thus, that any translations must be based on the Greek text as their source.

When it came to the corresponding translation of the Old Testament, the question of the source language appeared to be much more complicated and controversial. It was natural to use the Septuagint as long as the church operated in a setting where Greek was the common language. But as soon as other languages were involved, the question was whether the translation should be made on the basis of the Septuagint or, rather, on the basis of Hebrew, which was the language from which the Septuagint had been translated. A paradigmatic case is the discussion between the church fathers Augustine and Jerome

at the turn of the fifth century AD regarding the translation of the Old Testament into Latin. Whereas Augustine favoured the Septuagint, Jerome was convinced that he did right in translating the Old Testament from the Hebrew. As a consequence, the Latin Bible, the Vulgate, which soon acquired the position as the official and authorized Bible in the Western Catholic Church, is based on the Hebrew Bible. In this way the Vulgate is not dependent on the Septuagint, but rather appears as its parallel. However, the Vulgate does not limit its content to the 39 books of the *Tanakh*, but includes the additional deuterocanonical books of the Septuagint, translated from Greek, and the Vulgate also follows the Septuagint’s order of the books with the prophetic books at the end.

The next time in history when the questions of the source language and the content of the Old Testament became a burning issue was during the Reformation in Europe in the sixteenth century. By this time the Latin Vulgate had been the one exclusive form of the Bible in Europe for centuries. One concern of highest priority for the reformers was to give the public access to the Bible, and the invention of printing in the preceding century had suddenly made mass production of books possible. If the population at large should gain access to the biblical texts, it was necessary to translate the Bible into the vernaculars. The reformer Martin Luther’s translation of the Bible into German is generally seen as a brilliant achievement.<sup>24</sup> The New Testament books were, of course, translated from Greek, but what about the Old Testament? Luther did as Jerome more than one thousand years earlier; he decided to translate from the Hebrew Bible, not from the Greek Septuagint. Because of the total dominance of Latin as the language of the church in Europe, the knowledge of Hebrew had by this time practically been lost. When the so-called Renaissance humanists from the fifteenth century onwards gradually took an interest in returning to antiquity, they had to turn to the learned in the synagogue and study with them in order to learn Hebrew afresh and be able to read the biblical texts. The reformers not only obtained the source text of the Old Testament from the synagogue, but they also took over the *Tanakh* canon from the synagogue. Thus, the Reformation Bibles removed the so-called Apocrypha or deuterocanonical books that had always been part of the Christian Old Testament. This was done with varying rigour. In his German Bible of 1534 Martin Luther still included the Apocrypha in a separate section between the Old Testament books and the New Testament books and stated in the title of this section: “The Apocrypha. That is, Books which are not to be esteemed like the Holy Scriptures, and yet which are useful and good to read.”<sup>25</sup>

Reformed Protestantism went further in diminishing or even degrading the position of the Apocrypha. We can cite the 1646 Westminster Confession of Faith (§I.3) as an example: “The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.”<sup>26</sup>

#### THE EXTENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN CHRISTIAN BIBLES

As described above, the evangelists and the teachers in the early church and the New Testament authors embraced the Greek Bible of the Septuagint with its larger range of books than the Hebrew *Tanakh*.

We can observe an emphasis on the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms from the Old Testament references in the New Testament. However, we can also observe that the New Testament authors related to the so-called Apocrypha and sometimes quote from them as Scripture. The most explicit occurrences are quotations or echoes from Sirach, for example the reception of Sirach 4:1 in Mark 10:19 and of Sirach 5:11 in James 1:19.<sup>27</sup> In some cases New Testament authors combine phrases from different biblical

<sup>24</sup> The New Testament 1522; the whole Bible 1534, nine more editions before Luther died in 1546.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted from Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 761. This applies to the Catholic (Vulgate) Apocrypha/deuterocanonical books: Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch (+ Letter of Jeremiah), 1–2 Maccabees, Additions to Daniel.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted from Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 762.

<sup>27</sup> For an accurate analysis of these two instances and the demonstration that the reproduction of Sir 7:30 in Barnabas 19:2 shows that the Apostolic Fathers relate in the same way as the New Testament authors to the Old Testament Apocrypha, see Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 750.

books among which can be Apocrypha. One example of such conflated quotations is 2 Timothy 2:19, where the author cites from Numbers 16:5, Sirach 17:26 and Isaiah 26:13.

In addition to including direct quotations or borrowed phrases from individual verses, New Testament authors argue and expose certain theological issues on the basis of how biblical traditions have developed beyond the frames and limitations of the *Tanakh*. For example, Paul’s description of Gentile idolatry and the corruption of all morals that goes hand in hand with it in Romans 1:18–32 is closely related to the criticism and exposition in Wisdom of Solomon 13:1–14:31. In particular, from a tradition-historical perspective New Testament high Christology, as expressed in the prologue to the Gospel of John, John 1:1–18, and in the Christ hymn in Colossians 1:15–20, obviously has its background in wisdom theology the way it developed in early Judaism (see, especially, Sir 24 and Wis 6:12–9:18).

At the time of the New Testament the exact delimitation of the Septuagint was still not fixed. As a consequence, there was not yet any clear border line between those writings that later obtained the position as Old Testament Apocrypha or deuterocanonical books (included in the Septuagint and the Vulgate) and other early Jewish writings, later commonly classified as Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.<sup>28</sup> The pseudepigraphal book 1 Enoch is especially well represented in early Christianity. The Nestle-Aland edition of the Greek New Testament has registered more than one hundred allusions to or echoes from 1 Enoch in the New Testament books, and there is even one occurrence of a direct quotation.<sup>29</sup> The discovery of Aramaic fragments from all parts of the book except the Similitudes or Parables of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71) among the Dead Sea Scrolls proves that the original language was Aramaic. Further, a Greek translation of parts of the book is known from various manuscripts, but a complete version is only preserved in Ethiopic, and for this reason 1 Enoch has frequently been referred to as the “Ethiopic book of Enoch”. This version of the book is included in the biblical canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Starting from the quotation of 1 Enoch 1:9 in Jude 14–15, classified by the New Testament author as a prophecy, Bruk Ayele Asale has offered an excellent and informative presentation of 1 Enoch as Christian Scripture.<sup>30</sup>

From a tradition-historical and canonical perspective it is unfortunate that most Protestant churches have reduced the first part of the Christian Bible to the books of the *Tanakh*. However, there are ways in which this canon deficiency can be compensated for. It is crucial how New Testament scholars operate. Exegetes must recognize that the New Testament authors did not distinguish with any vigour between what post-exilic Jewish writings they were allowed to relate to as witnesses of the biblical tradition process and what writings were excluded from such status. Correspondingly, they must identify such links between New Testament texts and early Jewish books like Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon and 1 Enoch and expose how these books are received and appropriated in the New Testament texts.

#### THE OPENNESS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Although the Old Testament in Protestant Bibles is based on the Hebrew Bible as the source text and with regard to the included books, these Bibles, nevertheless, have not adopted the division of the books into the three parts of the *Tanakh*. Protestant Bibles stick to the order that was established in the Septuagint and continued in the Vulgate, with the prophetic books as the fourth and last section. Whereas the twelve so-called Minor Prophets from Hosea to Malachi are normally placed before the longer books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel in the Septuagint, this order has been reversed both in the Vulgate and in Protestant

<sup>28</sup> For an overview see *SBL Handbook of Style*, 125–26, the entry 8.3.4. “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha”. An English translation of the most important pseudepigrapha is found in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. by James H. Charlesworth. For volume 1, see note 15 above. According to the subtitle, volume 2 includes: *Expansions of the “Old Testament” and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works*.

<sup>29</sup> See *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012) Appendix III. Loci citati vel allegati, 836–78, 875–76. The corresponding references to the alluded or echoed verses in 1 Enoch appear throughout in the margins of the Greek text.

<sup>30</sup> Bruk Ayele Asale, *1 Enoch as Christian Scripture: A Study in the Reception and Appropriation of 1 Enoch in Jude and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahədo Canon* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2020). A synopsis of 1 Enoch 1:9 in Ethiopic and Greek and Jude 14–15 in Greek is found on page 33.

Bibles. As a consequence, the final Old Testament book in Protestant Bibles is the prophet Malachi. Malachi ends with a prophecy of the return of the famous prophet Elijah, prior to the Day of the Lord. Let me quote the last two verses with this prophecy, Mal 3:23–24 (ET 4:5–6): “Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.”

I have already touched upon the general effect of the compositional principle of letting the prophetic books constitute the final part of the Old Testament. This effect is an openness towards a future where the prophecies will be fulfilled. If we apply this general canonical principle to the specific oracle that closes the Old Testament if Malachi is the last book, we encounter the expectation that the prophet Elijah will return from the heavens, to where he had ascended in a chariot of fire (see 2 Kings 2:11), and that he will help reconcile parents and children to each other and by this rescue them and the land from God’s judgment. In the New Testament we observe a vivid awareness of this very prophecy and how it found its fulfilment. When asked by his disciples, Jesus identified John the Baptist as the returning Elijah (Matt 17:10–13 par. Mark 9:11–13).<sup>31</sup>

#### THE OLD TESTAMENT AS AN INDISPENSABLE PART OF THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE

The Old Testament is an indispensable part of the Christian Bible. The New Testament never intended to supersede it, only to confirm, continue and fulfil it by giving testimony about Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Saviour both for Jews and non-Jews. The New Testament authors not only quote and allude frequently to Old Testaments texts, the very language of faith, by which the gospel about Jesus is expressed in the New Testament, is taken from the Old Testament. In fact, the two-part Christian Bible, consisting of the Septuagint with its salvation-historical structure and the New Testament,

pictures a comprehensive way through salvation history that the one God has traveled with Israel and the world and will continue to travel until the end. When the Septuagint apocryphal books are included, the picture becomes even more clear than without them. God’s way leads from creation to the election of Israel and the revelation at Mount Sinai. From there the people of God are led to Jerusalem and Mount Zion, Israel’s prayers and wisdom are presented, and the prophets point forward to the New Testament fulfillment. The Gospels make it clear that the incarnation and the story of Jesus Christ climaxing in his cross and resurrection precede the church’s faith and provide its foundation. The ministry of the apostles called by Jesus and newly commissioned after Easter stands under the missionary mandate to proclaim God’s good news about Jesus Christ throughout the whole world [...] to Jews and Gentiles. At the end, the book of Revelation portrays the present and future work of establishing the kingdom through the risen Christ.<sup>32</sup>

#### PART 3. TRADITION-HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS AS EXPRESSIONS OF REVELATION HISTORY: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS SEEN FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT AS POINT OF DEPARTURE

It is common knowledge that the Old Testament spans a long period of time. It is very complicated to date and chronologically order everything that precedes the settlement of the Israelite tribes in Canaan. If for this reason we restrict ourselves to the period from approximately 1200 BC, we still have to work with more than one thousand years prior to the New Testament era. It is obvious that there were many changes

---

<sup>31</sup> See, further, Matt 11:14; Luke 1:17. Mal 3:1 is also applied to John the Baptist in Matt 11:10 par. Luke 7:27; Mark 1:2.

<sup>32</sup> Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 801.

and developments during so many years. Over the years the historical circumstances varied a lot both in Israel, in the region with close neighbouring nations like Edom, Moab and Syria and with regard to the international empires like Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, the Hellenistic kingdoms and, finally, Rome. The various books in the Old Testament originated at different times, and many of them underwent a long compositional process before they reached their final form. Many of the books interact with earlier traditions that have already existed for a long time, integrate these traditions in a new context and develop them further.

Those who consider the Old and the New Testaments to be very different and remote from one another, tend to underestimate or overlook the changes that occurred during the long formation process of the Old Testament. There are, of course, differences and contrasts between the Old and the New Testaments. Nevertheless, it might be that for example the exile in Babylon in the sixth century BC had a profound impact on theological developments similar to the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament had. Thus, it may be arbitrary to claim a deep, divisive break between the Old and the New Testaments if one at the same time ignores the profound shifts and changes in the traditions during the long Old Testament period.

Personally, I am convinced that there exists an indispensable connection and unity between the Old Testament and the New Testament. This connection and unity can be demonstrated from both sides. From the side of the Old Testament the connection appears and materializes in the form of tradition-historical developments that do not stop at the border between the testaments; rather, they continue into the New Testament and come to a climax and fulfilment there. In this third part of the article I will try to show this. In the fourth part, I will try to demonstrate the connection and unity from the New Testament side.

#### THE ZION TRADITION AS A PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLE OF BIBLICAL TRADITION-HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Instead of speaking in general and perhaps rather abstract terms about these tradition-historical developments, I have chosen one such central tradition that is capable and well suited for presenting this perspective on the relation between the Old and the New Testaments. My choice is the so-called Zion tradition, that I have worked on in my own research.<sup>33</sup>

##### *The location and meaning of Zion*

Zion was originally the name of the mountain ridge where King Solomon built the First Temple, simply called Mount Zion (Ps 78:68–69). In the course of later development the meaning of the term was expanded to become the designation of the whole city of Jerusalem or even of the people of Israel (see Lam 2:6–8; Isa 51:16; Zech 2:11 [ET 2:7]; 8:2–3). Hence, in the Bible Zion frequently alternates with Jerusalem, with a slight tendency of emphasizing theological rather than political or geographical aspects connected to this city.

##### *King David conquered Jerusalem and made Zion a religious centre of the Israelites*

A promise of settlement in the land of Canaan accompanies the biblical narrative from Abraham and the other patriarchs onwards throughout the entire exodus story, without any special focus on Jerusalem or Zion. The first time we encounter this promise of possession of land is in Genesis 12:7: “Then the Lord

<sup>33</sup> The following presentation depends heavily on Jostein Ådna, “The Role of Jerusalem in the Mission of Jesus”, in *The Identity of Jesus: Nordic Voices*, ed. Samuel Byrskog, Tom Holmén and Matti Kankaanniemi. WUNT 2.373 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 161–80. I have surveyed and discussed the Zion tradition more extensively in my doctoral dissertation, *Jesu Kritik am Tempel* (1993), and in one of the monographies based on the doctoral thesis: Jostein Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel: Die Tempelaktion und das Tempelwort als Ausdruck seiner messianischen Sendung*. WUNT 2.119 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

appeared to Abram, and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.'"<sup>34</sup> After the conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, the book that carries his name notes in 21:43 that the promise of land is now fulfilled: "Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land that he swore to their ancestors that he would give them; and having taken possession of it, they settled there." As already mentioned, there is no explicit reference to Jerusalem or Zion in this story of the land. As we learn from the next book in the Old Testament, the book of Judges, there were actually a number of cities or regions that the Israelite tribes did not invade and control, and among these were Jerusalem, where the Jebusites were living (Josh 15:63; Judg 1:21). It was not until two hundred years later, when David had been anointed king of all Israel, that he conquered Jerusalem with his personal troops and made it the new capital of the kingdom (see 2 Sam 5:6–9). Hence, compared to other parts of the land of Israel, Jerusalem became an integrated part of Israelite soil and history at a late or a delayed point of time.

*David's acceptance and appropriation of Zion and its religious traditions*

Jerusalem already had a long and rich history when it suddenly became the capital and centre for the entire people, during the reign of King David. We see a few glimpses of this in the Bible. The first one is the somewhat puzzling story about King Melchizedek as early as the time of Abraham in Genesis 14. Melchizedek resided in Salem, which seems to be a shortened form of Jerusalem (see Ps 76:3 [ET 76:2]), and he was priest of *El Eljon*, God Most High. Melchizedek blessed Abraham with the following words: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth" (Gen 14:19). When David moved from Hebron to Jerusalem, he was accompanied by a number of men who already had leading positions in Israel, for example the army commander Joab son of Zeruiah (2 Sam 8:16; 20:23) and the priest Ahimelech son of Abiathar (2 Sam 8:17).<sup>35</sup> However, new men also suddenly appear in the story, like the priest Zadok (2 Sam 8:17), who soon seems to have taken up the leading position among the priests. In later history he was referred to as the father and founder of the Zadokite priests, who qualified for the highest position as high priests in the temple.<sup>36</sup> We cannot know for sure, but it seems likely that Zadok had been a priest in Jerusalem of the god known as *El Eljon*, God Most High, prior to David's conquest, and that he sided with the new owner of the city, David, and was accepted by him. That David did not simply reject and crush the existing religious traditions in Jerusalem can be seen from the last story in 2 Samuel, recounting that David bought what is called the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, for building an altar to the Lord (see 2 Sam 24:18–25). This threshing-floor was located to the north of David's city and is probably close to the site on which David's son Solomon built the First Temple some years later.

On this background it seems likely that a kind of fusion or contextualisation took place when David and his people moved into Jerusalem. Instead of negating and wiping out the local traditions of the god known as God Most High, these so-called Zion traditions were appropriated, cleansed and combined with the unique religious tradition of the Israelites. In the Old Testament we see, on the one hand, a complete rejection of some local religious traditions and practices in Canaan, for example of the cults of Baal and Asherah, because they were absolutely incompatible with the worship of the Lord. But, on the other hand, we observe in the case of Melchizedek and Zadok in Jerusalem that the god they call *El Eljon*

<sup>34</sup> See further references in Gen 15:7, 18–21; 24:7; 48:21–22; 50:24. The promise of land occurs in combination with the promise of abundant offspring in Gen 13:14–17; 17:1–8; 26:3–4; 28:3–4, 13–14; 35:11–12; 48:4.

<sup>35</sup> The priestly family of Ahimelech had served in the sanctuary in Nob. See the story about his grandfather, Ahimelech son of Ahitub, and his father, Abiathar, in 1 Sam 21–22. Abiathar was the only one of his generation who survived King Saul's massacre of the inhabitants of Nob (1 Sam 22:19–23).

<sup>36</sup> Zadok played a major role in securing Solomon at the cost of Adonijah as successor of David at the throne (see 1 Kings 1–2). 1 Kings 4:4 and 1 Chr 29:22 confirm his continued position as priest during Solomon's reign. However, from 1 Kings 4:2 it seems that his son, Azariah, took over the leading priestly position. In 2 Chr 31:10 he is referred to as the chief priest, respectively as the high priest, and his belonging to the house of Zadok as a prerequisite for holding this position is explicitly mentioned. The unique position of the Zadokite priests as high priests in the post-exilic period is strongly supported by the prophecies of Ezekiel, according to which they shall serve as high priests in the future temple because they stayed loyal to God when the rest of the nation went astray (Ezek 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11).



can be identified as the God of Israel, and for this reason the local Zion traditions were not rejected, but, rather, integrated as an enrichment into the religious traditions of Israel because the Lord himself sanctioned such a procedure.

*Zion as the Lord's property and abode*

Psalms 132, one of the Psalms of Ascent, is an excellent text to start from in order to grasp the central content of the Zion tradition and for understanding how it was combined with and integrated into Israel's unique religious heritage. This psalm opens with commending David for his commitment to bringing the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem (see 2 Sam 6). This is namely the right place for the ark, seen as the Lord's footstool (Pss 99:5; 132:7–8), to be located.

Ps 132:13–18:

(13) For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation: (14) This is my resting-place for ever; here I will reside, for I have desired it. (15) I will abundantly bless its provisions; I will satisfy its poor with bread. (16) Its priests I will clothe with salvation, and its faithful will shout for joy. (17) There I will cause a horn to sprout up for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed one. (18) His enemies I will clothe with disgrace, but on him, his crown will gleam.

God's election of Zion and of David are interconnected. I think Psalm 132 helps us see that what comes first is Zion, and, as a consequence, its earthly owner, David, is also the subject of God's election. Although Jerusalem became the capital of the kingdom, it is, nevertheless, repeatedly called the city of David in the biblical texts, referring to the fact that Jerusalem was not conquered by the army of the tribes of Israel, but by David himself and his personal troops.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the election of David and his descendants is also expressly confirmed in Psalm 132:

(11) The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne. (12) If your sons keep my covenant and my decrees that I shall teach them, their sons also, for evermore, shall sit on your throne."

David intended to build a house for the Lord in Jerusalem, a temple where the ark of the covenant could be placed. However, through the prophet Nathan God told David that this task had to be left to his son (2 Sam 7). The temple was finally built during the reign of David's son Solomon. 1 Kings 6 and 7 tell in detail about the construction of the temple, and the following chapter 8 relates the dedication of the temple.

1 Kings 8:6, 10–11:

(6) Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. [...] (10) And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, (11) so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.

*The glory and inviolability of Zion*

After the Lord had made Zion his holy abode, Zion soon took up a central position in the Psalms of Israel. There are references to Zion in different kinds of psalms, for example individual thanksgiving psalms (Ps

---

<sup>37</sup> In 1 Sam 22:2 the number of David's mercenaries is estimated as 400 men; according to 1 Sam 27:2 they were 600. With these men David marched to Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6), and after conquering it he "named it the city of David" (2 Sam 5:9).

9:10–12 [ET 9:9–11]), royal psalms (Ps 20:2–3 [ET 20:1–2]) and individual lament psalms (Ps 26:8: "O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell, and the place where your glory abides"). Some psalms dwell on Zion as such as their theme, and it is common to refer to this group of psalms as Zion psalms (Pss 46; 48; 76; 84; 87; 122).

Ps 46:5–6, 8 (ET 46:4–5, 7):

(5 [4]) There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. (6 [5]) God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. [...] (8 [7]) The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Ps 48:13–15 (ET 48:12–14):

(13 [12]) Walk about Zion, go all around it, count its towers, (14 [13]) consider well its ramparts; go through its citadels, that you may tell the next generation (15 [14]) that this is God, our God for ever and ever. He will be our guide for ever.

Ps 87:1–3:

(1) On the holy mountain stands the city he founded; (2) the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. (3) Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. Selah.

We encounter the Zion tradition in the Prophets as well as in the Psalms. The prophet Isaiah operated in Jerusalem in the second half of the eighth century BC, a period of political crises and much turmoil. The small kingdoms along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea became victims of the aggressive expansionist policies of the Assyrian empire. In order to withstand Assyrian expansion, the kingdoms in the region had to cooperate closely, with united armies.

Whereas in 733 BC Rezin and Pekah, the kings in Damascus and in the northern kingdom, Israel,<sup>38</sup> decided to rebel against the Assyrians, King Ahaz of Judah, seated in Jerusalem, hesitated and did not dare to join the rebellion against the powerful Assyrians.<sup>39</sup> Because Rezin and Pekah needed to build a stronger alliance in order to have any chance of success, they wanted to force Judah to join their alliance, and at some time during the years 733/732 BC they prepared a military attack against Jerusalem with the aim of substituting someone called the son of Tabeel for Ahaz as new king, who would then join the alliance of the neighbouring kingdoms opposing the Assyrian empire. The book of Isaiah tells how this incident frightened Judah and Jerusalem: "When the house of David heard that Aram [i.e. Damascus] had allied itself with Ephraim [i.e. the northern kingdom, Israel], the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind" (Isa 7:2).

In this situation the Lord asked the prophet Isaiah to go to the king and say to him: "Take heed, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smouldering stumps of firebrands" (7:4), that is, the two attacking kings. The prophet Isaiah appeals to the Zion tradition: – Trust the Lord, have faith in him because he will protect Jerusalem and Zion.<sup>40</sup> This message is repeated a number of times throughout the book of Isaiah, for example in Isa 14:32 and 31:5.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> After the death of king Solomon the united kingdom of the Israelite tribes was divided into a northern and a southern kingdom. During the period of the divided kingdoms, the northern kingdom was called Israel and the southern kingdom was called Judah.

<sup>39</sup> We have information both in 2 Kings 15:27, 29–30, 37; 16:1–20; Isa 7:1–17 and in Assyrian sources for the events during the years 733–732 BC.

<sup>40</sup> This positive message about trusting God's protection of Zion is contrasted in the prophet's famous warning in Isa 7:9b: "If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all."

<sup>41</sup> Isa 14:32: "The LORD has founded Zion, and the needy among his people will find refuge in her." Isa 31:5: "Like birds hovering overhead, so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will spare and rescue it."

King Ahaz turned down the message brought to him by the prophet Isaiah. Instead of putting his trust in the Lord’s promise to protect Jerusalem and its people, he decided to solve the crisis by taking political steps. He understood that the small kingdoms in the region would not manage to stand against the Assyrians even if they built an alliance, and therefore he decided to approach the Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser, and declare his loyalty and ask for his protection against the attacking neighbours Syria and Israel (see 2 Kings 16:7). These tactics worked out; the Assyrian king accepted Ahaz’s submission and loyalty and marched up against the Syrian capital Damascus, took it, crushed the local kingdom and made it an Assyrian province. King Ahaz of Jerusalem hurried to Damascus to meet King Tiglath-pileser to show him due respect and veneration. Ahaz observed an altar in the Assyrian camp at Damascus, and he immediately commanded the priests at the temple in Jerusalem to construct an exact copy of this altar. The new Assyrian-inspired altar supplanted the earlier altar which was removed to a less prominent position within the temple area. King Ahaz also made other changes inside the temple, and the historian behind the books of Kings ends his report with the note: “He did this because of the king of Assyria” (2 Kings 16:18).

Later in his long career as a prophet in Jerusalem, Isaiah saw that king and people were tempted to seek help from the strong nation in the south, Egypt, as a protection against the Assyrian empire which continued to expand and put heavier and heavier burdens on small vassal kingdoms like the kingdom of Judah. In the view of the prophet, the attempts to make such political alliances instead of trusting the promises of the Lord regarding Zion were again futile (see Isa 30:1–5 and 31:1–3).

#### *Exploitation of the Zion tradition*

We have now seen examples of how the king and the people did not trust promises rooted in the Zion tradition and instead sought to overcome dangers by declaring their loyalty to political powers. The history of Judah also contains examples of how the inhabitants in Jerusalem, instead of neglecting and rejecting the Zion tradition, invoked it in a seemingly humble and pious way. However, the appeal to the wonderful descriptions of Zion’s inviolability, found in the Psalms, and the claim to be safe in Zion, turns out to be a misuse and an exploitation of the Zion traditions when the people involved at the same time transgressed severely against the commandments of the Lord. Pre-exilic prophets in Judah and Jerusalem exposed such misuse and perversion of the Zion traditions whenever people claimed refuge in the secure city, Jerusalem, while at the same time being unwilling to live in accordance with the will of the Lord. Zion was no guarantee of protection for disobedient Israel. On the contrary, in such circumstances God would rather destroy the temple, the city and the people. The most conspicuous example of a judgment prophecy based on the Zion tradition is the prophet Jeremiah’s temple speech “at the beginning of the reign of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah” (Jer 26:1), that is ca. 608 BC. God’s command to the prophet is recounted in Jeremiah 26:2–6 and the speech itself is presented in Jeremiah 7:1–15.

Jeremiah stands in the gate of the temple and speaks to those who pass by: “Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah, you that enter these gates to worship the Lord” (Jer 7:2). The message is that the people must amend their ways and actions, stop oppressing aliens and orphans and widows, and stop shedding innocent blood. With a reference to the Ten Commandments God asks rhetorically, “Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods” (v. 9) and at the same time “come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are safe’— only to go on doing all these abominations?” (v. 10). Those addressed obviously trusted in the safety promised by the Zion tradition. However, the prophet tells them that their mantra, “This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord” (v. 4), is deceptive words in their mouths as long as they ignore God’s will. In verse 11 the Lord asks, “Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight?” As the spokesman of God, the prophet Jeremiah accuses his contemporaries of relating to the temple in the same way as robbers do to their den. The den is the safe haven of the robbers, where they hide between their robberies. Correspondingly, his contemporaries look to the temple as their refuge, to which they seek without stopping sinning and violating God’s commandments. In Jeremiah’s speech God makes it clear that he is not willing to accept

such a misuse of his temple. He warns that he himself will also consider the temple a den of robbers, and the consequence will be that he will reject and destroy the temple. God reminds the listeners that he has in fact judged and destroyed a holy sanctuary in the history of Israel previously, namely, the temple in Shiloh, where Eli was the priest, and the prophet Samuel grew up. Because the contemporaries of Jeremiah are as wicked as the people at the time of the Shiloh sanctuary, “therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your ancestors, just what I did to Shiloh” (v. 14; see also 26:4–6). As we know from history, a few years after Jeremiah held this speech in the temple gate, the warning came true when the Babylonian army conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the temple.

### *Zion as the centre of the whole world*

There is one more very conspicuous aspect of the Zion tradition that we must now bring to the fore. The presence of God in the city makes Zion the true centre of the whole world. Although the altitude of Jerusalem is 750 to 800 metres above sea level and it is by far surpassed by Mount Hermon at the border to Lebanon, nevertheless, Psalm 48 describes Zion as the highest mountain and locates it in the far north:

Ps 48:2–3 (ET 48:1–2):

(2 [1]) Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God. His holy mountain, (3 [2]) beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King.

The Israelites knew, of course, that this was not a correct geographical description. It is a tremendous exaggeration, made in order to express a theological and spiritual truth and ambition. Although the other nations are not aware, the God of Israel, who has his abode in Zion and is worshipped in the temple in Jerusalem, is actually the creator of the whole world and is therefore its only true king and ruler. For this reason, the Israelites claim and appropriate for their God, the Lord, designations and epithets used by the gods of the capitals of the great kingdoms, like Nineveh or Babylon, and transfer them to the Lord and his city.<sup>42</sup> A group of psalms proclaim and confess the Lord as the king of Israel and the whole world; in scholarship they are commonly referred to as “Yahweh-King-Psalms”, namely, Psalms 47, 93 and 96–99.

Ps 99:1–3, 9:

(1) The Lord is king; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! (2) The Lord is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples. (3) Let them praise your great and awesome name. [...] (9) Extol the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the Lord our God is holy.

### *The importance of Zion in eschatology*

The aspects of Zion as the centre of the whole world and the Lord as its king played an important role as eschatology developed. Eschatology has to do with the future, final stage of history. When the realities and hardships experienced by Israel and Judah in history contradicted the breathtaking statements in the psalms that praised Zion and its king, the statements about Zion and the kingdom of the Lord were in part transferred into the realm of eschatology. Although the kings of the great empires and their gods seemed

---

<sup>42</sup> The statements that the Lord is “a great king over all the earth”, respectively, “the king of all the earth” (Ps 47:3, 8 [ET 47:2, 7]) correspond to the Assyrian titles “the great king” (*šarru rabu*) and “the king of the whole earth” (*šarru kiššati*). The claimed location of Zion “in the far north” (Ps 48:3 [ET 48:2]) is an appropriation of the traditional idea of the mountain of the gods in the north, as exemplified in the arrogant utterance of the Babylonian king in Isa 14:13–14. Zion is the holy mountain that *El Eljon* has chosen as his abode. No other holy sites or mountains can match it (Pss 68:16–17 [ET 68:15–16]; 76:3, 5 [ET 76:2, 4]).

to have the upper hand and triumph over Zion and the Lord, this will definitely be different at the end of the age. Then Mount Zion will be elevated and lifted above all other mountains. The universal reign of the Lord will become visible to everybody when all nations go up to Zion, and the Lord establishes peace for the whole world by his instruction and jurisdiction. This prospect for the eschatological future is proclaimed both by the prophet Isaiah and by the prophet Micah (see 4:1–4) in parallel texts that are almost identical.

Isa 2:2–4:

(2) In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. (3) Many peoples shall come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he might teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (4) He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

In 587 BC a great calamity befell the kingdom of Judah. In this year the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar brought an end to the kingdom; the temple in Jerusalem was completely destroyed, and parts of the population were deported into exile in Babylon (see 2 Kings 25; Jer 52). All of this caused a shattering theological crisis. However, the prophet Jeremiah had warned the inhabitants of Jerusalem that something like this would happen if they did not change their ways and turned to the Lord in obedience to his will. The prophet Ezekiel had also shown how the temple was desecrated and intruded by pagan cults and that because of this the glory of the Lord had left Zion (Ezek 8–11). In the severe crisis of the destroyed temple, the lost kingdom and the exile the prophecies of these judgment prophets actually became a vehicle to survive and overcome these immense challenges. These prophets had prophesied the devastating catastrophe *without* abandoning trust in the irrevocable and steadfast promises of God for Zion. Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesied a new beginning for the people of God beyond the judgment (see Jer 30–35 and Ezek 34–39), and, in fact, the Zion traditions even assumed increasing importance through the crisis of the exile and in the post-exilic era. The sharp contrast between the difficult contemporary conditions and the exuberant hopes directed towards the city of God contributed to a more resolute eschatological profile of the Zion traditions. In the eschatological consummation God will glorify Zion and his temple, bring the dispersed of his people back to the land and the city, and with them also the Gentile nations. Assembled on Zion they will all recognize and praise the Lord as the only true God together, as revealed in Zechariah 8.

Zech 8:2–5:

(2) Thus says the Lord of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. (3) Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts shall be called the holy mountain. (4) Thus says the Lord of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. (5) And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.

### *The Zion tradition in early Judaism*

The high eschatological expectations for Zion were upheld in early Judaism throughout the next centuries. Jewish texts from this period adhere to and confirm the election of Zion and Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God. God will definitely glorify the temple on Mount Zion and bring the dispersed of Israel back in the company of the nations.

A number of texts from the second century BC to the first century AD are of particular interest because they state that God himself, without human assistance, will establish the eschatological temple on Mount Zion. This development in the Zion tradition is obviously based on the dreary experience from the previous centuries that the historical temples in Jerusalem, built by humans, that is the temple of Solomon as well as the Second Temple raised by Zerubbabel in the years 520–515 BC, have fallen victims to sin and desecration. Certain apocalyptically oriented circles in Judaism apparently inferred from these experiences that only a divine construction would be a sufficient guarantee that the future, eschatological temple would avoid the kind of tragic fate which had befallen its predecessors in Jerusalem. I have picked four texts from the second century BC as examples.

1 Enoch 90:29:<sup>43</sup>

I went on seeing until the Lord of the sheep brought about a new house, greater and loftier than the first one, and set it up in the first location which had been covered up—all its pillars were new, the columns new, and the ornaments new as well as greater than those of the first, (that is) the old (house) which was gone. All the sheep were within it.

Jubilees 1:17:<sup>44</sup>

And I shall build my sanctuary in their midst, and I shall dwell with them. And I shall be their God and they will be my people truly and rightly.

Tobit 14:5:

[...] After this they all will return from their exile and will rebuild Jerusalem in splendour; and in it the temple of God will be rebuilt, just as the prophets of Israel have said concerning it.

The Temple Scroll from Qumran (11QT<sup>a</sup> [11Q19]) 29.9–10:<sup>45</sup>

(9) [...] until the day of creation, when I shall create my temple, (10) establishing it for myself for all days, according to the covenant which I made with Jacob at Bethel.

I have claimed above that there is no special reference to Zion in the tradition of the promise of the land in Genesis and in the following books Exodus through Joshua. Although this is true in general terms, nevertheless, this statement must be modified and nuanced as soon as we take one particular text into consideration.

After Israel had been rescued from the Egyptian army at the Sea of Reeds, Moses and the Israelites sang a song to the Lord (see Exodus 15:1–21). This song resembles hymns in the Book of Psalms praising the Lord for his strength and for having saved Israel (vv. 1–12). From verse 13 onwards the song anticipates what will happen in the future when the wandering Israelites arrive in the promised land, Canaan.

Exod 15:13–18:<sup>46</sup>

(13) In your steadfast love you [Lord] led the people whom you redeemed; you guided them by your strength to your holy abode. (14) The peoples heard, they trembled; pangs seized the inhabitants of Philistia. (15) Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed [...] (17) You brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your own possession, the

---

<sup>43</sup> Quoted from *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1, 71. This verse belongs to the Animal Apocalypse (*I Enoch* 85–90), from ca. 164 BC. The sheep represent the Israelites and their Lord is God. The house is the temple.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted from *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 2, 53. The book of *Jubilees* is from ca. 150 BC. See also Jub 1:29.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted from *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. 2 Volumes, edited by Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar (Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 1997/1998), 1251.

<sup>46</sup> In these verses the NRSV has rendered Hebrew perfect tenses with past tenses. Nevertheless, what is recounted in vv. 13–17 are still future events seen from the crossing of the Sea of Reeds.

place, O Lord, that you made your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have established. (18) The Lord will reign for ever and ever.

The mountain that is the Lord's possession on which he planted the Israelites is clearly a reference to Jerusalem and Zion. What is unusual with the statement in Exodus 15:17 is the anthropomorphic expression that the sanctuary was established by the Lord's own hands. From his throne in this temple the Lord reigns as king. According to the apocalyptic world view God's royal reign will only be established in the future. God will soon intervene and put an end to the rule of his evil enemies. After the judgment of the Devil and his servants, the kingdom of God will be established. The Lord will abide as king in the temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, the centre of the eschatological kingdom, and all who inherit and enter the kingdom will worship him eternally. Hence, the combination of the two elements of God's reign and the sanctuary in Zion made with his own hands in Exodus 15:17–18, gave these verses the potential to become key scriptural proof for those apocalyptically oriented circles in early Judaism that drew a sharp dividing line between the present evil world age and the future world of salvation for the pious and the godly.

We do in fact have evidence for such an interpretation and application of Exodus 15:17–18 in early Judaism. The most conspicuous example is a fragmentary text from the Dead Sea Scrolls, registered as 4Q174. In this document various Old Testament texts, most extensively 2 Samuel 7 with God's promises to David through the prophet Nathan, are combined and interpreted. The passage which interests us the most runs as follows:

4Q174 (frg. 1 col. i.1–6):<sup>47</sup>

(2) [...] This (refers to) the house which [he (*sc.* God) will establish] for [him (*sc.* the people of Israel)] in the last days, as is written in the book of (3) [Moses: "The temple of yhwh your hands will est[a]blish. yhwh shall reign for ever and ever." This (refers to) the house into which shall not enter (4) [ ... for] ever either an Ammonite, or a Moabite, or a bastard, or a foreigner, or a proselyte, never, because his holy ones are there. (5) "y[hw]h [shall reign for] ever." He will appear over it for ever; foreigners shall not again lay it waste as they laid waste, in the past, (6) the tem[ple of I]srael on account of their sins.

The authors of this text operated with an eschatological interpretation of God's kingly reign according to which the Exodus text must be applied to the coming age of fulfilled salvation. Then there will be a new temple on Mount Zion established and put there by God himself. This corresponds with the phrase in the so-called Temple Scroll, quoted above, that on the day of the new creation (see Isa 65:17–25) God "shall create [his] temple, establishing it for [himself] for all days" (11QT<sup>a</sup> 29.9–10).

### *Zion and the heavenly temple*

Priestly sections in the Pentateuch already state that the temple on Mount Zion shall be constructed in accordance with a model or a pattern that God shows the Israelites.

Exod 25:1, 8–9:

(1) The Lord said to Moses: [...] (8) And have them [*sc.* the Israelites] make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them. (9) In accordance with all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle and all its furniture, so you shall make it.

The importance of the transcendent model for the sanctuary and all its equipment is illustrated by the outline in Exodus. First, in Exodus 25–31, God's instructions to Moses, based on the transcendent

<sup>47</sup> Quoted from *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 353.

pattern shown to him on Mount Sinai (see 25:40), are presented in detail, and then in chapters 35–40 the actual execution of these instructions is recounted in the same detail.

There was a strong focus on the celestial spheres particularly in apocalyptic circles in early Judaism. For example, in the Qumran community there was an awareness that their worship interacted with the worship in the heavenly sanctuary.<sup>48</sup> The idea that there is a correspondence between the earthly Zion and its heavenly counterpart as the model according to which the temple in Jerusalem was to be constructed, led in some strains of early Judaism to the expectation that the future, eschatological temple would actually be the heavenly sanctuary descending upon Zion. It seems that this idea or expectation is present in the Book of Watchers<sup>49</sup> and in 4 Ezra.<sup>50</sup> Whether or not 2 Baruch reflects this idea is disputed.<sup>51</sup>

#### THE ZION TRADITION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Zion tradition does not come to an end in the Old Testament and early Judaism, but continues its organic development into the New Testament.

#### *Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom of God and his final journey to Jerusalem*

God’s kingdom was at the very centre of Jesus’ proclamation and teaching, as we learn from the Synoptic Gospels. As we have seen, in the biblical tradition the reign of God is linked to Zion and the temple. I see a clear connection between Jesus’ kingdom message and his final journey from Galilee to Jerusalem at Passover time. Jesus proclaimed the imminent coming of the kingdom, and because people expected the kingdom to appear at Zion, this journey definitely triggered hopes and expectations among the people, as stated in Luke 19:11: Jesus was near Jerusalem, and many around him “supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately”. Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem riding on the colt confirmed such hopes and aroused their expectations even further:

Mark 11:9–10:

(9) Then those who went ahead [of him] and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! (10) Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

The evangelists recount that upon his arrival in Jerusalem Jesus went straight to the temple (Mark 11:11). The temple remains in focus in the dramatic events of the following days and is also addressed in sayings of Jesus and of his disciples. In my opinion, Jesus’ confrontation with the temple, expressed in sayings and acts, can only be understood on the background of the Zion tradition.

#### *The temple saying(s) of Jesus<sup>52</sup>*

<sup>48</sup> See esp. Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice<sup>a</sup> [4Q400], and also the reference in the above quoted text 4Q174 to the presence of “his holy ones”.

<sup>49</sup> This book constitutes the first part of 1 Enoch, i.e. chapters 1–36. The heavenly temple is described in 14:15–20, and its descent on Zion seems to be implied in chapters 24–26.

<sup>50</sup> The promise to Ezra in 13:36, “And Zion will come and be made manifest to all people, prepared and built, as you saw the mountain carved out without hands” (*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1, 552), seems (on the background of the fourth vision in 9:26–10:59) to imply the idea of the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem upon the earth.

<sup>51</sup> It is obvious from 2 Bar 68:5 that this apocalypse also points to a restoration of Zion: “And at that time, after a short time, Zion will be rebuilt again, and the offerings will be restored, and the priests will again return to their ministry. And the nations will again come to honor it” (*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1, 644). Whether or not the new temple is thought of as the descending heavenly temple, depends on how the passages 4:2–7 and 32:2–4 are interpreted and interconnected.

<sup>52</sup> Ever since I started to work on my doctoral project in 1984, Jesus’ relation to the temple in Jerusalem has been the most central issue in my research. In addition to the dissertation, the monograph and the article mentioned in



With an impressively wide distribution in the New Testament Gospels, Acts and the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas,<sup>53</sup> there are a number of sayings about the destruction and establishment of the temple attributed to Jesus (Mark 13:2 par. Matt 24:2 and Luke 21:6; Mark 14:58 par. Matt 26:61; Mark 15:29 par. Matt 27:40; John 2:19; Acts 6:14; Gos. Thom. 71). The most detailed study of this material known to me is the monograph *Das Tempelwort Jesu*, written by the German scholar Kurt Paesler. The result of his source- and tradition- critical analysis is that the different attested versions originated in an authentic saying by Jesus still preserved in Mark 13:2b: “Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”<sup>54</sup> Hence, according to Paesler, Jesus, employing the *passivum divinum*, confined himself to prophesying that God will destroy the Second Temple in Jerusalem, built in 520–515 BC by Zerubbabel, modestly expanded during Hasmonean rule, and – in terms of Jesus’ life – fairly recently vastly expanded by Herod the Great (20–10 BC) and subjected to some further construction work and embellishment ever since (see John 2:20).

The earliest version of those sayings which consist of two parts, referring to both destruction and (re)establishment, is reconstructed by Paesler as, “I will destroy this temple and build it”. He regards it as a post-Easter reworking of Mark 13:2b, in which the divine act of destroying the temple was transferred to the exalted Christ and according to which the destruction would be succeeded by the reconstruction of the sanctuary, once again an act to be performed by the risen Lord.<sup>55</sup> The most comprehensive version of the two-part saying is found in Mark 14:58: “I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.” It contains two additional elements compared to Paesler’s reconstructed original form of the two-part saying, first, the contrast between the present temple as “made with hands” (Greek, *cheiropoiētos*) and the new one as “not made with hands” (*acheiropoiētos*), and, second, the fixation of the time of building “in three days”. Paesler holds that this phrase must refer to the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>56</sup> He submits the epithets “made with hands” and “not made with hands” to a detailed examination. They are well-known *topoi* from Greek and Jewish philosophical temple criticism that, according to Paesler, Hellenistic Jewish Christians in Jerusalem took up after they had abandoned the atoning cult of the temple. Instead they sought salvation in invoking the name of Jesus, and in line with this christological replacement of the temple they added the attributes “made with hands” and “not made with hands” to the earlier version of the temple saying.<sup>57</sup>

The Fourth Evangelist operates with a christological interpretation of the temple (cf. John 2:19 with vv. 21–22), and, thus, in this case the temporal phrase “in three days” corresponds to the tradition of Jesus’ resurrection on the third day. Further, the term “made with hands” (*cheiropoiētos*) is clearly used

---

note 33 above, I will add two more publications here: Jostein Ådna, “Jesus and the Temple”, in *Handbook for the Study of the Historical Jesus*. Four Volumes. Edited by Tom Holmén and Stanley S. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 3:2635–75; Jostein Ådna, “Temple Act”, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Second Edition (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic; Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2013), 947–52. For the following sections, “The temple saying(s) of Jesus”, “The temple act” and “Jesus’ violent death and the Zion tradition”, I take the freedom to reproduce most of the corresponding sections in my article, “The Role of Jerusalem in the Mission of Jesus”, 170–76, with only minor adjustments.

A good independent treatment of Jesus and the temple has been offered by my Norwegian colleague, Sigurd Grindheim, *God’s Equal: What Can We Know about Jesus’ Self-Understanding?* LNTS 446 (London: T & T Clark, 2011). See esp. chapter 11, “God’s New Temple”, pp. 205–18.

<sup>53</sup> The Gospel of Thomas belongs to the group of writings found in *The SBL Handbook of Style*, entry 8.3.13 “New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha”, 135–37. It contains 114 logia, of which approximately half have parallels in the New Testament Gospels. Logion 71 runs: “Jesus says: ‘I will (destroy this) house, and no one will be able to build it (again) – (except me).’” The quotation is taken from Kurt Aland, *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*. 15th revised edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996), 517–46, 537.

<sup>54</sup> See Kurt Paesler, *Das Tempelwort Jesu: Die Traditionen von Tempelzerstörung und Tempelrenewung im Neuen Testament*. FRLANT 184 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 76–92, 256, 259–60.

<sup>55</sup> See Paesler, *Das Tempelwort Jesu*, 189–93.

<sup>56</sup> Paesler, *Das Tempelwort Jesu*, 167–78.

<sup>57</sup> Paesler, *Das Tempelwort Jesu*, 203–27, esp. 221–25.

as a *topos*, cognate of Hellenistic philosophical temple criticism, in Acts 7:48 and 17:24.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, neither the application of the three days to Jesus’ resurrection nor the drawing of the attributes “made with hands” and “not made with hands” out of enlightened philosophical temple criticism are compelling deductions as such. The temporal designation “three days” is a traditional expression of a very short time span (e.g. Josh 1:11; 2 Sam 20:4; 2 Kings 20:8; Hos 6:2), and the distinction between “made with hands” and “not made with hands”, attributed to the temple, corresponds perfectly to the apocalyptic tradition in early Judaism, which contrasts the man-made temples of the past and present with the future, eschatological temple to be established by God himself (see above).

In my opinion, there are no compelling reasons for the most comprehensive version of the two-part temple saying in Mark 14:58 to be inauthentic. A condemnation of the present temple, combined with the proclamation that its destruction within a short time (“in three days”) will be followed by the establishment of a new temple, is in complete agreement with the apocalyptic-eschatological expectations of certain circles in contemporary Judaism. The employment of the “made with hands” and “not made with hands” contrast in this ‘I-saying’ alludes to Exodus 15:17 and is an expression of Jesus’ bold claim to act on behalf of and in the role of the Lord as the sole builder of the eschatological temple on Mount Zion. The first part of the saying must not necessarily mean a violent destruction of the present temple. The emphasis lies on the contrast between the present temple and the future temple, and the substitution of the eschatological temple for the man-made temple can also be conceived of as a miraculous transformation. Hence, as the bringer of the imminent kingdom of God, Jesus is also the one who will establish the sanctuary on Mount Zion, where God will reign as king and where the nations of the world will worship and praise him for ever and ever. The temple saying in Mark 14:58 confirms in a very obvious way the interrelation between Jesus’ eschatological kingdom message and the Zion traditions.

I assume that Jesus spoke the words transmitted in Mark 14:58 shortly after his arrival in Jerusalem.<sup>59</sup> It definitely bolstered his eschatological message about the turning of the eras through the imminent coming of the kingdom of God. The expectations of those followers of Jesus who “supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately”, as he approached Jerusalem (Luke 19:11), were definitely intensified and heightened when they heard his ambitious words that he intended, within a very short time span, to build a new temple not made with hands. However, because of the negative outcome of Jesus’ symbolic act in the temple, performed immediately after his arrival in Jerusalem (Mark 11:15–17, see below), Jesus realised that the religious leaders of the Jewish people would not accept the message conveyed through the two-part temple saying and the temple act. As a reaction to their lack of willingness to repent, Jesus then uttered his unconditional prediction of destruction recorded in Mark 13:2. Hence, I also consider this saying to be authentic and think that Mark has dated it correctly.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> The transference of the temple notion to the church (1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:20–22; 1 Pet 2:4–6) as well as, consequently, the designation of all Christians as priests (1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 5:10) and the spiritualisation of sacrifices (Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15–16; 1 Pet 2:5) are coherent with this detachment from physical sanctuaries as the divine abode.

<sup>59</sup> Mark’s charge against those witnesses who cite the alleged saying of Jesus during the nocturnal interrogation in the palace of the high priest of giving “false testimony against him” (Mark 14:57), does not mean that they simply made up a defamatory saying and wrongly accused Jesus of having said this. The reference to a saying of this kind among those who mocked Jesus on the cross in Mark 15:29 presupposes that Jesus uttered the temple saying in public. The characterisation of the testimonies as false might be a reference to the fact that they did not comply with the judicial criteria to convict the accused (see Mark 14:59), and it definitely expresses the evangelist’s opinion that at this point in the conspiracy against him Jesus’ adversaries consciously misconstrued his message to compromise and harm him as much as possible.

<sup>60</sup> Secondly, after Easter Mark 14:58 was reinterpreted and the attributes “made with hands” and “not made with hands” were applied to the tradition critical of physical sanctuaries as abode of the divine: the risen Christ or, rather, the community of the believers, was then understood to be a substitution as the temple “not made with hands” for the man-made Jerusalem temple. The New Testament references listed in footnote 58 above belong to the post-Easter era and the exposition of Christology, ecclesiology and soteriology in this phase of early Christian theology.

Jesus’ prophecy in Mark 13:2 was fulfilled approximately forty years later, in AD 70, when Roman troops invaded Jerusalem and burnt the temple.

*The temple act*

During recent years the historicity of Jesus’ temple act, recounted in all four Gospels (Mark 11:15–17; Matt 21:12–17; Luke 19:45–48; John 2:13–17), has found increasing acceptance among scholars. In my opinion, Mark offers a rather accurate account:

Mark 11:15–17:

(15) [...] And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves; (16) and he did not allow anybody to carry any vessel through the temple. (17) He was teaching and saying, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”<sup>61</sup>

With due consideration of the historical and architectural circumstances the event can be reconstructed as follows: The temple market was situated in the basilica-like hall along the southern wall of the Herodian temple complex, extensively described by the Jewish historian Josephus and labelled by him the *Royal Stoa* (*Jewish Antiquities* 15.411–416). Inside this hall Jesus overturned some tables and seats belonging to the money-changers and the sellers of doves. Further, he did not allow vessels to be moved between the market area and the inner parts of the temple, and he began to drive some of those who were selling and buying sacrificial items out of the market hall. As a justification of his intervention Jesus quoted the prophecy in Isaiah 56:7b and alluded to the accusation of the prophet Jeremiah against his contemporaries that they had made the temple a den of robbers (see Jer 7:11, presented above).<sup>62</sup>

In the temple saying, recorded in Mark 14:58, Jesus stated that he was about to establish the new temple on the occasion of the ushering in of the kingdom of God. This eschatological turn will necessarily have consequences for the old temple and the cult performed there, and in my opinion the temple act is Jesus’ symbolic demonstration of this fact.<sup>63</sup>

Let us begin with the accompanying saying in Mark 11:17. As already stated, the accusation that the temple has been turned into a den of robbers is an allusion to Jeremiah 7:11. In the speech in Jeremiah 7:1–15, the prophet Jeremiah used the metaphor “den of robbers” as a characterisation of the schizophrenic practice of his contemporaries of seeking refuge and security in the temple while they at the same time worshipped idols and disregarded God’s commandments. The premise for drawing on Jeremiah’s accusation must be that Jesus has an analogous estimation of the situation in his time. Because the religious leaders and most of the Jewish people cling to the traditional temple cult instead of obediently answering Jesus’ call for repentance and discipleship at the threshold of the kingdom of God, the people deceive themselves by seeking their security in a temple apparatus and order which are no longer appropriate. Jeremiah had warned his audience that the temple of Solomon would suffer the same fate as the sanctuary in Shiloh unless they repented (see Jer 7:12–14). This fate befell the temple when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it some twenty years later. Correspondingly, Jesus implicitly warns that the Herodian temple will also be destroyed unless the priests and the people react properly to his words and acts by finally obeying him and repenting.

<sup>61</sup> I have modified the NRSV translation of v. 16 in order to obtain a more precise rendering of the Greek.

<sup>62</sup> I have investigated the archaeological and architectural history of the Herodian temple in detail in Jostein Ådna, *Jerusalemers Tempel und Tempelmarkt im 1. Jahrhundert n.Chr.* ADPV 25 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 3–90; and, further, I have subjected the gospel account about the temple act of Jesus to a source- and tradition-critical analysis in Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel*, 157–238, and discussed the historicity of the incident on pp. 300–33 therein. Shorter presentations in English can be found in Jostein Ådna, “Temple”, *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus*, ed. Craig A. Evans (New York: Routledge, 2008), 630–34, and in Ådna, “Jesus and the Temple”, 2638–47, 2653–54.

<sup>63</sup> There are numerous interpretations of Jesus’ temple act, of which some ignore the Zion traditions completely and others in which certain aspects of these traditions have a part. I cannot survey the different interpretations here. See Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel*, 334–87, and Ådna, “Jesus and the Temple”, 2654–65.

In the quotation from Isaiah 56:7, which precedes the allusion to Jeremiah 7:11, Jesus points to the legitimate function of the future temple as the site for all nations to worship the one true God.<sup>64</sup> Whereas the atonement cult, as the central purpose of the old temple, becomes obsolete when the eschatological renewal is fulfilled, the redeemed and saved of all nations will still perform a worship of prayer and adoration. The contrasting references to the Scripture bring the radical alternatives to the fore: a stubborn clinging to the old will ultimately bring destruction upon the temple, whereas an obedient response to Jesus’ call will prepare for the eschatological transformation of which a new or renewed temple on Mount Zion will be a part.

Let us turn next to the actions of Jesus reported in Mark 11:15b–16. In overturning tables and seats and banning the carrying of vessels through the temple Jesus actually disturbed functions vital to the temple cult. Symbolically, he stopped the handing out of doves for individual burnt-offerings and sin-offerings (see Lev 5:7; 12:8; 14:21–23). Furthermore, and again symbolically, he stopped the collection of the temple tax that financed the collective atonement cult performed by the priests on behalf of all of Israel, securing the continuous state of purity and holiness of Israel, because these daily sacrifices “appease and effect atonement between Israel and their Father in heaven” (Tosefta Sheqalim 1.6; cf. Jubilees 6:14; 50:11).<sup>65</sup> Finally, he stopped the conveyance of money or sacrificial ingredients that were agricultural (flour, oil and wine) in vessels from the market in the Royal Stoa to the inner parts of the temple where the money was stored and the sacrifices performed. This was again symbolic. Hence, by his actions, Jesus hit crucial functions of the temple service, and his temple act appears as a symbolic gesture towards disrupting the sacrificial cult. The act and the accompanying saying correlate and completely cohere. The old atonement cult must be brought to an end because it is inappropriate in the eschatological era about to be ushered in, in which it will be replaced by eternal worship performed by the redeemed from all nations.

#### *Jesus’ violent death and the Zion traditions*

Jesus was, of course, aware that his act and words in the temple were very provocative. Being convinced that the decisive moment in his mission had arrived, Jesus pushed things to extremes. The outcome would either be that the religious leaders of Israel would finally react appropriately to his call, or that they would firmly reject him and his message and probably seek options for how to put an end to his activity. As we know, their reaction would soon be seen as negative (cf. Mark 11:18, 27–33).

In this situation Jesus drew the conclusion that the threat of destruction to the temple, implicit in his reference to Jeremiah 7:11 in Mark 11:17, would now be its inevitable destiny, and stated correspondingly: “Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down” (Mark 13:2, see above). If not voluntarily abandoned as a consequence of Israel accepting Jesus’ message, the obsolete atonement cult would be forcibly abandoned when the temple was destroyed.

However, in the case of a disobedient reaction to the call to repentance there is still a positive message inherent in the symbolic act. The implication of Jesus’ attack on the atonement cult is that it will be replaced under all circumstances, if not by the immediate realisation of the eschatological renewal on Mount Zion, then in a different way. The alternative is that Jesus dies vicariously as a ransom (see Mark 10:45 par. Matt 20:28), and, as stated by him during the Passover meal with the Twelve, that his body is given and his blood poured out for the many (see Mark 14:22, 24). Hence, with this historical outcome of

<sup>64</sup> Irrespective of its setting in Isa 56:3–8 and the original historical context of this text unit, by the first century AD Isa 56:7 was generally interpreted as an oracle relating to the eschatological temple (see Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel*, 276–87).

<sup>65</sup> The money-changers present at the temple market not only operated currency exchange, the regular bank service needed when travellers arrived from all of the widespread diaspora inside and outside the Roman Empire, they also collected the temple tax (see Ådna, *Jerusalem Temple*, 96–118). At the time of Jesus, the daily *tamid* offering (cf. Exod 29:38–42; Num 28:3–8; Mishna Tamid) constituted the centre of the collective cult, and – together with the rites and offerings of the annual Day of Atonement (Lev 16) – the *tamid* was considered to be the fundamental basis for Israel’s existence because of its atoning effect. Because the temple tax gave each Jew a share in the atoning effect, it was called a ransom (cf. Philo, *On the Special Laws* 1.77; *Who Is the Heir?* 186, and Babylonian Talmud Baba Batra 9a).

the confrontation in the temple, Jesus was willing to offer himself and consequently take over and substitute the sacrificial cult in the temple as the basis for atonement.

*Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem*

The form of the Zion tradition which emphasizes a correspondence of some kind between earthly Zion and transcendent, heavenly realities, known from priestly sections in the Pentateuch, Qumran and Jewish apocalyptic circles (see above), also appears in the New Testament. In this article it is not possible to offer an extensive presentation and a profound analysis of this strain of the Zion tradition; hence, we must content ourselves with some short references and remarks.

In Romans 11:26–27 the apostle Paul applies a combined quotation of Isa 59:20–21 and 27:9 to Christ’s parousia for the salvation of Israel: “Out of Zion will come the Deliverer; he will banish ungodliness from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins.” Paul’s rendering contains a conspicuous variant in the beginning of the quoted verse Isa 59:20. The Hebrew text of this verse reads, “And he will come to Zion (*lʿtsiyōn*) as Redeemer”, whereas the Septuagint reads, “And the one who delivers will come for Sion’s sake (*heneken Siōn*).” By formulating “out of Zion (*ek Siōn*)”, Paul has probably looked to Psalm 50:2, “Out of Zion (*mitsiyōn*, rendered in the Septuagint as *ek Siōn*), the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.” In the same way as God’s beauty and glory shines forth and proceeds from Zion, Christ will perform his eschatological ministry for redemption out of Zion.

While there is no explicit reference to a heavenly Jerusalem in Paul’s location of Christ’s parousia in Zion in Romans 11:26–27, he contrasts the present Jerusalem and “the Jerusalem above” in the allegory of Hagar and Sarah in Galatians 4:21–31. He identifies Hagar, the slave woman, with the covenant from Mount Sinai that “corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children” (v. 25). Sarah, the free woman, whose children, born through God’s promise, are also free, “corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother” (v. 26). Thus, in this text Paul contrasts sharply the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem, and the fulfilment of the promises of being free children and heirs of Abraham is allegorically connected to the heavenly Jerusalem.

The Letter to the Hebrews attaches the utmost importance to the heavenly sanctuary in its exposition of Christ’s atoning ministry. Quoting God’s instruction to Moses in Exodus 25:40,<sup>66</sup> the author characterizes the temple in Jerusalem as “a sketch and shadow of the heavenly one” (8:5). In Hebrews 9 the earthly (see vv. 1–5) and the heavenly sanctuaries (v. 11) and the priestly ministries performed in them are sharply contrasted.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, the heavenly Jerusalem has a prominent position in the Revelation to John.<sup>68</sup> The apocalyptic drama described throughout this book culminates in the ultimate renewal of the cosmos, and the new Jerusalem is at the very centre of this vision (Rev 21:1–22:5):

Rev 21:1–2:

(1) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. (2) And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

<sup>66</sup> “And see that you make them [*sc.* the utensils for the sanctuary] according to the pattern for them, which is being shown to you on the mountain.”

<sup>67</sup> These aspects of the Zion tradition are included in the broader presentation of Christology and soteriology in Hebrews in Part 4.

<sup>68</sup> Based on a lecture series at SALT, Lutheran Graduate School of Theology, Fianarantsoa, Madagascar, in December 2009, I have written an article in three parts on “The Revelation to John”, published in three issues of the magazine of this institution, *Voice of SALT / Feon’ Ny SALT / Voix de la SALT*: Part 1 in the issue for January–March 2010, Part 2 in the issue for April–September 2010, and Part 3 in the issue for April–September 2011. The following short presentation relies on the section “The New Jerusalem (21:1–22:5)” in Part 3 of this article.

According to Revelation 21:10 the new Jerusalem is situated at a high mountain. As we have seen, this corresponds with the biblical Zion tradition (see Ps 48:2–3 [ET 48:1–2]; Isa 2:2). Further, with the water of life and the tree of life in its midst (22:1–2, cf. 21:6), it corresponds to the paradise of the first creation (Gen 2). Constructed of wonderful, precious stones and metals (21:18–21), the new Jerusalem is a temple city adorned with the materials of paradise.

Having come down out of heaven, the new Jerusalem has God's glory and radiance (21:11, 23),<sup>69</sup> and its wall, gates and streets are made of precious material as transparent as the heavenly sea of glass (21:18, 21, see 4:6). The throne of God has been moved from heaven (4:1–3) to the city (22:1, 3). The city is the light of the world, by which the nations will walk (21:24) and to which they come on pilgrimage, bringing the glory and the honour of the nations (21:25).

Only at one point does the seer John speak about what he did *not* see: "I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" (21:22).<sup>70</sup> As the site of God's immediate presence the whole city is a temple. Like the inner chamber in the temple, the holy of holies, it has a cubic shape (cf. 21:16 with 1 Kings 6:20). Whereas in Revelation 4–5 worship was only performed by the heavenly beings, now everybody inside the city participates in the worship (22:3b–5). Previously, only the high priest was allowed to approach God's presence in the holy of holies once a year (see Lev 16); but now everybody will be close to God and the Lamb continuously. What has not been possible for mortals will now be a permanent state: "They will see [God's] face" (22:4). All distance between God and his creation will have been overcome and will have disappeared (22:5).

#### PART 4. THE RECEPTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS SEEN FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

The transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament is marked both by continuity and renewal. This double relationship is expressed very well in the opening verses in the Letter to the Hebrews:

Heb 1:1–2:

- (1) Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets,
- (2) but in these last days he has spoken to us by the Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.

The apostle Paul expresses his far-reaching expectation about what the Old Testament is capable of offering when he writes to the Romans: "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom 15:4).

#### A SHARED LANGUAGE OF FAITH

The New Testament's conscious connection to the Old Testament becomes, of course, visible in the many quotations from and allusions to Old Testament texts. However, "[t]he New Testament's reference to the Old Testament is [...] not exhausted by scriptural quotations and allusions, but extends to the very foundations of the language of faith and leaves its mark on the entire testimony about Christ".<sup>71</sup> As a matter of fact, the Old Testament, both in the original Hebrew language and in the Greek Septuagint

<sup>69</sup> Compare this with the earlier description of the heavenly throne hall in Rev 4:1–5:14, see 4:3.

<sup>70</sup> The Lamb is the most frequent designation of Christ in Revelation with 28 occurrences (e.g. 21:9, 14, 23, 27; 22:1, 3). It appears the first time in the vision of the heavenly throne hall: "Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, [...] the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb [...]. They sing a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God the saints from every tribe and language and people and nation'" (Rev 5:6, 8, 9).

<sup>71</sup> Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 751.

translation, had developed ways for testifying to the revelation of the God of Israel and for expressing human responses in confession, prayer and lament. As Jews the early Christian believers and the New Testament authors cherished the Holy Scriptures as the word of God and were familiar with how they spoke. Now they applied these same language resources for testifying to God's revelation in Jesus Christ and for expressing their response in confession and prayer.

#### A SHARED CONFESSION OF THE ONE TRUE GOD

The shared confession of the one true God is fundamental for the unity between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Lord's prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" (Matt 6:9, cf. Luke 11:2). That the one true God had revealed himself and made his exclusive name known to Israel is of paramount importance in the Old Testament. This was communicated to Moses out of the burning bush. When Moses asked God, who had commissioned him to bring his people the Israelites out of Egypt, about his name,

Exod 3:14–15:

(14) God said to Moses, "I am who I am." He said further: "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, I am has sent me to you." (15) God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you: This is my name for ever, and this is my title for all generations."

At the centre of biblical Israel's religious life, continued in Judaism through all ages, stands the so-called *Shema Yisrael*, to be found in Deuteronomy 6:4–5, the confession of the Lord as their only God and the commandment to love him:

Deut 6:4–5:

(4) Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. (5) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

On this background, it is no surprise that the sanctification of God's name is a very central issue in the Old Testament. In a prophecy about hope for the future for the house of Jacob in Isaiah 29:17–24 the prophet describes what happens when God's people realize what God is doing. They will no longer feel ashamed, and they will sanctify their God.<sup>72</sup> However, when Israel fails in sanctifying God's name and even brings shame upon him among the nations, God himself will sanctify his name. This is a central point in the proclamation of the prophet Ezekiel, according to whom God intervenes for the salvation of the house of Israel primarily for the sake of his name on which the Israelites have brought shame.

Ezek 36:22–23:

(22) Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. (23) I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when through you I display my holiness before their eyes."

---

<sup>72</sup> Isa 29:22–23: "(22) Therefore thus says the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: No longer shall Jacob be ashamed, no longer shall his face grow pale. (23) For when he sees his children, the work of my hands, in his midst, they will sanctify my name; they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God of Israel."

We see how central this issue is to Jesus, when he places the hallowing of God’s name as the first concern in the prayer he taught his disciples. As disciples of Jesus, we are called both to be grateful human beings who hallow God’s name and to ask God that he himself shall intervene and sanctify his great name. Both these aspects are central concerns throughout the Old Testament, taken up by Jesus and continued in his ministry.

Further, Jesus had and nurtured a close and intimate relationship to the one and only God as his Father. There are abundant examples in the Gospel of John (e.g. John 5:17–18, 37, 43; 14:2, 6–7; 17:1, 5; 20:17), and the Synoptic Gospels also give evidence to this unique relationship, as we can see in Matt 11:25 and its parallel in Luke 10:21: “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants.” In his most difficult hour, when he was distressed and troubled in Gethsemane, Jesus spoke words from Psalms 42 and 43 to his disciples, “I am deeply grieved, even to death” (see Pss 42:6, 12 [ET 42:5, 11]; 43:5). In this most distressing time Jesus addressed God as his Father, saying: “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want” (Mark 14:36, cf. Matt 26:39).

This unique, intimate relationship of Jesus to God is followed up in the New Testament Letters, which repeatedly speak of God as the “Father of Jesus Christ”. I have already quoted from Romans 15:4 regarding the role of the Old Testament Scriptures as written for our instruction, and when Paul in the following verses speaks of the effect and fruit of receiving such instruction from the Holy Scriptures, he encourages the believers in Rome, stating: “so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 15:6). When short formulas of praise to God are formulated at the beginning of more New Testament Letters, the Father-Son relation between God and Christ is emphasized, for example in 1 Pet 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (see also 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3; Col 1:3).

From observation of the New Testament statements about God’s holy name and the Father-Son relationship between God and Jesus, we can see that what connects the Old and New Testaments is more than a mere continuity of tradition. In fact, Jesus and his witnesses establish a *continuity of confession* between the two testaments. One text where this continuity is especially transparent is Romans 4, where Paul describes Abraham as the exemplary believer, based on the statement in Genesis 15:6: “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness”, quoted by Paul in Romans 4:3. Further on in his exposition, in verse 17, Paul describes the character of the God in whom Abraham believed as the one “who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist”. Hence, God is the sovereign and mighty creator who brought the whole world into existence from nothing, simply by speaking his word. This is described in the creation story in Genesis 1 and is testified in Psalm 33:9: “For he [the Lord] spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.” After having defined the God Abraham believed in as the creator God who created *ex nihilo*, Paul proceeds further in his exposition on the faith of Abraham:

Rom 4:23–24:

(23) Now the words, “it was reckoned to him”, were written not for his sake alone, (24) but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Thus, in Romans 4 Paul proceeds seamlessly from the Jewish predication about God as the creator who can even give life to the dead, to the identification of this God as the one who raised Jesus from the dead. The continuity of both tradition and confession expresses most profoundly how the New Testament relates to the Old Testament. In its own understanding the New Testament depends upon the earlier Holy Scriptures; it belongs to and continues the process of witnessing what God has done and still is doing in order to bring salvation to the world and humanity that he has created, loves and cares for.



THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES AND THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The biblical canonization process (see Parts 1 and 2, above) was accompanied by statements that these very scriptures are inspired by God and his Spirit. At this point the early Christians followed the general conviction among Jews and showed the same respect and reverence as other Jews for the Holy Scriptures as inspired. A famous example is found in Paul's address to his young co-worker Timothy:

2 Tim 3:15–16:

(15) [...] from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (16) All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

Another example is how the Letter to the Hebrews introduces long quotations from the Old Testament by identifying the Holy Spirit as the true author and speaker of these words. This applies to a quotation from Psalm 95:7–11 (see Heb 3:7–11) and to the famous prophecy in Jer 31:31–34 about the new and different covenant (see Heb 10:15–17, quoting vv. 33–34).<sup>73</sup> Regarding how the Old Testament and New Testament texts speak about the Spirit, Peter Stuhlmacher notes:

The decisive difference over against the Jewish understanding of Scripture lay in the fact that for the New Testament, the Spirit that blows through the Old Testament Scriptures was no longer only the Spirit that communicates himself to Israel and the entire world in the Mosaic didactic tradition, but the Spirit of the Father of Jesus Christ and of the exalted Christ himself. Therefore the early Christian church read the Holy Scriptures with eyes that had been opened for her by the risen Christ and by the Spirit whom he sent.<sup>74</sup>

The story in Luke 24:13–35 about the two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus on Easter Sunday shows us how the disciples depended on the instruction given to them by the risen Christ in order to interpret the Holy Scriptures properly. The risen Jesus joined them on their walk without being recognized by them. The two disciples were confused and frustrated; their master had been crucified and buried two days earlier, but this same morning his tomb had been found empty, and some women belonging to the group of Jesus followers had claimed to have had a vision of angels saying to them that Jesus was alive. At this point, the risen Jesus "said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about him in all the scriptures" (vv. 25–27).

The role of the Holy Spirit in enlightening the disciples' minds is emphasized in the Gospel of John. In his farewell discourse to the disciples in John 14–16 Jesus promises that he and his Father will send the Spirit, called the Paraclete (the Advocate), to them, and one of the functions of the Spirit will be to teach them everything and remind them of all that Jesus had said to them (John 14:26). The evangelist John has integrated this aspect of the Spirit's assistance in conveying the full understanding of the Holy Scriptures in his gospel narrative. There are two very clear examples.

The first one is found in John 2:13–22, the story about Jesus' temple act, followed by a dispute about the destruction and renewal of the temple. Observing how Jesus interfered with the market activities in the temple, driving out those selling animals for sacrifices and overturning the tables of the money-changers, his disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me" (v. 17); the biblical text the disciples remembered is Psalm 69:10 (ET 69:9). However, according to the last verse in this passage, John 2:22, it was not until after Jesus was raised from the dead that the disciples actually understood the meaning of this scripture. Zeal for God's house had consumed Jesus in the sense that it led

<sup>73</sup> All verses of the prophecy Jer 31:31–34 are quoted in Heb 8:8–12.

<sup>74</sup> Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 752.

to his death, but through his resurrection Jesus had overcome those who intended to destroy him and his mission, and thanks to the assistance of the Spirit the disciples were now capable of understanding and believing the scripture.

The second example we find in John 12:12–19, the story about Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. When Jesus was met by a crowd, shouting words from Psalm 118:26, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord – the King of Israel”, and, further, when Jesus found a young donkey to ride on, as – the evangelist notes – is written in the prophet Zechariah 9:9, “Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt”, then in John 12:16 we read the following comment regarding the disciples: “His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.”

#### LOGOS CHRISTOLOGY AS A UNITING BOND BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

As the Son of God, the man Jesus of Nazareth is the incarnate *Logos* or Word, as we learn from the prologue in the Gospel of John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [...] And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1, 14). The fact that Jesus Christ had been pre-existent with God his Father prior to the creation of the world is also expressed in other New Testament texts (e.g. 1 Cor 8:6, Phil 2:6 and Col 1:15–17). Already in the second century AD the Ancient Church inferred from the doctrine of the Logos that the Old Testament Scriptures testify to a revelation from and about the preincarnate Logos, whereas the New Testament Scriptures testify to a revelation from and about the same Logos after he had been born a human being, that is, had become flesh as the incarnate Logos. The famous church father Origen expressed this idea with the following words: “By the words of Christ we do not mean those only which he taught ... when present in the flesh; for also before this Christ was the Word of God in Moses and the prophets.”<sup>75</sup> In 1 Corinthians 10 we find an example in the New Testament itself, prior to the church fathers, that Christ is identified as already present during Israel’s exodus from Egypt. The rock that Moses struck to get water for the people to drink, recounted in Exodus 17:6, is commented upon and explained by Paul in the following way: “[...] all [our ancestors] drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ” (1 Cor 10:4).

#### APPLICATION OF OLD TESTAMENT TRADITIONS AND TEXTS IN NEW TESTAMENT EXPOSITIONS OF THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

Next, we will direct our attention to some texts in the New Testament that apply Old Testament traditions and texts in their exposition of central theological issues.

##### *The application of Psalm 22 in the passion narratives in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew*

My first and most extensive example will be how the Gospels of Mark and Matthew apply the Old Testament tradition of the righteous sufferer, particularly revealed in some Psalms, of which Psalm 22 is the most important, as a key resource for interpreting the passion of Jesus Christ.<sup>76</sup> This approach of the evangelists has a basis in Jesus himself. Jesus was crucified at nine o’clock in the morning of Good Friday. After six hours on the cross, at three in the afternoon, he cried out with a loud voice: “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” This is Aramaic and means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus’

<sup>75</sup> Origen, *First Principles*, preface; quoted from Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 752.

<sup>76</sup> The following presentation depends heavily on Jostein Ådna, “Der Psalter als Gebetsbuch Jesu nach der Darstellung des Markus- und des Matthäusevangeliums: Aspekte biblischer Theologie”, *Theologische Beiträge* 41 (2010): 384–400, esp. 395–400. (ET of the title of this essay: “The Book of Psalms as Jesus’ Prayer Book according to the Gospels of Mark and Matthew: Aspects of Biblical Theology”.)

words are an exact Aramaic rendering of the opening words in Psalm 22 with the Hebrew text, *Eli, Eli, lama ʿazavtani*, translated as “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” in our English Bibles (see Ps 22:2 [ET 22:1]). There is discussion among scholars whether Jesus only spoke this first sentence of Psalm 22 in his prayer at the cross or whether the evangelists imply that he spoke the whole psalm. Irrespective of the length of Jesus’ prayer, the evangelists were directed towards this psalm because Jesus, who knew the Book of Psalms as his own prayer book, had clothed his deep anxiety and despair in the words of the psalmist speaking in Psalm 22: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Psalm 22 is a combined lament and thanksgiving psalm. In Old Testament times individuals who were in trouble because of harassment, injustice, persecution or illness could go to the temple, turn to God in a prayer in which they described their suffering and worries, appeal to God for help and deliverance, and promise that they would come back to the temple and offer a thanksgiving sacrifice and sing a thanksgiving psalm after they have been rescued by the Lord.

An impressive example of someone who prays a lament psalm in the temple and later returns for thanksgiving is Hannah, the wife of Elkanah. She suffered and was mocked because she had not borne any children. Her prayer in the temple in Shiloh and her encounter with the priest Eli is wonderfully described in 1 Samuel 1. The Lord answered her prayer and gave her a son, Samuel. On the next occasion when she and her husband returned to the temple, she gave thanks to God (1 Sam 1:24–2:11).

The Book of Psalms contains a broad variation of different kinds of psalms; indeed, lament psalms of individuals make up the largest group. The first part of Psalm 22, verses 1–22 (ET vv. 1–21) is such an individual lament psalm.<sup>77</sup> In a typical manner, this part of the psalm text varies between sections that describe pain and terror (vv. 2–3, 7–9, 13–19 [ET vv. 1–2, 6–8, 12–18]), sections that praise the Lord for what he has done in the past (vv. 4–6, 10–12 [ET vv. 3–5, 9–11]), and finally an appeal to God for help and a promise to thank him in the future (vv. 20–22 [ET vv. 19–21]).<sup>78</sup> In the lament sections the psalmist describes his pain and misery. He appears as a worm and is ridiculed and despised by the people. He is surrounded by terrible and frightening enemies who are compared to the strong bulls of Bashan or lions or a pack of wild dogs attacking him. He suffers severely in his body; he is dried up like a potsherd, his tongue sticks to his jaws and his bones are visible due to sickness and hunger. In the sections of praise the psalmist reminds God of what he has done for him before, and, finally, the lament part of the psalm culminates in the appeal to God to rescue him: “O my help, come quickly to my aid! Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog! Save me from the mouth of the lion!” (vv. 20b–22a [ET vv. 19b–21a]).

The last ten verses of Psalm 22 make up the thanksgiving part. The first five verses (vv. 23–27 [ET vv. 22–26]) are regular in the sense that they contain elements which are typical for all thanksgiving psalms. After having been rescued by God, the psalmist has returned to the temple where he speaks out in the assembled congregation. He asks them to praise the Lord with him, and he tells them how God has helped and delivered him. The psalmist declares that he will now pay his vows. This means that he will perform his thanksgiving psalm in the midst of the congregation and offer a thanksgiving sacrifice, of

---

<sup>77</sup> One challenge with the translation of the Psalms into English is that many of the psalms in English Bibles count the verses in a different way than in the Hebrew Bible. Many of the Psalms have a heading, counted as verse 1 in the Hebrew text, and this is followed in many translations, e.g. in Norwegian and German Bibles. English Bibles, however, omit the headings from the versification, with the consequence that there is a displacement in the verse count. In Psalm 22 the heading is “To the leader: according to The Deer of the Dawn. A Psalm of David,” registered as verse 1 in the Hebrew Bible. Consequently, the next statement in the text which is the proper beginning of the psalm, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”, is counted as verse 2. However, when the heading is not included in verse count, the opening cry, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”, is registered as verse 1.

<sup>78</sup> Psalm 13 is often referred to as a paradigmatic individual lament psalm. In this short psalm the typical elements of lament (with a description of personal suffering and of the enemies), trust in God (with praise of him) and a promise (of what the psalmist will do when God has rescued him) are easy to identify.

which most of the meat will be distributed among those present for a common meal of peace and harmony, so that the poor will also satisfy their hunger.<sup>79</sup>

Finally, the last five verses in Psalm 22 stand out as unique:

Ps 22:28–32 (ET 22:27–31):

(28 [27]) All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord;  
and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

(29 [28]) For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.

(30 [29]) To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.

(31 [30]) Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord,

(32 [31]) and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

According to these verses it is not only the assembled congregation in the temple listening to the psalmist and sharing the thanksgiving meal with him who get to hear about how God delivered him. But in addition, in verses 28–29 (ET vv. 27–28) we read that the whole contemporary world, in verse 30 (ET v. 29) the past world, those who are dead, and in verses 31–32 (ET vv. 30–31) the future generations get to hear about God’s deliverance of the psalmist in Psalm 22, and they praise God for this.

We return to the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, which recount that Jesus prayed with words from Psalm 22 while he was hanging on the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34; Matt 27:46). Irrespective of whether Jesus actually spoke the whole psalm or only the first verse, the evangelists Mark and Matthew were directed towards this psalm when they reflected on how to present the narrative of Jesus’ passion in written text. For them Psalm 22 appeared as a model text for how to describe and express the suffering of a just person. Wherever they observed similarities between how Jesus was harassed, despised, mocked, mistreated and tortured, and the afflictions that befell the psalmist they clearly noticed these similarities. Because Matthew has in total more explicit allusions to Psalm 22 than Mark, I will refer to the text of Matthew, chapter 27.

We start in verse 35, when the Roman soldiers have brought Jesus to Golgotha and hang him on the cross: “And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots.” This corresponds to what the psalmist speaks in verse 19 (ET v.18): “They divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.”<sup>80</sup> While Jesus is hanging on the cross between two bandits, people passing by start to humiliate him. I quote from Matthew 27:39–40: “Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’” This corresponds to verse 8 (ET v. 7) in Psalm 22: “All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads.”<sup>81</sup> The religious leaders of the people, the high priests, along with the scribes and the elders, appear next in Matthew’s text as those who mock the crucified Jesus. The evangelist renders their words in verses 42–43: “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to, for he said, ‘I am God’s Son.’” These words are ironic and mocking, and they correspond exactly to what the psalmist experienced from his enemies: “Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver – let him rescue the one in whom he delights!” (Ps 22:9 [ET 22:8]).

We have now observed that there are as many as four corresponding similarities between the description of the sufferings of the psalmist in the lament part of Psalm 22 and the sufferings and humiliation experienced by Jesus at the crucifixion:

<sup>79</sup> As can be seen from Psalm 116 as a paradigmatic example, a thanksgiving psalm presented in the temple on the occasion when the psalmist returns after having received deliverance includes a retrospective description of the past misery that the psalmist has suffered. When a lament psalm and a thanksgiving psalm are fused and combined in one psalm, as exemplified in Psalm 22 and Psalm 69, the lament psalm is reproduced on the occasion of thanksgiving as the retrospective element.

<sup>80</sup> See the parallel in Mark 15:24.

<sup>81</sup> See the parallel in Mark 15:29–30.

- 1) the division of the clothes and casting of lots (Matt 27:35 = Psalm 22:19 [ET v. 18])
- 2) the deriding shaking of heads (Matt 27:39 = Psalm 22:8 [ET v. 7])
- 3) the ironic and mocking reference to God (Matt 27:42–43 = Psalm 22:9 [ET v. 8])
- 4) the cry of Jesus (Matt 27:46 = Psalm 22:2 [ET v. 1])

Next, we must direct our attention to the fact that Psalm 22 is a combined lament and thanksgiving psalm. This implies that the psalm transcends the situation of suffering and despair and includes God's deliverance and the psalmist's thanksgiving for having been rescued by the Lord. We must presuppose that the evangelists did not isolate the lament part of Psalm 22 from the last ten verses of the psalm; they definitely took the whole psalm into account when they, prompted by Jesus' cry, turned to this psalm as a biblical resource for exposing the passion of Jesus. The exceptional ending of Psalm 22 in particular made it a unique pre-text for expressing the universal scope and significance of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ for the kingdom of God and the salvation of the world. I have already indicated that the last five verses of Psalm 22 proclaim that God's intervention for the rescue of the psalmist has positive consequences beyond all geographic and temporal borders and limitations.

First, verses 28 and 29 (ET vv. 27–28), quoted above, declare that the God of Israel by rescuing the psalmist from his morbid misery, announces to the whole world that dominion belongs to him alone. In response to this announcement all nations repent and worship the Lord, who rules over them as king. Next, verse 30 (ET v. 29) states: "To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him." In the Old Testament lament psalms the realm of the dead is generally seen as a place outside the area where God can be worshipped, as expressed for example in Psalm 115:17: "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor do any that go down into silence."<sup>82</sup> Once again, this psalm carries out an as yet inconceivable step by including the dead as worshippers of God and thus giving them a share of new life. Thirdly and finally, verses 31 and 32 (ET vv. 30–31), quoted above, state that God's rescue of the psalmist from death shall be proclaimed and made known in all future generations.

The evangelists knew and must also have taken the last five verses of Psalm 22 into account. Although there are no explicit allusions to these verses, there are, nevertheless, some clear indications of their reception in Matthew and Mark. When the Roman centurion who was in charge of the group of soldiers who executed Jesus, watched how Jesus died, he confessed: "Truly this man was God's Son" (Matt 27:54).<sup>83</sup> This gentile man realizes that the crucified Jesus is not simply a despised and accursed villain, but the Son of God. The soldier at the cross is a representative of the gentile world. According to Psalm 22:28–29 (ET 22:27–28) the message about God's rescue of the one who in his misery had cried to God shall reach all of humanity, and in his statement and confession the centurion speaks on behalf of the gentile world in fulfilment of Psalm 22. Both Mark and Matthew mention that the curtain in the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom, in the very moment when Jesus died (Mark 15:38; Matt 27:51a). Whereas Mark goes directly from telling about the curtain to the confession of the Roman centurion, Matthew alone adds a small, midrashic episode in between.

Matthew 27:51b–53:

(51b) The earth shook, and the rocks were split. (52) The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. (53) After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many.

This seems to correspond to verse 30 (ET v. 29) in Psalm 22 according to which those who have died are also included in praising God for delivering the psalmist. When it comes to the final point in Psalm 22, namely, that all future generations shall get to hear about God's rescue of the psalmist, this is a task that the evangelists themselves take responsibility for by writing their Gospels so that people in the future – even two thousand years after – can read and learn what happened to Jesus.

---

<sup>82</sup> Other examples are Pss 6:6 (ET 6:5); 30:10 (ET 30:9); 88:12–13 (ET 88:11–12).

<sup>83</sup> See the parallel in Mark 15:39.

We can conclude our analysis of the relation between Psalm 22 and the passion story in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. The desperate cry at the beginning of the psalm, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” has its counterpart in Jesus’ cry at the cross and in his death. The five last verses in Psalm 22 have a corresponding text in Jesus’ resurrection. The New Testament testifies in correspondence with Psalm 22:28–32 (ET 22:27–31) that Jesus’ death and resurrection is the point in history where the kingdom of God breaks through into our world.

*The exposition of Christ’s ministry in the Letter to the Hebrews*<sup>84</sup>

We will now turn to the Letter to the Hebrews as the next example of how New Testament authors apply Old Testament traditions and texts. This book offers the most detailed exposition of the death of Jesus as a once for all substitution for the atonement sacrificial cult in the old covenant.

The one verse in the Old Testament that is quoted and alluded to most times in the New Testament is Psalm 110:1: “The Lord says to my lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’”<sup>85</sup> According to the heading, the speaker in Psalm 110 is King David, and he tells what God the Lord says to another person whom David refers to as his lord. Hence, according to Psalm 110 David has a second lord in addition to God. This lord of David is seated at the right hand of God. In this verse Jesus himself and then the apostles already found a scriptural confirmation that Jesus was at the same time the Messiah, Son of David, and the Son of God, higher than David and all his royal successors. Whereas the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and Paul quote Psalm 110:1, it is only the Letter to the Hebrews that also quotes verse 4 of this psalm. It happens three times: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek’” (Psalm 110:4). Again, it is God the Lord who speaks to the second lord of David, the exalted Messiah: “You are a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchizedek” (Heb 5:6; 7:17, cf. 7:21 and the allusions in 6:20; 7:3, 11). Hence, the Holy Scriptures inform about God’s inauguration of the Messiah as a priest, indeed, as a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Next to Psalm 110:4, Melchizedek is only referred to once in the Scriptures, in Genesis 14:17–20 in a spectacular sequence added to the puzzling story about Abraham’s victory over four kings in a battle north of Damascus (see Gen 14:1–16). After Abraham’s victory this man Melchizedek, king in Salem and priest of God Most High, *El Eljon*, approached Abraham, blessed him and received tithes from him. In Hebrews 7:1–3 the author combines the narrative about Melchizedek and Abraham from Genesis and Psalm 110:4 and interprets these two texts according to well-established rules of interpretation. The way in which Melchizedek suddenly appears on the scene in Genesis 14 is worthy of note. He is without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; therefore, he resembles the Son of God and remains a priest for ever (7:3). On this basis, the Letter to the Hebrews demonstrates throughout the next verses, 7:4–10, that the Levitical priests who descend from Abraham are in an inferior position to Jesus as a priest of the order of Melchizedek because it is the one in a higher position who blesses the other one and receives tithes from him. Further, all priests since the time of Levi have died, and their priestly ministry has come to an end when they die. It is only the one risen from the dead, Jesus, who is now exalted to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, who qualifies for a priesthood of the order of Melchizedek.

We turn to how Hebrews explains the difference between the priestly ministry of the high priests in the old covenant and the priestly ministry of Jesus, who is high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Jesus’ offering of himself by dying on the cross once for all corresponds to and surpasses what happens each year anew on *yom kippur*, the Day of Atonement. Hebrews describes the priestly service in the old covenant in 9:1–10. Only once each year, on the Day of Atonement, is the high priest allowed to go into the inner room in the sanctuary, taking with him the blood of goats and calves that he offers for himself and for the sins committed unintentionally by the people. As long as the two rooms in

<sup>84</sup> See chapter 29 in Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 522–53, on “The Theology and Proclamation of Hebrews”.

<sup>85</sup> See the citations in Mark 12:36 (with synoptic parallels in Matt 22:44; Luke 20:42b–43); Acts 2:34; 1 Cor 15:25; Heb 1:13. In addition to these quotations there are numerous allusions to Ps 110:1 in the New Testament.

the sanctuary remain, there is no direct access to God, whose presence is located at the site of atonement over the ark of the covenant between the cherubim. Hebrews interprets the sanctuary model with two rooms or chambers in the following way: The first room represents the Mosaic cult system from Sinai, whereas the inner room stands for the entry into the heavenly sanctuary and belongs to the eschatological era of salvation.

From verse 9:11 onwards, the author of Hebrews turns to describing the high priestly ministry of Jesus likening it and contrasting it to the Levitical high priest’s ministry on the Day of Atonement. Christ must not limit himself to one annual visit in the inner room of the earthly temple, which according to Hebrews 8:5 is only a sketch and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary. On the contrary, “when Christ came as a high priest, [...] [he came] through the greater and perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation” (9:11, cf. v. 24). The following similarities to the high priest on the Day of Atonement are emphasized:

- 1) Jesus entered once for all into the Holy Place, not annually (see 9:12).
- 2) Jesus brought himself as a perfect sacrifice without defect or blemish, not goats or calves (cf. 9:14 with 9:12–13).
- 3) Jesus entered with his own blood, with himself as the sacrifice, whereas the high priests in the old covenant brought with them the blood of goats or calves to sprinkle at the site of atonement. The blood represents life poured out or indulged in death, and the reference to Jesus’ blood here means his death on the cross as an atoning sacrifice (9:13–14).

The way in which Jesus transcends the Israelite high priests on the Day of Atonement is expressed at the end of chapter 9:

Heb 9:24–25, 28:

(24) For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. (25) Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own. [...] (28) [...] Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

The outlook to Christ’s return in Hebrews 9:28 brings us to a final point. The one atonement sacrifice of Jesus has a lasting effect because he is the mediator of a new and better covenant: “But Jesus has now obtained a more excellent ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted through better promises” (Heb 8:6). We find the classical prophecy of a new and different covenant in Jeremiah 31:31–34. This passage is quoted in full in Hebrews 8:8–12 and repeated in a somewhat shortened form in 10:16–17. With this positioning of the two quotations the prophetic promise of the new covenant encloses and frames what is said about the sacrifice of Jesus in chapter 9 and in the first part of chapter 10. The fact that the Holy Scriptures themselves contain such a promise of a new covenant implies in the interpretation of Hebrews that the old covenant from Sinai will one day necessarily be obsolete. This day has already arrived on the occasion of Jesus’ death and exaltation, and for this reason the old sacrificial system in Jerusalem is outdated. The blood of Jesus himself, brought into the sanctuary, represents not only the atoning blood on the site of atonement at the Day of Atonement; it is also the blood related to the inauguration of a covenant. Hence, even the old covenant was inaugurated with blood, the author states in 9:18, and in the following verses he recounts the story from Exodus 24:3–8 about the sprinkling of blood in the inauguration of the covenant at Sinai. Whereas the atonement sacrifice erases and ends something, the covenant sacrifice points towards the future and remains valid in the covenant reality that is opening, that is, the era of the new covenant. In this way the death of Jesus embraces past and present; it marks the definitive victory over sin and death and is the entry into salvation in the eternal kingdom of God.

## CONCLUSION

In this article I have surveyed the canon history of the Jewish and Christian Bibles. We have observed how the Jewish Bible developed gradually, beginning with the Law, continuing with the Prophets and, finally, being complemented by the Scriptures. From the third century BC onwards, the formation of the Jewish Bible was a bilingual process that included the gradual translation of the biblical books from Hebrew and Aramaic to Greek. The process that led to the Christian Bible interconnected closely with the Jewish Bible. Jesus and the apostles shared the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms with all other Jews in Galilee and Judea. Beginning in the bilingual community of Jesus followers in Jerusalem, the early church adopted the Greek version of the Bible, the Septuagint, and cherished it as Holy Scripture on the same level as the Hebrew Bible. The Christians very soon began to supplement the inherited Holy Scriptures with writings that recounted the story of Jesus Christ (i.e. the Gospels) and theologically elaborated and applied the Christ event (i.e. the Letters). All these new books were written in Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean world, and, correspondingly, the Septuagint became the first part of the two-part Christian canon, called the Old Testament. Because the Greek version of the Jewish Bible encompasses more books than the Hebrew version, consequently, the Christian Old Testament is broader than the Jewish canon that obtained its final shape and size in early rabbinical Judaism.

The canonical processes of the Jewish and Christian Bibles were intertwined and mutually interdependent. The Christians inherited the Greek version of the Holy Scriptures from the Jews, who finally distanced themselves from the Septuagint, as it appeared and was conceived more and more as (the first part of) the Christian Bible. Consequently, they authorized the Holy Scriptures only in the original language Hebrew (and Aramaic) and with a reduced number of books compared to the Septuagint as their canon, called the *Tanakh*.

The early Christians never regarded the Old Testament as outdated and obsolete. Hence, the New Testament was never intended as a substitution for the Old Testament. On the contrary, the early Christians conceived of the New Testament as a continuation of the earlier Holy Scriptures, in which the same language of faith was applied in order to testify to God's revelation in Jesus Christ and to express their response in confession and prayer. The complete integration of the (Greek) Jewish Bible into the Christian canon as its first part, called the Old Testament, is in no way a suspicious undertaking or an illegal appropriation of what belongs to others. Like Jesus, the apostles and the New Testament authors (except Luke) were all Jews themselves, and they read the Holy Scriptures as a message that spoke to them and enabled them to grasp and express God's contemporary work in Christ for the redemption of humankind and the whole world.

The Greek Jewish Bible operates with a salvation-historical outlook, oriented towards the future. This is seen in the compositional structure of the Septuagint, with the prophetic books at the end. Hence, the expectation that the biblical tradition and revelation history will continue beyond the borders and frames of the collection of the Law, the Prophets and the Scriptures, including the so-called Apocrypha, is an intrinsic element in the Greek Jewish Bible itself. In this article we chose the Zion tradition as an example and saw how it developed coherently and organically beyond the Jewish Bible and continued throughout early Judaism and in the New Testament. Further, taking the New Testament as our point of departure, we saw two examples of how New Testament authors turned to the Old Testament for finding theological resources for expressing and elaborating upon central aspects of Christology and soteriology, namely, how the evangelists Mark and Matthew drew upon the Old Testament tradition of the righteous sufferer in Psalm 22 to describe the passion of Jesus, and how the Letter to the Hebrews drew upon the priesthood of Melchizedek and the promise of a new covenant for the exposition of Jesus' ministry.

New Testament exegesis and theology can only be performed and expounded on the basis of the two-part Christian canon, never disconnected from the Old Testament. The masterpiece of my honoured New Testament teacher Peter Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (see n. 3), is a paradigmatic example of what a New Testament theology written on these premises might look like.