

JESUS, THE NEW TEMPLE, AND THE NEW PRIESTHOOD

~: **Brant Pitre** ~:

Our Lady of Holy Cross College

Almost fifty years ago, in his excellent but often-overlooked book, *The Mystery of the Temple*, the great Dominican theologian Yves Congar highlighted a paradox present in the gospels—a mystery of sorts:

When the gospel texts are read straight through with a view to discovering the attitude of Jesus towards the Temple and all it represented, two apparently contradictory features become immediately apparent: *Jesus' immense respect for the Temple*; his very lively criticism of abuses and of formalism, yet above and beyond this, *his constantly repeated assertion that the Temple is to be transcended*, that it has had its day, and that it is doomed to disappear.¹

With these words, Congar put his finger on one of the most puzzling aspects of Jesus' relationship to the Judaism of his day. For it is of course true that the Gospels contain numerous statements of Jesus in which he esteems the Temple as the dwelling place of God, and others in which he explicitly denounces the Temple and declares that it will eventually be destroyed. For example, on the one hand, Jesus says, "he who swears by the Temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it" (Matt. 23:21). On the other hand, he denounces the city of Jerusalem for opposing the prophets of God and says to her: "Behold, your house [the Temple] is forsaken and desolate" (Matt. 23:38). How do we explain this seeming paradox? How can Jesus both revere the Temple and at the same time declare its eventual destruction?

In order to answer this question, I will focus on four aspects of the Jewish Temple that are widely known but have not been sufficiently highlighted in the historical study of Jesus. Although most students of the Bible have a basic knowledge of the importance of the Temple at the time of Jesus, our appreciation of ancient Jewish Temple *theology* is still somewhat under-developed.² In this paper, I will

1 Yves Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple*, trans. Reginald F. Trevett (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1962), 112 (emphasis added).

2 Thankfully, this situation appears to be changing. In recent years, there has been an explosion of research into the liturgical and theological symbolism and significance of the Temple. Much of this is discussed in the exhaustive bibliography of G. K. Beale's excellent work, *The Temple*

try to move beyond the obvious visible, political, and national significance of the Temple to its deeper theological and liturgical significance. From a theological and liturgical perspective, for a first-century Jew, the Temple was at least four things: (1) the dwelling-place of God on earth; (2) a microcosm of heaven and earth; (3) the sole place of sacrificial worship; (4) the place of the sacrificial priesthood.³

As I hope to show, when these four Jewish beliefs about the Temple are given due emphasis, Jesus' strange combination of criticizing others for abusing the Temple and prophesying its destruction makes eminent sense. The reason: *Jesus saw all four of these aspects of the Temple as being fulfilled in himself and his disciples.* Indeed, the evidence in the Gospels strongly suggests that Jesus saw his own body as (1) the dwelling-place of God on earth; (2) the foundation stone that would be the beginning of a new Temple and a new creation; and (3) the sole place of sacrificial worship in the new covenant. Moreover, there are also good reasons to believe that he saw himself and his disciples as constituting (4) the new, eschatological priesthood that had been spoken of by the prophets.⁴

Because of this, the old Temple was destined to pass away and be replaced by a new Temple, a greater Temple, one "not made with hands," and the old priesthood with a new. In this essay, I hope to offer the beginnings of what might be called a *biblical mystagogy* of both the Jewish Temple and the Jewish priesthood, one which has the potential to shed enormous light on Jesus' view of himself and his disciples. But in order to see all this, we will need to examine how the Temple was viewed in first-century Judaism, in order to root our understanding in ancient Jewish practice and belief.

The Importance of the Temple in Ancient Judaism

It should go without saying that the ancient Jewish Temple, as the liturgical and sacrificial center of Second Temple Judaism, was extremely important.⁵ Although

modern readers often consider those sections of the Bible which describe the Temple and its sacrificial rituals to be rather dull (if not downright repugnant), this was most certainly not the case for practicing Jews in the first century. For the vast majority of them, the Temple was arguably the center of their religious life. As N. T. Wright has said:

The Temple was the focal point of every aspect of Jewish national life. Local synagogues and schools of Torah in other parts of Palestine, and in the Diaspora, in no way replaced it, but gained their significance from their implicit relation to it. *Its importance at every level can hardly be overestimated.*⁶

E. P. Sanders is in agreement:

*I think that it is almost impossible to make too much of the Temple in first-century Jewish Palestine. Modern people so readily think of religion without sacrifice that they fail to see how novel that idea is.*⁷

These modern sentiments find confirmation in ancient Jewish texts. To cite but one famous example: according to the Mishnah, Simeon the Just, who was high-priest during the third century B.C., used to say:

By three things the world is sustained: by the Law, *by the [Temple]-service*, and by deeds of loving-kindness.⁸

In this ancient Jewish text, "the service" (Hebrew *'abodah*) is a technical term for the sacrificial worship offered to God by his priests in the Temple.⁹ For Simeon the Just, then, the importance of the liturgy of the Jerusalem Temple is not simply

and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004). See also Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006), esp. 111–144.

3 By "sacrificial priesthood" I am referring here to those ordained priests who ministered in the Temple cult. There was of course a sense in which the entire people of Israel was called to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:5–6), but this universal priesthood is not the object of our present study.

4 This essay is drawn from a book I am currently writing on Jesus and the Jewish roots of the Last Supper. For further details, see Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper: Judaism and the Origin of the Eucharist* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, forthcoming).

5 The Second Temple period ranges from roughly 520 B.C. to 70 A.D. On the Jewish Temple, see especially the concise but amazingly thorough article by Johann Maier, "Temple," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2 vols., eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (New York: Oxford University, 2000), 2:921–926. See also Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*; Carol Meyers, "Temple, Jerusalem," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:350–369; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63BCE–66 CE* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), 47–145; Emil Schürer, *The History of the*

Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.—A.D. 135), 3 vols., rev. and ed. Geza Vermes, et al. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973, 1979, 1986, 1987), 2:237–313; Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978); Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, trans. F. H. Cave and C. H. Cave (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 21–27, 84–86, 147–221; H. H. Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel* (London: S.P.C.K., 1967), 71–110; Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple*. For a beautifully illustrated introduction to the Temple as described in rabbinic literature, see Israel Ariel and Chaim Richman, *Carta's Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem*, trans. Yehoshua Wertheimer (Jerusalem: Carta, 2005).

6 N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 224. Emphasis added.

7 E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1994), 262. Emphasis added.

8 Mishnah *Aboth* [The Fathers], 1:2. The Mishnah, a compilation of the Jewish oral law dates to roughly 200 A.D. See *The Mishnah*, trans. Herbert Danby (Oxford: Oxford University, 1933), 446. My translation here modifies Danby's slightly.

9 See Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven: Yale University, 1988), 673, who likewise translates the term as "the Temple service."

national, but *cosmic*: it is one of the three things that “sustains the world.” We will return to this cosmic dimension shortly.

For now, the basic point is that the Temple was of central significance for Judaism at the time of Jesus. This is important to stress because of a long-standing tradition, both in popular Christian consciousness and in some New Testament scholarship, of depicting the Jewish Temple in entirely negative terms: as an outmoded system of external rituals and legalistic regulations; or as an oppressive tool of economic exploitation used and abused by the widely-despised priestly hierarchy; or simply as a primitive expression of sacrificial religion, destined to be transcended by a purely spiritual worship.¹⁰ Other authors are not so harsh, but rather tend to downplay the significance of the Temple by suggesting that in Jesus’ day it had already been eclipsed by the emergence of the local gathering place of worship, the synagogue.¹¹ Neither of these approaches does justice to the immense reverence and respect which most Jews of Jesus’ day had for the Temple. With this basic point in mind, let us turn now to four specific aspects of the Temple that will play an important role in our study—the Temple as the dwelling-place of God; the Temple as a microcosm of heaven and earth; the Temple as the sole place of sacrifice; and the Temple as the place of the sacrificial priesthood.

The Temple as the Dwelling-Place of God

The first aspect of the Jewish Temple, one which marked it out as different from all other buildings, is the fact that it was the dwelling place of God. Above all, it was the presence of God that made the Temple a place “set apart”: in Greek, that is what the word “temple” (*hieron*) means.¹² Although ancient Jews recognized

¹⁰ Sanders gives an excellent catalogue of such views in New Testament scholarship at the beginning of his study. See *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 23–60.

¹¹ See, for example, Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 59, who asserts that “in the first century ... the Temple was not the center of piety in the way that synagogue and home were.” This totally ignores the centrality of sacrifice in worship (which, as we will see, could only be carried out in Jerusalem), and that Jewish synagogues themselves reflected their subordination to the Temple by the fact that they were oriented toward the Temple, so that “the people prayed standing with their faces turned toward the Holy of Holies, towards Jerusalem.” See Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, 2:449, citing Mishnah *Berakoth* [Firstlings] 4:5–6, and *Tosefta Megillah* [The Scroll of Esther] 3:21–22: “The minister of the synagogue faces the holy place, and all the people face the sanctuary,” and “the doors of the synagogue open only eastward, for so we find concerning the sanctuary that it was open eastward.” Translated by Jacob Neusner, *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew, with a New Introduction*, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), here at 650. Johnson’s error reflects an anachronistic tendency to read back some of the later features of rabbinic Judaism (which lacked a Temple and was hence wholly focused on the synagogue) into the period of the Second Temple. At the risk of oversimplifying, it may nevertheless be helpful to make the point that later rabbinic Judaism is much more like Protestantism (that is, non-sacrificial, with no cult and a rabbinate), and Judaism at the time of Jesus was much more like Catholicism (sacrificial, with both cult and priesthood).

¹² See, for example, N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 406–407; Meyers, “Temple, Jerusalem,” 351–352; Craig R. Koester, *The Dwelling of God: The Tabernacle*

that the transcendent God of the universe could not be “contained” by any earthly dwelling, they nevertheless maintained that he had chosen in some unique way to dwell with his people in the Temple in Jerusalem.

This belief runs like a golden thread through the writings of the Old Testament. Any knowledgeable Jew would have been familiar with the unforgettable account of the building of the Temple by King Solomon. On the day of its dedication, after the priests of Israel bring the Ark of the Covenant into the holy place, the presence of God descends from heaven in the form of the “glory cloud”—what the rabbis later referred to as the *Shekinah*¹³—to make the Temple his dwelling place:

And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD [that is, the Temple], 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*. Then Solomon said: “The LORD has set the sun in the heavens, but has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. *I have built thee an exalted house, a place for thee to dwell forever.*” Then the king faced about, and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood. (1 Kings 8:10–14)

Although Solomon himself goes on to acknowledge that “heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain” God, much less a man-made “house,” (1 Kings 8:27), this does not negate the fact of God’s presence in the Jerusalem Temple. Through an act of divine condescension, the God of the universe deigns to dwell among his people, and pours out the glory of his presence upon this sacred place, set apart for him. As Josephus says in his account:

This cloud [the glory cloud] so darkened the place, that one priest could not discern another; but it afforded to the minds of all a visible image and glorious appearance of God’s having descended into this Temple, and of his having gladly pitched his Tabernacle there.¹⁴

Although by the time of Jesus, the Ark of the Covenant—which was the principal symbol of God’s glorious presence—had been lost, the belief persisted

in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature, and the New Testament, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 22 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1989).

¹³ On the *Shekinah*, see Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple*, 93–94 (with bibliography).

¹⁴ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Bk. 8, Chap. 4, 106, in *The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 219.

that God was present in a special way in the Temple.¹⁵ This is what we find recorded in the Gospels:

He who swears by the altar, swears by it and everything on it; and he who swears by the Temple, swears by it and by *him who dwells in it*. (Matt. 23:16–21)

Jesus' words fit quite squarely into the matrix of ancient Jewish belief. In light of such texts, Sanders concludes:

*The Temple was holy not only because the holy God was worshipped there, but because he was there. ... Jews did not think that God was there and nowhere else, nor that the Temple in any way confined him. Since he was creator and Lord of the universe, he could be approached in prayer at any place. Nevertheless, he was in some special sense present in the Temple.*¹⁶

Hence, the divine presence, the presence of God in the Temple, lays the foundation for all of its other aspects. Once this is clear, we can ask ourselves: what light does the Temple as the dwelling-place of God shed on Congar's paradox? How does it illuminate the mystery of Jesus' relationship to the Temple?

To attempt to answer these questions takes us straight into the heart of the debate over Jesus' messianic "self-understanding."¹⁷ For, in what must be considered one of the most striking passages in all the Gospels, Jesus not only identifies himself with the Temple, but asserts that he is in fact *greater than the Temple*:

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck ears of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he

was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the Bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless? *I tell you, something greater than the Temple is here.* And if you had known what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the guiltless. *For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.* (Matt. 12:1–8)¹⁸

While there are many aspects of this fascinating text that could be explored, for our purposes here we will focus on only one: Jesus' words, "Something greater than the Temple is here." As the context makes clear, this is a veiled reference to *himself*. Should there be any doubt about this, he uses similar language elsewhere to refer to himself as prophet and king: "Something greater than Solomon is here" (Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31) and "Something greater than Jonah is here" (Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32). In our text, Jesus is not only identifying himself as a temple—as if this were not striking enough—but as *greater* than the Temple in Jerusalem.

This identification immediately raises a question of no little importance: *if, to an ancient Jew, the Temple is the dwelling place of God on earth, then what could possibly be greater than it?* Although some commentators have tried to avoid the obvious, the only adequate answer is, of course, God himself, present in person, "tabernacling" in the flesh.¹⁹ In confirmation of this, Jesus' second enigmatic self-reference—"the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath"—points in the same direction. For again, to a first century Jew, there can be only one "Lord of the Sabbath": the maker of the Sabbath, the Lord of creation (see Gen. 1; Exod. 20). With these words—to use the somewhat infelicitous categories of twentieth-century theology—we find a christology that is very "high," but very *Jewish*: Jesus himself is the true Temple, where God dwells on earth. And, as the messianic "Son of Man," he

15 See 2 Macc. 2. See also the first-century work, *The Lives of the Prophets* (2:8–19) regarding Jeremiah and the removal of the Ark from the Temple. Text in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols., ed. James H. Charlesworth, The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 2:387–389.

16 Sanders, *Judaism*, 70–71.

17 For recent affirmations that Jesus saw himself as Messiah by two giants of New Testament scholarship, see Martin Hengel, "Jesus, the Messiah of Israel: the Debate about the 'Messianic Mission' of Jesus," in *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*, eds. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, *New Testament Tools and Studies* 28:2 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 323–349; Ben F. Meyer, "Jesus' Ministry and Self-Understanding," in *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*, eds. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 337–352. For a full-length exploration and defense of Jesus' messianic self-understanding, see Michael F. Bird, *Are You the One Who Is To Come? The Historical Jesus and the Messianic Question* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, forthcoming).

18 Compare Mark 2:23–38; Luke 6:1–5. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the Bible contained herein are from the Revised Standard Version.

19 It is fascinating to observe that many modern commentators do not even attempt to wrestle with the implications of Jesus' identification of himself as "greater than the Temple." The verse is all but ignored in the otherwise extremely thorough work of W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 2:314–315. Similarly, the verse receives no discussion at all in Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 111–112. It is also lacking in works on Jesus, such as the (otherwise massive) work of James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 566–569 who totally ignores it in his discussion of Matt. 12:1–8; Mark 2:23–28; Luke 6:1–5, and does not mention it anywhere else in his book. Even Ben Witherington's book, *The Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 66–71, never even mentions this verse in his discussion. It should be noted that this cannot be because there is a strong case for the inauthenticity of the verse, since we have already seen that it strongly coheres with Jesus' words about being "greater than Solomon" (Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31) and "greater than Jonah" (Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32).

has authority over creation itself and the Sabbath covenant. The divine identity and prerogative in both these statements is implicit but undeniable.²⁰

But this is not the only evidence that Jesus identifies himself with the Temple as the dwelling-place of God. There is another key text, which is perhaps more suggestive because it focuses not so much on the earthly Temple as on its heavenly counterpart. (Although we do not have time to study it in depth, I should note here in passing that it was widely understood in ancient Judaism that the earthly Temple in Jerusalem was a replica of the heavenly Temple—where God “really” dwells.²¹) It is this heavenly Temple that forms the subject of Jesus’ response to Nathanael’s famous confession of him as “Son of God” and “King of Israel” (John 1:43–51). After Jesus mentions having seen Nathanael under the fig tree, he says:

Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these.” And he said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you, *you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.*” (John 1:50–51)²²

Again, the key to understanding this strange image lies in the Old Testament. With these words, Jesus is combining two heavenly visions: Daniel’s famous vision of the heavenly “son of Man” (Dan. 7:14), and Jacob’s famous vision of the “staircase” to the heavenly Temple (commonly known as “Jacob’s Ladder”):²³

²⁰ The fact that both these statements are often discarded by scholars as creations of the early Church shows just how lofty their christology is, although it is rarely noted by such scholars that the terminology is strikingly unique: the early Church itself never anywhere speaks of Jesus as “greater than the Temple” or “the Lord of the Sabbath.” It is arguable that the reason for this is that these expressions were distinctively used by Jesus himself. Compare Craig Keener’s comments, who remarks that Jesus’ words are “veiled enough to prevent accusations of blasphemy—especially since his opponents would not expect him actually to claim what he was claiming—but obvious enough to enrage them.” See Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 356.

²¹ See Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple*, 65, 91 n. 2; Beale, *The Temple*, 134–135; Maier, “Temple,” 921–922; Meyer, “Temple, Jerusalem,” 367; Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, 2:522 n. 31. George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1927), 1:404: “As the divine king, God received a worship that was more than royal homage; his palace was a temple in which angelic choirs perpetually intoned his praises and incense was burned upon the altar by a celestial priesthood.” Also important is George Buchanan Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament* (New York: KTAV, 1971 [1925]), 148–178, on the “sacrificial service in heaven.”

²² For arguments favoring the authenticity of this text, see Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John’s Gospel: Issues and a Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 82–85, not least of which is the use of the title “Son of Man,” which is widely recognized as “both distinctive and characteristic” of Jesus.

²³ As Raymond Brown notes, this link between John 1:51 and Gen. 28 goes back at least as far as the time of Augustine. See Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 2 vols., Anchor Bible 29–29a (New York: Doubleday, 1966, 1970), 1:89.

I saw in the night visions, and behold, *with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man*, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away ... (Dan. 7:13–14).

Jacob left Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place, and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. *And he dreamed that there was a stairway²⁴ set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!* And behold, *the LORD stood above it* and said, “I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac ...” Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “*Surely the LORD is in this place; and I did not know it.*” And he was afraid, and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than *the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*” (Gen. 28:10–18)

First, it should be made clear that Jacob is having a vision, not simply of a “ladder” (as the English translations frequently suggest), but of a heavenly temple. In the ancient Near East, temple sanctuaries frequently consisted of several levels of ascending staircases; here Jacob sees the angels ascending and descending upon the staircases of the Temple, engaged in liturgical worship.²⁵ Second, this Temple is characterized by the presence of God. Not only is “the LORD” depicted as standing at the apex of the Temple, but Jacob is awestruck primarily because “the LORD is in this place”; for this reason, he names the place “the house of God” (Hebrew: *beth ’el*) and “the gate of heaven.”

Once this Old Testament background is clear, Jesus’ words to Nathanael take on a whole new depth, for it appears that *Jesus is fusing the heavenly Temple of Jacob’s vision and the heavenly Son of Man of Daniel’s vision into one*. If this is correct, the implications are weighty: no longer is the earthly sanctuary the dwelling place of the LORD; soon Nathanael will see the Son of Man revealed as “the house of God” and “the gate of heaven.” Although, as before, Jesus does not make an explicit claim to divine identity, this is as close as it comes for a first-century Jew, since in Jacob’s vision, the angels appear to ascend to God, whereas in Jesus’ vision, the

²⁴ Most translations have “ladder,” but this English term distorts what is clearly a vision of the staircases that were often part of temples in the ancient Near East. See E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 218.

²⁵ See Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997 [1961]), 274–329; Speiser, *Genesis*, 218–220.

only visible heavenly being is the Son of Man.²⁶ As Raymond Brown puts it, with these words: “Jesus as Son of Man has become *the locus of divine glory*, the point of contact between heaven and earth.”²⁷

To sum up what we have seen so far: it was a standard belief in ancient Judaism that the Temple was the dwelling place of God. In both the synoptic Gospels and in John, Jesus, by contrast, transfers this belief to himself, thereby identifying himself as the true Temple of God. He is not only greater than the present Temple, the dwelling-place of God on earth, but at the revelation of the Danielic Son of Man he will be shown to be the heavenly Temple of God—the dwelling place of “the LORD” that was revealed to the patriarch Jacob. In light of such statements, Congar’s question begins to see its resolution: it is no wonder that Jesus both reveres the Temple and awaits its destruction. The old Jerusalem Temple must make way for the unveiled glory of the divine presence that will be manifest in the coming of the heavenly Son of Man.

The Temple as a Microcosm of Heaven and Earth

The second aspect of ancient Jewish Temple theology that will prove important to our study is the belief that the Temple was not simply the dwelling place of God; it was also a microcosm of heaven and earth. Indeed, for ancient Judaism, the Temple not only had religious and cultic significance, it had *cosmic* significance: it was a miniature replica of the universe.²⁸

It is worth noting here that for much of the twentieth century this cosmic dimension of the Temple was largely ignored.²⁹ Nevertheless, as recent scholarship has shown—and I am thinking here especially of G. K. Beale’s book, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission* (2004)—there is overwhelming evidence for this cosmic temple symbolism in both Scripture and Judaism at the time of Jesus. Indeed, the Old Testament, the Second Temple literature, and the rabbis all bear witness

26 If we had more space, we could explore the fact that in one version of Daniel’s vision of the Son of Man, the Son of Man is not coming “to” the Ancient of Days but appearing “as the Ancient of Days.” See the Septuagint translation (hereafter, LXX) of Dan. 7:13–14. Compare Rev. 1:12–16, where the Son of Man appears as the Ancient of Days, with “head and hair white as snow.” I owe this fascinating insight to my colleague, Michael Barber.

27 Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 1:91. Emphasis added.

28 See especially Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 29–80, for abundant primary and secondary resources. See also Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 111–144; Meyers, “Temple, Jerusalem,” 359–360; Sanders, *Judaism*, 249; Margaret Barker, *The Gate of Heaven* (London: SPCK, 1991), 104–132; Koester, *The Dwelling of God*, 59–63; Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 111–184; Raphael Patai, *Man and Temple* (New York: KTAV, 1976), 54–139.

29 This is no doubt due, at least in part, to the post-Kantian collapse of metaphysics, the materialism of modernity, as well as the widespread influence of Rudolf Bultmann’s program of “demythologizing”—which at its core was really about “de-cosmologizing” the Bible. See Congar, who at the beginning of the 1960s can only cite Joachim Jeremias and one other German scholar as having highlighted this cosmic significance. *The Mystery of the Temple*, 94, n. 9.

to the fact that the Jerusalem Temple—like the Tabernacle before it, and other temples in the ancient Near East—was designed and decorated to represent the entire universe: the heavens, the earth, the sea, the stars. Take the following quotes as examples:

[God] built *his sanctuary* [the Temple]
like the high heavens, like the earth,
which he has founded for ever. (Ps. 78:69)

If anyone without prejudice, and with judgment, look upon these things [in the Tabernacle], he will find *they were in every one made in way of imitation and representation of the universe*. When Moses distinguished the Tabernacle into three parts, and allowed two of them to the priests, as a place accessible and common, he denoted *the land* and *the sea*, these being of general access to all; but he set apart the third division for God, because *heaven* is inaccessible to men. (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*)³⁰

The house of the Holy of Holies is made to correspond to *the highest heaven*. The outer holy house was made to correspond to *the earth*. And the courtyard was made to correspond to *the sea*. (Rabbi Phinehas ben Ya’ir, second century A.D.)³¹

In addition to this overall cosmic symbolism, the specific *features* of the Temple, down to its architectural details, appear to have been constructed so as to conjure up images of all creation.³² For example, the famous “bronze sea”—which contained some thousand gallons of water—was actually meant to represent “the sea” (1 Kings 7:23–24; 1 Chron. 18:8; Jer. 52:17). Moreover, the seven lamps of the menorah inside the holy place were interpreted by some Jews as representing the seven visible planets (Exod. 25:31–40; 37:17–24). Finally, Josephus even states that the veil in the Temple had cosmic significance:

30 *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Bk. 3, Chap. 7, 81, text in *The Works of Josephus*, 90.

31 The quotation is from Beale, *The Temple*, 46 n. 36.

32 Meyer, “Temple, Jerusalem,” 359: “Other symbols constitutive of the cosmic order made visual and vital in the Temple can be identified in the exuberant presence of floral and faunal motifs in the interior decoration of the building and in the construction and decoration of its appurtenances. The trees carved on the walls, the groves on the Temple mount, and perhaps even the sacred lampstands, are part of the symbolic expression of the mythic Tree of Life that stood on the cosmic mountain, and in the paradisiacal garden at creation. Similarly, the waters of the molten sea and the great fountains of the deep present in God’s habitation on Zion (Ps. 46:4) contribute to the notion of the Temple as a cosmic center.”

It was a Babylonian curtain, embroidered with blue, and fine linen, and scarlet, and purple, and of a contexture that was truly wonderful. Nor was this mixture of colors without its mystical interpretation, but was a kind of *image of the universe*. ... This curtain had also embroidered upon it a *panorama of the heavens*. (Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*)³³

This will prove significant momentarily; for now, we can conclude by stating that for many ancient Jews, the Temple represented the heavens and the earth.³⁴ It was quite literally, a “micro-cosmos,” a little universe. This may be one reason why the high priest Simeon (and the rabbis after him) taught that “the Temple service” was one of the three things which “sustained the world.”³⁵

Once this cosmic significance of the Temple is clear, another piece of the puzzle can be fitted into its place to illuminate two important episodes from the Gospels: (1) Jesus’ prophecies of the Temple’s destruction and restoration; and (2) his identification of himself as the “cornerstone” of the new Temple.

The first of these is important to emphasize. As the Gospels repeatedly attest, Jesus anticipated and spoke of the eventual destruction of the earthly Temple in Jerusalem, and also taught that it would be replaced by a new Temple, an eschatological Temple (see Matt. 23:37–39; Luke 13:34–35).³⁶ We see this both in his teaching and in the account of his trial before the Sanhedrin:

And as he came out of the Temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? *There will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down.*” (Mark 13:1–2)

33 *The Wars of the Jews*, Bk. 5, Chap. 5, 212–214, in *The Works of Josephus*, 707 (slightly altered). See Beale, *The Temple*, 46–47, for abundant references to the ancient literature, especially Philo and Josephus.

34 So too Carol Meyers, an expert on the Temple: “The symbolic nature of the Jerusalem Temple, as for all major shrines in the ancient world, depended upon a series of features that, taken together, established the sacred precinct as being located at the cosmic center of the universe, at the place where heaven and earth converge. ... Zion, and the Temple built there, is the cosmic mount. The Temple building, on a mountain and a platform, replicates the heavenly mountain of Yahweh (compare Ps. 48:1–4) and also its earlier manifestation at Sinai. It also reaches back to the beginning of time, to the creation of the world. ... The foundation of the Temple thus becomes a protological event, going back to the beginnings of time.” “Temple, Jerusalem,” 358.

35 See Mishnah *Aboth* [The Fathers] 1:3.

36 This is widely recognized in modern scholarship: see especially Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 61–90. See also Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 514–515, 628–634; Craig A. Evans, “Jesus and Predictions of the Destruction of the Herodian Temple,” in *Jesus and His Contemporaries: Comparative Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 367–380; Paula Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews* (New York: Vintage, 1999), 226–228; Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 510–527.

Now the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin sought testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. ... And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, “We heard him say, ‘*I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.*’” (Mark 14:55–58)

In the first passage, we see Jesus clearly prophesying the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem—something which did indeed take place forty years later, in 70 A.D., when the Romans came and demolished the city of Jerusalem. In the second text, we find important evidence for the fact that Jesus expected there to be a new Temple, an eschatological Temple—a temple “not made with hands.” Although the testimony that he would destroy the Jerusalem Temple is called “false,” there is no reason to doubt that some error has been mixed with some truth: Jesus did expect a new Temple “not made with hands” to be erected after “three days”; but he did not say that he would destroy the earthly Temple.³⁷ Most important for our purposes is that by speaking of the new Temple as being erected “after three days,” he (implicitly) identified himself as the new Temple, that would replace the old.

Now, what is fascinating about this identification, given our interest in the cosmological significance of the Temple, is that Jesus’ image of the new Temple being “not made with hands” (Mark 14:56) draws directly on a famous Old Testament prophecy. I am speaking here of the book of Daniel, which describes the coming of a mysterious “stone” that is “cut by no human hand” (Dan. 2:31–35). In the Danielic interpretation of the image, the identity of this stone is revealed:

And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever; just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be hereafter. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure. (Dan. 2:44–45)

37 While it is true that the evangelist refers to this accusation as “false testimony,” its falsity probably resides in only the accusation that Jesus himself would destroy the Temple; the rest of their accusation coheres quite well with Jesus’ prophecies of the Temple’s destruction, and is probably accurate. For discussions of this material, see Craig Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, Word Biblical Commentary 34b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 445–446; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 71–76, although the latter seems to think that Jesus said that he himself would destroy the Temple, while I think that this is the element of the testimony which the evangelists (rightly) regarded as false.

Although there is much that could be said about this important passage, three points must suffice. First and foremost, the image of a “stone” cut from the mountain “by no human hand” is evocative of *the stones of the Temple*.³⁸ For, according to several Old Testament passages, the Temple altar was supposed to be “an altar of unhewn stones, upon which no man has lifted an iron tool” (see Josh. 8:31, drawing on Exod. 20:25; Deut. 27:6). Hence, the image of a stone cut “by no human hand” is a designation for a sacred stone, a cultic stone (compare 1 Kings 6:7).³⁹ Second, given the fact that the Temple was a microcosm of creation, the stone cut by no human hand is not only an image of an eschatological Temple, but of a “new creation.” This implicit cosmic dimension becomes explicit when the little stone becomes a “great mountain” and fills “the whole earth” (Dan. 2:35–35).⁴⁰

Hence, the little stone is not simply the beginnings of a new Temple, but of a new cosmos. Third and finally, and perhaps most striking of all, as Wright has pointed out, “from at least as early as the first century,” the Danielic stone “not cut by human hand” was taken in ancient Jewish literature “to refer to the Messiah, and to the kingdom that would be set up through him.”⁴¹ In light of this ancient messianic interpretation of the stone, the polyvalence of the image is readily apparent: the stone represents the Messiah, the eschatological Temple, and the eschatological creation.

When Jesus’ words about the new Temple “not made with hands” are given due weight, his basic point seems clear: he not only expected the destruction of the earthly Temple in Jerusalem, but he expected that earthly Temple to be replaced by a new Temple, an eschatological Temple—Daniel’s prophecy of the Temple that would be built “by no human hand”—a prophecy which he apparently applied to himself. This interpretation coheres well with what we find elsewhere in the Gospels:

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: *‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the LORD’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’* [Ps. 118:22–23]? ... And *he who falls on this stone will be broken*

to pieces; but when it falls on any one, it will crush him.” (Matt. 21:42–44)⁴²

Here we see quite clearly that Jesus is applying the image of the Danielic stone (as well as the Temple stone of Psalm 118) to himself. In light of this parallel, there should be no doubt that “the idea of the ‘stone’ is closely linked with the idea of the new eschatological Temple,” and that Jesus applied this idea to himself.⁴³

But, one might object: where could Jesus have gotten the (admittedly strange) idea that the entire Temple—not to mention creation itself—could be embodied in a single individual? Is it really plausible to believe that he could have identified himself with both the eschatological Temple and the beginnings of the new creation? Although to answer this question in full would take us too far afield, it is critical to note here that in ancient Judaism, there was one person who was viewed as embodying in himself both the Temple and the cosmos. That person was *the Jewish High Priest*, whose liturgical vestments were meant to replicate both the Temple and the universe.⁴⁴ As Josephus states, the colored “garments of the High Priest” were woven to match “the fabric of the Tabernacle.”⁴⁵ And on those same garments were woven figures of the universe:

For upon [the High Priest’s] long robe *the whole world was depicted,*
and the glories of the fathers were engraved on the four rows of
stones,
and your majesty on the diadem upon his head. (Wis. 8:24)

Then [Moses] gave [the priests] their sacred vestments, giving to his brother [Aaron, the High Priest] the robe which reached down to his feet, and the mantle which covered his shoulders, as a sort of breast-plate, being *an embroidered robe, adorned with all kinds of figures, and a representation of the universe.* (Philo, circa 50 A.D.).⁴⁶

38 See Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 631, n. 89.

39 Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 153.

40 “Temples were symbolically the ‘embodiment of the cosmic mountain’ representing the original hillock first emerging from the primordial waters at the beginning of creation; these waters themselves were symbolized in temples together with fertile trees receiving life from such waters. ... Daniel’s picture of an expanding mountain is compatible with ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies that sometimes portray a hillock arising amidst the chaos seas as the bridgehead of a new creation.” Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 53, 148, citing abundant secondary literature in support of this interpretation.

41 Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 500, citing 4 Ezra 13:25–38 as an example. See also Joachim Jeremias, “Lithos” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:272–273, for later rabbinic texts that explicitly identify the stone as the “Messiah.”

42 Compare Mark 12:10–11; Luke 20:17–18. On the interpretation and authenticity of this passage, see the stunning article by Craig A. Evans, “God’s Vineyard and Its Caretakers,” in *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 381–406. See also Seyoon Kim, “Jesus—the Son of God, the Stone, the Son of Man, and the Servant: The Role of Zechariah in the Self-Identification of Jesus,” in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Otto Betz (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987), 134–148.

43 So Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 499.

44 See Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 47–48; Sanders, *Judaism*, 249.

45 *Antiquities of the Jews*, Bk. 3, Chap. 7, 80, in *The Works of Josephus*, 90; compare Exod. 26:1; 28:5–6.

46 *The Life of Moses* Bk. 2, 143. Text in C. D. Yonge, trans., *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 503.

We will return to the connections between the Temple and the priesthood in our final section below. For now, it is simply necessary to point out that in an ancient Jewish context, the notion that both the Temple and the cosmos could somehow be embodied in a single individual had a ready example in the figure of the High Priest. As the first-century Jewish philosopher Philo says: the High Priest “represents the world” and is a “microcosm” or “little world” (*brachys kosmos*).⁴⁷ Indeed, one could even suggest that for ancient Judaism, the cosmos was a macro-temple, the Temple was a microcosm, and the High Priest, when he donned his priestly vestments, was both a micro-temple *and* a microcosm, summing up all things—the “twelve tribes” and “the whole world”—in himself.

In light of what we have seen so far, we can now draw the following conclusion: a second key to the mystery of Jesus’ relationship with the Temple has to do with the fact that the Jerusalem Temple was not simply a building; it was a microcosm of the universe. Moreover, the Gospels suggest that while Jesus expected the old Temple to be destroyed and replaced by a new Temple, he did not expect the new Temple to be a building of bricks and mortar. It would not be “made with hands”—that is, it would not be of this world, but of supernatural origin.

Sanders concludes: “We should probably think that [Jesus’] expectation was that new Temple would be given by God from heaven.”⁴⁸ This is extremely important: to the extent that the Temple represented the cosmos, the destruction of the old Temple represented the demise and passing away of the old creation. Likewise, to the extent that the Temple represented all creation, any talk of a new Temple—especially one “not made with hands”—would signal the onset of the new creation. Great as the earthly Temple was, in the eschatological age, there would be no place for the Jerusalem Temple of stone and mortar, a Temple “made with hands.” If Jesus was truly awaiting the coming of a new Temple, then his reverence for the earthly Temple and his prophecies of its demise make perfect sense; for it would be transcended by a new Temple and a new creation that would be made “by no human hand.”

This interpretation finds confirmation in the gospel accounts of Jesus’ crucifixion and death.⁴⁹ There we find an implicit connection between the death of Jesus, the demise of the Temple, and the destruction of the cosmos:

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “This man is calling Elijah.” ... And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the Temple was torn (*eschisthe*) in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were torn (*eschisthesan*); the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of their tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. (Matt. 27:45–53)

Notice the twofold consequence of Jesus’ death: with the yielding up of his spirit, it is *the Temple* and *the earth* that are both “torn asunder” (Greek: *schizo*). In other words, the effects of his death are both *cultic* and *cosmic*. With his crucifixion, the Temple of the old creation and indeed, creation itself, are not only thrown into a state of upheaval, but arguably begin the process of “passing away.” Should there be any doubt about this suggestion, recall what we learned earlier and what every first-century Jew would have known: on the Temple veil was depicted “the panorama of the heavens.”⁵⁰ Hence, with the tearing of the Temple veil and the earthquake—the whole universe, “heaven and earth,” were symbolically being torn asunder. And because the Jerusalem Temple was the sign and symbol of this universe, it was now destined to share the same fate. The old Temple would be replaced by a new, and the old world—as Isaiah had said so long ago—would be replaced by “a new heavens and a new earth” (Isa. 65:17; 66:22). And all this, according to Jesus, would begin “on the third day.”

The Temple as the Sole Place of Sacrifice

The third ancient Jewish belief that can shed light on the mystery of Jesus and the Temple is that the latter was regarded as the sole place of sacrificial worship.⁵¹ Now, it is true some Jews, such as the Essenes, at various times rejected the sacrifices in the Temple as illegitimate or ritually impure. And it is also true that outside the land of Israel, in the Jewish diaspora, some Jews may have departed from the Torah and officiated at their own sacrificial services.⁵² Nevertheless, the fact remains that

47 *Life of Moses* Bk. 2, 135. “Priestly attire was a microcosm of the Temple itself, which was also a small model of the entire cosmos.” Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 48.

48 Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 73.

49 For an excellent study of Jesus’ passion and death as an eschatological event with both cultic and cosmic ramifications, see Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The End of the Ages Has Come: An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 30–33. He points out that in Ps. 104:2; Isa. 40:22, and in the Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Metsia* [The Middle Gate] 59a, the sky is compared to a “curtain” or “tent.”

50 Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Bk. 5, Chap. 5, 214. So Allison, *The End of the Ages Has Come*, 33.

51 On these points, see discussion in Sanders, *Judaism*, 47–54.

52 For criticisms of the Second Temple and even the rejection of the Temple as defiled, see, for example, 1 *Enoch* 90:28–29; *Damascus Document* (CDa) 5:6–7; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18:9; Craig A. Evans, “Opposition to the Temple: Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 235–253; Maier, “Temple,” 923–924.

for what Sanders has called “common Judaism,” the Temple in Jerusalem was the only place where God could be licitly worshiped through the offering of sacrifice.⁵³ This belief was of course rooted in the divine Law given to Moses:

You shall seek the place which the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there; thither you shall go, and thither you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the offering that you present, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flock; and there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your households, in all that you undertake, in which the LORD your God has blessed you. ... Take heed that you do not offer your burnt offerings at every place you see; but at the place which the LORD will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you. (Deut. 12:5–14)

For Jews living at the time of Jesus, this text meant that while God could be honored through prayer, song, and Scripture reading in the local synagogues, the essence of religious worship—*sacrifice*—took place only in the Temple. Hence, for what Sanders calls “common Judaism,” the Temple in Jerusalem was the only place sacrificial worship could be offered to God. Indeed, the Mishnah prescribes excommunication for anyone who “offers up [an offering] outside [the Temple court],” placing such an action on par with Sabbath-breaking, incest, blasphemy, idolatry, and child-sacrifice.⁵⁴ In contrast to the pagan world, whose landscape was littered with a host of temples to a pantheon of various deities, first-century Judaism explicitly restricted sacrificial worship of the one God to only one place: the Jerusalem Temple.

For Jesus and his contemporaries, this restriction of sacrificial worship to the Temple had important liturgical consequences, especially during major sacrificial feasts. According to witnesses such as Josephus and Philo, at such times, thousands of Jews would converge upon Jerusalem in order to offer animal sacrifices there in the Temple. Particularly striking is Josephus’ description of how many pilgrims came to Jerusalem at Passover each year. He describes them as “an innumerable multitude,” who had come from far and wide “in order to worship God.”⁵⁵ When the time came, they would offer the Passover sacrifice “with cheerful willingness.”

At this time “they are required to slay more sacrifices in number than at any other festival.”⁵⁶ He even gives us a precise description of the liturgical multitude:

So these High Priests, upon the coming of their feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour [about 3 p.m.] to the eleventh [about 5 p.m.], but so that a company not less than ten belong to every sacrifice (for it is not lawful for them to feast singularly by themselves), and many of us are twenty in a company, found the number of sacrifices was 256,500; which, upon the allowance of no more than ten that feast together, amounts to 2,700,200 persons that were pure and holy.⁵⁷

Even if somewhat exaggerated, this is a staggering figure: over 200,000 lambs for some 2 million people. For the modern reader, who probably has never witnessed a single animal sacrifice, much less several thousand, it is difficult to imagine two hundred thousand lambs being slaughtered at the Passover feast, and just *how much blood* would have been spilled. Indeed, the Mishnah tells us that a drainage canal had to be built to allow for the flow of blood from the altar:

At the south-western corner [of the Altar] there were two holes like two narrow nostrils by which *the blood that was poured* over the western base and the southern base *used to run down and mingle in the water-channel and flow out into the brook Kidron.*⁵⁸

One can only imagine what this would have looked like during a major feast like Passover. With some 200,000 lambs being slaughtered and their blood being poured out upon the altar, the brook of the Kidron Valley must have looked like a veritable river of blood and water, flowing out from the altar of the Temple. We will return to this image shortly; for now, we need only stress that all this was so because the Temple was the sole place of sacrifice. Indeed, according to the Pentateuch, there was no other place the blood could licitly be poured out in sacrificial worship.

With this important background in mind, we can now turn to passages in the Gospels that bear on Jesus’ relationship with Temple sacrifice. As mentioned above, there should be no doubt that, during the greater portion of his public ministry,

⁵⁶ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 17:213, in *The Works of Josephus*, 465.

⁵⁷ Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, 6:423–427, in *The Works of Josephus*, 749.

⁵⁸ Mishnah *Middoth* [Measurements] 3:2. For other mentions of this drainage channel, see Mishnah tractates *Yoma* [The Day of Atonement] 5:6; *Zebahim* [Sacrifices] 8:7ff.; *Temurah* [Exchange] 7:6; *Tamid* [Always] 5:5. It is fascinating to note that the same channel that was used to drain the blood into the river was also used for pouring out “drink-offerings” of wine; see Mishnah *Meilah* [Sacrilege] 3:3.

⁵³ On these points, see discussion in Sanders, *Judaism*, 47–54.

⁵⁴ Mishnah *Kerithoth* [Uprootings] 1:1, in *The Mishnah*, 563.

⁵⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 17:213–214, in *The Works of Josephus*, 465.

Jesus himself not only participated in the Jewish feasts, but also directed others to offer the appropriate sacrifices in the Temple.⁵⁹ One thinks here of course not only of his parents traveling to Jerusalem to keep the Passover when he was twelve years old (Luke 2:41–51), but of his words to the leper who was cleansed: “Go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to the people” (Matt. 8:4; see also Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14). However, all this changes when, during his last days in Jerusalem, he performs one of his most memorable prophetic signs: the so-called “cleansing of the Temple.” Although this episode is well known, I cite it here to highlight the sacrificial implications of his action:

And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the Temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the Temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons; and he would not allow any one to carry anything through the Temple. And he taught, and said to them, “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.” (Mark 11:15–16)⁶⁰

Contrary to common opinion, Jesus’ action in the Temple is not merely a spontaneous outburst of righteous indignation at the extortion of pilgrims by greedy money-changers.⁶¹ Much less is it, as S. G. F. Brandon once suggested, an attempt at enacting a full-scale “takeover” of the Jerusalem Temple.⁶² Instead, I would submit, it is quite clearly a symbolic action, a prophetic sign, carried out in the tradition of biblical prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.⁶³ The meaning of this sign is evident from its *effect*: by overturning the tables of the money-changers and by driving out those who were buying and selling the animal sacrifices, Jesus temporarily causes a *cessation of sacrifice*. As Wright states:

I suspect that the answer [to the question of the meaning of Jesus’ actions] lies closer to the mechanics of what actually happened in the Temple. . . . Without the right money, individual worshippers could not purchase their sacrificial animals. Without animals, sacrifice could not be offered. *Without sacrifice, the Temple had lost its raison d’être. The fact that Jesus effected only a brief cessation of sacrifice fits perfectly with the idea of a symbolic action.* He was not attempting a reform; he was symbolizing judgment.⁶⁴

In short, in the “cleansing of the Temple,” Jesus is performing a small-scale symbolic demonstration of what will eventually happen to the Temple as whole: the sacrifices will cease when the Temple is destroyed (compare Dan. 9:25–27).

The question this should raise for us, is, of course: if Jesus symbolized the cessation of sacrifice in the Temple, did he think it would be restored? Would the sacrificial worship of God cease altogether? Or would it be superseded by something greater? To answer this question, I turn to one of the great Jewish scholars of the twentieth century: Jacob Neusner. In his interpretation of the cleansing of the Temple, he states:

[The overturning of the money-changers’ tables] would have provoked astonishment, since it will have called into question the very simple fact that the daily whole offering [known as the *tamid*] effected atonement and brought about expiation for sin, and God had so instructed Moses in the Torah. Accordingly, only someone who rejected the Torah’s explicit teaching concerning the daily whole offering could have overturned the tables—or, as I shall suggest, someone who had in mind setting up a different table, and for a different purpose: for the action carries the entire message, both negative and positive. . . . The overturning of the moneychangers’ tables represents an act of rejection of the most important rite of the Israelite cult, the daily

59 It is intriguing to note, along with Congar, that “the Gospels say nothing of any sacrifice offered by Jesus” in the Jerusalem Temple. Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple*, 116–117. I doubt, however, whether this silence should be taken to suggest that Jesus never offered sacrifice in the Temple—something which would have arguably put him in the position of breaking the Mosaic Law which he came not to abolish but to fulfill (Matt. 5:17). The question of whether he ever offered a sin offering, however, is something worthy of christological reflection and speculation. Compare Mary’s offering in Luke 2:22–24, done out of obedience to the Law.

60 For an exhaustive survey of competing opinions and interpretations, see Jostein Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel* [Jesus’ Stand against the Temple], *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 119 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

61 No hard evidence for such extortion has ever been produced, and the money-changers served an essential role to pious pilgrims. See Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 61–71.

62 See S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1967).

63 Sanders actually uses the terminology of “symbolic demonstration”; I find “sign” more precise and more helpful because it is actually utilized in the biblical texts. Compare Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 69.

64 Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 423. See also John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 357: “[Jesus’] action is not, of course, a physical destruction of the Temple, but it is a deliberate symbolical attack. It ‘destroys’ the Temple by ‘stopping’ its fiscal, sacrificial, and liturgical operations.” Although Sanders’ interpretation of Jesus’ actions as a “symbolic demonstration” have been criticized by some, the strongest arguments for this interpretation is based on the fact that Jesus’ actions did not—indeed, they could not—actually cause the buying and selling of sacrifices in the Temple to cease entirely. As Sanders rightly points out, the Temple complex was huge; if Jesus had really intended to stop all buying and selling, this would have taken an army of men. All Jesus can do alone is temporarily interrupt the offering of sacrifice. Hence, anyone witnessing the event would have recognized it is the symbolic action of a prophet, intended to make a point. See Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 70.

whole-offering, and, therefore, a statement that there is a means of atonement other than the daily whole offering, which is now null. *Then what was to take the place of the daily whole-offering? It was to be the rite of the Eucharist: table for table, whole offering for whole offering.*⁶⁵

This is a fascinating conclusion: for Neusner, Jesus' actions did not just symbolize the cessation of just any sacrifice, but of the cessation of the *tamid*, the daily whole burnt offering, which was believed to effect atonement (see Num. 28:1–8). Moreover, when Jesus' actions in the Temple are combined with his actions in the upper room, they lead a Jewish scholar like Neusner to the conclusion that he intended the sacrifices of the Jerusalem Temple to be replaced by "the rite of the Eucharist."

Should there be any doubt about Neusner's suggestion, we need only turn to the account of the Last Supper, and pay particular attention to the sacrificial language and imagery utilized by Jesus in the words of institution:

Now, as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; *this is my body.*" And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is *my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.* (Matt. 26:26–28)⁶⁶

As Joachim Jeremias pointed out some fifty years ago, by utilizing the combined imagery of "body" and "blood," any ancient Jew would have recognized that Jesus "is applying to himself *terms from the language of sacrifice.*"⁶⁷ This is especially true of the image of "blood" being "poured out"; such language is clearly sacrificial imagery drawn directly from the liturgy of the Temple (Lev. 4:5–7; Deut. 12:26–27).

65 Jacob Neusner, "Money-Changers in the Temple: The Mishnah's Explanation," *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 287–290 (here 289–90, emphasis added), cited in Jostein Ådna, "Jesus' Symbolic Action in the Temple (Mark 11:15–17): The Replacement of the Sacrificial Cult by His Atoning Death," in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel* [Community without Temple], eds. Beate Ego, Armin Lange, and Peter Pilhofer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 461–473 (citation 472, n. 6). For similar conclusions, "Jesus as the Founder of a Cult: the Last Supper and the Primitive Christian Eucharist," in Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 405–439.

66 Compare Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Cor. 11:23–25. On the authenticity of words of institution, see Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 559–562.

67 Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1966), 222.

Once these parallels are clear, Jesus' actions during his last days in Jerusalem—both in the cleansing of the Temple and at the Last Supper—begin to make a great deal of sense, and indeed mutually illuminate one another. By temporarily causing the cessation of sacrifice in the Temple, Jesus points forward to the day when "sacrifice and offering" will "cease" in the Jerusalem Temple, as the prophet Daniel had foretold (see Dan. 9:27).

But at the same time, this does not mean that sacrificial worship will be entirely brought to an end. Rather, it is the very "pouring out of blood," which was formerly confined to the Temple, that will now be transferred to the rite of the Last Supper, and, through the command for it to be repeated, to the early Eucharist of the disciples. Indeed, when the Jewish background is properly taken into account, it becomes clear that *it is precisely the Jewish notion of one single locus of sacrificial worship that lays the foundation for Jesus' prophecy of the Temple's destruction.* Once the offering of the "blood of the covenant" is transferred from the Temple sacrifices to the offering of his own body and blood, there can no longer be any room for Jerusalem Temple cult. Its time has come to an end. There can be only one Temple of sacrifice: the body of Jesus.

Again, while this paper is primarily focused on Jesus' own teachings and actions, it is important not to let confirmation from the accounts of crucifixion pass us by. There is in fact one aspect of his passion and death that is well-known, although its possible connection to the Temple sacrifice is frequently overlooked.⁶⁸ I am speaking of the Gospel of John's description of the piercing of Jesus' side, from which blood and water flow:

Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath ... the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. *But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.* He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth—that you may also believe. (John 19:31–35)

68 Compare, for example, Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 2:946–952, whose lengthy and detailed discussion of the historicity and meaning of the flow of blood and water from Jesus' side fails to record any witnesses in connection with the Temple.

What is the meaning of this unforgettable scene, and why does John step into the narrative to insist on the veracity of his eyewitness testimony to the event?⁶⁹ In light of what we have learned about Temple sacrifice, I suggest that John is calling attention to the fact that *Jesus' crucified body has now become the locus of sacrifice; his body is the new Temple*. Should there be any doubt about this, recall what we learned earlier: it was from the altar of sacrifice in the Temple that a stream of blood flowed, mixing with the waters of the Kidron to form a river of blood and water.

If this is the background which John has in mind—and I submit that it is—then the obvious implication is that *it is no longer the Temple in Jerusalem from which the blood of sacrifice will flow. The Temple has now been replaced by the immolated body of Jesus*. Not only does Jesus replace the Temple sacrifices with the bread and wine of the Last Supper—which he identifies as his “body” and “blood”—but the very body and blood of the crucified Messiah is now revealed as the true Temple of God. And because, as every first-century Jew would have known, there could be only one place of sacrifice, Jesus' body now replaces the Temple in Jerusalem. He fulfills the purpose of the Temple in himself; what he began in the upper room is completed on the wood of the cross, and the mystery of his identity with the Temple is now fully revealed. In this light, the words of John from earlier in his gospel now make sense:

The Jews then said to him, “What sign have you to show us for doing this?” Jesus answered them, “*Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*” The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he spoke to them of *the Temple of his body*. (John 2:18–21)

The Temple as the Place of the Sacrificial Priesthood

The fourth and final aspect of the ancient Jewish Temple that has the power to illuminate the mystery of Jesus' relation to it is the identity of the Temple as the place of the sacrificial priesthood.⁷⁰ If, for an ancient Jew, it would have been absurd to speak of religious worship without sacrifice, then it would be equally absurd to

speak of sacrifice without priesthood. Indeed, the two are almost synonymous: the Temple is the locus of the priesthood because it is the sole place of sacrifice, and it is the sole place of sacrifice because it is the locus of the priesthood. The place of “the priests, the ministers of the LORD,” is “between the vestibule and the altar”—that is, in the Temple (Joel 2:17). Hence, any attempt to understand Jesus' relationship to the ancient Jewish Temple must eventually raise the question of his relationship to the ancient Jewish priesthood.

And yet, when we turn to recent studies of Jesus and Judaism, we find a strange situation: If there is any single subject which modern historical scholarship on Jesus has almost completely neglected, it is the subject of Jesus and the Jewish priesthood.⁷¹ Although one finds over and over again the assertion that Jesus expected a new Temple, one searches even the most in-depth monographs on Jesus in vain for any detailed treatment of whether he expected this eschatological Temple to be in any way tied to an eschatological priesthood.

This is true, despite the fact that it is widely acknowledged that the Dead Sea Scrolls have proven beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jews in the first century were not only waiting for a new Temple, but for a priestly Messiah.⁷² Indeed, several major scholars categorically deny even the possibility that Jesus saw himself as a priestly Messiah, much less that he sought to establish an eschatological priesthood.⁷³ Remarkably, this is even true of studies that are otherwise very interested in the ancient Jewish context of Jesus' words and deeds. Such works leave one with the distinct (but historically puzzling) impression that while Jesus had a great deal

(Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 147–221; de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 274–515; Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, 179–270.

71 The most notable exception is the excellent pair of articles by Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1,” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 4:2 (2006): 155–175; “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2,” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 5:1 (2007): 57–79. For others, see Albert Vanhoye, S.J., *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest*, trans. J. Bernard Orchard, (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's, 1986), 47–59; André Feuillet, *The Priesthood of Christ and His Ministers*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Doubleday, 1975); Oscar Cullman, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (London: SCM, 1959), 83–89. It is notable that none of these appear in major historical monographs on Jesus.

72 See James C. VanderKam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2002), 265–273; John Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 74–101.

73 See, for example, Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 654; Jürgen Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. James E. Crouch (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 215; James D. G. Dunn, “Messianic Ideas and their Influence on the Jesus of History,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 373; Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973), 153. See Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1,” 155, n. 1.

69 See now Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: the Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 358–383.

70 On the priesthood and the Temple, see esp. Sanders, “The Ordinary Priests and Levites: At Work in the Temple,” in *Judaism*, 77–102; and Schürer, “Priesthood and Temple Worship,” in *The History of the Jewish People*, 2:237–313. See also Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel*; Haran, “Priest and Priesthood,” in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 16 vols. (New York: KTAV, 1971), 13:1076–1088; Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem at the Time of Jesus*, trans. F. H. Cave and C. H. Cave

to say about the Jewish Temple, he had almost nothing to say about the Jewish priesthood.

In this final section, I would like to challenge this widespread assumption and suggest instead that if Jesus expected a new, eschatological Temple, then it stands to reason that he also expected a new, eschatological priesthood.⁷⁴ From a first-century Jewish perspective, the Temple cult and the sacrificial priesthood were inextricably intertwined. Although I cannot develop the arguments at length here,⁷⁵ several of the texts we have already examined regarding Jesus and the new Temple also suggest that Jesus not only awaited an eschatological priesthood but also saw in himself and his disciples a new priesthood. Indeed, it is no coincidence that *in the very texts wherein Jesus speaks about the eschatological Temple, he also speaks of the eschatological priesthood.*

Take, as our first example, the famous account of the cleansing of the Temple. As we saw above, Jesus' act of overturning the tables of the moneychangers is widely recognized as a prophetic sign of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and its eventual replacement by a new Temple. But what often goes overlooked is that in one of the Old Testament prophecies cited by Jesus, Isaiah not only speaks of an eschatological Temple; he also speaks of *a new priesthood*, in which not only Levites but *Gentiles* will offer sacrifice and act as priests. Compare the texts:

And [Jesus] entered the Temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the Temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons; and he would not allow any one to carry anything through the Temple. And he taught, and said to them, "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." (Mark 11:15–16)

And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants ... these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. (Isa. 56:6–8)

74 I am building here on the excellent work of Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah," but taking his insights in a different direction. See also his book: Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 57 (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

75 I refer the reader here to my forthcoming volume, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, where I will treat this in much greater depth.

As many commentators have recognized, the prophecy of Isaiah that is cited by Jesus is one of the most striking in the Old Testament. For in it, Isaiah clearly depicts Gentiles ("foreigners") as not only being brought by God into the Temple (the "house of prayer") to worship. He also depicts them acting as priests—offering their "burnt offerings" and "sacrifices" on the "altar"—something only priests were allowed to do.⁷⁶ Should there be any doubt about this interpretation, Isaiah makes the point a second time, in the final chapter of the book, where God declares that the Gentile "nations" will bring the lost tribes of Israel to the new Jerusalem, but that he will take "some of them" to be "priests and Levites" (Isa. 66:20–21).

It is hard to overestimate how striking these prophecies would have been to any Jewish reader living in the first-century. For at the time Jesus, every practicing Jew would have known that it was not only totally prohibited for a Gentile to act as priest, but even the majority of Israelites—all twelve tribes, with the exception of the tribe of Levi—were prohibited from acting as priests. Since the time of the golden calf incident, the priesthood had been taken away from the twelve tribes as a whole and given to only one: the tribe of Levi (see Exod. 32).

The upshot of this background is simple: by speaking of a future "house of prayer" for all nations where Gentiles act as "priests and Levites," Isaiah is clearly describing not only a new Temple, but a radically new priesthood—an *eschatological priesthood*. The fact that Jesus chooses and cites this particular prophecy when he performs his sign of the Temple's destruction is not inconsequential: it demonstrates that he is not only awaiting a new Temple, but a new priesthood, in which both Israel and the Gentiles will act as priests in the eschatological age.

Should there be any doubt that this was possible in an ancient Jewish context, it is worth pointing out that this is exactly what is described in the ancient writing known as the *Testament of Levi*, which contains an amazing description of the coming of a priestly Messiah who inaugurates an eschatological priesthood.⁷⁷

76 See Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 135, citing E. J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 535. Intriguingly, Beale suggests that "the reason that the Gentiles will be included as priests is because now the place of true worship and Temple service is not geographically located in the old, temporal Jerusalem, but throughout the entire earth, where 'all mankind will come to bow down before me' for ever (Isa. 66:23)." Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 137–138.

77 Although there continues to be debate about the Jewish origin of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, of which the *Testament of Levi* is a part, Howard Clark Kee dates the Jewish elements to the second century B.C., especially given the fact that fragments of an Aramaic Testament of Levi were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. For discussion, see Kee's introduction in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:775–781. See also Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 86–89, who points out that while the current Greek testaments are "Christian in their present form," they are "widely thought to incorporate an older Jewish work," such as that found at Qumran. See the discussion in Gerbern S. Oegema, *The Anointed and His People: Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kochba*, Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 27

Although the passage is long, it is the most explicit ancient description of the hope for a priestly Messiah and a messianic priesthood, and is worth citing in full:

When vengeance will have come upon them from the Lord, *the priesthood will lapse. And then the Lord will raise up a new priest, to whom all the words of the Lord will be revealed.* ... And the angels of glory of the Lord's presence will be made glad by him. *The heavens will be opened and from the Temple of glory sanctification will come upon him, with a fatherly voice, as from Abraham to Isaac.* And the glory of the Most High shall burst forth upon him. And the spirit of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon him in the water. For he shall give the majesty of the Lord to those who are his sons in truth forever. *And there shall be no successor for him from generation to generation forever. And in his priesthood the Gentiles shall be multiplied in knowledge upon the earth, and they shall be illumined by the grace of the Lord. In his priesthood sin shall cease and lawless men shall rest from their evil deeds, and righteous men shall find rest in him. And he shall open the gates of Paradise; he shall remove the sword that has threatened since Adam, and he will grant to the saints to eat of the Tree of Life.* The spirit of holiness shall be upon them. And Beliar shall be bound by him. And he shall grant his children the authority to trample on wicked spirits.⁷⁸

Although much could be said about this important text, for now we need only make the following point: according to the *Testament of Levi*, there was an expectation that in the last days God would send a distinctively priestly Messiah, "an eschatological High Priest,"⁷⁹ who would not only restore the "lapsed" priesthood of the last days, but inaugurate a new priesthood in which "the Gentiles" would somehow participate. It is also worth noting, given what we have seen about the supernatural Temple, that the new priesthood of the Messiah does not appear to be focused on the earthly Jerusalem, but on "the Temple of glory" in "the heavens." Finally, this priesthood—this eschatological priesthood—will be ordered toward a definitive atonement for sin: "in his priesthood, sin shall cease."

With this in mind, we can turn to our second example from the Gospels: Jesus' response to the Pharisees' objection to his disciples plucking grain on the

Sabbath. As we saw above, Jesus' justification for his disciples' actions rests above all on his identification of himself as "greater than the Temple" (Matt. 12:6). Again, however, Jesus' identification of himself with the Temple is not floating in mid-air: it is inextricably tied to his identification of himself with David and his disciples with *priests in the Temple*, as a justification for their "working" on the Sabbath. Consider the text a second time, this time focusing on the priestly imagery:

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck ears of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the Bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the Temple is here. And if you had known what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," you would not have condemned *the guiltless*. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. (Matt. 12:1–8)

Admittedly, Jesus' argument here is somewhat dense. In order to properly understand it, we must turn again to the Old Testament background of his words, in which he alludes to two key texts, both of which are related to the weekly sacrifice of the Bread of the Presence.

First, he is alluding to passages in the Pentateuch which command the priests to offer the "Bread of the Presence"—a mysterious bread that was kept perpetually in the Tabernacle, and later, in the Temple (Exod. 24:59; 26:35)—on the Sabbath:

[God said to Moses:] "And you shall take fine flour, and bake *twelve cakes* of it. ... And you shall set them in two rows, six in a row, upon the table of pure gold. ... *Every Sabbath day Aaron shall set it in order before the LORD continually on behalf of the sons of Israel as an everlasting covenant.* And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the offerings by fire to the LORD, a perpetual debt." (Lev. 24:5–9)⁸⁰

(Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 75–81, who treats the description of the priestly Messiah as representing the Jewish version of the document.

78 *Testament of Levi* 18:1–14, in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:794–795.

79 Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 89.

80 RSV, slightly adapted.

Here we see quite clearly the Bread of the Presence was not simply kept in the Tabernacle as a sign of God's "everlasting covenant" (Hebrew: *berith 'olam*) with the twelve tribes of Israel (the "twelve cakes"). It was also offered as an offering "every Sabbath day" by the priests ("Aaron and his sons"), with the requirement that the priests—and they alone—eat it in the Tabernacle (the "holy place"). The reason this is important is that it is sometimes forgotten that, in the Old Testament, the Sabbath was not just a day of rest from work: it was a day of *worship*, and worship was constituted by sacrifice. And there was one sacrifice that was unique to the Sabbath alone: the offering of the Bread of the Presence, which was accompanied by an offering of wine.⁸¹ Each Sabbath day, the priests in the Temple would offer and eat the bread and wine of the Presence which, though "unbloody,"⁸² was nevertheless a sacrifice in the true sense.⁸³ It is this sacrifice of bread and wine to which Jesus refers when he speaks of the "priests in the Temple" profaning the Sabbath by working, but remaining "guiltless."

Second, Jesus is also alluding to a time *when David and his disciples acted like priests* by going into the Tabernacle and actually eating the "Bread of the Presence," even though only priests were supposed to eat it (1 Sam. 21:3–6). In this episode, David and his men are on the move, in flight from Saul, and come to the Tabernacle and the priest Ahimelech. David asks the priest for "five loaves of bread, or whatever is here," to feed his men. The priest answers David by pointing out that he has "no common bread at hand," but only "holy bread"—and insists that the men cannot eat it unless they have abstained from sexual relations. Such temporary abstinence was required of priests in the Old Testament while serving in the Temple (Exod. 19:15; Deut. 23:9–13). David responds by pointing out that sexual abstinence was always practiced while on a military "expedition"—that is, he and his men are in a state of priestly purity—and Ahimelech therefore acquiesces:

So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the Bread of the Presence, which is removed from

before the LORD, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away [that is, the Sabbath]. (1 Sam. 21:6)

Again, the main thrust of this story is that in eating the Bread of the Presence, David—as elsewhere in the books of Samuel and Chronicles—acts as a *priest*. As Crispin Fletcher-Louis says, "The way Jesus tells the Old Testament story, *David* plays the role of the priest who enters the sanctuary on the Sabbath to collect the old bread and distribute it to his fellow priests."⁸⁴

Once this background is in place, Jesus' overall response to the Pharisees becomes clear: they accuse his disciples of working on the Sabbath by plucking grain. Jesus responds by giving two examples of biblical cases where people appear to break the Mosaic Law: first, when David and his disciples enter the Tabernacle to eat the Bread of the Presence, and second, when the priests in the Temple offer the Bread of the Presence on the Sabbath, but remain "guiltless." The obvious implication of his parallel between the "guiltless" priests (Matt. 12:5) and his "guiltless" disciples (Matt. 12:7) is that both have priestly prerogatives when in the Temple. Again, Fletcher-Louis states:

Jesus justifies his disciples breach of the Sabbath because he claims to be a sacral king and high priestly Son of Man. Where *he is*, in that place there is the transcendent liturgical space and time of the true Temple in which his disciples can legitimately act as priests for whom the Sabbath prohibition does not apply.⁸⁵

But why does Jesus choose such obscure Old Testament examples? Although we can only speculate, one cannot help but wonder if the reason is because at the Last Supper he will institute a ritual in which the twelve disciples—most of whom were apparently not Levitical priests⁸⁶—will be commanded *to repeat the very priestly act of offering sacrificial bread and wine of a new "covenant"* (Matt. 26:28;

81 See Exodus 25:39, which describes the Bread of the Presence being accompanied by "flagons and bowls with which to pour libations; of pure gold you shall make them" (likewise Exod. 37:16).

82 Compare *Testament of Levi* 3:6, which speaks of a "bloodless oblation," in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:789.

83 "Regarded from the standpoint of material used, sacred offerings fall into two broad classes: (1) the animal or bloody offering; (2) the vegetable or bloodless offering." Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, 398. The bloody sacrifices are sometimes referred to by the Hebrew terms *zebah* and *'olah*, while the unbloody sacrifices are referred to by the Hebrew term *minhab* (at 401). The Bread of the Presence falls into the latter category. For further discussion, see Paul V. M. Flesher, "Bread of the Presence," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols., Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:780–81.

84 Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 76. On the priesthood of David, see Carl E. Armerding, "Were David's Sons Priests?" in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenney Presented by his Former Students*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975); Anthony Phillips, "David's Linen Ephod," *Vetus Testamentum* 19 (1969): 458–487.

85 Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High-Priestly Messiah: Part 2," 77.

86 Although there is some speculation that John, the son of Zebedee was of a priestly family, and good reasons to believe that Matthew (Matt. 9:9; 10:3) was of Levitical heritage (he is also called "Levi" in Mark 2:15; Luke 5:27) there is no evidence to my knowledge that any of the other Twelve were of priestly descent. The theory about the priestly identity of John was recently given a very visible supporter in Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 224–225, following Henri Cazelles, "Johannes. Ein

Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:23). In the old Temple of the old covenant, this would constitute a grave sacrilege, as well as a violation of the Law. But, as we will see in a moment, in the new Temple—the Temple of Jesus’ “body”—it appears that a new “Bread (and Wine) of the Presence” will constitute the center of the eschatological priesthood of the restored twelve tribes of Israel.

Once again, should this seem implausible in a first-century Jewish context, it is critical to recall that there is strong evidence that other Jews at the time of Jesus were thinking along the same lines. Particularly important in this regard is the testimony of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which provide so many insights into Jewish practice and belief at the turn of the era. It is well known that the authors of the scrolls were waiting for a new Temple in the eschatological age: indeed, one of the most famous scrolls is known as the *Temple Scroll*; it is an extremely long description of exactly what this new Temple and its new cult would be like.⁸⁷ It is also well-known that they were waiting for a priestly Messiah. But it is often missed that in at least one scroll, known as *The War Scroll*, the vision of the last days not only contains the expectation of an eschatological Temple but also an eschatological priesthood:

They shall arrange *the chiefs of the priests* behind the *High Priest* and of his second (in rank), *twelve chiefs to serve in perpetuity before God*. And the twenty-six chiefs of the divisions shall serve in their divisions and after them *the chiefs of the Levites to serve always, twelve, one per tribe*. And the chiefs of their divisions shall each serve in his place. *The chiefs of the tribes*, and after them the fathers of the congregation, *shall take their positions in the gates of the sanctuary in perpetuity*. ... These shall take their positions at the holocausts and the sacrifices, in order to prepare pleasant incense for God’s approval, to atone for all his congregation, and *to satisfy themselves in perpetuity before him at the table of glory*.⁸⁸

Above all, two parallels stand out between this vision of the new Temple and the new priesthood and Jesus’ own. First and foremost, it envisions an eschatological priesthood which consists both of the “High Priest” and twelve “chief priests”—one for each tribe—who will offer sacrifice in the eschatological Temple.

Sohn des Zebedäus. ‘Priester’ und ‘Apostel’ [John. A Son of Zebedee. ‘Priest’ and ‘Apostle’] *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 31 (2002): 479–484.

87 See Otto Betz, “Jesus and the Temple Scroll,” in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 75–103.

88 *1QWar Scroll [1QM] 2:1–6*, translation in Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997, 1998), 1:115.

The parallel between this numerical arrangement and Jesus and “the Twelve” is striking. Second, and equally important, the Scroll emphasizes that these twelve chief priests will not only offer normal animal sacrifices, but—in particular—they will feast on *the sacrificial Bread of the Presence*. When the Scroll says that they will feast at “the table of glory” (*shulhan kabod*), this is a clear reference to the golden “table” (*shulhan*) of the Bread of the Presence, which was in the Tabernacle sanctuary, and which could only be eaten by the priests (see Exod. 25:23–30; compare *1QM* 2:6). In light of this connection, one cannot help but think of Jesus’ words to the disciples at the Last Supper:

As my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you *that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom*, and *sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. (Luke 22:29–30)

It seems that in both the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Gospels, we find not only the vision of a new Temple, but of an eschatological priesthood that is focused on the sacrificial offering of the Bread of the Presence and the “table” of glory.

This connection brings us to our third and final example from the Gospels: Jesus’ words and deeds at the Last Supper.⁸⁹ As we saw above, scholars such as Neusner have argued that by identifying the bread as his body and the wine as his blood, Jesus was deliberately replacing the sacrificial cultus of the Jerusalem Temple with the ritual of the Eucharist. But, again, what has often been overlooked is the distinctively *priestly* nature of his actions. By referring to his blood being “poured out” (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20) and commanding his disciples to “do this” (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24–25), *Jesus deliberately institutes the repetition of a sacrificial rite of the Last Supper by the disciples, who would thereby act as eschatological priests*. In order to see this, we need to recall, again, that the “pouring out” of blood in a cultic context was a sacrificial act performed by priests.⁹⁰ Although laymen could slaughter the animal, it was only the priests who could “pour out” the blood at the altar:

89 On the Last Supper, see Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 229–231, 512–513, 771–773, 795–796, 804–805, 815–818; Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 405–436; Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 554–562; Barry D. Smith, *Jesus’ Last Passover Meal* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1993); Ben F. Meyer, “The Expiation Motif and the Eucharistic Words: A Key to the History of Jesus?” *Gregorianum* 69 (1988): 461–487.

90 See Exod. 29:12; Lev. 4:7, 18, 25–26, 30, 34; 8:15; 9:9; Deut. 12:25–27; 2 Kings 16:15. Lev. 17:1–6 is very explicit that if a layman “pours out” the blood of an animal as a sacrificial offering outside the Tabernacle, he incurs bloodguilt and shall be “cut off” from his people (Lev. 17:13; Deut. 12:16). I owe this point about the cultic nature of “pouring out” blood to Evans, *Mark*, 394. See also Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 222, n. 5: “He is applying to himself terms from the language of sacrifice ... in the case of the participle *ekchunnonenon* (‘poured out’, Mark 14:24). *Ekchein haima* is used in the LXX, apart from its use of murder or the domestic slaughter of cattle, only when speaking of sacrifice.”

And *the anointed priest* shall take some of the blood of the bull and bring it to the tent of meeting ... and *the priest* shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense before the LORD which is in the tent of meeting, and *the rest of the blood of the bull he shall pour out at the base of the altar.* (Lev. 4:5–7)

Thus, with Jesus' command to the disciples to "do this"—to offer his body and his blood in the form of bread and wine—he is commissioning them to perform a priestly action. Should there be any doubt about this, as Jeremias noted long ago, the injunction to "do this" was "an established expression for the repetition of a rite."⁹¹ When this background is combined with the fact that Jesus' terminology of "remembrance" (*anamnesis*) was also linked to the repetition of the "Passover sacrifice" (compare the Septuagint translation of Exod. 12:14), it strains credulity to suggest that he did not see himself as instituting a sacrificial rite to be repeated by his priestly circle of disciples.

Lest there remain any doubt about this as well, we bring one final text to bear on our subject. As is widely recognized, Jesus' language of "blood" of the "covenant" (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25) is a direct allusion to a pivotal Old Testament event: the sacrificial liturgy of Moses and the elders of Israel atop Mount Sinai.⁹² As most scholars recognize, Jesus' allusion draws a parallel between the sealing of the covenant with blood on Mount Sinai and his inauguration of the new covenant in the upper room. But what often goes unrecognized is the striking parallels between the priestly hierarchy of the Sinaitic liturgy and the various circles of Jesus' own disciples. Compare the following texts:

And [the LORD] said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, *you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel*, and worship afar off. Moses alone shall come near to the LORD; but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him. And he [Moses] rose early in the morning, and built *an altar* at the foot of the mountain, and *twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel*. And he sent *young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD*. And Moses took half of the blood and put

it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. ... And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people, and said, "Behold, *the blood of the covenant* which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." *Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel*; and there was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; *they beheld God, and ate and drank.* (Exod. 24:1–11)

If one carefully compares the numbers and divisions of this priestly hierarchy of Mount Sinai with the various circles of Jesus' own disciples, the parallels are quite striking:

<i>Old Covenant Priesthood</i>	<i>Jesus and his Disciples</i> ⁹³
Moses	Jesus
The 1: the High Priest, Aaron	The 1: Peter, chief of the Apostles
The 3: Aaron, Nadab, Abihu	The 3: Peter, James, and John
The 12: Twelve Pillars/"Young Men" of the Twelve Tribes	The 12: Twelve Apostles of the Twelve Tribes
The 70: Priestly Elders of Israel	The 70: Appointed and Sent Out

These parallels—which to my knowledge continue to go undetected by Jesus scholarship—are striking. What are we to make of them? Is it possible that Jesus was unaware of the numerical correspondence between his own disciples and the priestly mediators at Mount Sinai? I think not. Rather, they strongly suggest that *Jesus deliberately organized the various circles of his disciples to signify the imminent eschatological restoration of the sacrificial priesthood.*⁹⁴

⁹³ See Matt. 10:1–4; 16:13–20; 17:1; Luke 10:1–16.

⁹⁴ Should there be any doubt about this, these parallels go a long way toward providing a historical explanation for the opposition Jesus met with from one particular ruling body within Second Temple Judaism: the Great Sanhedrin. For while modern scholars often miss the significance of Jesus' gathering and commissioning seventy disciples, the *seventy* members of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin would have certainly gotten the point. Jesus' gathering of priestly followers was a direct challenge to their authority and their Temple and a threat to their existence. See Mishnah *Sanhedrin* [The Council] 1:5–6: "The greater Sanhedrin was made up of one [the High Priest] and seventy and the lesser [Sanhedrin] of three and twenty. Whence do we learn that the greater Sanhedrin should be made up of one and seventy? It is written, 'Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel' [Num 11:16]." To my mind, this parallel alone demolishes the position that Jesus had no intentions of establishing some kind of priestly hierarchy. This position is ultimately based on ignorance of (or inattention to) the priestly hierarchy of the Old Testament

⁹¹ Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 249–250. See Exod. 29:25; Num. 15:1–16; 1QRule of the Community [1QS] 2:19; compare 1QS 1:1–2:18; Jeremias points out that "All of these texts have *kakah* (LXX *houtos*) with a jussive form of '*assah* (LXX *poiein*)." *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 249, n. 4.

⁹² See Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 516.

In summary: although much more could be said, it seems clear that when Jesus' words and actions that reflect his anticipation of a new Temple are examined closely in light of their ancient Jewish background, they not only reveal his expectation of an eschatological Temple—which would consist of himself and his disciples—but of an eschatological priesthood as well. Although I am well aware that this conclusion swims against the tide of most twentieth-century scholarship on Jesus and that it may come as a surprise to some readers, it really should not. For anyone familiar with Second Temple Judaism at the time of Jesus—for that matter, anyone familiar with the Old Testament—knows that the Temple cult and the Temple priesthood were inextricably intertwined with one another. They existed in a living, symbiotic relationship. To the extent that Jesus did not come to “abolish” the Torah and the Prophets but to “fulfill” them (Matt. 5:17), one must ask and attempt to answer the important historical question of whether Jesus expected a new Temple and a new priesthood. And the answer that seems forthcoming from a close study of the sources is a resounding “yes.”

The Mystery of the Temple: Some Conclusions

We end by returning to the initial paradox posed by Yves Congar in his masterful work, *The Mystery of the Temple*. How is it that we find in Jesus a combination of both deep respect for the Jewish Temple and at the same time a prophetic pronouncement of its ultimate demise? In this essay, I have tried to utilize four Jewish beliefs about the Temple—as the dwelling-place of God, a microcosm of heaven and earth, the sole locus of sacrifice, and the place of the sacrificial priesthood—to shed light on several sayings and deeds of Jesus.

As our study suggested, Jesus seems to have repeatedly tapped into these various beliefs about the Jewish Temple, but transferred them to himself, and, by extension, to his disciples. The implication of this transfer is quite simple: Jesus did not simply see himself—as he is so often portrayed nowadays—as a mere “eschatological prophet”—much less as a moralizing teacher of prudential wisdom. Rather, he saw himself as the new Temple, the eschatological Temple that had been spoken of by the prophets and was awaited by many Jews of his day.

The implications of these conclusions are significant. First, they suggest that Jesus believed that the sacrificial worship of the old covenant was coming to its end. The time of animal sacrifice was now being brought to a close, to be replaced not only by the sacrificial death of Jesus, but by the memorial of that sacrifice which he instituted in the upper room.

Second, the growing scholarly recognition that Jesus intended to establish a new Temple cult—one focused on his body, focused on the Eucharist—needs to be complimented by the recognition that he also appears to have sought to establish a new priesthood, an eschatological priesthood. Although the study of this issue is still in its infancy, when the evidence from the Gospels is situated in the context of ancient Jewish liturgy and ancient Jewish eschatology, the conclusion seems unavoidable, and its implications weighty. In the twentieth century, it was very popular to see Jesus as the “apocalyptic prophet” who thought (wrongly) that history would come to its end in his lifetime.⁹⁵ But if Jesus not only deliberately organized his disciples into a priestly hierarchy, but commanded their twelve chiefs to repeat the sacrificial ritual of offering his body and blood, then this picture needs to be radically called into question. Indeed, the Last Supper strongly suggests that Jesus envisioned a future time when the eschatological priesthood would be in force after his death, and that he sought to establish it in his absence.

Third, when the cosmic significance of the Temple is taken into account, Jesus' identification of himself as the new Temple also reveals that for Jesus—like many other Jews of his day—the coming of the new Temple would not simply be an event of national (or even international) significance. Rather, it would impact the cosmos itself. Because the Temple was a miniature replica of the universe, and because—as the rabbis contended—the “whole world” was sustained by its liturgy, the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple meant nothing less than that the age of “this world” was coming to its end, and the age of the “world to come”—the messianic age—would be objectively inaugurated. Jesus apparently saw his death as thus ushering in the beginnings of a new creation.

Fourth, and finally, and by no means least significant, Jesus' identification of himself with the Temple provides us with a penetrating insight into the mystery of his self-understanding. While the twentieth century was characterized by a great deal of scholarly wrangling over “low christology” (supposedly represented by the synoptics) and “high christology” (supposedly located only in John), our study of the Jewish Temple has made one thing abundantly clear. If Jesus did indeed refer to himself as “something greater” than the earthly Temple and identified himself as the heavenly Temple of the “Son of Man,” then he was claiming nothing less than to be God dwelling with us. Indeed, he thereby identified his own body as “the house of God” and the “gate of heaven.” If this is correct, then contemporary christological discussions of Jesus' self-understanding may want to revisit the issue and pay closer attention to the insights that can be gained from Jesus and the mystery of the Jewish Temple.

and ancient Judaism, as well as modern (often Protestant) prejudices against the concept of priesthood and sacrifice. Any scholarly denial of Jesus' priestly vision will have a hard time explaining why Jesus sent precisely the opposite message to his Jewish followers and audiences by organizing his disciples as he did.

95 Most famously, Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. William Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 1968 [1906]).

